AN OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS.
BABYLONIA, ASSYRIA, MEDIA & SUSIANA
COUNTRIES OF THE JEWISH CAPTIVITIES

[Babyloina, Assyria, Media & Susiana map with geographical features labeled]
AN OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS.

BY VARIOUS WRITERS.

EDITED BY CHARLES JOHN ELICOTT, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL.

VOL. IV.

"WHATSOEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN AFORETIME WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING, THAT THROUGH PATIENCE AND THROUGH COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES WE MIGHT HAVE HOPE."

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED:
LONDON, PARIS & NEW YORK.

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1884.
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THE BOOK OF JOB.
I. Plan of the Book.—Great as are the difficulties connected with, and many as are the differences of opinion concerning, the Book of Job, there is and can be neither difficulty nor difference of opinion as to the plan on which the work is constructed. This is at once simple and obvious. There is, first, an historical prologue, just sufficient to make the reader acquainted with and interested in the hero of the book, relating who he was and what was the occasion of the following controversy, but nothing more. Secondly, a dialogue or argument carried on between Job and three of his friends who came to him in his great calamity. Each of the friends is answered by Job three times; but as the book is now found, the third friend only replies twice, unless, as some suppose, Zophar's third speech is to be discovered at chap. xxvii. 13, and Job's reply at chap. xxix. 1. This great discussion or controversy which constitutes the main substance of the book is introduced by the solemn curse pronounced by Job upon the day of his birth in chap. iii. Thirdly, after the three friends have ceased to accuse Job, another speaker comes forward in the person of Elihu, who is specially introduced to us at chap. xxxii. 2. He is distressed both at the tone assumed by Job and at the way in which the friends have conducted the argument, and proceeds to take a somewhat different and intermediate position; his share in the discussion is continued through the next six chapters. Fourthly, the reply of the Lord as the hitherto unseen witness but now manifested judge and umpire in the great argument, which extends from chap. xxxviii. to the end of chap. xlii. or the beginning of chap. xliii. And, fifthly, there is an historical conclusion or epilogue, which gives us the sequel of Job's history till his death.

II. Object.—This can only be gathered from a survey of the facts and incidents recorded, which are briefly these:—Job was a man famous in his age and country for his piety and integrity. Up to a certain period also he was notoriously happy and prosperous, till a succession of ruthless calamities fell upon him with tremendous and unexampled severity; and in one day he was deprived of his ten children and of all his substance. We are further told that this was by the express permission of the Almighty, who had given him over to the power of Satan because that evil spirit had alleged that the piety of Job was not disinterested, but only for selfish ends. It may be presumed, therefore, that Satan challenged the Almighty in the case of Job, and that the Almighty accepted his challenge. It must, however, be carefully noted that the reader only, and not the several characters in this discussion, is supposed to be acquainted with this fact, for had it appeared openly at any point of the argument there would at once have been an end to the discussion. The several speakers were shooting arrows in the dark; the reader only occupies a vantage-ground in the light afforded by a knowledge of the secret. Satan, however, is not mentioned again after his disappearance in the second chapter. The result, therefore, of his challenge of the Almighty is only to be discovered in the sequel of the history. We are especially told that Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly, up to the point when Satan put forth his hand and touched his person. Nor are we told that he did so afterwards; on the contrary, from the words of God in chap. xlii. 7, we are rather led to imply the contrary. We may infer, therefore, that the outspokenness of Job, seeing it was accompanied with faith in God, profound and unswerving, was not displeasing to the Almighty, and was not reckoned as sin; albeit Job was fain to repent himself in dust and ashes at the actual manifestation of the Lord. It was not, however, on his repentance, but on his intercession on behalf of his friends, that the Lord turned the captivity of Job (chap. xlii. 10); and then his prosperity once more returned to him. Seven sons and three daughters were again born to him, and his cattle and substance became twice as much as they had been at the first. Such is the summary of the narrative of Job, from which alone we can gather the object of the book, and this, it would seem, must be capable of being expressed in the several truths which are obviously to be deduced from it; and these are:—

1. Severity of affliction is not a proof of special iniquity—it does not vary as sin varies. The sinner may escape—the innocent may suffer. Because a man is exceptionally stricken, he is not, therefore, exceptionally guilty—because a man is especially prosperous, he is not, therefore, especially holy. This is a truth which is confirmed to us by the repeated experience of life; but notwithstanding this continued experience of it, the reminder thereof is oftentimes most needful and salutary in affliction, while it is always valuable as a corrective in our judgment of others. To inculcate this truth must assuredly have been part of the object of the Book of Job, if not the main and sole object; but we may learn that—

2. Righteousness is its own reward, independently of all the inequalities of fortune. The position and the arguments of Job would have been altogether different if he had not had the testimony of a good conscience. It makes all the difference to the imputus of adversity whether it overtakes the innocent or the guilty. This is clearly one of the inferences that the Book of Job suggests, whether or not it was part of the object contemplated by the writer. The powerlessness of accumulated adversity to overthrow the truly righteous man is taught us by the history of Job. He is proof against all the slings and arrows of outrageous
fortune. He can still trust God, and God will justify him. This is verily a priceles lesson, and it is unquestionably taught by the history of Job.

(3) Hope is not only brighter, but truer also than despair; the dark days of Job were not destined to be his last. He had in himself a principle of vitality which could and would survive them. The Lord, after he had tried him, gave him not only what he had before, but twice as much also as he had had before. To be sure, the children he had lost could not be restored to him; but his tears for them were wiped away by the smiles of others, and the closed page of their history was replaced by the open page of the history of others as yet unaulled and full of hope—the sweeter and brighter because of the dark background. To enforce this truth, and to remind men of it, must surely have been part of the object of him who wrote the Book of Job; and when the storm is raging it is no small consolation to remember that the sun will shine brightly after it, and perhaps the more brightly because of it. If Job had not suffered exceptionally, no one would have recorded his history or remembered his name. He would not have been known for his patience had he not been known for his sufferings. The one, therefore, is not only the condition of the other, but contains also in itself the promise of the other, even though in certain cases that promise may not visibly be fulfilled, as, for a time and while the anguish lasted, it certainly was not in the case of Job.

(4) Satan is not to be permitted to triumph over man. He shamelessly challenged the Most High to produce an instance, even where the conditions were most promising, of one who served Him for anything more than could be gained therefrom. The challenge was accepted, and Satan was foiled. He proposes the challenge, but when the issue of it is to be declared, by the course of circumstances, he is not forthcoming. His judgment goes by his default; his defeat is proclaimed by his non-appearance, although by that alone. At the same time, while man is so far justified against his ghostly adversary, the Almighty also is vindicated; for He will be no man's debtor, and, therefore, all that Job had in his prosperity is restored to him, and in respect of worldly substance twice as much. This also is one of the lessons of Job, whether or not it was the designed object of the writer to inculcate it, upon which we are hardly competent to pronounce. It may be observed incidentally that this is virtually the teaching also of the third chapter of Genesis; while the word "enmity," verse 15 (יָבִא, 'eybhah), and the name Job (יָבָה, 'yobh), the assaulted one, and therefore the hated one, present an unquestionable although significant point of contact, inasmuch as the two words are derived from the same root (יָבָה, "hated, or was an enemy.

(5) Job is a typical character; for it is hardly possible to suppose that his history is not intended to be typical of the condition of man in life, and, therefore, in its degree typical of the Son of Man in His cross and passion, and in the eventual glory of His resurrection. What is true of the type must be true of the race; and what is true of the race must be true of the Head of the race. I am far from saying that this was all foreseen by the writer of Job; but so far as the history of Job is capable of teaching the essential truth of human life to man, it must also foreshadow and reflect the history of Him who was the truth itself, and this not because of any power of arbitrary and mechanical predetermination in the writing or the writing, but because the writing was inherently, essentially, and intensely true to human nature, which was the nature that Christ took.

JOE.

So far, then, without reference to the authorship of Job, or to its place in the Canon, we are perfectly warranted in regarding it as pointing to Him, because it points to and expresses the deepest and most essential truth of that human life and nature of which He was the deepest and the most essential truth.

(6) The object of Job was unquestionably didactic; it was intended to teach and inculcate all the lessons that we can derive from it. The writer cannot be suspected of writing without a purpose, but must fairly be credited with all the wisdom and doctrine with which his work is fraught, whether or not it was consciously present to his mind, even as Shakespeare must fairly be credited with all the wisdom and truth that Coleridge or Schlegel or Goethe could detect in "Hamlet." Job also, from its inherent characteristics, is a cosmopolitan book. It inculcates truth without reference to any religious systems. It aims at justifying the ways of God to man as man, whether under the Law or the Gospel, or independently of the light of either, seeing that it is not improbably preceded both. It takes the broadest possible view both of the character of God and of the position of man, and deals with the mighty problem of the moral government of God, towards which it offers the only solution possible under the circumstances.

III. Character.—The Book of Job is a Divine book, and marked with the distinctive features that characterise the other books of revelation. For instance, it assumes the possibility and the fact of God's revelation of Himself, and is in no way staggered at the thought of God's holding direct intercourse with man. Those who demur to this position can so far have nothing in common with the writer of Job. It is a foregone conclusion with him that this intercourse and the manifestation or revelation it implies was not only a possibility, but an historic fact. However true it may be that the Lord speaks out of other whirlwinds than that of Job, it is no subjective or ordinary voice which said, Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job hath. Here, then, we discover the first characteristic feature of the book, and one that binds it closely to the collection of which it forms a part; the verdict, therefore, that we pass on this matter will inevitably influence all our judgment of the book. It will have no other authority than we consent to allow it unless we accept its testimony in this respect, while if we do, it will at once speak to us with the very highest authority. But, secondly, the book is essentially non-Jewish and non-Israelite in character. The hero Job was not of the chosen race; and, what is more, there is no trace of a consciousness of the existence of any such race; while it is included among the sacred books of the Hebrews, it is distinctly non-Hebrew in character. There seem to be but two ways in which we can reasonably account for this circumstance—either the book must have been derived from some foreign source and adopted into and appropriated by the literature of Israel, in which case it furnished a solitary, and an improbable, instance; or it must be the record and monument of a time when the nationality of Israel was as yet undefined and transient, before Israel had become conscious of its own existence as a nation; in other words, before the Exodus. My own opinion inclines very strongly to this belief, for to suppose, which is the only other alternative, that in the palmy days of the literature of Israel any Israelite would have entirely divorced himself of his nationality, and his national recollections and prejudices, and have set himself the task of bringing
back and reconstructing the life and manner of a bygone age, and have thrown himself so successfully into the surroundings of the past as to betray no token of his own condition and circumstances, is absolutely impossible. The Book of Job knows nothing of Moses, or the Exodus, the Temple, the kingdom, or the Law (once only in chap. xxii. 23 is the word law used in a merely general sense—receive the law at his mouth), or of any of the later incidents in the history of Israel. It would have been strange if, being conversant with them, no allusion to them had anywhere escaped the writer; but so it is, and this makes the book essentially non-Hebrew in character; but, nevertheless, thirdly, it is in no sense alien from or antagonistic to the faith of Israel; on the contrary, it takes that view of Divine things which, as a matter of fact, the unaided speculations of man have never risen to, and displays that knowledge of God which is not found outside the compass of revelation. This is a feature which must on no account be overlooked in dealing with the Book of Job. Fourthly, the book is unquestionably historical—first, because it clearly professes to be so; secondly, because, although parables and allegories are to be found in Scripture, it does not appear that any one book is purely allegorical, or is intended to be so. If the Book of Ruth, for example, or the Book of Job, is mere allegory—that is, romance—then a death-blow is struck at the root of all history, and like the gods in the story of Nala, we stand upon air when we seem to touch the ground. A tradition is found in the Talmud to the effect that “Job did not exist, and was not a created man, but the work is a parable;” but this is shown to be worthless by the reasons above given, and from the way in which the persons in Job are linked to names and places otherwise known to us, and from the general circumstantiality of the narrative. It is, of course, possible to throw doubt on the reality of anything, but there is no reason to doubt the reality of Job.

IV. Integrity.—The most superficial observer can see that there is a great difference in style (if only the difference of prose and poetry) between the narrative portions of the book and the argumentative; the important feature is the frequency of the name Jehovah in the former, and its occurrence but once in the latter (chap. xii. 9); still it is to be observed that Job himself, who uses it here, has already used it thrice in chap. i. 21, and precisely in the same way, which is that, namely, of ascribing all things both good and evil to God (comp. ii. 10 and xii. 6, 9). It may be questioned, however, whether this obvious difference of style is anything more than is needful from the exigency of the case in passing from narrative to elevated discussion; certainly we cannot allow that this difference shows the book to be other than a consistent whole, and warrants us in assigning the narrative parts to a different hand. In short, these narrative parts are indispensable to the understanding of the others, which, except as fragments preserving the sentiments of the several speakers, can have had no existence independent of them. He, therefore, who is responsible for the book in its present form is so far responsible for both alike; though, of course, no further responsible for the several speeches than responsible for their general accuracy in rightly representing the several speakers. Some, indeed, have supposed that the speech of Eliphaz was an interpolation, though, of course, without the slightest ground. Artistically his speech holds its proper place as leading up gradually from the unqualified condemnation of the friends, and Job's longing for vindication, to the ultimate appearance and justification of the Lord as judge and umpire in the controversy. It would, therefore, be as reasonable to excuse Job's curse as to omit the speech of Eliphaz. In short, the Book of Job is, apparently, a consistent whole, nor is there any reason to suppose that it ever existed in any other form.

V. Date.—Opinions as to the date of Job have varied from the age of the patriarchs to that of the Captivity, or even later, that is to say, 800 or 1,000 years. As the supporters of the several theories have uniformly appealed to the critical and linguistic reasons, this may serve to show the vagueness and uncertainty of much that arrogates to itself the name of criticism. He who could not tell the difference between a work of the time of the Conquest and one of our own day could hardly claim to be a critic; and though it is true that the language of the Old Testament was far less liable to change than our own, yet this may be taken as an instance not altogether inappropriate or unfair. Of course, if the Book of Job is in any sense authentic—i.e., a record of actual fact—its date as a composition cannot be put very much later than the time of the events that is, than the age of Job. Now, it so happens that the age of Job is, within certain limits, ascertainable—e.g., we are told that he lived a hundred and forty years after his recovery from his great trials. As he had ten children, who appear to have been all grown up when his calamities overtook him, we can hardly suppose him to have been less than sixty or seventy at this time. It has, indeed, been suggested that, as Job's substance was doubled, so also the years of his life may have been, and this would correspond with some such number. At all events, he must have been 200 or 210 years old at the time of his death. If, then, we may trust these numbers, which must depend upon the authentic character of the narrative, we may find in them at least some guide to the age of Job. It cannot have been, with all due deference to those who think otherwise, within 100 years of the Captivity (Renan, Livre de Job, p. xxxvi.), because at that time there is no evidence that the life of man was prolonged to such an extent. Neither, again, can it have been (assuming for the moment the authenticity of Genesis) in the age of the earlier patriarchs of Gen. v., because then the period of human life was yet longer; but in the case of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we meet with the ages of 175, 180, and 147 years respectively. These would furnish us with some approximation to the supposed age of Job, which, however, we may regard as having been exceptionally prolonged. It would seem, therefore, antecedently probable that the age at which Job lived was approximately that of the Hebrew patriarchs. Now it so happens that most of the names occurring in connection with Job are found also in what we may roughly call the age of these patriarchs, when, as it appears, human life was not uncommonly at least twice as long as it is now. For instance, in Gen. xxv. 3 we find Sheba and Dedan among the sons of Abraham by Keturah. It was apparently a band of Sheba's retainers or descendants who fell upon Job's cattle (chap. i. 15). Sheba and Dedan are also mentioned among the sons of Cush and Ham (Gen. x. 7), and it has been supposed that Keturah was of Canaanite, and therefore of Hamite origin, and that Sheba was reckoned to Ham through her; at all events, Sheba, and Dedan, and Shuah, from whom we seem to have Biledah the Shuhite, were among these of his descendants whom Abraham during his lifetime
sent away “eastward to the land of the East,” to which Job himself belonged. Here, then, we seem to have some sort of clue to the time and place of Job. Uz, again, is mentioned as a descendant of Shem in Gen. x. 23; and in xxi. 21, he is said to have been the son of Nahor, and brother of Chedeth, possibly the father of the Chassidim or Chaldeans of Job i. 17. Job thus may be traced perhaps through Uz to Nahor the brother of Abraham; at all events, there is a similarity in the names found in both cases. Once more, Eliphaz was the son of Esau and father of Amalek (Gen. xxxvi. 10, 12), and Teman was the son of Eliphaz, so that Eliphaz the Temanite, the friend of Job, may probably either have been this man or a descendant of his. Teman, again (Job vi. 19), was a descendant of Ishmael (Gen. xvi. 15), so that these lines, however faint, all point to what we may call the age of the patriarchs between Abraham and Moses for the time at which Job flourished. It is plain also that a generation or two was enough to establish a tribe or family, for when Israel came out of Egypt, Amalek, who was of the sons of Esau, had become a powerful people, who were even regarded as ancient (Num. xxiv. 20). The only nearer guide we have to the precise age of Job is on the supposition that Eliphaz the Temanite was the son of Esau of that name (though it is strange he should be called after the name of his own son), in which case the children of Jacob would be contemporary with Job. Following out this supposition, the late Dr. Lee of Cambridge calculated that Job died forty-seven years before the Exodus (Book of Job, p. 34). Whether or not this is correct, there at least seems to be very good reason to believe that the age of Job fell between the entry of the Israelites into Egypt and the Exodus. If so, we then are able to arrive at some idea as to the—

VI. Author of the Book of Job.—There is nothing whatever to guide us on this point except the evidence of the book itself, coupled with any such considerations as have already been noticed. There is but one solitary fragment of tradition, which is that Job, like the Pentateuch, was the work of Moses. This may be worth nothing critically, but as a tradition it is simply the only one that exists. If, however, the age of Job was that of the patriarchs between Abraham and Moses, as there is every reason to believe, and if the book is authentic, as its place in the Canon would seem to imply, then there is no one so likely as Moses to whom it can be referred. If it was written before the Exodus, that would account for the silence of the book with reference to that and to all subsequent events of Jewish history; and while the influence of the Book of Job is traceable in the Psalms and prophets, it manifests various points of contact with the Book of Genesis, which alone of the books of Moses has been in existence at that time. It is not improbable; but, on the contrary, highly probable, that Job himself may have thrown together the various speeches of himself and his friends—and manifestly no one would have been so fit to do this as himself; but we can hardly account for the acceptance of the book by the people of Israel, unless it had been specially commended to them by some one in the position of the great Law-giver; and with some reason we have supposed the work of the book, and reduced it to its ultimate form. I venture to think that the Mosaic origin of the book is really more probable than the Solomonic or the Exile origin of it. Certain phrases in Job are peculiar to, or characteristic of, Moses: for instance, יָתֵת יַעֲדוּת רַבָּה (Job i. 3 and Gen. xxvi. 14); “the sons of God” (Job i. 6 and Gen. vi. 2); “the fire of God” (Job i. 16 and Gen. xix. 24); “his bone and his flesh” (Job ii. 4 and Gen. ii. 23); “they lifted up their voice, and wept” (Job ii. 12 and Gen. xxvi. 16, xxvii. 38, xxviii. 11); “they scattered dust toward heaven” (Job ii. 12 and Exod. ix. 10); “the seven and seven rams” of Job xii. 8 and Num. xxii. 1; the strange word קֶסֶתָה (qesethah), found only in Job xii. 11, Gen. xxxiii. 19, and Josh. xiv. 32; the “earing of gold” (Job xii. 11 and Gen. xxiv. 22), used afterwards by Solomon (Prov. xi. 22, xxv. 12); “their father gave them inheritance among their brethren” (Job xiii. 15; comp. Num. xxxvii. 7). Bearing in mind that there are but three chapters in which to trace these similarities, they are even more numerous than we could expect to find them. Besides this we may mention, in the book generally the name of God, Shaddai, the Almighty, which is so frequent in Job, but, with the exception of the Pentateuch, is not found above twice in any other book, and only eight times in all the other books together; the notion of Divine communications conveyed in sleep, as in the case of Abraham, Jacob, &c.; wealth consisting in flocks and herds, and the like. There is no mention in Job of Tarshish, Hermom, or Lebanon; but, on the other hand, Jordan is mentioned. There is a possible allusion to the Fall (Job xxxi. 33) and to the Deluge (Job xxii. 16), though this is not certain in either case. The grosser forms of idolatry of a later age are not mentioned in Job, but only sun and moon worship (chap. xxxi. 26—28). The Repham of Gen. iv. 5, Deut. ii. 11, 20, iii. 11, 13 are mentioned (Job xxxvi. 5). The character given to Job (chap. i. 1) is like that ascribed to the patriarchs Jacob (Gen. xxv. 27) and Joseph (Gen. xiii. 18; comp. Gen. vi. 9 and xviii. 1). The feasting of Job’s sons every one in his day is like the feast on Pharaoh’s birthday in the history of Joseph. Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither” (chap. i. 21) is an echo of “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. iii. 19). The “deep sleep falling on men” (Job iv. 13, xxxiii. 15) is like the “deep sleep” that fell on Adam and Abram (Gen. ii. 21, xv. 12); but the word here used occurs only three times elsewhere. There is a probable allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Abraham’s Đặc with Job xxxii. 21; the “side” in Job xviii. 12 may possibly mean the “wife” in allusion to Gen. ii. 22. The “harp” and the “organ” of Job xxxi. 12 and xxx. 31 are identical with Gen. iv. 21, but not found in juxtaposition elsewhere, nor at all except in Ps. cl. 3, 4. In Job xxxi. 32 there seems to be a reference to Gen. ix. 2. In Job xxxii. 5, xxxiii. 4, 6; comp. Gen. ii. 7 (נְשָׁה נְשָׁה—neshehah—is used in all). In Job xxxiv. 12; comp. Gen. xviii. 25. In Job xxxiv. 29, 25 one might almost imagine an allusion to the death of the firstborn. In Job iii. 13 we, at all events, find the תָּמָא—noghes—of the bondage; while in Job xxii. 30 there may possibly be an allusion to the intercession of Abraham for Sodom. At all events, these points of contact between Job and the Book of Genesis, which under the supposition of the Mosaic origin of the book could have been the only part of the Bible in existence when Job was written, and the early history of which must, at any rate, have been known to Moses, are at least strong enough and many enough to give support to the theory, if they do not establish it conclusively. It must be borne in mind that we have every reason to believe that the several books of the Bible were the work of well-known actors in the Bible history, and not of casual and insignificant authors. In the New
JOB.

Testament it is so with the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Hebrews, and it is probably so in every case in the Old Testament. It is not likely that there is in the Old Testament the work of any man who is not known to us from the history, whether in the case of Chronicles, Judges, Ruth, or Job. But if this is so, as seems most probable on every ground, and if we are right in maintaining the antiquity of Job, then there is no one so likely to have written it as Moses. Indeed, with the exception of Job himself (whose virtual authority for the book must be presupposed in any case, if it is a true history), there is no one else who can have written it. We find here that acquaintance with desert life, and with Egypt, for this is so, as seems most probable on every ground, sufficiently shows this.

Example, which were combined in Moses, but scarcely one else who can have written it. We find here that the Epistle to the Hebrews, and it is probably so in the New Testament it is so with the Acts of the Apostles and in which horses were abundant (Gen. xlvii. 17, xlix. 17; Exod. ix. 9, 23, xv. 1, 21). Mining operations and the achievements of early engineering were familiar to the writer of Job (chap. xxviii.), as were the riches and the solitude of the desert. In fact, the range of observation, experience, and reflection is probably larger in Job not only than that of any other book of the Bible, but also of any other book whatever of the same extent. While, however, there is no trace in Job of a knowledge of any other composition than that of Genesis, it is significant to observe the manifest—

VII. Doctrine of the Book of Job.—There is distinct knowledge of God as the Creator of man, and the Author of nature (chaps. ix., xxviii. 8, 9). "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me," says Job (chap. iv. 15). 

(4) Job assumed in his discourses the faith that he had made man of clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? (chap. xxvi. 8, 10). The speeches of Elisha and of the Lord abundantly show that they identify the Author of nature with the moral Governor. In Elisha’s words, “the spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life” (chap. xxxiii. 4). He not only recognizes God as his Creator, but even does so in words which almost involve the knowledge of Gen. ii. 7, when they are compared together; while in declaring the righteousness of God as the ultimate Judge (chap. xxxiv. 12), he almost repeats the words of Abraham. It is hardly possible to read Job without reading into it a variety of allusions to other books, and discovering points which will largely tend to confirm our preconceived notions, whatever they may be; but these considerations must be borne in mind.—(1) Is the date of Job likely to be early or late? Formerly it was always regarded as one of the oldest books in existence; but though some have put it as low down as the Captivity, and of course thought they discovered reasons in the book itself for doing so, it seems to me beyond all question that, as the book undoubtedly describes a very early state of society, so it must belong to that early period. (2) If the traditional and apparent succession of the books of Scripture is in the main correct, then there can have been only one book of the whole which was in existence when Job was written, namely, the Book of Genesis; now, on the supposition that the records of this book were known, then it is not a little remarkable that the points of contact between the two are numerous and striking. And therefore, (3) so far as this is the case, the fact must be allowed to go some way in confirmation of this hypothesis as the right one. The theocratic tone of Job is exactly that of Genesis. The history of Joseph (e.g.) in that book presents in its vision of the desert a marked resemblance to the teaching of the Book of Job, and to the development of the history of Job. God is regarded in Job as Supreme and Independent, Holy and Incorruptible (chaps. xv. 15, xxii. 2—4), Immortal and Eternal (chap. x. 5), Spiritual and Invisible (chaps. ix. 11, xxvi. 13), the Meaner and Answerer of prayer ( chap. xxxiii. 26), the King of kings (chap. xxxiv. 19), the Preserver of men (chaps. xxxiii. 28, xii. 10), the Giver of wisdom (chap. xxxv. 11, &c.), the Ruler of nations (chap. xii. 23, &c.). In the words of Job x. 9, he almost declares his knowledge of what God had said to Adam (Gen. iii. 18), and so far as this is the case he accepts that record as a true revelation of God. There is evidence in Job of acquaintance with, and the study of, astronomy, in which considerable advancement must have been made (chaps. ix. 9, xxxviii. 31, 32, &c.). The description of the war-horse in chap. xxxix. is one of the most famous in Job, and this points to a knowledge of Egypt, in which horses were abundant (Gen. xlvii. 17, xlix. 17; Exod. ix. 9, 23, xv. 1, 21). Mining operations and the achievements of early engineering were familiar to the writer of Job (chap. xxviii.), as were the riches and the solitude of the desert. In fact, the range of observation, experience, and reflection is probably larger in Job not only than that of any other book of the Bible, but also of any other book whatever of the same extent. While, however, there is no trace in Job of a knowledge of any other composition than that of Genesis, it is significant to observe the manifest—

VIII. Effect of this Book on other Books of Scripture.—The evidences of this are so numerous that they can only be touched upon here. Foremost comes the famous instance of Jeremiah’s complaint unto God (chap. xxvii.), in which he curses the day of his birth, like Job. It is plain that one of these pre-supposes the other, and no one of any critical discernment can doubt which is the original. (See Renan xxxiv.) Next, there is Ps. viii. 4, which almost repeats Job vii. 17— at least, in its idea. Comp. Ps. xvi. 6, Job xxx. 20. &c.; Lam. iii. 7, Job i. 10; Eccles. v. 15, Job i. 21; Ps. lxxii. 8, Job iii. 18; Prov. ii. 4, Job iii. 21; Isa. xxxv. 3, “Strength ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees;” Job iv. 4; “Thy words have upheld him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees;” comp. Heb. xii. 12; comp. also Ezek. vii. 17, and xxi. 7, and Isa. xiii. 7. With Ps. xxxvii. 25, “I have been young, and now am old,” &c., comp. Job iv. 8. With Ps. xvi. 7, “In the morning it is green,” &c., comp. Job iv. 20 and viii. 12. Indeed, the language of Psalms, Proverbs, and the prophets abounds with traces of the influence of Job; in fact, so manifest is this that it has been made the basis of a theory that Job was written in the age of David and Solomon. But, as before said, its ancient existence and authority, which will equally account for this knowledge, is inherently more probable. It is in the substantial teaching of the book, no less than in the reproduction of its language, that we can discern traces of its influence. For instance, in the teaching of Job xiii. 16 ("He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him") there is the germ not only of all the stern morality of the prophets, but also of the grace and sweetness of the Gospel itself. And so completely was it felt that faith was the lesson of Job, that his patience, which was manifested in the deep undercurrent of resignation and confidence (chap. xiii. 15) rather than in the outward reproof of complaint, has passed into a proverb (James v. 11). He was patient, however, because of his intense faith; and to the exhibition of this character of faith as seen in Job how much may we not ascribe of the trust, resignation, and confidence of the Psalms? With the exception, however, of Job and the Psalms, no book of the Bible so honours and inculcates faith as the Book
of Genesis (e.g., in chap. xv. 6), which, we have seen, the writer of Job must have known.

IX. Canonicity.—Job belongs to the third section of the Hebrew writings, being classed with the Psalms, Proverbs, &c. And this for obvious reasons, because it was not a book of the Law, and it could not be classed with the prophets. But its canonicity has never been doubted. Its very place, however, in the Canon must be owing to its connection with some great writer of authority; and this is the more obvious because of its being in no sense an Israelitish book. When, however, we bear in mind the fact of its position among the sacred writings of Israel, the sublimity, purity, and simplicity of its teaching and aim, we must not only confess that it is in many respects the most marvellous book in existence, but that it towers far above all other books in the grandeur of its poetry, the nobility of its sentiments, and the splendour of its diction. And in the contemplation of these features, we are led by a species of induction to the acknowledgment of its true—

X. Inspiration, for no judgment of the Book of Job can be adequate or just which does not recognise in the facts about it sufficiently clear indications of an origin not of the unaided speculations of man, but the product, if we will only accept it, of an authorised and inspired communication on the part of God. If things happened as the Book of Job says they did, then we must have in that record of them a veritable revelation of the Most High.
CHAPTER I.—(1) There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and shewed mercy on his enemy. (2) And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. (3) His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great house; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. (4) And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. (5) And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually. (6) Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. (7) The Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, out of the dust of the earth. (8) And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, fearing God and eschewing evil? (9) And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all his substance was in thy power; only spurn not my servant Job. (10) So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. (11) Now there was a man of the east, whose name was Zophar the Naamathite. (12) And the words of Zophar the Naamathite were beginning, and he said, (13) For the name of our God is true, and the grace of the Most High aboundeth: (14) Moreover his excellency is an evil, and of shunning that which is opposed to it. (15) And there was a man that had a son, whose name was Job, the man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. (16) And there were seven sons and three daughters. (17) And all his substance was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. (18) And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. (19) And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually. (20) Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.
Satan is Permitted to Tempt Job.

1. And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them; (15) and the Sabœans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. (16) While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. (17) While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. (18) While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: (19) and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

iii. 12, and possibly in 1 Chron. xxi. 1 and Ps. cix. 6. If this psalm is David's, according to the inscription, no reliance can be placed on speculations as to the lateness of these early chapters of Job. Precisely the same word is used, apparently as a common name, in the history of Balaam (Num. xxii. 22, 32), also in 1 Sam. xxix. 4, and 1 Kings v. 4, 14, 23, 25, where it can hardly be otherwise. Here only and in Zechariah it is found with the definite article "thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." (11) But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. (12) And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. (13) And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

(14) Thy sons and thy daughters.—See verse 13. The marvellous accumulation of disasters points us to the conclusion that it was the distinct work of Satan, according to the permission given him (verse 12), and consequently supernatural.
CHAPTER II.—(1) Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. (2) And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. (3) And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause.

(1) And worshipped.—Compare the conduct of David (2 Sam. xii. 20) and of Hezekiah (2 Kings xix. 1). Moments of intense sorrow or trial, like moments of intense joy, force us into the immediate presence of God.

(2) Thither.—If taken literally, can only refer to the womb, which in that case must here mean the earth, with a probable allusion to Gen. iii. 19. (Comp. Job xvii. 14.)

(3) Blessed be the name of the Lord.—The very word used in a contrary sense (verse 11). Thus was Satan foiled for the first time.

(4) Foolishly.—The same word as at chap. xxiv. 12, signifying reproach or guilt. It is a noun derived from the adjective rendered "unsavoury" in chap. vi. 6.

(1) And Satan came also.—See chap. i. 7. St. Peter applies to Satan the verb from which we have peripatetic.

(2) Skin for skin.—This is a more extreme form of the insinuation of chap. i. 9. He means Job takes care to have his quid pro quo; and if the worst come to the worst, a man will give up everything to save his life. If, therefore, Job can save his life at the price of subservience to God, he will willingly pay that price rather than die; but his service is worth no more than that selfish object implies.

(5) But save his life.—God's faithfulness cannot fail even if, as Satan hints, Job's should do so (2 Tim. ii. 13). There was one who cared for Job's life more than he cared for it himself.

(6) Sore boils.—Supposed to be Elephantiasis, an extreme form of leprosy, in which the skin becomes clotted and hard like an elephant's, with painful cracks and sores underneath.

(9) Then said his wife.—Thus it is that a man's foes are they of his own household (Micah vii. 6; Matt. x. 36, &c.). The worst trial of all is when those nearest to us, instead of strengthening our hand in God and confirming our faith, conspire to destroy it.

(11) Eliphaz the Temanite.—Teman was the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, to whose family this Eliphaz is probably to be referred (Gen. xxxvi. 4, 10, 11). If so, this may roughly indicate the date of the book. The inhabitants of Teman, which lay north-east of Edom, were famed for their wisdom (Jer. xlvii. 7). Bildad the Shuhite probably derived his origin from Shush, the son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. xxiv. 2). Of the district from which Zophar the Naamathite came nothing is known. It probably derived its name from a Naamah or Naaman, of which there were several (e.g., Gen. iv. 22; 1 Kings xiv. 21; Gen. xlv. 21; Num. xxvi. 40; 2 Kings v. 1), as names of persons or places called after them.
Job's Friends Visit him.

CHAPTER III.—(3) After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

(2) And Job spake, and said,

Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, Neither let the light shine upon it.

Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it;
Let a cloud dwell upon it;
Let the blackness of the day terrify it.

As for that night, let darkness seize upon it;
Let it not be joined unto the days of the year,
Let it not come into the number of the months.

(12) And knew him not.—Compare the converse statement descriptive of the love of him who could recognise his lost son under a disguise as great as that of Job, or even greater (Luke xv. 20).

(13) So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days.—Compare the conduct of David (2 Sam. xii. 16), and see also Gen. I. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13; Ezek. iii. 15. There is a colossal grandeur about this description which is in keeping with the majesty and pre-eminence of the poem.

(1) After this opened Job his mouth.—There is a striking similarity between this chapter and Jer. xx. 14–18, so much so that one must be borrowed from the other; the question is, which is the original? Is Jeremiah the germ of this? or is this the tree from which the other; the question is, which is the original? Is

(2) Jeremiah or Job the original, inasmuch as this chapter is indispensable to the development of the poem; but in Jeremiah the passage occurs casually as the record of a passing mood of despair. It is, moreover, apparent clear that Jeremiah is quoting Job as he might quote one of the Psalms or any other writing with which he was familiar. He was applying to daily life the well-known expression of a patriarchal experience, whereas in the other case the words of Job would be the ideal magnifying of a commonplace and realistic experience.

(3) Brought.—Literally, redeem.—i.e., claim as their rightful inheritance. The other meaning enters into this word, as in Isa. lxii. 3; Mal. 1. 7.

(4) Blackness of the day—i.e., preternatural darkness, inopportune and unexpected darkness, like that of eclipses, &c.

(5) Let it not be joined unto the days of the year.—Let it not be a sample of cursing. This seems to be Job's meaning.

(6) Let the dawning of the day terrify it.—Another condition which would have relieved him from the experience of suffering

(7) Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

(8) Why did the knees prevent me?

(9) Or, let them terrify it, or those who have a better day.

(10) Why did I not from the womb?

(11) Why did I not from the womb?

(12) Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

(13) Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

(14) Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?
There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?

Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

I was not in safety, neither had I rest; Neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

Without any true sympathy, however, he may have given the outward signs of it (chap. ii. 12, 13). He charges Job with inability to derive from his own principles that support which he had expected them to afford to others, and seems almost to rejoice malevolently that one who had been so great a help to others was now in need of help himself. "Calmity touches thee, and thou art overwhelmed by it."

The meané seems to be, "Should not thy fear or piety be thy confidence, and the uprightness of thy ways thy hope? Should not the piety thou wast so ready to commend to others supply a sufficient ground of hope for thyself?" Or we may understand, "Is not thy reverence, thy confidence, thy hope, and thy integrity shown to be worthless if thou faintest as soon as adversity toucheth thee?" The drift of the speaker is virtually the same in either case.

CHAPTER IV.—(1) Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

(2) If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? But who can withhold himself from speaking?

(3) Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

(4) Thy words have upheld him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

(5) But now it is come upon thee, and thou art troubled.

(6) Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, Thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?

(7) Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off?

(8) Even as I have seen, thy that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

(9) By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.
Shall a man be more pure than his maker?

Behold, he put no trust in his servants;
And his angels he charged with folly:
How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Which are destroyed from morning to evening:
They perish for ever without any regard­ing it.

Doth not their excellency which is in them go away?
They die, even without wisdom.

CHAPTER V.—(1) Call now, if there be any that will answer thee;
And to which of the saints wilt thou turn?
For wrath killeth the foolish man,
And envy slayeth the silly one.
(2) I have seen the foolish taking root:

1. Heb. by stealth.
2. Heb. met me.
3. Heb. the multitude of my bones.
4. Or, I heard a still voice.
5. Or, nor to his enemies, in whom he put light.
6. Heb. beaten in pieces.
7. Or, lookest.
1. Or, indignation.

(17) Shall mortal man be more just than God?
—This is the burden, or refrain, upon which the friends of Job are for ever harping. It is perfectly orthodox, but at the same time perfectly inadequate to deal with the necessities of Job’s case. He is willing to admit that it is impossible for any man to be just with God; but then arises Job’s dilemma, Where is God’s justice?—This means “it is equally unable to prosper. It is to be observed that no less than five different words are here used for Zion, showing that these animals must have been common and of various kinds in Job’s country.

Now a thing.—He now proceeds to enforce and illustrate what he has said in highly poetical language, which has been versified in one of Byron’s Hebrew Melodies.

Secretly brought to me.—Literally, was stolen for me. Joseph uses the same expression of himself in Gen. xi. 15.

Mine ear received a little, compared with the inexhaustible resources remaining un­revealed. The word used for little is only found once again, and in the mouth of Job (chap. xxvi. 14).

In thoughts from the visions of the night.—The Book of Genesis exhibits the same idea of revelation through visions of the night, e.g., chaps. xv. 1, xx. 3, xxx. 11, xl. 5, xli. 1, xlvii. 2; afterwards it is not common, except in the Book of Daniel. The word rendered “thoughts” only occurs once again, in Job xx. 2. The “deep sleep” of this place is like a reminiscence of Gen. ii. 21 and xv. 12. It is used again in Job xxxiii. 15, otherwise only once in 1 Sam. xxvi. 12, once in Prov. xix. 15, and once in Isa. xxix. 10.

A spirit passed before my face.—It is vain to argue from this passage that spiritual essences are capable of being seen by the bodily eye, because, first of all, the language is highly figurative and poetical, and because, secondly, every one understands that a spiritual manifestation can be made only to the spirit. The notion, therefore, of seeing a spirit is absurd in itself, because it involves the idea of seeing the invisible; but it is conceivable that the perceptions of the inner spirit may be so vivid as to assume the character of outward manifestations.

(18) Behold, he put no trust in his servants;
And his angels he charged with folly:
How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Which are destroyed from morning to evening:
They perish for ever without any regard­ing it.

(21) Doth not their excellency which is in them go away?
They die, even without wisdom.

(1) Call now.—The speaker now becomes more per­sonal and direct in his tone and bearing. He insinuates that Job is “unwise” and “silly,” and promises swift destruction for all such.

(2) I cursed.—The word means, “I was able to declare distinctly, and I did declare without hesitation, that his
Man Born to Trouble.

But suddenly I cursed his habitation. (4) His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them. (5) Whose harvest the hungry eateth up; and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance. (6) Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; (7) Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. (8) I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: (9) "Which doeth great things, and wonderful: Marvellous things without number:" (10) Who giveth rain upon the earth; and sendeth waters upon the fields; (11) To set up on high those that be low;
Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

(18) For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and his hands make whole.

(19) He shall deliver thee in six troubles: Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

(20) In famine he shall redeem thee from death: And in war 1 from the power of the sword.

(21) Thou shalt be hid 2 from the scourge of the tongue: Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

(22) At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

(23) For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

(24) And thou shalt know 3 that thy tabernacle shall be in peace;

the Hebrews (chap. xii. 5), while the spirit of it is expressed by St. James and St. John in the Revelation. (See the margin.) This is the only place in Job in which the word here used for happy—which is the very first word of the Psalms, and is used five-and-twenty times in them alone—is found.

(18) He maketh sore, and bindeth up.—The sentiment here expressed is one of those obvious ones which lose all their force from familiarity with them, but which come home sometimes in sorrow with a power that is boundless, because Divine.

(20) He shall redeem thee.—It is rather, he hath redeemed thee, as though the speaker could appeal to Job's own experience in the matter which itself became a ground of confident hope for the future.

(21) Shalt thou be afraid.—Comp. the expression in verse 15.

(22) Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.—Literally, and of the beasts of the earth be not thou afraid.

(23) For thou shalt be in league.—Literally, for with the stones of the field shall thy covenant be, and the beasts of the field shall be made to be at peace with thee.

(24) Sin.—The word rendered "sin" literally means also to miss the mark, as in Judges xx. 16, and that is probably its meaning here. Thou shalt visit thy dwelling-place, and miss nothing, since one does not see very clearly why the promise of not sinning is connected with visiting the habitation or fold.

(25) Great.—The word means also numerous, which seems to suit the parallelism better here. The whole description is a very beautiful and poetical one of the perfect security of faith, though it is to a certain extent vitiated by its want of strict correspondence with facts, of which the very case of Job was a crucial instance. This was the special problem with which his friends had to deal, and which proved too hard for them. May we not learn that the problem is one that can only be solved in practice and not in theory?

(29) Thou shalt come to thy grave.—There is not improbably a contrast implied here between going into the grave and going up (see the margin) to the barn. The grave in such a case is not the melancholy end of life, but rather the passage to a higher life for which one is already ripe. &c. (2 Tim. iv. 8).

(22) So it is.—It is the boastful confidence of Eliphaz which is so hard to bear. He speaks as though Job's experience were as nothing to his. "This is mine: take it to thyself, and make it thine."

VI.

(1) But Job answered and said.—Job replies to Eliphaz with the despair of a man who has been baulked of sympathy when he hoped to find it. We cannot trace, nor must we expect to find, the formal reply of a logical argument. Eliphaz, he feels, has so misjudged his case that he is neither worthy of a direct reply nor susceptible of one. It is enough for him to reiterate his complaint, and long sufferings.—That is, words are useless and powerless to express it. (See the margin.)

(4) The poison whereof drinketh up my spirit.—Rather, the poison whereof my spirit is

And thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not 4 sin.

(25) Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be 5 great, Ad thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

(28) Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, Like as a shock of corn 6 cometh in in his season.

(27) Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; Hear it, and know thou it 7 for thy good.
The poison whereof drinketh up my spirit:
The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.
(5) Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?
Or loweth the ox over his fodder?
(9) Can that which is unavory be eaten without salt?
Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?
(7) The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.
(9) Oh that I might have my request;
And that God would grant me the thing that I long for!
(4) Even that it would please God to destroy me;
That he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!
(10) Then should I yet have comfort;
Yea, I would harden myself in sorrow:
For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

Do set themselves in array against me.—Like hosts marshalling themselves for battle. “If the ox or the ass will not low or bray so long as he is satisfied, so neither should I complain if I had no valid cause. My groaning is the evidence of a great burden, and consequently the disdainful way in which you treat it is insipid and distasteful to me—my soul refuses to touch your proffered remedies; they are as loathsome to me. According to some, the words “doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?” or “loweth the ox over his fodder?” or “are as my sorrowful meat” are rendered “the white of an egg,” meaning the juice of a hard-boiled egg. Thus Job looks forward to death as his only solace. He seems to have passed away and to have issued in blank hopelessness. (10) Concealed—i.e., denied. The same was the confidence of the Psalmist (Ps. xl. 9, 10). (Comp. Acts xx. 20.)

Prolong my life.—This is the literal rendering; but some understand be patient, as in our phrase, long-suffering.

Is not my help in me?—It is in passages such as these that the actual meaning of Job is so obscure and his words so difficult. The sense may be, “Is it not that I have no help in me, and wisdom is driven quite from me?” or yet again, “Is it, because there is no help in me that therefore wisdom is driven far from me?” as is the case by your reproaches and insinuations. (See especially chaps. ii. and iii.)

But he forsaoketh the fear of the Almighty.—It is difficult to determine the precise relation of dependent clauses in an archaic language like the Hebrew; but the Authorised Version is, at all events, not correct here, the sense rather being, “Even to one that forsaoketh the fear of the Almighty;” or, perhaps, better still, “lest he should forsake;” or, “he may even forsake,” &c.

Have dealt deceitfully as a brook.—This is one of the most celebrated poetical similes in the book, and carries us to life in the desert, where the wild ass or the ox is a thing that he longs for, his hope or expectation. (Comp. Job, xvi., where even the hope that he had in death seems to have passed away and to have issued in blank hopelessness.)

They go to nothing.—It is doubtful whether this applies to the streams or to the caravans. Thus, “The hosts of their way are turned aside;” or, “The caravans that travel by the way of them turn aside, and go into the waste and perish.” The passage is one of the most obscure parts of the whole book. It needs a keen insight into the Jewish mind to apprehend the meaning of it. (18) They go to nothing—i.e., decay or waste, as is evident from the parallel passage in the Vulgate (Ital. Ed. 1531, vulg, ita: "et in semine suo utrinque mortuum est") and the Latin of the Septuagint (Sept. vulg, "et in semine suo utrinque mortuum est") which is rendered in the Authorized Version as "and is consumed out of their place."
They go to nothing, and perish. (5) The troops of Tema looked, they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed. (21) ‘For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid. (22) Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance? (23) Or, Deliver me from the enemy’s hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? (24) Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. (25) How forcible are right words! But what doth your arguing reprove? Do ye imagine to reprove words, or, to make merchandise of your friend. And the speeches of one that is despicable, which are as wind? (27) Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend. (28) Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie. (29) Return, I pray you, let it not be unjustly; Yea, return again, my righteousness is in it. (30) Is there iniquity in my tongue? Cannot my taste discern perverse things? CHAPTER VII.—(1) Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling? (2) As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work:

And in accordance with the language, and preserves the parallelism. (29) Now therefore be content to look upon me: for it will be evident unto you if I lie; or, for surely I shall not lie to your face. (30) Return, I pray you.—“Do not regard the case as settled, but come again and examine it; try once more before you decide there is no unrighteousness in my case;” or, as some understand it, in my tongue, which is expressed immediately afterwards, and is here anticipated in the pronoun her. This rendering is certainly confirmed by verse 30.

(30) Is there iniquity?—Or, injustice in my tongue? Is my taste so perverted that it cannot perceive what is perverse? “Ye appear to think that I am wholly incapable of judging my own cause because it is my own; but if ye will only condescend to return in due course, ye shall find that I know what is right as well as you, and that there is no more vicious reasoning in me than there is with you, and probably less.” It is difficult to draw out the argument of Job in the logical form of our Western thought, and to trace the line of connection running through it. If we look at it in detail—as we must in order to explain it—then we are apt to look at it piecemeal, and miss the thread; but in point of fact it is just this very thread which it is so difficult to detect and retain from one chapter to another.

VII.

In this chapter Job turns away from his friends to God, to whom he appeals for compassion (verses 1—11). He asks whether man hath not a campaign to serve upon earth. The English Version suggests a limited period; but it is apparently not so much that as what is required to be done in the period. “Hath not man a time of service upon earth? Is he not appointed to sorrow (verses 5—7), because his life is one of toil? Is not his life a life of servitude? and is he not like a very slave?” Job does not regret that man’s time is short upon earth, for he says that he longs eagerly
Job is Weary of Life,

(9) So am I made to possess months of vanity,
And wearisome nights are appointed to me.
(10) When I lie down, I say,
When shall I arise, and the night be gone?
And I am full of tossings to and fro
Unto the dawning of the day.
(11) My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust;
My skin is broken, and become loathsome.
(12) My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
And are spent without hope.
(13) O remember that my life is wind;
Mine eye shall no more see good.
(14) The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more:
Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.
(15) As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away:
So he goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.
(16) He shall return no more to his house,
Nor shall his place know him any more.

Neither shall his place know him any more.

(17) Therefore I will not refrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
(18) Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?
(19) When I say, My bed shall comfort me,
My couch shall ease my complaint;
(20) Then thou scarest me with dreams,
And terrifiest me through visions:
(21) So that my soul chooseth strangling,
And death rather than my life.
(22) I loathe it; I would not live alway:
Let me alone; for my days are vanity.
(23) What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?
And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?
(24) And that thou shouldest visit him every morning,
And try him every moment?
(25) How long wilt thou not depart from me,
for his end, but he regrets that it is so full of misery.
The context, therefore, shows that it is the character of the appointed time, and not the shortness of it, that he laments.

(4) When I lie down, I say.—Or, When I lie down, then I say. When shall I arise? But the night is long, and I am filled with tossings to and fro till the morning twilight.
(5) With worms and clods of dust.—It is characteristic of Elephantiasis that the skin becomes hard and rugous, and then cracks and becomes ulcerated.
(6) Shall see me no more.—That is, thine own eyes shall look for me, but I shall be no more. So LXX. and Vulg.
(7) As the cloud is consumed.—It is a fine simile that man is as evanescent as a cloud; and very apt is the figure, because, whether it vanishes on the surface of the sky or is distributed in rain, nothing more completely passes away than the summer cloud. It is an appearance only, which comes to nothing.
(8) Neither shall his place.—This language is imitated in Ps. ciii. 16. We need not force these words too much, as though they forbid our ascribing to Job any belief in a future life or in the resurrection, because, under any circumstances, they are evidently and accurately true of man as we know him here. Even though he may live again in another way, it is not in this world that he lives again, and it is of this world and of man in this world that Job is speaking. And man, in the aspect of his mortality, is truly a pitiable object, demanding our compassion and sympathy. Happily, the appeal to man's Maker is not in vain, and He who has made him what he is has looked upon his misery.
(9) Heh, the mercy may be measured?—Heh, or a similar heh, is sometimes used in place of the Hebrew, and even in place of the English, word 'ye.' A comparison of the Greek and Hebrew shows that the LXX. and Vulg. have here very probably the right translation: 'I am seeking the mercy.' The expression 'the mercy may be measured?' is, therefore, very uncertain.

Consequently Job can say, therefore, "I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul."

(10) Am I a sea, or a whale . . . ?—This very hard verse it seems most reasonable to explain, if we can, from Scripture itself: e.g., in Jer. v. 22 we read, "Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea?" The writer was probably familiar with Egypt when the Nile, which is still called the sea, was carefully watched and guarded by dykes that its overflow might not destroy the land. So Job exclaims, "Am I like the sea, or one of its monsters—like that Leviathan which Thou hast made to take his pastime therein, that Thou keepest guard over me and makest me thy prisoner continually, shutting me up on every side so fast in prison that I cannot get free?"

(11) So that my soul maketh choice of strangling and death rather than a life like this. Literally, 'than these my bones, or, as some take it, a death by these my members: a death inflicted by myself, suicide.'
(12) I loathe it—i.e., the thought of self-destruction; or, I loathe my life; or, according to others (see the margin), I waste away: this, however, is perhaps less probable. Then the thought comes with a ray of comfort, "I shall not live for ever;" for this seems more in accordance with the context than the Authorised Version: "I would not live always."
(13) What is man?—Here is another point of contact with Ps. viii. 5; but the spirit of the Psalmist was one of devout adoration, whereas that of Job is one of agony and desperation.
(14) Till I swallow down my spittle.—This is doubtless a proverbial expression, like "the twinkling of an eye," or "while I catch a breath."
Nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, So that I am a burden to myself?

And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, And take away mine iniquity? For now shall I sleep in the dust; And thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

CHAPTER VIII.—(1) Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

(2) How long wilt thou speak these things? And how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?

(3) a Doth God pervert judgment? Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

(4) If thy children have sinned against him, And he have cast them away 1 for their transgression; 2

(5) If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, And make thy supplication to the Almighty;

(6) If thou wert pure and upright; Surely now he would awake for thee, And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

(7) Though thy beginning was small, Yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

(8) b For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, And prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

(9) For we are but of yesterday, and know 5 nothing, Because our days upon earth are a shadow:

(10) Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, And utter words out of their heart?

(11) Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?

(20) I have sinned—i.e., “Putting the case that I have sinned, yet what then can I do unto Thee, O thou keeper of men?” with a possible allusion to verse 12, though the verb is not the same.

O thou preserver of men.—“Why hast Thou set me as a mark for Thee to expend all Thine arrows upon?” or, “Why hast Thou made me to be Thy stumbling-block, so that Thou ever comest into collision against me, so that I am become a burden to myself?”

And why dost thou not pardon my transgression?—In Job’s belief, sin was the origin of all disaster, and so he thinks that if he were but pardoned his sorrows would pass away. Our Lord has not discouraged the belief when He has taught us that His miracle of healing the paralytic was accompanied with the assurance of forgiveness (e.g., Matt. ix. 2; Mark ii. 5; Luke v. 20).

The burden of Bildad’s speech is very much what that of Eliphaz was: the justice of God, and the impossibility of one who is not a wicked man being forsaken of God and punished. This, which is emphatically the problem of the Book of Job, was the great practical problem of the Old World, as we see from Ps. xxxvii, and the like. It is a problem which not seldom weighs heavily on our own hearts even in the light of the Gospel, though, of course, since the redemption of the Cross of Christ this problem has once for all been practically solved. What is so conspicuous in the speeches of Job’s friends is their total want of refinement and delicacy of feeling. They blurt out without the slightest compunction the most unscrupulous charges, and they cast the most reckless insinuations against him. Here, for instance, Bildad does not hesitate to say that Job’s sons died for their transgressions because God is a righteous God, and He would not have been righteous had they, being innocent, perished. Thus, in order to save the credit of the righteous God facts must be distorted or misrepresented to any extent, as though God were not a God of truth as well as of righteousness.

And he have cast them away.—Literally, then he sent them away. By means of their transgression; it became their destruction.

If thou wert pure and upright.—Of course, there is but one inference: thou art not pure and upright. These are verily the wounds of a friend which are not faithful. Bildad brings to the main­
ten­ance of his point the experience of former genera­
tions. He wishes to be very orthodox in his assertions, and to base his statements upon authority, and he appeals to the experience of former ages long gone by, and to base his statements upon authority, and he appeals to the experience of former ages long gone by, and calls them to attest the truth of what he says. He also, like Eliphaz, uses figures, and has recourse to metaphor, only his figures are highly obscure and admit of various explanations. We give that which seems to commend itself most to us. It appears, then, that Bildad contemplates two representative characters, the two which are so prominent throughout this book—namely, the righteous and the wicked. He depicts the latter first, and describes him under the likeness of the paper-reed, or rush that grows in the mire of Egyptian swamps, which, though surrounded with moisture, yet as a matter of fact is liable soon to wither: so is the wicked man, according to this moralist and philosopher. He is surrounded by mercies and blessings, but they avail him nought; he withereth in the midst of abundance.

(11) The flag is the plant of Gen. xli. 2, which the cattle feed upon. This figure is enforced by a second, that, namely, of the spider’s web, the most fragile and transient of tenements.
JOB, IX.

(19) Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down,
It withereth before any other herb.
(20) So are the paths of all that forget God;
And the 'hypocrite's' hope shall perish:
(21) Whose hope shall be cut off,
And whose trust shall be a spider's web.
(22) He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand:
He shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.
(23) He is green before the sun,
And his branch shooteth forth in his garden.
(24) His roots are wrapped about the heap,
And seeth the place of stones.
(25) If he destroy him from his place,
Then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.
(26) Behold, this is the joy of his way,
And out of the earth shall others grow.
(27) Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man,
Neither will he help the evil doers:
(28) Till he fill thy mouth with laughing,
And thy lips with rejoicing.

15 It shall not endure.—The description of the wicked man ends here.
16 He is green.—Here begins, as we understand it, another and an opposite picture, which fact is marked in the Hebrew by an emphatic pronoun. "Green is he (see verse 6) before the sun, &c., quite unlike the watery paper-plant. This man is verdant and luxuriant, not in the midst of moisture, but even before the sun." There is not the same promise of verdure, but a greater realisation of it.
17 His roots are wrapped about.—This is the cause of his continual luxuriance, that his roots receive moisture from below, where they are wrapped about the spring which fertilises them underneath; they are planted near to a perennial fountain, and therefore (see verse 6) "he is green before the sun."
18 And seeth the place of stones.—Rather, the house of stones—i.e., the stone house. He seeth the permanent and durable edifice of stone which is the habitation of civilisation and culture, and here his holding is so firm that, even if plucked up, his roots and suckers are so numerous that they leave behind them descendants and offshoots, so that out of his earth others grow; or, more correctly, out of another dust they grow. Even if transplanted, this luxuriant tree will flourish equally well in another soil.
19 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing.—Rather, he will yet fill thy mouth with laughter—afflicted though thou hast been, thou shalt again rejoice. The attitude of Bildad is one of unsympathetic selfishness. He wishes to think well of his friend because he is his friend, but he cannot reconcile his afflicted condition with any theory of righteous government, and therefore is driven to suspect that all is not right with him, though he feels warranted in promising him that if he casts away that secret sin all shall yet be well with him. We may say that if the contrast here indicated is not intended by the speaker, then we must consider the "he" of verse 16 the person before spoken of, and must understand his luxuriance of a merely apparent luxuriance; but then in that case one is at a loss to see why the "he," of verse 16 should be emphasised as it is in the Hebrew.

Job's Answer to Bildad.

IX.

Then Job answered...—Job's reply to Bildad differs from that to Eliphaz, inasmuch as he exposes the hollowness of Bildad's position by sapping his foundation. Admitting the general propriety of all he has said, he confronts him with the anterior question, "How can weak man be just with God?" and this is the question, if fairly dealt with, which must always confound shallow generalisers like Bildad.
(3) If he will contend with him.—If man choose to contend with God, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand, and his answer will be a loss to see why the "he," of verse 16 should be emphasised as it is in the Hebrew.
(4) He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?
(5) Which overthroweth the mountains, and they know not: Which overturneth them in his anger.
(6) Which shaketh the earth out of her place, And the pillars thereof tremble.
(7) Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; And sealeth up the stars.
(8) Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, And treadeth upon the waves of the sea.
God's Great Works.

(9) Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, And the chambers of the south. (10) Which doeth great things past finding out; Yea, and wonders without number. (11) Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: He passeth on also, but I perceive him not. (12) Behold, he taketh away, 2 who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou? (13) If God will not withdraw his anger, The 3 proud helpers do stoop under him. (14) How much less shall I answer him, And choose out my words to reason with him? (15) Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, But I would make supplication to my judge.

JOB, IX. Man's Feebleness.

(16) If I had called, and he had answered me; Yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. (17) For he breaketh me with a tempest, And multiplieth my wounds without cause. (18) He will not suffer me to take my breath, But filleth me with bitterness. (19) If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: And if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? (20) If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: If I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. (21) Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life. (22) This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. (23) If the scourge slay suddenly,

(9) Which maketh Arcturus . . . —This shows us that in the time of this writer, whoever he was, his fellow-countrymen had attained to such knowledge of astronomy as is here implied in the specific names of definite constellations. The Great Bear is the glory of the northern hemisphere, Orion of the southern sky, and the Pleiades of the east; the chambers of the north are the unknown and unexplored regions, of which the speaker has no personal experience.

(10) Which doeth great things.—He adopts the very words his former antagonist, Eliphaz, had used in chap. v. 9.

(11) He passeth on also.—This, again, is an expression Eliphaz had used in chap. iv. 15. Here in words of great sublimity Job depicts the unapproachable majesty of God omnipotent, but invisible, and shows the utter hopelessness of entering into judgment with Him. Unfortunately, though this is a proposition to which all must assent, yet none is virtually so much repudiated or practically so often contravened. Men still cast about for strength,—All that the Book of Job has laid the foundation of the Gospel by preparing for its acceptance by overthrowing man's natural and habitual standing-ground in himself.

(12) What doest thou?—Putting the case even that God were, so to say, in the wrong, and the assailant, yet even then He would maintain His cause from sheer might, and crush His adversary.

(13) Proud helpers.—Literally, helpers of Rahab. (See Isa. xxx. 7; Ps. lxxvi. 4.) But whether Rahab was Egypt, or a poetical name for the lost archangel, it is impossible to say. If the former, then there is a probable allusion here to the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts; but we lack evidence to make it plain. The phrase is evidently used as expressing the very ideal of strength—the race of the giants.

(14) Though I were righteous.—He now puts the alternative case: that he were actually righteous; yet even then supplication, and not assertion, would best become him.

(15) He breaketh me . . . —This is one of the three passages in which this word is found, the other two being Gen. iii. 15, “It shall bruise,” &c., and Ps. cxxxix. 11, “If I say the darkness shall cover me.”

(16) Take my breath.—The action being that of breathing again after complete exhaustion.—recovering breath and the power to breathe, &c. “If I say I am perfect, it also shall prove me perverse by the very act of saying so; because I am not able to maintain his righteousness before God is at once to proclaim his iniquity. The infinite cannot come into competition with the Infinite, nor measure itself therewith.”

(17) If I speak of strength.—All this is the most uncompromising acknowledgment of the absolute inability of man to stand in judgment before God. The whole of this is so very abrupt and enigmatical that it is extremely difficult to be sure of the argument, though naturally the general drift of it is obvious enough. “If it were a trial of strength—Who is Almighty?—and if it was a matter of judgment, is He not judge and court together? and what authority that He would acknowledge could give me the opportunity of pleading my cause before Him? Were I righteous, my own mouth would show me wicked; were I perfect, then would it or He prove me perverse. Were I perfect, I should not know myself, or know it myself, I despise my life under such conditions; therefore, said I, it is all one: He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked alike.”

(18) The scourge slay suddenly.—Probably meaning that in the case of hidden calamity overtaking an innocent man, He, God, will laugh at it: that is to say, take no more notice of it than if it furnished Him
He will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

(25) If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?
(30) If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean;
(31) Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

(32) For he is not a man, as I am, that should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

(33) Neither is there any daysman between us, that might lay his hand upon us both.
(34) Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me:
(35) Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.

Man's Innocency not to be

Condemned by his Afflictions.

JOB, IX.

with sport. The very fact of such calamity befalling, as it often does, the innocent is at all events, in one view, a proof of His indifferenee to it who, by the exercise of His providence, could easily interpose to prevent it, and so looks as if He verily winked at it. Job's argument is the argument of a man who wilfully shuts out faith in his estimate of God's dealings; not that Job is devoid of faith, but in the course of arguing with his friends, who maintain the strict, rigid justice of God, he confronts them with the severe logic of facts, which they can neither contradict nor explain. Of course, for the very requirements of argument, he takes the pessimist view of the Divine providence, and declares even that the earth is given over into the hands of the wicked man. "He covereth the face of the judges thereof; and if it is not He that doeth this, who is it there can be none other. He either doeth the evil Himself, or He permits it to be done; and what is the difference, supposing Him able to prevent it?" When we review the discourses of the earth—and how much more in Job's days was it so—all must admit that faith is sorely tried; and even faith can render but a very partial explanation of them, so that such a line as this is fully justified, there not only was no hope, but no possibility of justification with God, unless there should be an umpire and impartial mediator, who could make the cause of the world as it is, determined to maintain that all is right with himself.

(26) "They are passed away as the swift ships:
As the eagle that hasteth to the prey.
(27) If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:
(28) I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

(29) If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:
(30) I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

(31) "They are passed away as the swift ships:
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(38) If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:
(39) I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

(40) "They are passed away as the swift ships:
As the eagle that hasteth to the prey.
(41) If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:
(42) I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

(43) "They are passed away as the swift ships:
As the eagle that hasteth to the prey.
(44) If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:
(45) I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

The words are variously understood: "It is not so with me," i.e., "I am not thus without fear," as the former part of the verse supposes; or, "I am not so as ye suppose," i.e., guilty, but innocent; or, "Am I not right with myself?" i.e., inwardly conscious of my integrity and innocence (chap. x. 1).
CHAPTER X.—(1) My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
(2) I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.
(3) Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress, That thou shouldst despise the work of thine hands, And shine upon the counsel of the wicked?
(4) Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth? Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days,
(5) That thou enquirest after mine iniquity, And searchest after my sin? (6) Thou knowest that I am not wicked; And there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.
(8) Thine hands have made me And fashioned me together round about;
Yet thou dost destroy me.
(9) Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; And wilt thou bring me into dust again?
(10) Hast thou not poured me out as milk, And curdled me like cheese?
(11) Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, And hast fenced me with bones and sinews.
(12) Thou hast granted me life and favour, And thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.
(13) And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.
(14) If I sin, then thou markest me, And thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.
(15) If I be wicked, woe unto me; And if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head.
(16) For it increaseth. Thou testest me as a fierce lion: And again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.
(17) Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, And increaseth thine indignation upon me; Changes and war are against me.

X.

In this chapter Job reaches the climax of his complaint, which leaves him in the land of thick darkness, where the light is as darkness.

(1) I will leave.—Or, according to some, I will give free vent to the complaint that is upon me. (Comp. verse 27 of the last chap.)
(2) I will say unto God . . .—This is a model of prayer for all, combining the prayer of the publican (Luke xviii. 13), and a prayer for that light for which we long so earnestly in times of affliction and darkness.
(3) That I am not wicked.—The meaning is rather, that I shall not be found guilty. It is not like the appeal of Peter (John xxi. 17). See the language borrowed by the Psalmist (Ps. cxxii. 13).
(4) Into dust.—Comp. Ps. xxii. 15.
(5) Poured me out as milk.—An allusion to the embryo. (See Ps. cxxxiv. 13—16.)
(6) That is, thy plagues.
(7) These things hast thou hid in thine heart:—Job implies that his sense of God's goodness is embittered by the thought that while showing him such kindness, He had in reserve for him the trials and sorrows under which he was then labouring; while showering good upon him, He intended eventually to overwhelm him with affliction. This was the purpose He had hidden in His heart.
(8) If I sin . . .—If I had sinned Thou wouldst have marked me for punishment, and from mine iniquity Thou wouldst not acquit me. If I had been guilty, woe unto me! and if righteous, I must not lift up my head like an innocent person. I am full of shame, therefore behold Thou mine affliction, for only by Thy taking note of it can I find relief.”
(9) For it increaseth.—This verse is very obscure. Some understand it thus: “But is it so glorious a thing that Thou shouldst hunt me like a fierce lion, and then again show Thyself mysterious and wonderful towards me? hunting me like a lion, and yet hiding alike Thy person and Thy motive from me?” Or the subject is the head of the former verse, “And if it exalt itself, Thou testest me,” &c. Or again, as in the Authorised Version, the subject is the affliction, “For it increaseth: Thou hast testest me.” &c.
(10) Thou renewest thy witnesses against me.—Some understand this of the sores on Job's person, which his friends regarded as witnesses—proofs of his guilt; but it seems more probable that the figure is forensic: “Thou still bringest fresh witnesses against me; and multiplyest thine anger against me, so that relays of them, even a host, are against me; for they come upon me host after host—these witnesses of Thine anger, the ministers of Thy vengeance.” The sublimity of this indictment against God is only equalled by the sense of terrific awe with which one reads it. The language is Job's, and so far has the sanction of Holy Writ; but we may surely learn therefrom the condescension as well as the loving-kindness of the Most High.
Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! (18)

I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave. (19)

Are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without order, and where the light is as darkness. (20)

CHAPTER XI.—(1) Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said, (2) Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be justified? (3) Should thy 2 lies make men hold their peace? (4) And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? (5) For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. (6) But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; (7) And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserved. (8) Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? (9) It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? (10) The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. (11) If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?

(18) Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth?—Here Job reverts to the strain of his original curse (chap. iii. 11, &c.). (19) Cease then, and let me alone.—According to another reading, “Let him cease, and let me alone.” In reading this reply of Job’s, one cannot but feel that it moves upon the very verge of blasphemy, and is only redeemed therefrom by its pervading reverence and deep undertone of faith. Job never gives up his faith in God, though, like Jacob, he wrestles with Him in the dark, and the issue shows that God is not displeased to it. He refracts his protestations of innocence against His protestations of the iniquity in making them. His longing also to come into judgment with God (chap. ix. 32) he turns back upon himself, being confident that it could not fail to convict him were he to do so.

(1) Zophar, the third of Job’s friends, has a clearly defined character, distinct from that of the others; he is the ordinary and common-place moral man, who expresses the thoughts and instincts of the many. Eliphaz was the poet and spiritual man, who sees visions and dreams dreams; Bildad was the man who rested on authority and appealed to tradition; Zophar is the man of worldly wisdom and common sense. In some respects he is the most offensive of the three. He is astonished that Job has not been silenced by the replies of the other two, and thinks he can do no less than help to silence him. Thus he at once begins with “a multitude of words,” and “full of talk,” and “lies,” and “mockery.” Zophar stands on a lower level, and drags Job down to it. He refracts his protestations of innocence against Job’s charges him with iniquity in making them. His longing also to come into judgment with God (chap. ix. 32) he turns back upon himself, being confident that it could not fail to convict him were he to do so.

(4) Clean in thine eyes is variously referred to God, to mortal men (verse 3), and to Job himself (chap. xxxii. 1). The first seems most to be preferred, for at all events Job had hypothetically spoken of himself as righteous before God (chap. x. 16). (Comp. chap. ix. 30, &c.) Zophar, therefore, who professes superior wisdom, desires that God would show Job how far short he falls of it; that He would show him the hidden things, the secrets of wisdom; for sound wisdom is manifold: it has many aspects, and lies as it were fold over fold in unexpected complexities, defying the shallow and unscrutinising gaze; and were He to do this, Job would find out to his dismay that God still credited him part of the penalty due to him. (5) They are double to that which is!—This translation conveys no sense, and is not a translation; see the last Note. (6) Canst thou by searching find out God?—Literally, Canst thou attain to the searching out of God? (9) It is as high as heaven.—Literally, The heights of heaven; what canst thou do? it is deeper than the grave; what canst thou know? (10) If he cut off. It is the same word as “a spirit passed before me” (chap. iv. 15); and as Job himself used (chap. ix. 11): “he passeth on, but I perceive him not.” “If, then,” says Zophar, “God acteth thus, or if He delivers up a man into the hands of his enemies, or if He calls together a multitude against him—alluding apparently to chaps. ix. 11, 12, and x. 17, where the word rendered changes is a derivative of the word here rendered cut off,—then who can turn Him back from His intent?” adopting Job’s own question at chap. ix. 12: “Who can hinder Him?” Some understand the three terms forensically: “if He arrest, and im-
For he knoweth vain men:  
He seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?

For vain man would be wise,  
Though man be born like a wild ass’s colt.

If thou prepare thine heart,  
And stretch out thine hands toward him;

If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away,  
And let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot;  
Yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear:

Because thou shalt forget thy misery,  
And remember it as waters that pass away:

And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday;  
Thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope;  
prison, and hold assize;” but it is probable that Job’s own statements are alluded to.

He knoweth vain men.—Though he regarded it not: that is, seemeth not to see it.

For vain man would be wise, &c., is extremely difficult, because it is hard to distinguish subject and predicate. Literally, it runs, And hollow man is instructed, and the wild ass’s colt is born a man. Whether it means that if God did not thus conceal His observation of human actions, the very fool and the most obstinate would become instructed and disciplined, whereas now they are allowed to go on in their folly and obstinacy; or whether it is meant that, notwithstanding the dealings of Providence, hollow-hearted man is still devoid of heart, and every son of Adam at his birth is a very wild ass colt; or whether, again, it is meant that by reason of the Divine discipline the hollow-hearted man is disciplined, and the very wild ass colt is born a man and humanised, it is hard to decide. The uncertainty in part arises from our not knowing the exact meaning of the first verb: whether it is to get understanding or to be deprived of it—for either is possible. Another way of taking the context is to refer the last clause of verse 11, not to God, but to man. Man sees not that God sees him, for an empty man will get understanding when a wild ass’s colt is born—a man—that is, the latter is as likely as the former. One point is pretty clear, that by the wild ass’s colt Zophar means Job. However, he suggests that if he will become something better and wiser, and will put away his secret sin, which he is convinced must cling to him, then he shall again know prosperity and be established in it.

Thine age shall be clearer than the noonday.—Rather, there shall arise for thee a lifetime brighter than the noonday; thou shalt soar on high; thou shalt be like the morning, which is conceived of as having wings (Ps. xxxix. 9). Comp. Mal. iv. 2, of the Sun of Righteousness.) This is how we understand the word rendered thou shalt shine forth. Many take it as a substantive, meaning darkness, in which case we must render, though there be darkness, thou shalt be as the morning.

Thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid;  
Yea, many shall make suit unto thee.

But the eyes of the wicked shall fail,  
And they shall not escape,  
And their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

CHAPTER XII.—And Job answered and said,

No doubt but ye are the people,  
And wisdom shall die with you.

But I have understanding as well as you;

I am not inferior to you:  
Yea, who knoweth, not such things as these?

I am as one mocked of his neighbour,  
Who calleth upon God, and he answereth him:  
The just upright man is laughed to scorn.

He that is ready to slip with his feet

of Repentance.

The Assured Blessing
Is as a lamp despaired in the thought of him that is at ease.

(4) The tabernacles of robbers prosper, And they that provoke God are secure; Into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

(7) But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

(8) Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

(9) Who knoweth not in all these That the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?

(10) In whose hand is the soul of every living thing; And the breath of all mankind.

(11) Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?

(12) With the ancient is wisdom; And in length of days understanding.

(13) With him is wisdom and strength, He hath counsel and understanding.

(14) Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again:

(15) Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: Also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

(16) With him is strength and wisdom: The deceived and the deceiver are his.

(17) He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, And maketh the judges fools.

(18) He looseth the bond of kings, And girdeth their loins with a girdle.

(19) He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

(20) He removeth away the speech of the trusty, And taketh away the understanding of the aged.

(21) He poureth contempt upon princes, And weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

(22) He discovereth deep things out of darkness, And bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

(23) He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: He en largeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.

prepared for feet tottering and uncertain in the darkness is disregarded and rejected by those who are at ease, and need no such aid; in which case one does not see very clearly why Job compares himself to such a torch: or, more probably, there is contempt for calamity in the thoughts of him that is at ease, it is ready at hand for them who are tottering with their feet.

(6) Into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

—Some understand these words, to him that bringeth his god in his hand (comp. Hab. i. 11, 16); but the other seems more in accordance with the usage. (Comp., e.g., Prov. iii. 27, &c.)

(10) Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?—This is the only place in the dialogue parts of Job in which the sacred name of Jehovah is found, and Job’s very feeling his way in thick darkness, sustained, nevertheless, by an unquenchable faith that there is light, and that the light will eventually dawn. That this character is the more acceptable to the God of truth is made abundantly clear in the sequel. It is to be observed, however, that Job’s breadth of view far exceeds that of Eliphaz, inasmuch as the latter generalises vaguely, while Job declares that not men, but nations, are the subjects of God’s guiding providence.

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other. Some understand it of the girdle of servitude in contrast to the girdle of state.

(19) He leadeth princes.—Some understand priests rather than princes. The word appears to be used in both senses; here the parallelism seems to suit princes better. The latter part of this chapter seems to re-echo the sentiments of Eliphaz in chap. v. 11–16; but, instead of giving them the optimist direction he had sketched, he confesses that his own position is rather one of blank despair. Eliphaz is quite sure he possesses the key to the interpretation of the ways of Providence. Job ever fears that his ignorance is so profound as to amount almost to sheer hopelessness. Job is thus the type of a man who has felt the hollow-ness and unreality of traditional orthodoxy, and is feeling his way in thick darkness, sustained, nevertheless, by an unquenchable faith that there is light, and that the light will eventually dawn. That this character is the more acceptable to the God of truth is made abundantly clear in the sequel. It is to be observed, however, that Job’s breadth of view far exceeds that of Eliphaz, inasmuch as the latter generalises vaguely, while Job declares that not men, but nations, are the subjects of God’s guiding providence.

(22) He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them.—The latter part of this chapter teaches us a truth that is apt to be forgotten in the present day, which is, nevertheless, the key to much of the history of the world. Why is it that nations are marked with such characteristic differences? as, for instance, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews in ancient times; the French, the English, and the Germans in our own. Why is it that the counsel of the wisest sometimes faileth, as with
And found in the profession of a loosely held creed. So the mate truth may exist in honest doubt than is sometimes refreshing to find that there may be some truth spoken principles of His action. As it is manifestly the tradition for God by what is not so reckoned, and that more ultimate with God, and to reason with Him on the first face with God, and to reason with Him on the first

CHAPTER XIII.—(1) Lo, mine eye hath seen all this,
Mine ear hath heard and understood it.
(2) What ye know, the same do I know also:
I am not inferior unto you.
(3) Surely I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to reason with God.
(4) But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.
(5) That ye would altogether hold your peace!
And it should be your wisdom.
(6) Hear now my reasoning,
And hearken to the pleadings of my lips.

(Job Reproveth his Friends)

JOB, XIII.

of Partiality.

(7) Will ye speak wickedly for God?
And talk deceitfully for him?
(8) Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?
(9) Is it good that he should search you out?
Or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?
(10) He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.
(11) Shall not his excellency make you afraid?
And his dread fall upon you?
(12) Your remembrances are like unto ashes,
Your bodies to bodies of clay.
(13) Hold your peace, let me alone,
That I may speak, and let come on me what will.
(14) Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth,
And put my life in mine hand?
(15) Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:

XIII.—(4) Ye are forgers of lies.—He now retorts upon his friends in terms not more deferential than their own, and calls them scrapers together, or patchers up, of falsehood, and physicians who are powerless to heal, or even to understand the case. He feels that they have failed miserably and utterly to understand him.

(5) That ye would altogether hold your peace! is singularly like the sentiment of Prov. xvii. 28. Their wisdom will consist in listening to his wisdom rather than displaying their own folly.

(7) Will ye speak wickedly for God?—And now, in these verses, he gives utterance to a sublime truth, which shows how truly he had risen to the true conception of God, for he declares that He, who is no respecter of persons, desires to have no favour shown to Himself, and that in seeking to show favour they will greatly damage their own cause, for He is a God of truth, and by His words as well as actions are weighed, and therefore nothing that is not true can stand any one in stead with Him.

(9) As one man mocketh another.—As one man, with mingled flattery and deception, seeks to impose upon another.

(12) Remembrances—i.e., “Wise and memorable saws of garnered wisdom are proverbs of ashes, worthlessness as the dust, and fit for bodies of clay like your bodies.” Or, as some understand it, “Your high fabrics, or defences, are fabrics of clay,” as an independent parallelism.

(13) Hold your peace.—He now prepares to make a declaration like the memorable one in chap. xix. He resolves at all hazards to face God in judgment.

(14) Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth.—This is probably the meaning of this verse, which, however, should not be read interrogatively: “At all risks, come what may, I will take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand.”

(15) Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.—This rendering is almost proverbial; but, to say

Ahitophel—the bravery of the boldest sometimes for-saketh them? but because there is One working under-neth it all for His own ends and to His own glory, as seemeth Him good. Zophar, with all his common sense, had scarcely risen to the perception of this truth, for while Job maintained that there was always a deeper savour of fatalism, but that is simply because he deals only and, consequently, from their very darkness, suggested the necessity for faith. His teaching here may seem to savour of fatalism, but that is simply because he deals only with one side of the problem. Had he found occasion, he would have stated with equal force the correlative conception of God, for he had transcended that of his friends as their estimate of his righteousness fell short of the truth. Justly, therefore, he exclaims, “I am not inferior unto you.”

I am not inferior unto you.—I fall not short of you. But it is this very sense of the inscrutableness of God’s dealings that makes him long to come face to face with God, and to reason with Him on the first principles of His action. As it is manifestly the traditionally orthodox position that his friends assume, it is refreshing to find that there may be some truth spoken for God by what is not so reckoned, and that more ultimate truth may exist in honest doubt than is sometimes found in the profession of a loosely-held creed. So the Laureate:

“There lives more truth in honest doubt, Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, And causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.
(25) They grope in the dark without light, And he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.
But I will maintain mine own ways before Him.

(16) He also shall be my salvation:
For an hypocrite shall not come before Him.

(17) Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.

(18) Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.

(19) Who is he that will plead with me? For now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.

(20) Only do not two things unto me:
Then will I not hide myself from thee.

(21) Withdraw thine hand far from me:
And let not thy dread make me afraid.

(22) Then call thou, and I will answer:
Or let me speak, and answer thou me.

(23) How many are mine iniquities and sins?
Make me to know my transgression and my sin.

(24) Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
And holdest me for thine enemy?

(25) Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?
And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

(26) For thou writest bitter things against me,
And *makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

(27) Thou poudest my feet also in the stocks,
And *lookest narrowly unto all my paths;
Thou settest a print upon the 3 heels of my feet.

(28) And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, As a garment that is moth eaten.

CHAPTER XIV.—(1) Man that is born of a woman is *of few days,
And full of trouble.

(2) He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down:

(29) Withdraw thine hand far from me.—That is, "Cease to torture me bodily, and to terrify me mentally; let me at least have freedom from physical pain and the undue apprehension of Thy terrors."

(30) Wilt thou break a leaf.—His confession of sin here approaches even to what the Psalmist describes as the condition of the ungodly (Ps. i. 4).

(31) For thou writest bitter things against me.—Exquisitely plaintive and affecting is this confession.

(32) Thou poudest my feet also in the stocks.—This is illustrated by the language of the Psalms (Ps. lxxxviii. 8, cxxii. 7, &c.). There is a difficulty in these two verses, arising from the pronouns. Some understand the subject to be the fetter: "Thou poudest my feet in the fetter that watcheth over all my paths, and imprinteth itself upon the roots of my feet, and it (the foot) consumeth like a rotten thing, and like a garment that is moth eaten." Others refer the "he" to Job himself, and others to man, the subject of the following chapter. In the Hebrew future tense the third person feminine and the second person masculine are alike, and the word to be the fetter:

(33) *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down:

(34) *Thou poudest my feet also in the stocks, and *lookest narrowly unto all my paths; Thou settest a print upon the 3 heels of my feet.

(35) And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, As a garment that is moth eaten.

(36) *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down:

(37) *Thou poudest my feet also in the stocks, and *lookest narrowly unto all my paths; Thou settest a print upon the 3 heels of my feet.

(38) And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, As a garment that is moth eaten.
He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Seeing his days are determined, The number of his months are with thee,

Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

Turn from him, that he may rest, Till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.

For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,

And the stock thereof die in the ground;

Yet through the scent of water it will bud,

And bring forth boughs like a plant.

But man dieth, and is wasted away:

Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

As the waters fail from the sea, And the flood decayeth and drieth up:

So man lieth down, and riseth not:

Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,

Nor be raised out of their sleep.

That thou wouldest hide me in the grave,

That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,

That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

If a man die, shall he live again?

All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee:

Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

For now thou numberest my steps: Dost thou not watch over my sin?

My transgression is sealed up in a bag,

And thou sewest up mine iniquity.

And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought,
And the rock is removed out of his place.

The waters wear the stones: Thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; And thou destroyest the hope of man.

Thou prevailst for ever against him, and he passeth; Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; And they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

But his flesh upon him shall have pain, And his soul within him shall mourn.

CHAPTER XV.—(1) Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said, (2) Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, And fill his belly with the east wind? (3) Should he reason with unprofitable talk? Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? (4) Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God. (5) For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity,

And thou choosest the tongue of the crafty. (6) Thine own mouth condemnest thee, and not I. Yea, thine own lips testify against thee. (7) Art thou the first man that was born? Or wast thou made before the hills? (8) Hast thou heard the secret of God? And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? (9) What knowest thou, that we know not? What understandest thou, which is not in us? (10) With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, Much elder than thy father. (11) Are the consolations of God small with thee? Is there any secret thing with thee? (12) Why doth thine heart carry thee away? And what do thy eyes wink at? (13) That thou turnest thy spirit against God, And lettest such words go out of thy mouth? (14) What is man, that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?
Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints;  
Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

How much more abominable and filthy is man,  
Which drinketh iniquity like water?  
I will shew thee, hear me;  
And that which I have seen I will declare;  
Which wise men have told  
From their fathers, and have not hid it:  
Unto whom alone the earth was given,  
And no stranger passed among them.  
The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days,  
And the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.

A dreadful sound is in his ears:  
In prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.  
He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness,  
And he is waited for of the sword.

He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it?

He knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.  
Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid;  
They shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.  
For he stretcheth out his hand against God,  
And strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

He runneth upon him, even on his neck,  
Upon the thick bosses of his bucklers:

Because he covereth his face with his fatness,  
And maketh collops of fat on his flanks.  
And he dwelleth in desolate cities,  
And in houses which no man inhabiteth,  
Which are ready to become heaps.  
He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue,  
Neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.

He shall not depart out of darkness;  
The flame shall dry up his branches,  
Bear witness that I am innocent;  
And I have cleaved to the path of uprightness.  
For the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Because he hath stretched out his hand against God, and behaveth himself proudly against the Almighty.  
He runneth upon Him with haughty neck, with the thick bosses of his bucklers;  
Fully protected as he supposes against the vengeance of the Most High.  
Compa Ps. x. 46, 67, &c.

And maketh collops of fat on his flanks.  
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And in houses which no man inhabiteth,  
Which are ready to become heaps.

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The flame shall dry up his branches,  
Bear witness that I am innocent;  
And I have cleaved to the path of uprightness.  
For the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.
And by the breath of his mouth shall he be go away.

(31) Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity:
For vanity shall be his recompence.

(32) It shall be accomplished before his time,
And his branch shall not be green.

(33) He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine,
And shall cast off his flower as the olive.

For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate,
And fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.

(35) They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity,
And their belly prepareth deceit.

CHAPTER XVI.—(1) Then Job answered and said,
I have heard many such things:
Shall 4 vain words have an end? Or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?
If your soul were in my soul's stead,

(4) I also could speak as ye do:
If your soul was in my soul's stead,

1 Or, cut off.
2 Or, insiquity.
3 Or, treble.
4 Heb., words of wind.
5 Heb., what goeth from me.

(31) Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity.—Or, Let him not trust in vanity deceiving himself. (Comp. James i. 26; 1 Sam. xii. 21.) It shall be accomplished.—That is, paid in full before its time.

The remainder of this chapter calls for little explanation. In it the speaker only repeats the orthodox and familiar saw that the wicked are punished in life, and therefore, by implication, the good rewarded: a maxim which fails utterly in the face of afflications like those of Job, unless, as his friends insinuated, he was one of the wicked. After stating the doom of the ungodly, Eliphaz, in the last verse, sums up the character of those he has been denouncing. Not only are they evil in themselves, but they hatch evil; but it is evil that recoils on themselves.

(1) Then Job answered.—Job, in replying, ceases to continue the argument, which he finds useless; but, after complaining of the way his friends have conducted it, and contrasting the way in which they have treated him with that in which he would treat them were they in his case, he proceeds again to enlarge upon his condition, and makes a touching appeal to Heaven, which prepares us for the more complete confession in chap. xix. He ends by declaring that his case is desperate.

(2) I have heard many such things.—Trite rather than true, or at least the whole truth.

"Common is the common-place,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain."

(3) Shall vain words have an end?—The English idiom rather requires, "Shall not vain words have an end? for if not, what emboldeneth or provoketh thee that thou answerest?" Eliphaz had contributed nothing to the discussion in his last reply; he had simply reiterated what had been said before.

(4) If your soul.—i.e., person.—"If you were in my place, I could heap up words against you," &c. It is doubtful whether this is in contrast to what comes afterwards in the fifth verse, as in the Authorised Version, or whether it may not be in parallelism with it; thus: "I would make myself a companion to you—condole and sympathise with you in words, and shake my head at you as a mark of sympathy." The phrase differs somewhat from that in Ps. xxii. 7; Isa. xxxvii. 22, where to shake the head expresses contempt and derision.

(7) But now he hath made me weary.—He turns again, in his passionate plaint, to God, whom he alternately speaks of in the third person and addresses in the second. "Thou hast made desolate all my company," by destroying all his children and alienating the hearts of his friends.

(9) He teareth me in his wrath, which is a witness against me: And my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face. He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: He gnasheth upon me with his teeth; Mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

(10) They have gathered themselves together against me.

"Common is the common-place,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain."
He Maintaineth his Innocence.

Job's Afflictions.

(15) God hath delivered me to the ungodly,
And turned me over into the hands of the wicked.
(12) I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder:
He hath also taken me by my neck,
And shaken me to pieces,
And set me up for his mark.
(13) His archers compass me round about,
He cleaveth my reins asunder,
And doth not spare;
He poureth out my gall upon the ground.
(14) He breaketh me with breach upon breach,
He runneth upon me like a giant.
(15) I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin,
And defiled my horn in the dust.
(16) My face is foul with weeping,
And on my eyelids is the shadow of death;
(17) Not for any injustice in mine hands:

He would maintain the right of man with God, and of the son of man with his neighbour;" or, "that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!—this is what he has already longed for in chap. ix. 33.

(22) When a few years are come, Then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

CHAPTER XVII.—(1) My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, The graves are ready for me.
(3) Are there not mockers with me? And doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?
(5) Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee;

God, for though he immediately speaks of his friends, yet just afterwards he openly mentions God.

The ungodly and the wicked are the terms he retorts upon his friends, and they have certainly earned them. Now follows—

(15) I was at ease.—A highly poetical passage, in which Job becomes, as it were, a St. Sebastian for the arrows of God. It is hardly possible to conceive a more vivid picture of his desolate condition under the persecuting hand of the Almighty.

(16) I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin,—Referring, probably, to the state of his skin, which had become hard and rugged as sackcloth. As the second half of the verse must be figurative, there seems to be no reason to understand the first half otherwise.

(17) Not for any injustice in mine hands:

CHAPTER XVII.—(1) My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, The graves are ready for me.
(3) Are there not mockers with me? And doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?
(5) Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee;

Also my prayer is pure.

(13) O earth, cover not thou my blood,
And let my cry have no place.
(19) Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven,
And my record is on high.
(20) My friends scorn me:
But mine eye poureth out tears unto God.
(21) O that one might plead for a man with God,
As a man pleadeth for his neighbour!
(22) When a few years are come, Then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.
Who is he that will strike hands with me? (4) For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: Therefore shalt thou not exalt them. (5) He that speaketh flattery to his friends, Even the eyes of his children shall fail. (6) He hath made me also a byword of the people; And aforetime I was as a tabret. (7) Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, And all my members are as a shadow. (8) Upright men shall be astonished at this, And the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. (9) The righteous also shall hold on his way, And he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: For I cannot find one wise man among you. (10) My days are past, my purposes are broken off, Even the thoughts of my heart. (11) They change the night into day: The light is short because of darkness. (12) If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. (13) I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: To the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. (14) And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? (15) They shall go down to the bars of the pit, When our rest together is in the dust.
CHAPTER XVIII.—Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

(1) How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?

Mark, and afterwards we will speak.

(3) Wherefore are we counted as beasts, And reputed vile in your sight?

(4) He teareth himself in his anger: Shall the earth be forsaken for thee? And shall the rock be removed out of his place?

(5) Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, And the spark of his fire shall not shine.

(6) The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, And his candle shall be put out with him.

(7) The steps of his strength shall be straitened, And his own counsel shall cast him down.

(8) For he is cast into a net by his own feet,

He shall lie in wait and shall lead him to destruction. (Comp. Ps. cxli. 11.)

The steps of his strength.—i.e., his giant strides. He shall be the victim of his own devices, and when they seem to hold out the hope of prosperity shall lead him to destruction. (Comp. Ps. cxii. 11.)

And he walketh upon a snare.

The gin shall take him by the heel, And the robber shall prevail against him.

The snare is laid for him in the ground, And a trap for him in the way.

Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, And shall drive him to his feet.

His strength shall be hungerbitten, And destruction shall be ready at his side.

It shall devour the strength of his skin: Even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.

His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, And it shall bring him to the king of terrors.

It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his:
Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.


Calamities of the Wicked.

(16) His roots shall be dried up beneath,
And above shall his branch be cut off.

(17) His remembrance shall perish from
the earth,
And he shall have no name in the
street.

(18) He shall be driven from light into
darkness,
And chased out of the world.

(19) He shall neither have son nor nephew
among his people,
Nor any remaining in his dwellings.

(20) They that come after him shall be
astonished at his day,
As they that went before were
afrighted.

(21) Surely such are the dwellings of the
wicked,
And this is the place of him that
knoweth not God.

CHAPTER XIX.—(1) Then Job
answered and said,
(2) How long will ye vex my soul,
And break me in pieces with words?
(3) These ten times have ye reproached
me:
Ye are not ashamed that ye make
yourselves strange to me.
(4) And be it indeed that I have erred,
Mine error remaineth with myself.

shall be scattered on his dwelling” is probably an allu-
sion to the cities of the plain (Gen. xix.).

(16) His roots shall be dried up.—With tacit
allusion to what he had said in chap. viii. 12, and also
to the destruction of Job’s own offspring, which had
already been accomplished.

(17) His remembrance shall perish.—This is the
doom which above all others is dreaded by the modern
roamers of the desert. (Comp. also Jer. xxxv. 19.)

(19) He shall have neither son nor nephew.—
“He shall have neither his own son’s son among
his people, nor any remaining, where he sojourned.”

(20) Shall be astonished at his day.—That is, his
doom, or destiny. He shall stand forth as a warning
and monument to all.

(21) Dwellings of the wicked.—That is to say, of
the wicked man. As Bildad designly uses the singular
here, there can be little doubt that he as designedly in-
tended this terrible and cruel picture to represent Job
himself.

XIX.

(2) How long?—Job begins as Bildad himself had
begun in both cases. His last speech had been so
offensive and unfeeling that Job may well ask “How
long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with
words?” Moreover, Bildad had infused a kind of per-
sonal malice into his charges, which Job felt most
keenly, so that he is constrained to ask, “If indeed I
have erred, doth not my error remain with myself? I
alone suffer for it, and ye do not even sympathise or
suffer with me.”

(6) Know now that God hath overthrown
me.—Bildad had spoken a great deal about the wicked
being snared by his own sin, and now Job, without ac-
tually quoting his words— for he uses a word for net
that Bildad had not used—speaks to their substance.
It is God who has taken him in His net and compassed
him about therewith. This is the assertion he has made
before (chaps. xvi. 7, xiii. 27, &c.).

(7) Behold I cry out of wrong.—The description
he now gives of himself as persecuted and forsaken by
God is necessary to enhance the value of the confession
he is about to make. Severely has Goel dealt with him,
but that severity of dealing has only drawn him nearer
to God. He groups together a rich variety of figures to express his desolate
condition. He is suffering assault, and can get no pro-
duction or redress; he is imprisoned on every side, his
hope is torn up like the tree of which he had before
spoken (chap. xiv. 7).

(11) He hath also kindled his wrath against
me, and he counteth me unto him as one
of his enemies.

(12) His troops come together, and raise
up their way against me, and encamp round about my taber-
nacle.

(13) He hath put my brethren far from
me, and mine acquaintance are verily es-
tranged from me.
Job Craveth

believe in the overruling presence of the Holy Ghost will grow clearer in this and other places, and at all events it shows how completely Christ entered into the very heart of human suffering, in that the deepest expressions of suffering inevitably remind us of Him, whether those expressions are met with in the Book of Job, in the Psalms of David, or in the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Though I intreated for the children’s sake of mine own body.—Rather, and so is my affection or kindness (see Ps. lxxvii. 10, where the same word occurs) to the children of my mother’s womb, i.e., my brethren. Others render, I am become offensive to, &c.

My inward friends.—That is, my intimate friends: the men of my counsel who are familiar with my secret affairs.

My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh in one indistinguishable mass, and I have escaped with the skin of my teeth, because the teeth have no sin, or, as others explain, because the teeth have fallen out. This expression, which is by no means clear in the context, has passed into a proverb expressive of a very narrow escape—a meaning which can only by inference be obtained from this place in Job.

Have pity upon me.—Now comes once more an exceeding great and bitter cry. (Comp. chap. xvi. 9.)

Why do ye persecute me as God?—Comp. chap. xvi. 20.

Oh that my words were now written!—Some understand this to refer to the words he is about to utter; by others they are interpreted generally. The former view is probably owing to the Christian acceptance given to them, and the consequent great importance attaching to them. Since, however, the three verses, 25—27, are manifestly more emphatic than any he has yet spoken, though they do not stand quite alone, there is no reason why it should not be especially these very words which he desires more than any others to have recorded. Perhaps the “now” = here shows this.

Oh that they were printed.—This points us to primitive time, when writing materials and the use of writing involved more or less of engraving, as, for instance, in later times was the case with tablets of wax.

For I know that my redeemer liveth.—We must carefully note all the passages which lead up to this one. First, we must bear in mind that Bildad (chap. xviii. 17—20) had threatened Job with the extinction of his name and memory, so he now appeals to the verdict of futurity, and with what success we ourselves who read and repeat and discuss his words are witnesses. Then in Job’s own speeches we have, as early as chap. ix. 32—33, his longing for a daysman to come between himself and God. Then in chaps. x. 7, xi. 15—19, he emphatically declares his innocence, and appeals to God as conscious of it. In chap. xvi. 19, he affirms that his witness is in the high heavens; in verse 21 of the same chapter he longs for an advocate to plead his cause. In chap. xvii. 3 he calls upon God to be surety for him. Therefore he has already recognised God as his judge, his umpire, his advocate, his witness, and surety, and in some cases by formal confession of the fact, in others by earnest longing after and aspirations for some one to act in that capacity. Here, then, he goes a step further in expression, if not by implication, and declares his knowledge that he has a God or Redeemer. This God was the name given to the next of kin whose duty it was to redeem, ransom, or avenge one who had fallen into debt or bondage, or had been slain in a family feud. In Ruth, for instance, the goel is he who has to marry the widow of his relative, and to continue his name. The various and conditional functions, then, of this God, Job is assured, God will take upon Himself for him: He will avenge his quarrel (comp. Ps. xxxv. 1, 23). He will be surety for him. He will vindicate him before men and before God Himself; He will do for him what none of his professed friends would undertake to do. And as to this matter, he has not the slightest doubt: he states most emphatically that he himself knows that this God liveth. "And I, even I know; as for me, I know that my Vindicator is living, that He liveth, is a reality existing now, and not one to come into existence hereafter, though His manifestation may be a thing of the future, for He shall stand at the last upon the earth," or, "He shall stand last upon earth" (comp. Isa. xl. 8), that is, after all others have passed away and gone down to the bars of the tomb. Now, this alone is assuredly a marvellous confession. It states the reality and eternity of God. It is faith in the I am. This same epithet of Redeemer is applied to God in Ps. xix. 15; Isa. lxi. 29; in the former passage it is coupled with rock, which was the term Bildad had applied to God (chap. xviii. 4).
Faith in the Resurrection.

And that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

(26) And though after my skin worms destroy this body,

Yet in my flesh shall I see God:

(27) Whom I shall see for myself,

And mine eyes shall behold, and not another;

Though my reins be consumed within me.

(28) But ye should say, Why persecute we him,

Seeing the root of the matter is found in me?

(29) Be ye afraid of the sword:

For wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword,

That ye may know there is a judgment.

Upon the earth is literally, upon dust; the word is thus used in Job xli. 33. This usage of the same words in the same book, where the meaning is not ambiguous, is strongly against the rendering some have preferred: over the dust, or over my dust.

(29) And though after my skin.—The word skin is probably put by the common metonymy of a part for the whole for body. “After they have thus destroyed my skin,” or “after my skin hath been thus destroyed”—or, “and after my skin hath been destroyed”—this shall be: that even from my flesh I shall see God”—referring, probably, in the first instance, to his present personal faith, notwithstanding the corruption produced by his disease. “I can and do still see God, whom I know as my Redeemer;” but perhaps more probably put in contrast to this present knowledge as implying something yet to come, when the Redeemer stands at the last upon the earth, which also seems to be yet further expressed in the following verse.

(27) My reins be consumed within me.—i.e., with longing to see Him; literally, my reins are consumed in my bosom. The words “in my flesh” may mean from my flesh, or, without my flesh. Taken in the former sense and applied to the future, it is hard not to recognise in them, at the least, some dim conception of a resurrection.

(22) Whom I shall see for myself.—The words “see for myself” may mean see on my side, i.e., as my Judge and Avenger; or they may be the personal intensifying of the conviction which seems confirmed by the words, “and not a stranger.” Do Job’s words then teach the doctrine of the resurrection? Possibly not directly, but they express the firm conviction of that faith of which the resurrection is the only natural justification; they express a living trust in a living personal God, who, if He is to come into contact with man, cannot suffer His Holy One to see corruption nor leave His soul in hell. How far Job believed in the resurrection of the flesh hereafter, he certainly believed there was life out of death and through death here; and no man can believe in a living God and not believe that He must and will triumph over death. It is possible for us to believe in some dogmata about the resurrection, and yet not believe in God. In this respect we shall be unlike Job. It is impossible for us to believe as he did and not be ready and thankful to believe in the resurrection of Christ, and of those who belong to Christ, as soon as the fact is proclaimed to us on sufficient authority. In this way, and for this reason, the confession of Job rightly stands at the head of the Christian Office for the Burial of the Dead, which looks forward to the resurrection, and lays fast hold thereon. Those who decline to see in Job’s confession any knowledge or hope of a resurrection, must not forget that they have also to explain and account for Isaiah xxvi. 19.

(28) Seeing the root of the matter.—This verse is variously understood, according as “the root of the matter” is interpreted of the cause of suffering or the essence of piety. “For ye say, How we will persecute him, and that the root of the matter is found in me.” The Authorised Version takes the other view. It seems preferable to render, “For ye say, What is a persecuted man to Him (why should He persecute any man without cause?), and therefore the root of the matter (i.e., the cause of the afflictions) is, i.e., must be found in me.”

(29) Be ye afraid.—Job threatens his friends with that confiding punishment of which they regarded him as a conspicuous example.

CHAPTER XX.—(1) Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

(2) Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, And for this I make haste.

(3) I have heard the check of my reproach, And the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.

(4) Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth,

(5) That the triumphing of the wicked is short, And the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

(6) Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, And his head reach unto the clouds;

(7) Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung:

JOB, XX. Reply of Zophar.

(1) Then answered Zophar.—Zophar retorts with yet greater vehemence than before, and assumes a more ornate and elaborate style, still reiterating the former burden of the speedy doom of the wicked man.

(2) Therefore.—That is, because of the eagerness that is in him. His spirit is stirred in him, and impels him to reply.

(3) I have heard the check of my reproach.—Rather, I have heard, or, I hear the reproach of my shame: that is, a reproach that puts me to shame, or is intended to do so.

The spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.—Or, more literally, Out of my understanding my spirit answereth me, or causeth me to answer. He professes to be moved by an impulse within, which he cannot but obey.

(9) The triumphing of the wicked is short.—He affirms that the destruction of the wicked is not only certain, but speedy. (Comp. Ps. ciii. 16 and chap. vii. 8, 10.)
They which have seen him shall say, Where is he? (8) He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. (9) The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; Neither shall his place any more behold him. (10) His children shall seek to please the poor, And his hands shall restore their goods. (11) His bones are full of the sin of his youth, Which shall lie down with him in the dust. (12) Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, Though he hide it under his tongue; (13) Though he spare it, and forsake it not; But keep it still within his mouth: (14) Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, It is the gall of asps within him. (15) He hath swallowed down riches, And he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly. (16) He shall suck the poison of asps: The viper's tongue shall slay him. (17) He shall not see the rivers, The floods, the brooks of honey and butter. (18) That which he laboured for shall he restore, And shall not swallow it down; According to his substance shall the restitution be, And he shall not rejoice therein. (19) Because he hath oppressed and hath forsaken the poor; Because he hath violently taken away an house which he builded not; (20) Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, He shall not save of that which he desired. (21) There shall none of his meat be left; Therefore shall no man look for his goods. (22) In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: Every hand of the wicked shall come upon him. (23) When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, And shall rain it upon him while he is eating. (24) He shall flee from the iron weapon, And the bow of steel shall strike him through. (25) It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; Yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall:

(10) His children shall seek to please the poor.—That is, shall seek their favour by making good what had been taken from them, or otherwise; or it may be rendered, the poor shall oppress his children. (11) His bones are full of the sin of his youth.—Rather, of his youth, or youthful vigour, as in chap. xxxiii. 25: “He shall return to the days of his youth,” and Ps. lxxxix. 46: “The days of his youth hast thou shortened.” “Though he is in the full vigour of life, yet it shall lie down with him in the dust.” (12) Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth.—He draws a picture of the wicked man after the pattern of a gourmand or glutton, which, if it were intended to apply to Job, was a fresh instance of heartless cruelty, as well as of an entire want of discernment of character, and of unfitness for the office of judge he was so ready to assume. It is possible that the reproach here aimed at Job was that of inordinate love of riches, which Zophar extracts from the bare fact of his having been a wealthy man. (13) The brooks of honey and butter.—He uses language which might lead one to suppose he was familiar with the promise of Canaan, except that, as the phrase is not precisely identical, it may perhaps rather show a community of proverbial language, and that the land flowing with milk and honey may have been an expression in use, and not one original with the Pentateuch. (14) That which he laboured for shall he restore . . . —The latter part of this verse is probably right; but it may be, “According to the substance that he hath gotten he shall not rejoice.” (15) Because he hath oppressed and forsaken . . . —For these insinuations there was not a vestige of ground, but Job formally rebuts them in chap. xxxi. (16) Quietness in his belly.—“Because he know no quietness within him.” (Comp. Isa. lvi. 20, 21.) He shall not save ought of that which he desireth. (21) There shall none of his meat be left.—Rather, There was nothing left that he denounced not, therefore his prosperity shall not endure. (22) The hand of every one that is in misery shall come upon him: i.e., in retaliation, or possibly, but less probably, every blow of a miserable man, which can render a man miserable, shall come upon him. (24) He shall flee from the iron weapon, and . . . —That is, if he escaped one mischance, another should overtake him. (25) Yea, terrors overtake him.—Even when he has escaped a second and a third calamity, terrors shall still be upon him. This was all perfectly true in a sense, yea, even a truism, but it was utterly false in its application to Job himself.
All darkness shall be hid in his secret
places:
A fire not blown shall consume
him;
It shall go ill with him that is left in
his tabernacle.

The heaven shall reveal his iniquity;
And the earth shall rise up against
him.
The increase of his house shall de-
part,
And his goods shall flow away in the
day of his wrath.

This is the portion of a wicked man
from God,
And the heritage appointed unto him
by God.

CHAPTER XXI.—But Job answered
and said,
Hear diligently my speech,
And let this be your consolations.
Suffer me that I may speak;
And after that I have spoken, mock
on.
As for me, is my complaint to
man?
And if it were so, why should not my
spirit be troubled?
Mark me, and be astonished,
And lay your hand upon your mouth.
Even when I remember I am afraid,
Terrors are upon him.

All darkness shall be hid in his secret
places.—Rather, All darkness, every kind of
disaster, is laid up for his secret treasures.
A fire not blown.—By human hands, &c.
The heaven shall reveal his iniquity.—
All nature shall combine to bring about his ruin, which
is, in fact, decreed by God. We here take leave of Zophar,
who does not reply again; he has exhausted
his words, and let this be your consolations.

Is my complaint to man?—"Listen to my
words, and let that be the consolation you give me."

Is it not to man that I complain? I do not ask for your sympathy, and,
therefore, why should ye resent an offence that is not
given? If, however, I did ask it, might not my spirit
with good reason be impatient? But, on the contrary,
my complaint is to God; and, concerning the ways of
God, I venture to ask why it is that His justice is so
tardy; and this is a problem which when I remember it
I am troubled, and horror taketh hold on my flesh, so
difficult and arduous is it."

And trembling taketh hold on my
flesh.

Wherefore do the wicked live,
Become old, yea, are mighty in
power?
Their seed is established in their sight
with them,
And their offspring before their eyes.
Their houses are safe from fear,
Neither is the rod of God upon them.
Their bull gendereth, and faileth not;
Their cow calveth, and casteth not her
calf.
They send forth their little ones like
a flock,
And their children dance.
They take the timbrel and harp,
And rejoice at the sound of the organ.
They spend their days in wealth,
And in a moment go down to the
grave.

Therefore they say unto God, Depart
from us;
For we desire not the knowledge of
thy ways.
What is the Almighty, that we should
serve him?
And what profit should we have, if we
pray unto him?
Lo, their good is not in their hand:
The counsel of the wicked is far from
me.

Their seed is established in their sight.—
Not only are they mighty in power themselves, but they
leave their power to their children after them (comp.
Ps. xvii. 14). This contradicts what Eliphaz had said
(chap. xv. 34), what Bildad had said (chap. xviii. 19),
and what Zophar had said (chap. xx. 10).
Their houses are safe from fear.—On the
contrary, Zophar had just said that "a fire not blown
should consume him" (chap. xx. 28), and Bildad (in chap.
xxvii. 15) that "destruction should dwell in his taber-
nacle, and brimstone be scattered on his habitation."

They send forth their little ones . . . —
In striking contrast to the fate of Job's own children, and
in contradiction to what Eliphaz had said (chap. xv.
29—33).

In a moment.—They go down to death
without being made to feel the lingering tortures that
Job had to undergo.

Therefore they say unto God.—Should be,
Yet they said unto God, Depart from us, &c.
Lo, their good (i.e., their prosperity) is not
in their own hand.—And that constitutes the
mystery of it, for it is God who gives it to them; or
the words may be a hypothetical answer to his state-
ment, thus, "Lo, thou repliest, their prosperity is not,"
&c.; and then the words, "the counsel of the wicked is
far from me," are Job's indignant repudiation of all
knowledge of their reasoning.
How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! And how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble before the wind, And as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

God layeth up his iniquity for his children: He rewardeth him, and he shall know it.

His eyes shall see his destruction, And he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, When the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

Shall any teach God knowledge? Seeing he judgeth those that are high.

One dieth in his full strength,—being wholly at ease and quiet.

His breasts are full of milk, And his bones are moistened with marrow.

And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, And never eateth with pleasure.

They shall lie down alike in the dust, And the worms shall cover them.

Behold, I know your thoughts, And the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.

For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? And where are the dwelling places of the wicked?

Have ye not asked them that go by the way? And do ye not know their tokens, That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

Who shall declare his way to his face? And who shall repay him what he hath done?

Yet shall he be brought to the grave, And shall remain in the tomb.

The clogs of the valley shall be sweet unto him, And every man shall draw after him, As there are innumerable before him.

How then comfort ye me in vain, Seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

How oft is the candle of the wicked put out?—This and the following verse are either a concession on the part of Job, as much as to say, "I admit that it is as you say with the wicked;" or else they should be read interrogatively, "How often is it that we do see this?"

God layeth up his iniquity (i.e., the punishment of it) for his children, may be the hypothetical reply of the antagonist in the mouth of Job, and the second clause his own retort: "Let him repay it to himself that he may know it."

His eyes shall see his destruction.—This may be understood as the confirmation of Job's suggested amendment of the Divine government. "His own eyes should see his destruction, and he should drink of the wrath, &c. For what concern or interest hath he in his house after him when the number of his months is cut off, &c."

Shall any teach God knowledge? may be regarded as the hypothetical reply of the antagonist. If the reader prefers to understand these latter verses in any other way, it is open to him to do so, but in our judgment it seems better to understand them thus. The supposed alternative hypothetical argument seems to throw much light upon them.

One dieth.—Job enlarges on the inequality of human fate, showing that death is the only equaliser.

His breasts.—This is an uncertain word, occurring only here. Some understand it literally of milk-pails, others of the lacteals of the human body, which certainly suits the parallelism better.

They shall lie down alike in the dust. Not only, therefore, is the inequality of their life a stumbling-block, but so also is the equality which obliterates all distinction between them in death.

Of the prince.—i.e., of the generous, virtuous, princely man?—the antithesis to the wicked man. Behold I know your thoughts, for ye say, How can we tell who is virtuous and who is wicked? and consequently we know not to which catalogue you belong.

Their tokens.—i.e., the marks and evidences of their experience, and the conclusions at which they had arrived.

That the wicked. . . .—These verses contain the result of their experience.

And shall remain in the tomb.—The word rendered tomb is rendered shock of corn in chap. v. 26, and is not found in the sense of tomb elsewhere. It is doubtful, therefore, whether this is its meaning here. The verse may mean: "He shall be borne to the grave, and men shall watch over his sheaves," i.e., his possessions; or "He shall be borne to the grave with as much deference as when he used to watch over his sheaves" (to protect them from robbery).

The clogs of the valley shall be sweet unto him.—Death is robbed of its repulsiveness and horror, seeing that all will be glad to join in his funeral procession, and after him all men will draw (in endless procession), and before him they will be without number.

There remaineth falsehood.—Or, all that is left of them is transgression, that is to say, it is not only worthless, but yet more, it is even harmful and wrong.
CHAPTER XXII.—(1) Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,
(2) Can a man be profitable unto God, 1
(3) Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?
(4) Is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?
(5) Is not thy wickedness great?—and thine iniquities infinite?
(6) For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
(7) Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,
And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.
(8) But as for the mighty man, he had the earth;
And the honourable man dwelt in it.
(9) Thou hast sent widows away empty,
And the arms of the fatherless have been broken.
(10) Therefore snares are round about thee,
And sudden fear troubleth thee;
(11) Or, darkness, that thou canst not see;
And abundance of waters cover thee,
(12) Is not God in the height of heaven?
And behold the height of the stars, how high they are!
(13) And thou sayest, How doth God know?
Can he judge through the dark cloud?
(14) Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not;
And he walketh in the circuit of heaven.
(15) Hast thou marked the old way—
which wicked men have trodden?
(16) Which were cut down out of time,
Whose foundation was overlaid with a flood:
(17) Which said unto God, Depart from us:
And what can the Almighty do for them?
(18) Yet he filled their houses with good things:
But the counsel of the wicked is far from me,
(19) The righteous see it, and are glad:
And the innocent laugh them to scorn.

XXII.

(1) Then answered Eliphaz.—Eliphaz proceeds to reply in a far more exaggerated and offensive tone than he has yet adopted, accusing Job of definite and specific crimes. He begins by asserting that the judgment of God cannot be other than disinterested, to the wicked man in the last round of the stars, 6 which were cut down out of time, 7 whose foundation was overlaid with a flood: 17 which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them? 18 yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me, 19 the righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn.

is not God in the high heavens, though thou canst not see him. God is too great to take note of the affairs of men, their sin or their good doings. he is so far off that he cannot see what goes on in the earth, for his dwelling-place is in heaven. 19 eliphaz attributes to job the kind of sentiments that he had himself attributed to the wicked man in the last chapter, verse 14, &c.

(19) Hast thou marked the old way. . . ?—Rather, Dost thou keep the old way which the wicked men trod? Dost thou hold their tenets?
(20) Which were cut down out of time.—Or, which were snatched away before their time. it is generally supposed that there is an allusion here to the history of the flood; if so, the reference is of course very important in its bearing on the age of that record, since the book of job can hardly fail to be very old itself.

Whose foundation was overlaid with a flood.—Or, upon whose foundation a stream was poured out; or, whose foundation became a flowing stream; or, whose foundation is like a flowing stream; that is, their principles are infectious, and bear all before them.

(17) Which said unto God, Depart from us.—Here again he attributes to job the very thoughts he had ascribed to the wicked (chap. xx. 14, 15).
(18) yet he filled their houses.—The bitterness of his irony now reaches its climax in that he adopts the very formula of repudiation job had himself used (chap. xiv. 16).
(19) The righteous see it.—That is, the destruction of the wicked, as in the days of noah.
Whereas our substance is not cut down,
But the remnant of them the fire consumeth.
(Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace:)
Thereby good shall come unto thee.
Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth,
And lay up his words in thine heart.
If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up,
Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.
Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust,
And the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.
Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence,
And thou shalt have plenty of silver.

(Whereas our substance is not cut down,
But the remnant of them the fire consumeth.
Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace:
Thereby good shall come unto thee.
Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth,
And lay up his words in thine heart.
If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up,
Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.
Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust,
And the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.
Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence,
And thou shalt have plenty of silver.)

Then Job answered and said,

For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty,
And shalt lift up thy face unto God.
Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him,
And he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.
Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee:
And the light shall shine upon thy ways.
When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up;
And he shall save the humble person.
He shall deliver the island of the innocent:
And it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.

CHAPTER XXIII.—(1) Then Job answered and said,

If our substance is not cut down,
But the remnant of them the fire consumeth.
Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace:
Thereby good shall come unto thee.
Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth,
And lay up his words in thine heart.
If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up,
Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.
Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust,
And the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.
Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence,
And thou shalt have plenty of silver.

Have been an Indian colony in Southern Arabia, and others have placed it on the east coast of Africa.

The Almighty shall be thy defence.
Rather, And the Almighty shall be thy treasure, and precious silver unto thee.
The word thus qualifying silver occurs only three other times in the Bible: Ps. xciv. 4, "The strength of the hills"; Num. xxxii. 23 and 24, "the strength of a unicorn." Its original idea is probably brightness or splendour.

Then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty.
Zophar had told him the same thing, that he should lift up his face without spot (chap. xi. 15).
Thou shalt also decree a thing.
As, for instance, in the memorable case of Abraham's intercession for Sodom, to which there is not improbably an allusion here.
There is lifting up.
This may be its meaning, but some understand it in a bad sense: "When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, It was pride that caused their fall."

He shall deliver the island of the innocent.
It is undoubtedly an error for He shall deliver him that is not innocent: that is, either God shall deliver, or the humble person, if that is the subject of the former clause; the humble-minded man would have saved them. "He would have delivered him that is not innocent; yea, even so shall he be delivered by the cleanness of thy hands," as the ten righteous would have saved Sodom.
It is remarkable that this, which is the last word of Eliphaz, has in it the significance of a prophecy, for it is exactly thus that the history of Job closes; and Eliphaz himself exemplified his own promise in being indebted to Job for the act of intercession by which he was pardoned, together with his friends; chap. xliii. 8, 9.
(6) Even to day is my complaint bitter:—
1 My stroke is heavier than my groaning.
(3) Oh that I knew where I might find
him!—
That I might come even to his seat!
(4) I would order my cause before him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
(5) I would know the words which he
would answer me, 
And understand what he would say
unto me.
(6) Will he plead against me with his
great power?—
No; but he would put strength in me.
(7) There the righteous might dispute
with him;—
So should I be delivered for ever
from my judge.
(8) Behold, I go forward, but he is not
there;—
And backward, but I cannot perceive
him:
(9) On the left hand, where he doth
work, but I cannot behold him:—
He hideth himself on the right hand,
that I cannot see him:

Heb., my head.

Or, or, hid up.

Or, the seat that is with me.

Or, my appointed portion.

Ps. 115. 3.

Heb., I am afraid.

Heb., I am troubled.

Heb., or, hid up.

Heb., my mouth.

Job's Longing to Appear before God.

JOB, XXIII.

He declares his Innocence.

(10) But he knoweth the way that I
take:—
When he hath tried me, I shall come
forth as gold.
(11) My foot hath held his steps,
His way have I kept, and not declined.
(12) Neither have I gone back from the
commandment of his lips;—
I have esteemed the words of his mouth
more than my necessary food.
(13) But he is in one mind, and who can
turn him?—
And what of his soul desireth, even that
he doeth.
(14) For he performeth the thing that is
appointed for me:—
And many such things are with him.
(15) Therefore am I troubled at his
presence:—
When I consider, I am afraid of him.
(16) For God maketh my heart soft,—and
the Almighty troubleth me;
(17) Because I was not cut off before the
darkness,
Neither hath he covered the darkness
from my face.

(8) Even to day.—Or, Still is my complaint bitter or accountecl rebellion; yet is my stroke heavier than my groaning: my complaint is no just measure of my suffering.
(9) Oh that I knew where I might find him.—The piteous complaint of a man who feels that God is with him for chastisement, but not for healing.
(10) Plead against me.—Rather, Would he plead with me, or contend with me in the greatness of his power? Nay; but he would have regard unto me; he would consider my case. Eliphaz had bidden Job to acquaint himself with God, and return unto Him (chap. xxii. 23); Job says there is nothing he longs for more than to come into His presence.
(11) There the righteous might dispute.—He has learnt this marvellous truth, which the Gospel has so effectually brought to light, that it is God the Saviour who is Himself the refuge from God the Judge (John xii. 47); and then, in the solemn conviction of His presence, he makes use of the most sublime language expressive of it, being assured, though He may hide Himself with the express purpose of not interfering in his cause, yet that all things work together for good to them that love Him (Rom. viii. 28), and that when his time of trial is over, he himself will come forth like gold. Job's case teaches us that if an innocent man is falsely accused, God's honour is vindicated and maintained by his holding fast his conviction of innocence rather than by his yielding to the pressure of adversity and owning to sins he has not committed, or relaxing his hold on innocence by yielding to irritability.

I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.—Comp. John iv. 32—34. Or, I have treasured up the words, &c., according to the statute prescribed to me, or from my own law: i.e., "I made it a principle with myself to treasure up the words of His mouth," The LXX. and the Vulg. have a differing reading, and render in my bosom. He is one, or in one.—Job either declares His unique sovereignty or His unchangeable purpose. The context seems to support the latter, in which case the sense given by the Authorised Version is correct.
(14) He performeth the thing that is appointed for me.—"He will accomplish my appointed lot; He will complete that which He has decreed for me; and like these things there are many (more) with Him" (chap. x. 13). Job is disposed to take the full measure of the worst, like a pessimist, that being steeled against it, he may be prepared; and so steeled, he still trusts God. (Comp. chap. xiii. 15, Authorised Version.)
(15) Therefore am I troubled at his presence.—i.e., invisible though it be, and undiscoverable as He is on every hand (verse 8, 9), Job is in a strait betwixt two (Phil. i. 23). The victim of an apparent paradox and dilemma; afraid of God, yet longing to see Him; conscious of His presence, yet unable to find Him; assured of His absolute justice, and yet convinced of his own suffering innocence. His history, in fact, to the Old World was what the Gospel is to the New: the exhibition of a perfectly righteous man, yet made perfect through suffering. It was therefore an effort at the solution of the problem of the reconciliation of the inequality of life with the justice of God.

(16) For God maketh my heart soft.—That is, "He has made it full of apprehension and fear, and the Almighty hath troubled me in these two respects: that He did not cut me off before the darkness, so that I had never been born, or that He did not hide darkness from mine eyes after giving me life." (Comp. chap. iii.
CHAPTER XXIV.—(1) Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, Do they that know him not see his days? (2) Some remove the landmarks; They violently take away flocks, and feed thereof. (3) They drive away the ass of the fatherless, They take the widow’s ox for a pledge. (4) They turn the needy out of the way: The poor of the earth hide themselves together. (5) Behold, as wild asses in the desert, Go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: The wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children. (6) They reap every one his 2 corn in the field: And 3 they gather the vintage of the wicked. (7) They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, That they have no covering in the cold.

11, 20, &c.) We may understand this of the physical suffering to which he was subjected, or of the mental distress and perplexity under which he laboured.

XXIV. 

(1) Why, seeing times are not hidden.—Job, in this chapter, gives utterance to this perplexity, as it arises, not from his own case only, but from a survey of God’s dealings with the world generally. “Why is it,” he asks, “since times and events are not hidden from the Almighty, that they who know Him—that is, believe in and love Him—do not see His days?”—that is, His days of retribution and judgment. Even those who love and serve God are as perplexed about His principles of government as those who know Him not. It is to be observed that the position of the second negative in the Authorised Version of this verse renders it highly ambiguous to the majority of readers. This ambiguity would entirely disappear if we read see not instead of “not see.”

(2) Some remove the landmarks.—Now follows a description of the wrong-doings of various classes of men. The removal of landmarks was expressly provided against by the Mosaic Law (Deut. xix. 14, xxvii. 17).

And feed thereof.—Rather, probably, feed them: i.e., pasture them, the more easy to do when the landmarks are so removed.

(3) They drive away the ass.—The ass and the ox, the fatherless and the widow presumably having no more than one. He first describes the oppression of the country, and then that of the city (verse 12). We seem here to catch a glimpse of the sufferings of some oppressed and subject aboriginal race, such as the Canaanites may have been to the Jews, though there is probably no allusion to them. But, at all events, the writer and the speaker seem to have been familiar with some such abject and servile race, who haunts the desert and suffered at the hands of the more powerful tribes. Man’s inhumanity to man is, unhappily, a crime of very long standing.

(4) They reap every one his 2 corn in the field: And 3 they gather the vintage of the wicked.

(5) They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, That they have no covering in the cold.

(6) They reap every one his 2 corn in the field: And 3 they gather the vintage of the wicked.

(7) They cease the naked to lodge without clothing, That they have no covering in the cold.

(8) They are wet with the showers of the mountains, And embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

(9) They pluck the fatherless from the breast, And take a pledge of the poor.

(10) They cause him to go naked without clothing, And they take away the sheaf from the hungry:

(11) Which make oil within their walls, And tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.

(12) Men groan from out of the city, And the soul of the wounded crieth out:

Yeth God layeth not folly to them. (13) They are of those that rebel against the light; They know not the ways thereof, Nor abide in the paths thereof.

(14) The murderer rising with the light—killeth the poor and needy, And in the night is as a thief.

(15) The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight.

(16) They are of those that rebel against the light—That is, to those who are the cause of their wrongs, their oppressors.

(17) They are of those that rebel against the light.—A very remarkable expression, which seems to anticipate the teaching of St. John (chap. i. 9, &c.).

(18) With the light.—The mention of light as a moral essence suggests its physical analogue, so that by the contrast of the one with the violence done to the other, the moral turpitude of the wrong-doing is heightened. It seems impossible to interpret the light in the former case (verse 13) otherwise than morally, and if so, the mention of the “ways thereof” and the “paths thereof” is very remarkable. The order in which these crimes of murder, adultery, and theft are mentioned according, as it does, with that in the Decalogue, is, at all events, suggestive of acquaintance with it.
Saying, No eye shall see me: and 

1 Heb., setteth his face in secret.

16 In the dark they dig through houses, Which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: They know not the light. 

17 For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: If one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death. 

18 He is swift as the waters;—their portion is cursed in the earth: He beholdeth not the way of the vineyards. 

19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: So doth the grave those which have sinned. 

20 The womb shall forget him; The worm shall feed sweetly on him; He shall be no more remembered; And wickedness shall be broken as a tree.
He maketh peace in his high places. (3) Is there any number of his armies? And upon whom doth not his light arise? (4) "How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? (5) Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; Yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. (6) How much less man, that is "a worm? And the son of man, which is a worm? (7) Bildad’s Objection. (8) xxii. 6; Isa. xli. 14, &c.

(xxvi.) (1) But Job answered and said, "How hast thou helped him that is without power? How savest thou the arm that hath no strength? (2) How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? (3) How much less man . . . —Comp. Ps. viii. 4, xxii. 6; Isa. xli. 14, &c. (4) xxvi. 11, 12. (5) Heb., until the end of light with darkness.

Even to the moon and stars, pure and chaste as their light is, they are not clean before Him (comp. chap. iv. 18), for the stars rise and set, and once in every three thousand years ago, describing in language of scientific accuracy the condition of our globe, and holding it forth as a proof of Divine power. Some have attempted to explain the latter clause of the destitution caused by famine; but that is precluded by the term of the first clause. (6) Heb., prudence.

The thing as it is?—Rather, How hast thou plentifully declared sound knowledge? (7) To whom hast thou uttered words? And whose spirit came from thee? (8) Dead things are formed—From under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. (9) He holdeth back the face of his throne, And hangeth the earth upon nothing. (10) He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; And the cloud is not rent under them, (11) The pillars of heaven tremble—and are astonished at his reproof. (12) He divideth the sea with his power, And by his understanding he smiteth through the proud. (10) Heb., pride.
By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent.

Lo, these are parts of his ways: But how little a portion is heard of him? But the thunder of his power who can understand? 

CHAPTER XXVII.—Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,

As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; And the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; All the while my breath is in me, And the spirit of God is in my nostrils; My lips shall not speak wickedness, Nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you: Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

perhaps the latter is more appropriate to the context, which seems to speak of God's mastery over nature.

By his understanding he smiteth through the proud.—Literally, Rahab, which certainly is at times a name for Egypt (see Isa. li. 9, e.g.), and which, if used in that sense here, can only refer to the signal judgments on Egypt at the Exodus. According to our view of this matter will be the indication derived therefrom of the date of Job.

The crooked serpent.—By this expression is doubtless meant the forked lightning-flash, though it is difficult to determine whether any, or what mythological ideas may underlie the expression, or whether it is anything more than a figure derived from the natural world, which suggested the similitude of the flying serpent. Others understand by it the constellation of the Northern Dragon, to whose influence storms were ascribed.

These are parts.—Literally, ends—just the merest outskirts. For "is heard" we may render do we hear; and for "the thunder of His power," the thunder of His mighty deeds. We can only hear the faintest whisper of His glory, and cannot understand or endure the full-toned thunder of His majesty. Here, then, is Job’s final reply to the arguments of his friends. He shows himself even more conscious than they of the grandeur and holiness of God; but that has in no way rendered his position as a sufferer more intelligible—rather the reverse—nor theirs as defenders of the theory of exact retribution. He cannot understand and they cannot explain; but while he rejects their explanations, he rests secure in his own faith.

Job continued his parable.—The remainder of Job’s speech—now, for the first time, called his parable—consists of his determination not to renounce his righteousness (verses 2—6); his own estimate of the fate of the wicked (verses 7—23); his magnificent estimate of the nature of wisdom (chap. xxviii.); his comparison of his former life (chap. xxi.) with that of his present experience (chap. xxx.); his final declaration of his innocent and irreproachable conduct (chap. xxxi.).

As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment.—Job’s faith leads him to see that, though there may be no explanation for his sufferings, yet they are laid upon him by God for purposes of His own, which are veiled from him.

God forbid that I should justify you.—To admit the wickedness with which his friends charged him would have been to justify them—to say that they were right and he was wrong. This he resolves not to do.

My heart shall not reproach me.—Or, doth not reproach me for any of my days.

Let mine enemy be as the wicked.—While, however, he admits that the wicked is often a prosperous man, he declares that he has no envy for him, but would have only his adversaries to be like him.

What is the hope?—Better, What is the hope of the godless, though he get him gain, when God taketh away his soul? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God? I will teach you by the hand of God: That which is with the Almighty will I not conceal. Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; Why then are ye thus altogether vain? This is the portion of a wicked man with God.
And the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.

14 If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword:
And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

15 Those that remain of him shall be buried in death:
And his widows shall not weep.

16 Though he heap up silver as the dust,
And prepare raiment as the clay;

17 He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on,
And the innocent shall divide the silver.

18 He buildeth his house as a moth,
And as a booth that the keeper maketh.

19 The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered:
He openeth his eyes, and be is not.

20 Terrors take hold on him as waters,
A tempest stealtheth him away in the night.

21 The east wind carrieth him away,
And he departeth:

22 For God shall cast upon him, and not spare:
1 He would fain flee out of his hand.

23 Men shall clap their hands at him, And shall hiss him out of his place.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—(1) Surely there is a vein for the silver,
And a place for gold where they fine it.

(2) Iron is taken out of the earth,
And brass is molten out of the stone.

(3) He setteth an end to darkness,
And searcheth out all perfection: The stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

(4) The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; Even the waters forgotten of the foot: They are dried up, they are gone away from men.

(5) As for the earth, out of it cometh bread:
And under it is turned up as it were fire.

out; but whatever may so be gained in symmetry seems to be lost in dramatic effect. We have seen that Bildad had but little to say, and that was only a few truisms; it is not surprising, therefore, that when it came to the turn of Zophar he had nothing more to say, and Job was left virtually master of the field. It is, however, a little remarkable that, supposing these words to be rightly ascribed to Job, he should precisely adopt those with which Zophar had concluded (chap. xx. 29). Perhaps Job is willing to show how completely he is prepared to accept the facts of his friends, although he will not admit their inferences. He, like them, is quite ready to allow that the prosperity of the wicked must be seeming rather than real, and that it must eventually come to nought.

(15) Those that remain of him shall be buried in death.—That is, as the context shows, it shall be obscure, and excite no sympathy; their very death shall be as it were a burial, and shall consign them to oblivion.

His widows.—That is, those commonly hired for the purpose of making lamentation for the dead, or the widows of those that remain of him.

(19) But he shall not be gathered.—Some ancient versions read, “but he shall do so no more;” but the “gathering” may refer to his wealth. “He openeth his eyes, and it (i.e., his wealth) is not;” or it may mean that as soon as he opens his eyes, hoping to enjoy his riches, he shall be no more, but be suddenly cut off.

This sense appears to accord with the following verses.

(20) For God shall cast upon him.—The Authorized Version supplies God as the subject; but we obtain very good sense by understanding it of the man who constantly fled from his power now being only too glad of the opportunity of avenging himself on him, while he or others clap their hands at him, and hiss him from his place.

The Blessings of the Wicked

JOB, XXVIII.

And as a storm hurleth him out of his place.

For God shall cast upon him, and not spare:

Men shall clap their hands at him, And shall hiss him out of his place.

XXVIII.

(1) Surely there is a vein for the silver.—In this chapter Job draws out a magnificent contrast between human skill and ingenuity and Divine wisdom. The difficulty to the ordinary reader is in not perceiv.

(2) Iron is taken out of the earth,
And brass is molten out of the stone.

(3) He setteth an end to darkness,
And searcheth out all perfection: The stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

(4) The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; Even the waters forgotten of the foot: They are dried up, they are gone away from men.

(5) As for the earth, out of it cometh bread:
And under it is turned up as it were fire.

(6) The flood breaketh out... is very uncertain. We may render, Man breaketh open a shaft where none sojourneth; they are forgotten where none passeth by: i.e., the labourers in these deserted places, they hang afar from the haunts of men, they fit to and fro. Or it may be, The flood breaketh out from the inhabitants, even the waters forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from man: that is, the very course of rivers is subject to the will and power of man. Those who walk over the place forget that it was once a river, so completely has man obliterated the marks of it.

(7) As for the earth...—While the ploughman and the reaper till and gather the fruits of the earth on its surface, the miner far below maintains perpetual fires, as also does the volcanic mountain, with its fields and vineyards luxuriant and fertile on its sides.
### Human Skill and Divine Wisdom

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<td>The stones of it are the place of sapphires; And it hath 1 dust of gold.</td>
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<td>(7)</td>
<td>There is a path which no fowl knoweth, And which the vulture’s eye hath not seen;</td>
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<td>(8)</td>
<td>The lion’s whelps have not trodden it, Nor the fierce lion passed by it.</td>
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<td>(9)</td>
<td>He putteth forth his hand upon the 2 rock; He overturneth the mountains by the roots.</td>
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<td>He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; And his eye seeth every precious thing.</td>
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<td>(11)</td>
<td>He bindeth the floods from overflowing; And the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.</td>
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<td>(12)</td>
<td>But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?</td>
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<td>(13)</td>
<td>Man knoweth not the price thereof; Neither is it found in the land of the living.</td>
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<td>(14)</td>
<td>a The depth saith, It is not in me: And the sea saith, It is not with me.</td>
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<td>b It cannot be gotten for gold, Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.</td>
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<td>It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, With the precious onyx, or the sapphire.</td>
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<td>The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: And the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.</td>
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<td>(18)</td>
<td>No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: For the price of wisdom is above rubies.</td>
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<td>The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, Neither shall it be valued with pure gold.</td>
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<td>(20)</td>
<td>Whence then cometh wisdom? And where is the place of understanding?</td>
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<td>(21)</td>
<td>Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, And kept close from the fowls of the air.</td>
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<td>(22)</td>
<td>Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.</td>
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<td>(23)</td>
<td>God understandeth the way thereof, And he knoweth the place thereof.</td>
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<td>(24)</td>
<td>For he looketh to the ends of the earth, And seeth under the whole heaven;</td>
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<td>(25)</td>
<td>To make the weight for the winds;</td>
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6 The stones of it are the place of sapphires. —So ingenious is man that he discovereth a place of which the stones are sapphires and the very dust gold, and a path that no bird of prey knoweth, and which the falcon’s eye hath not seen.

9 He putteth forth his hand upon the rock. —The process described is that of tunnelling and excavating, and that of making canals and lining them with stone; and in the course of such works many precious things would be discovered. The canals and cisterns were made so accurately that they retained the water, and did not even weep or trickle.

13 But where shall wisdom be found? —With magnificent effect comes in this question, after the gigantic achievements of man just recounted; notwithstanding his industry, science, and skill, he is altogether ignorant of true wisdom. Neither his knowledge nor his wealth can make him master of that; nor can he find it where he discovers so many other secret and precious things.

17 The exchange of it. —Or, according to some, the attraction of it. The remainder of this chapter calls for little remark: its unrivalled sublimity is patent, and comment is superfluous. There is a general resemblance between this chapter and Prov. viii., and both seem to imply a knowledge of the Mosaic narrative of creation.

22 Destruction and death say. —That destruction and death should have heard the fame of wisdom is natural, as it consists in departing from the evil which leads to their abode.

23 God understandeth the way thereof. —God is the author of wisdom, and His fear is the beginning thereof; so with His infinite knowledge of the universe He cannot but be cognisant of the place and way thereof. It is to be observed that while the foundation of wisdom is said to be coeval with that of the world, the very existence of wisdom in relation to man implied the existence of evil, because except by departing from evil there could for man be no wisdom, though evil itself may undoubtedly involve and imply the deflection from a previously existing right. Wrong, for example, is what is wrong aside from the right. The two ideas which Job starts with are man’s ignorance of the price and the place of wisdom. Neither he nor nature knows the place of it; neither all living, nor the deep, nor the sea; and as for its price, though man is prepared to give any high price for the costly stones and jewels of the earth, yet all that he has to give is not to be mentioned in comparison with the value of wisdom. Wisdom, however, is to be purchased by the poor, as we may infer from the language of the prophet Isaiah (chap. iv. 1), or, at all events, that which ranks with wisdom; and in like manner Christ represented the kingdom of heaven as a pearl of great price, which would demand all that a man had to buy it, and yet he represented the poor as those especially to whom it was preached. It is true that the wisdom of which
Job mourns for the Loss

And he weighteth the waters by measure.

(28) When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

(27) Then did he see it, and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

(29) And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.

CHAPTER XXIX.—Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,

(1) Oh that I were as in months past, As in the days when God preserved me;

(2) When his candle shined upon my head, And when by his light I walked through darkness;

(3) As I was in the days of my youth, When the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;

(4) When the Almighty was yet with me,
JOB, XXX.

His Past Happiness.

(14) I put on righteousness, and it clothed me:

My judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

(15) I was eyes to the blind,—and feet was I to the lame.

(16) I was a father to the poor:

And the cause which I knew not I searched out.

(17) And I brake the jaws of the wicked,

And plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

(18) Then I said, I shall die in my nest,

And I shall multiply my days as the sand.

(19) My root was spread out by the waters,

And the dew lay all night upon my branch.

(20) My glory was fresh in me,

And my bow was renewed in my hand.

(21) Unto me men gave ear,

And waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

(22) After my words they spake not again;

And my speech dropped upon them.

(14) I put on righteousness.—Comp. Isa. lxi. 10, xxviii. 5, lxii. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 8; James i. 25; 1 Peter v. 4; 1 Thess. ii. 19. His judgment, the result of his sin, was as a robe of honor and a crown of glory to him.

It clothed me.—Literally, it clothed itself with me. First, righteousness is the garment, and then he is the garment to righteousness. (Compare the expressions “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,” Rom. xiii. 14, and 2 Cor. v. 2, 3, 4, and the Hebrew of Ps. cxliii. 9, where “I flee unto thee to hide me” is, “I have covered myself with thee, or, have hidden me with thee.”) This is the Gospel truth of the interchange of sin and righteousness between Christ and the believer. He bears our sins: we are clothed with the robe of His righteousness.

(18) I shall die in my nest.—Very touching is this spontaneous expression of his almost unconscious hope when in prosperity. Some have suggested the transposition of these three verses to the end of the chapter. Though this is obviously their natural position in one sense, yet in another it is less natural. The same thing is to be seen in the last four verses of chapter xxii. They carry on the previous vindication from verse 34, which had been broken by the parenthesis in verses 35—37.

(19) My root was spread.—It is perhaps better to read this and the next verse in the present: “My root is spread out . . . and the dew lieth. My glory is fresh in me, and my bow is renewed.” (Comp. Gen. xlix. 24.)

(20) If I laughed on them.—That is, “They would not believe that I could be so affable to them, could so condescend to them—they looked up to me with the greatest deference.”

(25) I sat.—It is still the custom among the Jews for mourners to sit upon the ground and for one who wishes to console them to occupy a seat above them. Such is Job’s pathetic lamentation over the days that were gone. He appears before us as a conspicuous example of one who had worn the poet’s crown of sorrow in the remembrance of happier things in time of sorrow. He is the type and representative of suffering humanity, of man waiting for redemption, but as yet unredeemed. He is in this way that he points us on to Christ, who, Himself the Redeemer, went through all the sorrows of sinful and unredeemed humanity. He is able to describe his former state and all its glory and bliss, while his friends are constrained to listen in silence. They have said their worst, they have not silenced him; he is able to make the most complete vindication of all his past life, to contrast its happiness with the present contempt and contumely of it, so much owing to them and their heartless, unsympathetic treatment of him, while they can make no reply.

(1) Whose fathers I would have disdained.—Rather, whose fathers I disdained to set. The complaint is that the children of those who were so inferior to him should treat him thus.

(2) Wherefore might the strength of their hands profit me, is the description of the fathers; verse 3 seqq. describes their children. The people here spoken of seem to have been somewhat similar to those known to the ancients as Tragodyles (Herod. iv. 193, &c.), the inhabitants of caves, who lived an outcast life and had manners and customs of their own.

His Honour turned into Contempt.

(23) And they waited for me as for the rain;

And they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.

(24) If I laughed on them, they believed it not;

And the light of my countenance they cast not down.

(25) I chose out their way, and sat chief,

And dwelt as a king in the army,

As one that comforteth the mourners.

CHAPTER XXX.—(1) But now they that are younger than I have me in derision,

Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

(2) Yea, wherefore might the strength of their hands profit me,

In whom old age was perished?

(3) For want and famine they were solitary;

Fleeing into the wilderness;

In former time desolate and waste.

(4) Who cut up lawns by the bushes,

And juniper roots for their meat.

(5) They were driven forth from among men.
(They cried after them as after a thief;)

(6) To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

(7) Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

(8) They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.

(9) And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

(10) They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

(11) Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

(12) Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

(13) They mar my path, they set forward my calamity; they have no helper.

(14) They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.

They are desolate with want and famine. They flee into the wilderness on the eve of fastness, and desolation, or when all is dark (yesternight), waste, and desolate. It is evident that Job must have been familiar with a people of this kind, an alien and proscribed race living in the way he mentions.

(7) Among the bushes they brayed. -- Herodotus says their language was like the screeching of hawks, other says it was like the whistling of birds. This whole description is of the mockers of Job, and therefore should be in the present tense in verses 5, 7, and 8, as it may be in the Authorised Version of verse 4.

(8) They were viler than the earth. -- Rather, they are scourged out of the land, or are outcasts from the land.

(9) And now am I their song. -- See the references in the margin, which show that it is quite appropriate to give to the complaints of Job a Messianic interpretation.

(11) Because he hath loosed my cord. -- Better, his; i.e., "God hath loosed the cord of his bow and they have cast off all restraint before me."

(12) The youth. -- i.e., the young brood, rabble.

(13) They have no helper. -- i.e., probably without deriving therefrom any help or advantage themselves.

(14) As a wide breaking in of waters. -- Or, as through a wide break they come. "In the midst of the crash they roll themselves upon me;" or, "instead of a tempest" (i.e., like a tempest) "they roll themselves upon me."

(15) Terrors are turned upon me. They pursue "my soul as the wind; and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

(16) And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.

(17) My bones are pierced in me in the night season:

(18) By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

(19) He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

(20) I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.

(21) Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

(22) Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolve my substance.

(23) For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.
His Great Affliction.

JOB, XXXI.

CHAPTER XXXI. — (1) I made a covenant with mine eyes; Why then should I think upon a maid? (2) For what portion of God is there from above? And what inheritance of the Almighty from on high? (3) Is not destruction to the wicked? And a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? (4) Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? (5) If I have walked with vanity, Or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; (6) Let me be weighed in an even balance, That God may know mine integrity. (7) If my step hath turned out of the way, And mine heart walked after mine eyes, And if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;

This is a very obscure verse. Some render it, "Surely against a ruinous heap he will not put forth his hand; though it be in his destruction one may utter a cry because of these things." Others, understanding the word rendered "ruinous heap" otherwise, render "Howbeit, God will not put forth His hand to bring man to death though it be in his destruction." This is one of those passages that may be regarded as hopelessly uncertain. Each reader will make the best use of it, according to his judgment. That Job should speak of himself as a ruinous heap seems very strange; neither is it at all clear what "these things" are because of which a cry is uttered. Certainly the significance given by the other rendering is much greater. "His destruction" must mean, at all events, the destruction that cometh from Him; and if this is so, the sense given is virtually that of the Authorized Version. Did not I weep for him? — Job declares that he has not withheld that sympathy with sorrow and suffering for which he himself has asked in vain. When I looked for good,—Before, in chap. iii. 25, 29, he had spoken as one who did not wish to be the fool of prosperity, and so overtaken unawares by calamity, and who therefore looked at things on the darker side; now he speaks as one who hoped for the best, and yet, notwithstanding that hope, was disappointed and deceived. My bowels boil.—The sense is better expressed by the present, "My bowels boil, and rest not. Days of affliction have overtaken me unawares." (See last verse.) I went mourning without the sun.—Rather, I go mourning without the sun; or, according to some,"blackened, but not by the sun." We give the preference to the other. I stood up, and I cried in the congregation —i.e., not merely in secret, but in the face of all men. Dragons and owls are, according to some moderns, jackals and ostriches. My harp also is turned to mourning, —Or, Therefore is my harp turned to mourning, and my pipe into the voice of them that weep. The musical instruments here named, like those of Gen. iv. 21, are respectively the stringed and wind instruments.

XXXI.

(1) I made a covenant with mine eyes.—Job makes one grand profession of innocence, rehearsing his manner of life from the first; and here he does not content himself with traversing the accusations of his friends, but professes his innocence also of sins less manifest to the observance of others, and affecting the secret conduct and the heart,—namely, sensual transgression and idolatry. His object, therefore, is to show his friends that he has really been more upright than their standard demanded or than they supposed him to be, till his affliction made them suspect him; and this uprightness was the consequence of rigid and inflexible adherence to principle, for he made a covenant with his eyes, as the avenues of sinful desires. (Comp. Matt. v. 28.)

(2) What portion of God is there from above? —Comp. the remonstrance of Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 9). (3) Is not,—i.e., Is not this the portion of verse 2? (4) Doth not he.—The "He" is emphatic, obviously meaning God. His appeal is to the All-seeing knowledge of God, whom nothing escapes, and who is judge of the hearts and reins (Ps. vii. 9, xlv. 21; Jer. xvii. 10, xx. 12). (Comp. Acts xxv. 11.) (7) If my step hath turned out of the way,—The form of the expression is very emphatic: the narrow way of strict integrity and righteousness. (Compare the expression applied to the first believers, Acts ix. 2—men of the way.)
Then let me sow, and let another eat; Yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, Or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door;

Then let my wife grind unto another, And let others bow down upon her.

For this is an heinous crime; Yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.

Or for it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, And would root out all mine increase.

If I did despise the cause of my manservant Or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;

What then shall I do when God riseth up? And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

Did not he that made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?

If I have witheld the poor from their desire, Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

(For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, And I have guided her from my mother's womb;) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, Or any poor without covering;

Oh that we had of his flesh! we can never be satisfied therewith. (Comp. the similar expression, chap. xix. 22.)

If I have made gold my hope.—He here refers to the admonition of Eliphaz (chap. xxi. 23, 24), and declares that such had not been his practice. If I beheld the sun.—It is remarkable that the kind of idolatry repudiated by Job is that only of sun and moon worship. He seems to have been ignorant of the more material and degraded kinds. By the judge.—Rather, perhaps, by my judge, i.e., God; unless, indeed, there be any reference to the Mosaic law (Deut. xvii. 2—7), which does not seem likely. If I rejoiced at the destruction.—He now proceeds to the realm of the wishes and thoughts, and is, therefore, far more thorough and searching with his own case than his friends had been. Oh that we had of his flesh!—We should never be satisfied therewith. (Comp. the similar expression, chap. xix. 22.)
Job's Last Words

(30) The stranger did not lodge in the street:
But I opened my doors to the traveller.

(31) If I covered my transgressions as Adam,
By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:
Did I fear a great multitude,
Or did the contempt of families terrify me,
That I kept silence, and went not out of the door?

(33) If I opened my doors to the traveller:-The manners of Gen. xix. 2, 3, Judg. xix. 20, 21, if not the incidents there recorded, are here implied. "The traveller" is literally the road or way: i.e., the wayfarer.

As Adam.-Or, as man, i.e., commonly does. There may or may not be here some indication of acquaintance with the narrative of Genesis. (See the margin.)

(35) Oh that one would hear me!—The rendering noticed in the margin is probably the right one—Oh that I had one to hear me! Lo, here is my mark! i.e., my signature, my declaration, which I am ready to subscribe; and oh that my adversary had written a book! More correctly, perhaps, "That I had the book or not before mentioned, but who appears to have been open to the stranger." The actual meaning is
I would declare unto him the Almighty would answer me, And that mine adversary had written a book.

(36) Surely I would take it upon my shoulder,
And bind it as a crown to me.

JOB, XXXII.

CHAPTER XXXII. — (1) So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

(32) I opened my doors to the traveller.—The manners of Gen. xix. 2, 3, Judg. xix. 20, 21, if not the incidents there recorded, are here implied. "The traveller" is literally the road or way: i.e., the wayfarer.

(33) If I covered my transgressions as Adam,
By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:
Did I fear a great multitude,
Or did the contempt of families terrify me,
That I kept silence, and went not out of the door?

(35) Oh that one would hear me!—The rendering noticed in the margin is probably the right one—Oh that I had one to hear me! Lo, here is my mark! i.e., my signature, my declaration, which I am ready to subscribe; and oh that my adversary had written a book! More correctly, perhaps, "That I had the book or not before mentioned, but who appears to have been open to the stranger." The actual meaning is
I would declare unto him the Almighty would answer me, And that mine adversary had written a book.

(36) Surely I would take it upon my shoulder,
And bind it as a crown to me.

(37) I would declare unto him the number of my steps;
As a prince would I go near unto him.

(38) If my land cry against me,
Or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;
If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money,
Or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

(40) Let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And, cockle instead of barley.
The words of Job are ended.

XXXII.

(1) So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

This appears from chaps. iii. 26, vi. 10, 29, x. 7, xiii. 15, xix. 6, &c., xxii. 7, 10, 11, 12, xxvii. 6, xxix. 12, &c.
(2) Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. (3) Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. (4) Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he. (5) When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled. (6) And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; Wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. (7) I said, Days should speak, And multitude of years should teach wisdom. (8) But there is a spirit in man: And the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. (9) Great men are not always wise: Neither doth the aged understand judgment.

(2) Because he justified himself rather than God.—See chap. xix. 6. Job maintained his innocence, and could not understand how his affliction could be reconciled with the justice of God. Yet, at the same time, he declared that God was his salvation (chap. xiii. 23), and that it was impossible for man to be absolutely just with God (chap. ix. 2, 28), though at the same time he might hope in His righteousness (chap. xxiii. 8 seqq.).

(3) They had found no answer.—They could not reply unto Job, nor deny that he had been in conduct such as he said he had been, and yet they concluded that he must be wicked because God had smitten him.

(4) Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken.—Literally, Had waited in words for or regarding Job; that is, as some understand it, had waited to speak unto Job, or, more probably, had waited till the argument was closed to declare his opinion with reference to Job. The line taken by Elihu is an intermedial one, and is neither that of Job nor his friends. He admits the integrity of Job—or, at least, he does not deny it—although he uses very strong expressions as to the course which Job has adopted (chap. xxxiv. 7—9, 35—37); but he considers that the Divine afflictions have a disciplinary object, and that they may be sent because God has discerned the seeds of unfaithfulness and defection in the sufferer; and this may serve to explain their purpose in the case of Job. He has very lofty ideas of the righteousness of God (chap. xxxiv. 10, &c.), and of His power and majesty (chap. xxxvii. 28). He holds that with regard to the Almighty we cannot say Him out, but that we may safely trust His mercy and His justice. This is the position to which he leads Job when the Lord answers him out of the whirlwind.

(5) I am young.—The way in which Elihu comes forward is very interesting, and full of character. It gives us also a picture of the times and habits.

(6) Therefore I said, Hearken to me;—I also will shew mine opinion.

(7) Behold, I waited for your words;—I gave ear to your reasons.

(8) Ye are not wise, although they spake not, But stood still, and answered no more;

(9) They were amazed, they answered no more:

(10) They were amazed, they answered no more:

(11) Therefore I said, I will answer also my part,—I also will shew mine opinion.

(12) For I am full of matter,

(11) The spirit within me constraineth me.
JOB, XXXIII.

He reasons with Job.

(19) Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. (20) I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. (21) Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. (22) For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—(1) Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. (2) Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth. (3) My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly. (4) The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. (5) If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.

(19) New bottles.—Or wine-skins. (Comp. Matt. ix. 17.)

(22) In so doing my maker would soon take me away.—Or perhaps the meaning may be, "My Maker will not have to forgive me," that is, for being too candid, frank, and straightforward: for speaking too plainly. Some commentators regard Elihu's character with great disfavour, and consider him to be an empty and arrogant talker, mainly, perhaps, from verses 18, 19; others accept him as a wise and pious friend of Job, who not only gave him good advice, but perhaps more nearly than any other of the disputants hit the truth about Job's afflictions. We are probably more right in this latter view, because at the climax of the poem we do not read that Elihu had any share in the condemnation which was passed by God on the three friends of Job. He is not noticed for either praise or blame.

(23) It is to be observed that the last eight verses of this chapter are a kind of soliloquy, unlike the former part of it, which was addressed to the friends, or the next chapter, which is addressed to Job.

XXXIII.

(1) Wherefore, Job, I pray thee.—He begins by professing his sincerity and integrity, and with reference to Job's expressed desire to find an umpire (chap. ix. 33), and one who would maintain his right with God (chap. xvi. 21), he declares that he is ready to do so, and that he is, like Job, made out of the clay, and consequently disposed to deal favourably with him.

(2) Neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.—i.e., I will deal gently with thee, and not be harsh.

(9) I am clean without transgression.—Job has nowhere used this language; but many of his statements were capable of being so perverted and misrepresented (chaps. ix. 20, 21, xvi. 17, xxiii. 10—12, xxvii. 5, 6). This shows that Elihu even was incapable of entering fully into Job's position. He did not understand that a man could alone be righteous in proportion as he trusted God, but that, as a man, he was righteous with his righteousness. This was the truth that Job dimly perceived and was faintly, though surely, striving after; and to his friends it was unintelligible, and not wholly apprehended by Elihu.

(10) Behold, he findeth occasions against me.—See chaps. xiii. 24, 26, 27, xix. 11.

(11) He putteth my feet in the stocks.—Referring, probably, to chap. xiii. 27.

(12) Behold, in this thou art not just: for I the giveth not account of any of his matters.

(13) Why dost thou strive against him?—For he giveth not account of any of his matters.

(14) For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

(15) In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falleth upon men, in
slumberings upon the bed; (16) Then he openeth the ears of men,—
and sealeth their instruction, (17) That he may withdraw man from his
purpose, And hide pride from man. (18) He keepeth back his soul from the
pit, And his life 3 from perishing by the
sword. (19) He is chastened also with pain upon his
bed, And the multitude of his bones with
strong pain : (20) So that his life abhorreth bread,—
and his soul 4 dainty meat. (21) His flesh is consumed away, that it
cannot be seen; And his bones that were not seen
stick out. (22) Yea, his soul draweth near unto the
grave, And his life to the destroyers. (23) If there be a messenger with him,

Instances of this first method. (Comp. also Gen. xv. 12.
&c., xxviii. 12, &c.) (16) Then he openeth the ears of men and
sealeth. Comp. chap. xiv. 17: “My transgression is
sealed in a bag.” “He openeth their ear,” that is, He
showeth them that He will decree, confirm, and seal up
their chastisement, the sentence that is to be executed upon them, if they will not repent. If taken in the
sense of instruction, it must mean that He will complete
and confirm it.

From his purpose.—Rather, That He may withdraw man from carrying out his evil actions, and
may remove that pride from man which he secretly
cherishes. This is the main point of Elihu’s teaching: that the purposes of God are disciplinary, to keep man
from the sin which otherwise he would be prone to
commit. In this way Job might have been a righteous
man, and yet be justly chastened lest he should prove
unrighteous.

He is chastened.—This is the second manner
in which God speaks—first by dreams, &c., then by
afflictions. And the multitude of his bones with strong
pain.—Or, reading it otherwise, we may render, And
with continual strife in his bones—e.g., rheumatism and
gout.

To show unto man his uprightness.— Some render, “to show unto man what is right for him,”
but it seems rather to mean, to declare concerning that man his uprightness, to plead his cause before God and
be his advocate. (Comp. 1 Kings xiv. 13; 2 Chron.
xix. 3, &c.) This angel, who is one among a thousand, and discharges the function of an interpreter, is a remarkable
anticipation of the existence of that function with
God which is discharged by the Advocate with the
Father (1 John ii. 1; Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25). It
is impossible for us who believe that all Scripture is given
by inspiration of God not to see in this an indication
of what God intended afterwards to teach us concerning
the intercession and mediation of the Son and the inter-
cession of the Holy Spirit on behalf of man (Rom. viii.
26). (Comp. John xiv. 16.)

Then he is gracious unto him— i.e., God is gracious; He accepts the mediation of the mediating
angel. These words of Elihu’s must have fallen on
Job’s ear with a grateful and refreshing sound, con-
firming to him his longing for the daysman (chap.
ix. 25).

And saith— i.e., to the destroying angels of verse
22. It is remarkable that it is God who finds the
ransom, as it was by God’s grace that the interpreting
angel was forthcoming. It is not man’s righteousness
that has saved him, but the ransom that God has found,
even though God, who judgeth the actions, may have
justly recognised what of righteousness there was in
man.

He will be favourable unto him.—Very
beautiful is this description of the restoration of the
penitent sinner and his recovery from sickness. He
shall thankfully resort unto the house of God with joy,
for that He has rewarded him according to his righteous-
ness, which was the fruit of faith (Gen. xv. 6; Ps.
xxiii. 1, 2).

He looketh upon men, and if any say.—
Rather, He looketh upon men, and saith, I have sinned,
&c.; that is the confession of the restored sinner. Some
render it, He shall sing before men, but hardly so
probably or appropriately.

He will deliver his soul.—There are two
readings in the Hebrew here, of which one is represented
by the Authorised Version; but the better one is, “He
hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit, and
my life shall see the light”—this is part of the restored
man’s confession, which appears to be continued till
the speaker resumes in verse 29.
Elihu accuses Job of... charging God with injustice.

(29) Lo, all these things worketh God—oftentimes with man,
(30) To bring back his soul from the pit,
To be enlightened with the lights of the living.
(31) Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me:
Hold thy peace, and I will speak.
(32) If thou hast any thing to say, answer me:
Speak, for I desire to justify thee.
(33) If not, hearken unto me:
Hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

CHAPTER XXXIV. — (1) Furthermore Elihu answered and said,
(2) Hear my words, O ye wise men;
And give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.
(3) For the ear trieth words,—as the mouth tasteth meat.
(4) Let us choose to us judgment:
Let us know among ourselves what is good.
(5) For Job hath said, I am righteous:
And God hath taken away my judgment.
(6) Should I lie against my right?
(7) What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?
(8) Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walketh with wicked men.
(9) For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing
That he should delight himself with God.
(10) Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding:
Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness;
And from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.
(11) For the work of a man shall he render unto him,
And cause every man to find according to his ways.
(12) Yea, surely God will not do wickedly,
Neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

(13) Who hath given him a charge over the earth? Or who hath disposed the whole world?

(14) If he set his heart upon man, If he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;

(15) All flesh shall perish together, And man shall turn again unto dust.

(16) If now thou hast understanding, hear this:

Hearken to the voice of my words, Shall even he that hateth right govern? And wilt thou condemn him that is most just? Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? And to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, but esteemeth the worthless as the precious, and the ill-favored as better than the noble?

is the welfare of that which is His—of that, therefore, in which He Himself has the largest interest. The argument is a somewhat strange one to us, but it is sound at bottom, for it recognises God as the prime origin and final hope of all His creatures, and assumes that His will can only be good, and that what He does is rather him that is just and mighty, i.e., not only just, but able also to execute justice because mighty.

(18) Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? And to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, but esteemeth the worthless as the precious, and the ill-favored as better than the noble?

(21) Is it fit to say to a king?—The argument is from the less to the greater. "Who could challenge a king or princes? and if not a king, how much less the King of kings?" There is a strong ellipse in the Hebrew, but yet one that is naturally supplied. (Comp. Ps. cxxxvii. 5.)

(22) In a moment shall they die—i.e., "they all alike die, rich and poor together; the hour of death is not hastened for the poor nor delayed for the rich. They all alike die." Even at midnight the people are troubled.

(23) For he will not lay upon man more than right; That he should enter into judgment with God.

(24) He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, And set others in their stead.

Him that is most just, is rather him that is just and mighty, i.e., not only just, but able also to execute justice because mighty.

(25) For he will not lay upon man more than right—i.e., so much that he should enter into judgment with God. This is probably the meaning, as the Authorised Version; but some render, "He needeth not yet again to consider a man that he should go before God in judgment." He hath no need to consider any man's case twice or to rectify His first decision. He is infallible, and cannot do otherwise than right, whatever He does.

(26) Without number.—Rather, in an unsearchable manner, as before, verse 20, "without hand," i.e., without human means.

(27) Therefore.—We should expect because rather; but the writer, believing in God's justice, infers that since God acts thus He knoweth the works of man, and has grounds for acting as He acts.
Therefore he knoweth their works,
And he overturneth them in the night,
so that they are destroyed.

He striketh them as wicked men—
in the open sight of others;
Because they turned back from him,
And would not consider any of his ways:
So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him,
And he heareth the cry of the afflicted.
When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?
And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?
Whether it be done against a nation,
or against a man only:
That the hypocrite reign not,—lest the people be ensnared.
Surely it is meet to be said unto God,
I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:
That which I see not teach thou me:
If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

Should it be according to thy mind?
he will recompense it,
Whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I:
Therefore speak what thou knowest.

Let men of understanding tell me,—
Rather, Men of understanding will say to me, or agree with me; and every wise man that heareth me will say, &c.
My desire is that Job may be tried.—There seems to be reason to prefer the marginal rendering, and consider the words as addressed to God: "Oh my Father, let Job be tried, &c." "Pater mi probetur Job," Vulg. Elihu's words cannot have fallen upon Job with more acceptance or with lighter weight than those of his other friends. He must have felt, however, that his cause was safe with God, whatever the misunderstanding of men.
Because of his answers for wicked men.—
Rather, his answering like wicked men.
He clappeth his hands among us.—As though he were confident of victory in argument.

My righteousness is more than God's.—See chap. xix. 6, &c. Job had not in so many words said this, but what he had said was capable of being so represented, and perhaps seemed to involve it. (Comp. chaps. ix. 22, x. 15.) Here, again, there was a misrepresentation of what Job had said. He certainly did not mean that he was none the better for being righteous; on the contrary, he had distinctly said, "Let mine enemy be as the wicked," &c. (chap. xxvii. 7, &c.), because he could not delight himself in God; but it was perfectly true that he had said that his righteousness had not delivered him from suffering.

And thy companions.—Elihu professes to answer Job's friends as well as himself, but what he says (verse 5, &c.) is very much what Eliphaz had said before (chaps. xv. 14, &c., xxii. 3, &c., and Bildad
Comparison is not

[(5) Look unto the heavens, and see; And behold the clouds which are higher than thou.]

[(6) If thou art wiser than man in time, Or if thousands in enterprise, what dost thou understand?]

[(7) Or if thou givest much of thy goods to the hungry, And seest at least one of the needy, open thy hand;]

[(8) They may even look upon thee and be寡 of thee: But if thou hast many, it is not so.] And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

[(12) There they cry, but none giveth answer, Because of the pride of evil men.]

[(13) Surely God will not hear vanity. Neither will the Almighty regard it.]

[(14) Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, Yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.]

[(15) But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity:]

[(16) Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; He multiplieth words without knowledge.]

CHAPTER XXXVI.—(4) Elihu also proceeded, and said, (2) Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee

in chap. xxxv.). It is indeed true that God is too high to be affected by man’s righteousness or unrighteousness, but it does not follow therefore that He is indifferent, for then He would not be a righteous judge. (See Note on chap. xxxiv. 9.)

[(9) By reason of the multitude of oppressions which they make the oppressed to cry: They cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty, But none saith, Where is God my maker, Who giveth songs in the night?]

[(10) But none saith, Where is God my maker, Who giveth songs in the night?]

[(11) Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, That is, God, Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, Or what receiveth he of thine hand?]

[(12) There they cry, but none giveth answer, Because of the pride of evil men.]

[(13) Surely God will not hear vanity. Neither will the Almighty regard it.]

[(14) Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, Yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.]

[(15) But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity:]

[(16) Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; He multiplieth words without knowledge.]

[(17) but none saith, Where is God my maker, Who giveth songs in the night?] And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

[(18) There they cry, but none giveth answer, Because of the pride of evil men.]

[(19) Surely God will not hear vanity. Neither will the Almighty regard it.]

[(20) Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, Yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.]

[(21) But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity:]

[(22) Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; He multiplieth words without knowledge.]

[(23) Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, Or what receiveth he of thine hand?]

[(24) They cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty, But none saith, Where is God my maker, Who giveth songs in the night?]
1. That I have yet to speak on God's behalf.
2. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
3. For truly my words shall not be false; He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.
4. Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any:
5. He is mighty in strength and wisdom.
6. He preserves not the life of the wicked:
7. But giveth right to the poor.
8. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous:
9. But with kings are they on the throne; Yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.
10. And if they be bound in fetters, And be holden in cords of affliction;
11. Then he sheweth them their work, And their transgressions that they have exceeded.
12. He openeth also their ear to discipline, And commandeth that they return from iniquity.
13. If they obey and serve him, They shall spend their days in prosperity,
14. And their years in pleasures.
15. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, And they shall die without knowledge.
16. But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath:
17. They cry not when he bindeth them,
18. They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.
19. He delivereth the poor in his affliction, And openeth their ears in oppression.
20. Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait Into a broad place, where there is no straitness;
21. And that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.
22. But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: Judgment and justice take hold on thee.
23. Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke:
24. Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.
25. Will he esteem thy riches? No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.
26. Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.

(3) I will fetch my knowledge from afar.
(4) He that is perfect in knowledge.
(5) He that is perfect in knowledge.
(7) Then he sheweth them their work.
(9) From the righteous—i.e., the righteous man.
(11) They shall spend their days in prosperity.
(13) The hypocrites in heart.
(15) He delivereth the poor in his affliction.
(17) But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath:
(20) Even so would he have removed thee.
(23) Because there is wrath.
(25) Will he esteem thy riches? No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

And the very affliction to deliver him by it as a means, "and openeth their ears by oppression."

Even so would he have removed thee. It is possible to understand this verse somewhat otherwise, and the sense may perhaps be improved. Elihu may be speaking, not of what God would have done, but of what He has actually done: "Yes, also He hath removed thee from the mouth of an adversary, even case and abundance in the place of which there was no straitness, and that which came down upon thy table full of fatness; but thou art full of the judgment of the wicked, therefore justice and judgment take hold on thee." God, in His mercy, saw that thou wast in danger, and He removed the cause of temptation, and thy chastisement would have been of short duration hadst thou been submissive and resigned; but thou hast been bold and daring, like the wicked, and hast reaped the judgment of the wicked.

Because there is wrath. "For there is wrath: now, therefore, beware lest He take thee away with one stroke, so that great ransom cannot deliver thee." Literally it is, let not a great ransom deliver thee, but the sense is probably like the Authorized Version.

No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

The words here are doubtful. Some render, "Will He esteem thy riches, that thou be not in distress?" or, "all the forces of thy strength;" others, "Will they cry avail, that thou be not in distress?" &c.; but there is authority for the Authorized Version.

Desire not the night.—i.e., of death, as Job had done (chaps. xvi. 22, xvii. 13, &c., xix. 27), or as, at
CHAPTER XXXVII. — (1) At this also my heart trembleth.

(21) Take heed, regard not iniquity: 
For this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.
(22) Behold, God exalteth by his power:— 
who teacheth him like he?
(23) Who hath enjoined him his way? 
Or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?
(24) Remember that thou magnify his work,—which men behold.
(25) Every man may see it;—man may behold it afar off.
(26) Behold, God is great, and we know him not,
Neither can the number of his years be searched out.
(27) For he maketh small the drops of water: 
They pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:

(28) Which the clouds do drop 
And distil upon man abundantly.
(29) Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, 
Or the noise of his tabernacle?
(30) Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, 
And covereth the bottom of the sea.
(31) For by them judgeth he the people; 
He giveth meat in abundance.
(32) With clouds he covereth the light; 
And commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.
(33) The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, 
The cattle also concerning the vapour.

The Greatness of God's Works.
God is to be feared

Job, XXXVII.

because of His great Works.

And is moved out of his place.

(2) Hear attentively the noise of his voice,
And the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

(3) He directeth it under the whole heaven,
And his lightning unto the ends of the earth.

(4) After it a voice roareth:
He thundereth with the voice of his excellency;
And he will not stay them when his voice is heard.

(5) God thundereth marvellously with his voice;
Great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

(6) For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth;
Likewise to the small rain, And to the great rain of his strength.

(7) He sealeth up the hand of every man;
That all men may know his work.

(8) Then the beasts go into dens,—and remain in their places.

(9) Out of the south cometh the whirl-wind:
And cold out of the north.

1 Heb., Hear in hearing.
2 Heb., light.
3 Heb., wings of the earth.
4 Ps. 147, 16, 17.
5 Heb., Out of the chamber.
6 Heb., scattering winds.
7 Heb., the cloud of his light.
8 Heb., a rod.

(3) He directeth it.—Or, saudeth it forth: i.e., the noise and rumbling which fills all heaven.

(4) After it a voice roareth—i.e., the thunderclap which follows the lightning-flash.

And he stayeth them not (or will not stay them) when his voice is heard.—What does this mean? We understand it, "Yet none can track them (i.e., the thunder and the lightning) when His voice is heard. They travel in paths which none can explore. Vivid as His land generally, or whether He causeth the rain as a special mercy:—these are the various purposes for which God reserves His showers.

(5) Out of the south cometh the whirl-wind:
And cold out of the north.

(10) By the breath of God frost is given;
And the breadth of the waters is straitened.

(11) Also by watering he weareth the thick cloud:
He scattereth his bright cloud:

(12) And it is turned round about by his counsels:
That they may do whatsoever he commandeth them
Upon the face of the world in the earth.

(13) He causeth it to come, whether for correction,
Or for his land, or for mercy.

(14) Hearken unto this, O Job:
Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

(15) Dost thou know when God disposed them,
And caused the light of his cloud to shine?

(16) Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds,
The wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?

(17) How thy garments are warm,
When he quieteth the earth by the south wind?

(18) Hast thou with him spread out the sky,
charged with rain. "He scattereth the cloud of His lightning," that is, which containeth His lightning. Others render, "Yea, the bright sun weareth out (disperseth) the thick cloud; it scattereth the cloud that holds His lightning. And it (the cloud) is turned round about by His counsels, that they may do His purpose, even all which He commandeth them, upon the face of the habitable world." Whether for correction, or for His land generally, or whether He causeth the rain to come as a special mercy:—these are the various purposes for which God reserves His showers.

(19) Spread out the sky.—Some understand this of the action of the sun in dispersing the clouds; but it seems more probable that it refers to God. "Hast thou spread out with Him the magnificent dome of heaven?" The words used, however, imply the clouds rather than the cloudless sky which resembles a burnished mirror; so that it is not improbable that the sun may be the subject here and in the following verses.
Which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?

Teach us what we shall say unto him;
For we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.

Shall it be told him that I speak?
If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.
And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds:
But the wind passeth and cleanseth them.

Fair weather cometh out of the north:
With God is terrible majesty.
Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power,
And in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

Men therefore fear him:
He respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,
Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?
Gird up now thy loins like a man;
For I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.
Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Or who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
Or who hath stretched the line upon it?
Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?
Or who laid the corner stone thereof?
When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
Or who shut up the sea with doors,
And brake up for it my decreed place.
Rather, And prescribed for it my decree: that is to say, determined the boundaries of its abode. When we bear in mind the vast forces and unstable nature of the sea, it seems a marvel that it acknowledges any limits, and is held in restraint by them.

And caused the dayspring to know his place; Changing, as it does, from day to day with the changing seasons.

That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, That the wicked might be shaken out of it? As clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

And from the wicked their light is withheld, And the high arm shall be broken.

Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth?

(10) And brake up for it my decreed place.—Rather, And prescribed for it my decree; that is to say, determined the boundaries of its abode. When we bear in mind the vast forces and unstable nature of the sea, it seems a marvel that it acknowledges any limits, and is held in restraint by them.

(12) And caused the dayspring to know his place;—Changing, as it does, from day to day with the changing seasons.

(13) That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, That the wicked might be shaken out of it?—The figure is that of a man shaking a cloth (chap. xxiv. 15—17).

(14) As clay to the seal.—In the darkness every object is without form and void, just as clay or wax, which has no distinctness of shape till the seal is applied, and then the impression is clear and manifest. So with the coming of the daylight after darkness. We should rather render, It is changed as clay under the seal, and all things stand forth as in their proper vesture.

(15) The search of the depth—i.e., the secret recesses of it. The "springs of the sea" are rather, perhaps, the mazes, intricacies, &c. of the trackless, pathless deep. This leads to the cognate thought of the bottomless pit of death (verse 17).

Declare if thou knowest it all.

Where is the way where light dwell-eth?
And as for darkness, where is the place thereof,
That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,
And that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?
Knowest thou it, because thou wast born?
Or because the number of thy days is great?
Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?
Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,
Which I have reserved against the time of trouble,
Against the day of battle and war?
By what way is the light parted, Which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?
Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, Or a way for the lightning of thunder;
To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; On the wilderness, wherein there is no man;
To satisfy the desolate and waste ground;
And to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

And the east wind.—As naturally suggested by the origin of light and the mention of it.

Who hath divided a watercourse.—Rather, cleft a channel for the water-flood.

To cause it to rain on the earth.—Because God is mindful of His creation, independently of the wants of man.
The Greatness of God

JOB, XXXIX. in all His Works.

Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?  
(29) Out of whose womb came the ice?  
And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?  
(30) The waters are hid as with a stone,  
And the face of the deep is frozen.  
(31) Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades,  
Or loose the bands of Orion?  
(32) Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?  
Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?  
(33) Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?  
Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?  
(34) Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,  
That abundance of waters may cover thee?  
(35) Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go,  
And say unto thee, "Here we are?"  
(36) Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?  
Or who hath given understanding to the heart?  
(37) Who can number the clouds in wisdom?  
Or who can stay the bottles of heaven,  
(38) When the dust groweth into hardness,  
And the clods cleave fast together?

The waters are hid.—Or, The waters hide themselves and become like stone. Water loses its familiar quality, and is turned into stone.  
The sweet influences.—With reference to their supposed effect on weather and the like, or perhaps the word means chain or band, with allusion to their group—"Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid." The context, however, of "the bands of Orion" seems rather to favour the other view. "Canst thou regulate the influences exerted by these several constellations in either direction of increase or diminution?"  
Mazzaroth is commonly understood to mean the signs of the Zodiac, and by the children of Arcturus the three stars in the tail of Ursa Major.  
The ordinances of heaven.—Comp. chap. xviii. 26. That is, the recurring seasons and their power of influencing the earth.  
Wisdom in the inward parts.—The mention of the inward parts and the heart here, in the midst of natural phenomena, perplexes every one; but it is a natural solution to refer them to the lightnings personified: "Who hath put such understanding in their inward parts?"

(30) Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion?  
Or fill the appetite of the young lions,  
(31) When they couch in their dens,  
And abide in the covert to lie in wait?  
(32) Who provideth for the raven his food?  
When his young ones cry unto God,  
They wander for lack of meat.  

CHAPTER XXXIX.  
(1) Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?  
Or canst thou mark when the hind doth calve?  
(2) Canst thou number the months that they fulfill?  
Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?  
(3) They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones,  
They cast out their sorrows.  
(4) Their young ones are in good liking,  
They grow up with corn;  
They go forth, and return not unto them.  
(5) Who hath sent out the wild ass free?  
Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?  
(6) Whose house I have made the wilderness,  
And the barren land his dwellings.  
(7) He scorneth the multitude of the city,  
Neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

Who can stay the bottles of heaven?—This is understood in two opposite senses—of pouring out the bottles or of laying them up in store. It is not easy to decide which is most in accordance with the context, for the context also is somewhat uncertain, according as we interpret the solid mass of thick mud or of hard, dry soil. The survey of physical phenomena ends with this verse.  
Wilt thou hunt the prey?—The new chapter ought to begin here with this verse, insomuch as the animal creation now passes under review.  
They wander for lack of meat.—The second clause is not a direct statement, but is dependent on the previous one; thus: "When his young ones cry unto God, when they wander for lack of meat."

XXXIX.  
They grow up with corn.—Or more probably, perhaps, in the open field, as the word means according to some.  
The crying of the driver.—Or, the shoutings of the taskmaster. The word is the same as is applied to the taskmasters of Egypt, and this suggests the question whether or not there may be a reminiscence of that bondage here.
Or, the feathers of the stork and ostrich.

Neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

What time she lifteth up herself on high,
She scorneth the horse and his rider.

Hast thou given the horse strength?
Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?
The glory of his nostrils is terrible.

He goeth on to meet the armed men.

He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted;
Neither turneth he back from the sword.

The quiver rattleth against him,
The glittering spear and the shield.

He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage:
Neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha;
And he smelleth the battle afar off,
The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom,
And stretch her wings toward the south?

The range of the mountains is his pasture,
And he searcheth after every green thing.

Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow?
Or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great?
Or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?

Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed,
And gather it into thy barn?

Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks?
Or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?

Which leaveth her eggs in the earth,
And warmeth them in dust,

And forgettest that the foot may crush them,
Or that the wild beast may break them.

She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not her's:
Her labour is in vain without fear;

Because God hath deprived her of wisdom,
Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, Upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: And where the slain are, there is she.

CHAPTER XL. — (1) Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it. Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: Yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, He that reproveth God, let him answer — and be arrayed with glory, and with beauty, and array thyself with majesty and excellency; and tremble not before him, neither be con­tent to dispute and contend with God. Always been a great difficulty with commentators. The word in Hebrew is really the natural plural of behemoth, as some think.

by means of the ostrich, which, though winged like a bird, cannot use its wings as birds do, but only run on the ground like a quadruped.

Where the slain are, there is she.—Comp. Matt. xxiv. 28, and Luke xvii. 37.

Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? — Rather, Can he that reproveth (e.g., Job) contend with the Almighty? or, Can he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? “Art thou prepared still to dispute and contend with God? or, if thou dost, is there any hope that thou wilt instruct (i.e., convince) Him in argument? Let him that argueth with God (i.e., Job) answer this question.” It might, perhaps, tend to make these verses (verses 4, 5) more effective if we transposed them after chap. xlii. 6, and regarded them as the very climax of the poem, as some have done. But this is not necessary, and is an arrangement that has no support from external evidence. If, however, it were adopted, Job’s resolution, “Once have I spoken; but I will speak no more; yes, twice; but I will not again” (verse 5), would not be literally inconsistent, as it now is, with what he says in chap. xlii. 1—6.

Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? — Comp. what Job said in chaps. xix. 6, 7, xxvii. 2. God is about to show Job his inability to govern the world and administer judgment among men, so as to rule them morally, from his acknowledged inability to govern the more formidable animals of the brute creation. If he cannot restrain them, how is it likely that he will be able to tread down the wicked in their place? And if he cannot hold the wicked in check and compel them to submission, how, any more, can he protect himself from their violence? how can he save himself from the outbursts of their fury? or, if not save himself from them, how much less can he deliver himself from the hand of God? If he cannot hide them in the dust together, and bind them (i.e., restrain the threatenings of their rage in the hidden world) in the secret prison-house, how much less can he save himself, and be independent of the help of a saviour?

Behemoth. —The identification of behemoth has always been a great difficulty with commentators. The word in Hebrew is really the natural plural of behêmah, which means domestic cattle; and this fact would suggest the idea that more than one animal may be meant in the description (verses 15—24), which scarcely seems to answer to one and the same. In this way the verses 15—20 would describe very well the elephant, and verses 21—24 the hippopotamus. The objection to this is, that behêmah is commonly used of domestic cattle in contrast to wild beasts, whereas neither the elephant nor the hippopotamus can come under the category of domestic animals. There is a word in Coptic (p-ehe-em-e, meaning water-ox), used for the hippopotamus, which may, perhaps, lie concealed in behemoth. Then the difficulty is to make the description answer throughout to the hippopotamus (e.g., verse 20), since the hippopotamus does not frequent mountains, neither does it exactly eat grass like an ox (verse 15).

Which I made with thee.—Fellow-creatures of thine, to inhabit the world with thee: thus skillfully reminding him that he had a common origin with the beasts.
The Behemoth

JOB, XLI. and the Leviathan.

(10) Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.

(17) He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

(18) His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.

(19) He is the chief of the ways of God: He that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

(20) Surely the mountains bring him forth food, Where all the beasts of the field play.

(21) He lieth under the shady trees, In the covert of the reed, and fens.

(22) The shady trees cover him with their shadow; The willows of the brook compass him about.

(23) Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not:

He trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

(24) He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.

CHAPTER XLI.—Canst thou draw out Leviathan with an hook? Or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?

(1) Or, He setteth up.

(2) Or, Will he set his impress on thee? or, bore his nose with a pin?

(3) Or, He drinks up.

(4) That is, a whirlpool, or, a whirlpool.

(5) Or, Which thou drivest out?

(6) In the navel.—Rather, in the sinews, or muscles.

(7) The sinews of his stones.—Rather, of his thighs.

(8) Strong pieces.—Or, perhaps, tubes. His limbs are like bars of iron.

(9) He is the chief of the ways of God.—This is surely more applicable to the elephant than the hippopotamus, considering the great intelligence and usefulness of the elephant. The last clause is very obscure. Some render, “He only that made him can bring his sword near unto him;” or, “He that made him hath furnished him with his sword.” Others, “He that would dress him (as meat) let him come near him with his sword,” indicating the inequality of the contest. Perhaps a combination of the first and last is best—“Let his Maker (but no one else venture to) approach him with His sword.”

(10) He lieth under the shady trees.—If this description applies to any one animal, it seems on the whole more appropriate to the elephant than the hippopotamus. No doubt the judgment of critics has been biased by their pre-conceived notions about the circumstances under which they suppose the Book of Job to have been written; and the author was more likely, it is thought, to have been acquainted with the river-horse of Egypt than with the elephant of India, though, to be sure, elephants abound also in Africa, and may very well have been known to the writer of Job from that quarter, if the other is less likely.

(11) Behold, he drinketh up a river.—This verse is better rendered, Behold, if a river overflow (or, is violent), he trembleth not (or, hasteneth not); if his tongue with a cord which thou letteth down?

(12) Or, Canst thou put an hook into his nose? Or bore his jaw through with a thorn? Or wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

(13) Will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make many supplications unto thee?

(14) Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

(15) Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidsens?

(16) Shall the companions make a banquet of him? Shall they part him among the merchants?

(17) Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? Or his head with fish spears?

(18) Lay thine hand upon him,—remember the battle, do no more.

(19) Behold, the hope of him is in vain: Shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?

(20) None is so fierce that dare stir him up:

Who then is able to stand before me?
Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him?

And sorrow is turned into joy before him.

Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

They are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

I will not conceal his parts, Nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

His heart is as firm as a stone;

Who can discover . . . ?—Rather, Who can strip off his outer garment? i.e., his scales, which are the covering of his skin. Who shall come within his double bridle, i.e., the doubling of his jaw? Who would venture a limb within his jaws? This seems to be the meaning, rather than "Who shall come to him with his double bridle," forsooth to take him therewith?

JPS, 24.1, & 30.12; 1 Cor. 10.13. 1 Or, within.

Or, breastplate.

Or, strong pieces of shield.

Heb., sharp pieces of the pot-shard.

The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold:

He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; He maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

His scales are his pride, Shut up together as with a close seal.

His breath kindleth coals,—and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

His teeth is terror. (29) Darts.—Rather, Sling-stones are turned with him into stubble.

They stick together, that they cannot be parted; the doors of his face shut up together, and before him danceth fear.
Job submits himself to God.

(32) He maketh a path to shine after him; One would think the deep to be hoary.
(33) Upon earth there is not his like,—
    1 who is made without fear.
(34) He beholdeth all high things:
    He is a king over all the children of pride.

CHAPTER XLII. — (1) Then Job answered the Lord, and said,
(2) I know that thou canst do every thing,
    And that *no thought can be withheld from thee.
(3) *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?
    Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; 

(33, 34) Upon earth there is not his like.—Some have proposed to take away the last two verses of chap. xli. from their connection with the crocodile, and to transpose them, referring them to man, so as to come before verse 8, understanding them thus: “There is one whose like is not upon earth, who is made without dread. He seeth every high thing, and is king over all the proud beasts. To Him then I say (verse 8), Lay thine hand upon him; remember the battle, and do so no more. Lo! his hope is deceived. Is he indeed cast down at the very sight of him? He is not so cruel to himself that he should arouse him up. Who then can stand before me? Who hath first given to me, that I should have to repay him? That which is under the whole heavens is mine.” It cannot be denied that this makes very good sense, but it seems to be too great a liberty to take with the text in which Joh and the Lord alternately reply.

1 Or, who beholds things with- out fear.

2 Or, no thought of thine can be hindered.

3 ) 4 ) Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak:
    I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 

(3) I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear:
    But now mine eye seeth thee.

Wherefore I abhor myself,—and repent in dust and ashes.

(7) And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. (8) Therefore take

(53, 54) Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

(4) Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak:
    I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

(5) Wherefore I abhor myself,—and repent in dust and ashes.

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unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for I will accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. (9) So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job. (10) And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD 3 gave Job twice as much as he had before. (11) Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they be-

of the Gospel, and the promise which in its degree is afforded by the history of Job: for if Job's is a representative history, as we are bound to believe it must be, then the lesson of it must be that what is not explained or mended here will be explained and mended hereafter. It is God alone who can enlighten the darkness which surrounds His counsels; but at the same time we must remember that with Him is the well of life, and in His light we shall see light.

(11) Every man also gave him a piece of money.—The Hebrew word is kesitah, which is found also in the narrative of Jacob's purchase of the field of the children of Hamor (Gen. xxxiii. 19). Some have supposed, from a comparison of this passage with Gen. xxiii. 16, which relates the corresponding transaction between Abraham and the sons of Heth, that the value of the kesitah was four shekels, but this is, of course, not certain from these narraties. Tradition says that the kesitah was a coin with the figure of a lamb stamped upon it.

(12) Fourteen thousand sheep.—The number of Job's cattle here is exactly the double of those in chap. i. 2—29. This is probably one indication out of many that the age of Job was that of Moses, or before it. "My servant Job shall pray for you." This, strange to say, was the very promise with which Eliphaz himself had closed his third and last speech. His words therefore received a striking fulfilment in the case of himself and his friends. The intercession of Job seems to show us that his character is a typical one, representing to us the character of Christ as the sufferer and the mediator on behalf of man; and as in Job there is no trace of acquaintance with the Divine covenant, the book shows us a sort of anticipation of the Gospel to the Gentile world, that supposed, from a comparison of this passage with Gen. xxiii. 16, which relates the corresponding transaction between Abraham and the sons of Heth, that the value of the kesitah was four shekels, but this is, of course, not certain from these narratives. Tradition says that the kesitah was a coin with the figure of a lamb stamped upon it.

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and forty years, and saw his sons, and
his sons' sons, even four generations.

character of Job was other than real; his great age also
shows that he must be referred to the very early patri­
archal times, probably anterior to Moses.

So Job died, being old and full of days.—
Such is the close of this mysterious book, which deals
with the greatest problems that can engage the human
mind, and shows us the way in which the ancients solved
them, and the help which God vouchsafed them, apart
from His covenant revelation and before the dawning of
the Gospel light. And the great lesson of the history
is the way in which the malice of Satan is foiled. He
had insinuated that all service of God was interested
and done for advantage. Job had clearly shown that he
was capable of loving God even under the most severe
afflictions; and the issue which was eventually brought
about was no contradiction of this fact, inasmuch as it
was entirely hidden from Job till long after his proba­
tion was ended, and therefore could have no influence
upon his patience and faith. It is remarkable that Job
is only twice mentioned in Scripture, once in the Old
Testament and once in the New. Ezekiel was acquainted
with Job's history (chap. xiv. 14, 20), and St. James (chap.
v. 11) refers to him as a familiar standard of patience.
It is evident, however, that the Book of Job was well
known, from the many instances in the Psalms and
elsewhere in which we find traces of the influence
produced by familiarity with the language of the
book.
THE BOOK OF PSALMS.
INTRODUCTION

TO

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

I. Preliminary.—The Psalms appear in the earliest classification we have of the Hebrew Scriptures, viz., that of the New Testament, as one of the three great divisions of sacred literature, side by side with the Law and the Prophets. In the more elaborate arrangement of the Talmudic Canon, they lose their distinctive title in the more general one of Hagigographa or sacred writings (in Hebrew, Kethubim), at the head of which they stand, in the order adopted in the Hebrew Bibles. In the Septuagint this threefold division, not having been settled at the time of that translation, does not of course appear, and the Psalms there are classed with the poetical and didactic books, as in our English Bibles. It is often assumed that the title Psalms in Luke xxiv. 44 means the whole of the Hagigographa, the whole being named after its most important part. It is, however, more probable that the pre-eminence there given to the Psalms is due to another reason. The threefold division into Law, Prophets, and Psalms, was not a popular mode of designating the Scriptures as a whole, but an arrangement arising out of the use of the synagogue, where the Psalms supplied the lesson for the afternoon, as the Prophets did for the morning, of the Sabbath. The collection in its present form bears evidence of adaptation to the exigencies of the synagogue services. It was, however, originally made for the (Second) Temple service, and for musical purposes. It was the Jewish hymnal. This appears in the names by which it was known. In Hebrew the book is that of the Tehillim, or shortly, Tillim, § that is, praises. The Greek name is in one Codex ταυταία, in another ψαλμοι (the Lyre), from τιτίλιον Psaltery.] The Hebrew word for psalm (mizmor), whatever be the root idea of the term, apparently denotes a composition, not merely lyric, like śir, and so capable of being sung, but one actually set to music and accompanied by music.

Another indication that the choral service of the Temple or the Synagogue was the object of the compilation of the Psalms, and indeed of the composition of many of them, is found in the titles prefixed to a great number of the hymns. The meaning of these titles, and their bearing upon the difficult questions of date and authorship, will be discussed in the individual psalms. Here it is only necessary to call the reader's attention to the musical character of many of them. Some, for instance, convey directions to the choir or choir-master; in the Authorised Version, "To the chief musician" (Pss. xi., xiii., &c.). To this is sometimes added the kind of instruments to be employed (Pss. v., vi., liv., &c.), or the name of a musician or designation of a body of musicians (Pss. ixix., lxxviii.). Others apparently indicate the time to which the psalm is to be sung, or the compass of the voices for which it is suitable (Pss. ix., xxxii., vi., xii.). Others, again, bring the Psalter into close connection with the Levitical guilds or families, the Asaphites and the Korahites (Pss. l, lxxxii.—lxxviii., xlii.—xli.), whose connection with the Temple worship is elaborately described in the Book of Chronicles.

But there is, besides, ample historical testimony which corroborates what the nature of many of the Psalms, as well as the titles of others, would lead us to conclude—that the whole collection was intended for public worship. That the use of the Psalter in the various branches of the Christian Church is a continuation of its original purpose and use in the Jewish Church, is proved by Talmudic directions, and that the use had begun at an early time and continued unbroken through all the fortunes of Israel is shown by notices in the historical books, in the apocryphal books, and in the New Testament.

Its character as the Jewish hymnal once recognised, the Psalter will be found to answer, so to speak, frankly and openly the many questions that can and must be asked of its composition, arrangement, &c., even if on all points the answer cannot be so complete as we could wish. For instance we see at once from the analogy of hymn-books of modern churches that the collection is likely to turn out to be a compilation of works of different authors and different times, composed with various purposes, and on a vast variety of subjects, and only so far connected as being capable of use in the public worship of the Church; and this the most cursory glance at the Book of Psalms is sufficient to establish.

There is, however, this important difference between the Jewish and other hymn-books; it is rare that into one of the latter a poem not having a distinct religious

*This term, which simply means "writings," no doubt came gradually into use after the Canon, as far as the Law and the Prophets were concerned, was formed, and seems to indicate that the books included in it were at first held in less esteem.

† This arrangement is not universal in Hebrew MSS. The Spanish MSS. and the Masorah place the Chronicles at the head of this division. Ruth took the place of honour according to one Jewish Canon, and according to another Job preceded the Psalter, as in the LXX., Vulgate, and our Bible.

‡ Grätz has pointed out that the number of Psalms in the collection was not invariably a hundred and fifty, but sometimes only a hundred and forty-seven. This variation was due to the Jewish and other hymn-books; it is rare that into one of the latter a poem not having a distinct religious

§ There is, however, this important difference between the Jewish and other hymn-books; it is rare that into one of the latter a poem not having a distinct religious

**This is not the case for the Psalter, which is a continuous collection of works of different authors and different times, composed with various purposes, and on a vast variety of subjects, and only so far connected as being capable of use in the public worship of the Church; and this the most cursory glance at the Book of Psalms is sufficient to establish.

Comp. the frequent use of the words harp, lyre, to denote books of poetry.
end is introduced. We do not in Christian hymn-books light upon old battle pieces, or patriotic ballads, or village songs of harvest and vintage, and it is rare that among the authors of church hymns we find a name of one recognised as great in poetry. In our own literature, though there is hardly one of our really great poets who has not written some poetry of this kind, which we may call sacred, not one has contributed to the many collections of hymns. Even Milton left nothing, save translations of Psalms, that is sung in church; Wordsworth's ecclesiastical sonnets have not found their way into hymn-books; nor are Coleridge's hymns “To the Earth” or “In the Vale of Chamouni”, embodied in any church hymnal. The case was wholly otherwise in the hynnal of Israel. There, not to depart from the traditions embodied in the titles, we find historic pieces, records of personal adventure, songs of travel and tempest, of light and festival, and at least one song of love; and these, or many of them, are, according to tradition, from the pens of some of the greatest bards the country produced. The reason of this difference is of course the acknowledged fact that poetical and religious inspiration were in Israel one and the same. With the one exception of the Song of Solomon, nothing has been preserved which was not religious either in tone or in intention. Rarely could the muse of Hebrew song find a voice till moved by religious feeling and fervour: rarely was the religious purpose absent. There are many pieces of poetry actually preserved in the Canon which were not made use of by the collectors of hymns, and yet the same sacred character marks them. Such, for instance, is David’s elegy over Saul (2 Sam. i. 17-27), and such his last words (2 Sam. xxii. 1-7). Deborah’s magnificent ode (Judges v.) is another example, and the many hymns scattered up and down the prophetic books. To form the hynnal of the Jewish Church, then, it was not necessary to bespeak hymns for this or that occasion, for a temple dedication, a thanksgiving for victory, for the marriage of a king, for harvest or vintage festival. Enough were there ready to the collector’s hand, sung at the village gathering, chanted by exulting soldiers, carolled forth at high festival with accompaniment of harp or horn. Some, no doubt, had a distinctive liturgical origin, but more were adapted for liturgical use. Many were put together entirely from older songs, to serve better than the originals for the Temple service; but more were taken just as they were, or, as hymn collectors have always allowed themselves a license in this respect, with slight alteration, and addition. Having thus the whole of that poetic wealth of the nation from which to draw, the Psalm collectors eagerly ransacked it. Indeed, the Psalter has sometimes been described as an *anthology* of Hebrew poetry. This it is not, for there is certainly as much of poetical matter in the rest of Scriptures as in the Psalms, but there is, it may be said with equal certainty, as truly great and noble poetry within the collections as we find in any of the other books. We cannot say that Isaiah contributed any of the Psalms, or the author of the Book of Job. Moses only by a suspicious title and Jeremiah only by the conjectures of critics, have a place in these collections. But there are psalms worthy of the pen of the greatest of these. And so truly is the Psalter representative of Hebrew poetry, that there is not one of the styles in which the bards of Israel made either successful or tentative efforts of which specimens are not to be found in it. Not only does it supply the greatest examples of lyric song, but of the best that Israel else produced. That which was almost its peculiar reaction—*Didactic or Gnomic* poetry—that species of poetry which its distinguishing genius, prophecy, made its own, the nearest approach it ever made to the *Epos*, and even what steps it took in dramatic art, are all worthyly represented in the books arranged for public worship. It can hardly be doubted that some at least of the power which the Psalter has exercised, is due to this poetic character. And if poetically the psalms compare so favourably with modern hymns in that which forms their chief and most important characteristic, they not only compare to advantage with ancient literature, but present themselves as unique at the time of their origin. Even among other nations of a Semitic origin there was nothing like them. Hymns to the gods of Greece have been preserved, but how vast is their difference from the Psalms. Let the reader compare one of those translated by Shelley, with any song out of the Psalter. Pretty compliments, and well turned stanzas intended to propitiate, he will find, set, indeed, in melodious verse that celebrates the birth of gods and demi-gods; but no wrestling in prayer with tearful eyes and downcast head, and the full assurance of faith, such as has made the Psalms for all time the expression of the devotional feelings of men.

II. Contents and formation of the Psalter.—Book I. Psalms i.—xiii., all ascribed to David, except Ps. i., ii., x., xxxiii., where the omission of an inscription is easily accounted for. The name Jehovah is principally, but not exclusively, used throughout this book.

Book II. Ps. xiv.—xxii., comprising the following groups: Ps. xiv.—xxi., Korahite; xxii., which is anonymous, is properly part of xiii.; Ps. i., Asaphic; Ps. li.—lv., Davidic; Ps. lxvi., lxvii., anonymous; Ps. lxviii.—lx., Davidic; Ps. lxx., anonymous; Ps. lxxi., Solomonic. The use of the name Elohim is characteristic of this book.

Book III. Ps. lxxii.—lxxxiv., comprising: Ps. lxxii.—lxxxii., Asaphic; Ps. lxxxv.—lxxxvii., Davidic; Ps. lxxxviii., Korahite, the latter having a supplementary inscription “to Heman the Ezrahite,” Ps. lxxxix. ascribed to Ethan. Though used an almost equal number of times, the name Jehovah is plainly not so congenial to this book as Elohim.

Book IV. Ps. xc.—cxiv., comprising: Ps. xc., ascribed to Moses; Ps. xci.—c., anonymous; Ps. ci., Davidic; Ps. cii., “A prayer of the afflicted;” Ps. ciii., Davidic; Ps. civ.,—cvi., anonymous. The divine names are used here and in the next book indiscriminately.

Book V. Ps. cxv.—cl., comprising: Ps. cxv., anonymous; Ps. cxvi.—cxv., Davidic; Ps. cxvi.—cxviii., anonymous; Ps. cxxii.,—cxvii., anonymous; Ps. cxxviii.,—cxviii., Ps. cxxxv.,—cxvii., anonymous; Ps. cxxxvi., being inscribed “Halleluhah, a psalm of praise;” Ps. cxxxviii.—cxv., Davidic;

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*The most recent commentator on the Psalms, Grätz (Kritischer Commentar zu den Psalmen nebst Text und Übersetzung Von Dr. K. Grätz, Breslau, 1882), says that, taken as a whole, the Psalms lack the qualifications of poetry of the highest order, viz., unity, depth of imagination, loftiness of thought, and an elegant rhythm. Probably he has not gone in his opinion. For the poetical form see below, § 5. The only unity possible in a collection of separate lyric pieces is one of purpose and spirit, and the religious history of the Psalter, the hold it has taken on the heart of the world, is sufficient evidence of the existence of unity, as the influence it has had on the poetry of Christendom is sufficient proof of the depth of its imagination and the power of its speech.*
PSALMS.

Pss. cxvi.—cl, anonymous, each beginning with "Hallelujah."

This arrangement does not correspond with that of the LXX. and Vulg., which put together Pss. ix. and x., cxiv., cxv., and separate Pss. cxvi. and cxvii. into two. There are also considerable variations in the titles. The LXX. ascribes seventeen to David, which have no author named in the Hebrew, one to Jeremiah (Ps. cxxxvii.), four to Hagga, and Zechariah (Pss. cxxxviii., cxv., cxvii., cxviii.) making at the same time the omissions noticed above, while other less important variations show themselves.

The complete absence of any perspicuous method in this table is the first point that strikes us. It is told that in the first century of our era an ambitious scribe wished to classify the Psalms and arrange them on some more intelligible plan, but was met by the objection that it would be impious to meddle with what David had left in such confusion. Modern scholars have not been so scrupulous, and many attempts at classification have been made, none, perhaps, with complete success, but even the worst with this result—to show how entirely without plan the last compiler of the Psalter worked, or rather to suggest that he made no attempt at classification, but found certain collections or groups already formed, and merely attached others to them so as to serve for the purpose of public worship, without either endeavouring to improve on a previous system or invent one of his own. That such collections previously existed there can hardly be a doubt. Just so much plan appears in the arrangement of the whole as to show it, for surely no collector would have taken the trouble to bring all the Davidic psalms which occur in the first and second books together, unless he were intending to make, as far as he could, a complete collection of such psalms. Indeed, the compiler of Book IV., had taken their present shape, or surely the last compiler of the Psalter himself declares he has effected this object by the statement, "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended," which can mean nothing else than that there were, in the writer's knowledge, no more to be found. We may even perhaps assume that before the bulk of the others bearing the inscription "of David" were discovered, not only Books I. and II., but also III. and IV., had taken their present shape, or surely the last redactor would have placed those occurring in Book V. nearer the others of the same reputed authorship.

The position of groups called from their titles Asaphic and Korahite psalms in Books III. and IV., points to the same conclusion. Unless the last compiler had found them already spread over two books, he surely would have grouped them together. Another distinct group, which seems to owe its arrangement to some previous hand, appears under the title "songs of degrees."

The groups, too, known as the Hallel psalms, were evidently formed for purposes of public singing, and not on any system affecting the whole collection of psalms.

The general conclusion is, that the Psalter owes its shape chiefly to what we may call the accidents of growth. Whenever the last redaction was made, individual psalms, nay, whole groups of psalms, may have been inserted, or added; but the addition was made without regard to any definite system, either chronological or artistic. The previous grouping may even have been interfered with, and to some extent disorder, by the latest hand that touched the Psalter.

On the other hand, so much of chronological sequence as naturally must show itself in a collection of compositions which has grown with time, may have been so far recognised and continued as that most of the very late psalms occur towards the end, while the earlier Books I. and II. were except in one particular—very slightly, perhaps from the same motive, interfered with.

This one particular relates to Psalms i. and ii. That these were the Rabbis regarded as one composition, and were placed at the head of the collection with a purpose (see Introduction, Pss. i. and ii.) can hardly now be questioned. It is also probable that they owe their position to the latest, or, at all events, a very late hand. The collector of the Davidic psalms of Book I. would hardly have begun his collection with an orphan psalm, as the Rabbis call those wanting inscriptions; whereas a late compiler, who had already under his hand many such, would not pay any regard to a point of the kind.

Wishing to strike at once the key-note of the whole collection, and to place at the opening of the Psalms a composition presenting the covenant relation in both its aspects, as affecting the individual towards ungodly individuals and the nation towards uncovenanted nations, and at the same time to bring into prominence the dignity of the written law, and the glory of the Messianic hope, he would select the two hymns most strikingly suiting his purpose, and weld them into one inaugurating psalm.

III. The titles of the Psalms.—Preliminary to any attempt at discussion of the authorship of the Psalms or the date of the composition and collection, the titles or inscriptions found at the head of so large a number of them claim notice, as being apparently the only guide followed in the arrangement of the Psalter as it has come down to us.

In the Hebrew Bible 116 psalms have inscriptions of some kind. There is, 34 in number, are called by the Rabbis "orphan" psalms. In the Greek Bible no psalm has been left without a heading, except the first and second. An indication of the difference of opinion as to the value of these headings is supplied by the numbering of the verses. When the text of the Hebrew Bible received its present shape they were treated as prefatory and not as part of the composition. That this opinion was not as old as the ancient versions is shown by the liberties the translators took with the inscriptions. They evidently did not, like the Fathers and later Jews, regard them as of equal importance with the text of the Psalms; and this very fact prepares the way for that criticism to which they have been in modern times subjected.

On the other hand, the fact that the LXX. found the inscriptions in their copies, proves that they were not the invention of those who incorporated them with the Psalms. Nay, it is often argued that because the translators were so perplexed by some of the musical directions as to have made hopeless nonsense of them, these at least, and by implication the titles generally, must be of an antiquity considerably greater than the version of the LXX., lapse of time having rendered these musical terms obscure. They may, however, have been obscure not from antiquity but from novelty. Newly-invented technical terms offer as much difficulty to a translator as obsolete words, and the musical system of Palestine was not improbably quite unknown at Alexandria long after it had come into use. On the other side it must be noticed that the translators are their themselves considerable license with the titles even
when they understood them, both changing and supplementing them, and generally treating them not as authoritative, but merely as convenient, finding them in many points defective, and often capable of improvement. This mode of treatment is not confined to the LXX. The Syriac allows itself the same freedom, and in one case prefixes a most interesting, but at the same time most tantalising heading, “from an ancient document.”

Since such was the point of view of the old versions, it may justly be its age or position. They were adapted, for we may dismiss the theory that they were prefixed to the fifteen psalms, cxx.-cxxxiv., “a song of degrees.” This translation comes through the Vulgate, canticum graduum; but song of steps or ascents would more nearly represent the Hebrew. The inscription was plainly intended to describe either the purpose for which the Psalms were composed, or some use to which they were adapted, for we may dismiss the theory that it describes a peculiarity of rhythm, a step-like progression, which is indeed audible in some of them, but only very faintly or not at all in most.*

Three accounts have been given of these psalms.

1. They were composed to celebrate the return from the Captivity, and the title means “songs of going up.”

This view, however, must be abandoned. Some of the poems may very probably have been composed in honour of this event, but others of them (Pss. cxx., cxxi., cxxxiv.) have nothing to do with the march homewards from exile. Nor does the inscription really refer to that event. It is true that the verb from which the noun is formed is the usual word for journeying from the Babylonian low country to Palestine, and in Ezra vii. 9 the very noun in the singular is used of the return, but the plural cannot well refer to it.

2. They are pilgrim songs which were chanted by the caravans as they journeyed to Jerusalem to the yearly feasts. This view is more natural, but against it is the fact that some of the hymns seem in no way suitable for such a use, and there is no historical authority (though strong probability) that any such custom prevailed. The form of the noun is also, in the opinion of many scholars, against this theory.

3. They were psalms chanted by the Levites at the feast of Tabernacles as they stood during the water-drawing on the steps leading from the court of the men to that of the women. They are in fact literally “step songs.” In favour of this view there is the fact that the number of the steps so occupied was fifteen, corresponding with the number of the Psalms. It is gathered also from the Talmud that these very Psalms were actually sung in this position. The inscription “songs of steps” not only exactly suits this explanation, but is what we should expect a rubrical title to be (Comp. the Graduale of the Romish Church). This is also the explanation given by the Rabbinical authorities, on which we have to rely for our knowledge of Jewish ritual.

IV. Authorship and Date of the Psalms.

The discovery that little historical value was to be attached to the titles, at once opened up the difficult question as to the authorship and date of every part of the collection, and, unfortunately, without knowing the principle on which the collectors worked in prefixing the titles, we are without the benefit of profiling by their errors. That they thought they were working on materials extending through the whole possible period of the nation’s literature, is shown by the inscription of one Psalm (x.c.) to Moses. That, however, they did not work with the intention of making their collection representative of all the different ages of the times, is evident from the exclusion of the Song of Deborah, and the Psalm of Hannah, which would have served as examples of the times of the Judges. Nor are more than two Psalms allotted to the prolific age of Solomon (Pss. xxii. and cxxvii.), and none at all to the revivals under Hosekiah and Josiah.

Apparently the first purpose was to collect and edit only Davidic psalms. Others, of Levitical origin, were soon added. But the tendency to attribute more and more of the hymns to David becomes evident as the collection goes on, and shows itself more decidedly still in the LXX.* By the time of Christ the whole Psalter had acquired the name of the royal poet, and in the phraseology of the Eastern and Western churches alike, it is simply called “David,” while the Æthiopic version closes with the words “David is ended.” Modern criticism has gone as far or even farther in the opposite direction. Ewald refers to David and his time only seventeen psalms; Grätz, the latest commentator on the Psalms, grudgingly allows him part of one, the xviiiith. The question of authorship, in so far as data exist for it, must be discussed with every individual psalm. Doubtless a very large part of the collection is due to the Levites. The inscriptions point that way, as well as the musical associations of the psalter. Within this body not only were the rites of the national religion preserved and continued, but its best spirit, as we know from the histories, was kept alive by them. In times when even the priests were carried away by the idolatrous influences of the court, Levites were found more “upright in heart,” to struggle against the corrupt tendencies of the times, or throw themselves into any movement for reform (2 Chron. xxix. 34, xxxiv. 8–13). Professionally a religious body, they were certain to be the first victims of religious persecution, and we cannot doubt that they were generally among that larger part of the community that were constantly lifted up in the psalms, now in plaintive prayer, now in fierce denunciation against the prevailing idola-

tries and apostacies. Add to this that they often

*The LXX. allot to David Pss. xx., xxxiii., xxxli., lxxi., lxxii., xcl., xcl.—xxxv., civ., cxxxvii. On the other side it omits the Davidic inscription in cxxii., cxxxiv., cxxvi., cxxxvii. (The numbers refer to the Hebrew Bible.)
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suffered from negligence in paying the tithes, and were therefore literally among those poor afflicted ones, whose constancy to the Theocratic ideal is to be rewarded as in Pss. xxii. and xxxvii., which console the true seekers of God with the hope of temporal as well as spiritual blessings.

The task of discovering individual authors for the Psalms must be given up; that of ascertaining the date of composition is hardly less difficult since so many have no strongly-marked individuality, and greatly resemble one another. Critics have, however, placed the largest number of the Psalms in four periods of history.

(1). Before the Captivity.
(2). During the Captivity.
(3). From the Captivity to the Maccabees.
(4). In the Maccabean (or subsequent) age.

Still, within limits so large it is often next to impossible to decide on the precise date of a psalm. Certain general features, however, present themselves as tests, and these have been followed here, and will be found noticed in the particular introductions.

The most important question with regard to these periods relates to the Maccabean age. In the controversy as to the existence of psalms of this period, critics of the greatest eminence are found on each side. If (see below) it can be proved that the Canon, as far as regards the Psalter, was not closed till after the reign of the Asmonean Queen Alexandra (Salome) then there is no external argument against Maccabean Psalms, while there is in many cases strong internal evidence in their favour. Nay, there is the strongest a priori probability that times so stirring, and marked by such a striking revival of patriotic and religious sentiment, should have given birth to poetry.

The question of the close of the Psalter has received a new light from the discovery of Grätz, that, according to tradition embodied in the Talmud, the night service, alluded to in Ps. cxxxv., did not become part of Jewish ritual before the re-inauguration of the Water Libation during the Feast of Tabernacles by Queen Alexandra. This, if certain, brings the composition of the Psalter, as far as the Psalter, was not closed till after the reign of the Asmonean Queen Alexandra (Salome) then there is no external argument against Maccabean Psalms, while there is in many cases strong internal evidence in their favour. Nay, there is the strongest a priori probability that times so stirring, and marked by such a striking revival of patriotic and religious sentiment, should have given birth to poetry.

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V. Nature of the verse.—Of quantity and metre, in the sense a Greek would have used the words, Hebrew poetry knows nothing.

It is even doubtful whether any regard was paid to the number of syllables in a line, as distinguished from words. Nor did rhyme lend its charm to Hebrew verse.† Its music is heard rather in the succession of sentences than the succession of words. Single lines show no certain indication of a rule of quantity or accent, guiding and regulating the flow of thought, but when two or more are taken together, there is found to be a rhythmical proportion or symmetry between them, which has received various names, but

is mostly usually, after Bishop Lowth’s terminology, called Parallelism.* This term, though mathematical rather than poetic, serves well to express the essential peculiarity of Hebrew verse, in which the lines are so balanced one against the other, that thought corresponds to thought, in repetition, amplification, contrast or response. We might make a rough analogy by comparing the rhythmic movement of verse to the time-beats of a clock or watch. Other languages divide the verses into measured feet, as a watch ticks off the seconds; but Hebrew offers line to line with the longer, more solemn, and more majestic beat of the pendulum of a large clock. If one sentence balances another, so that voice and sense stop together, the natural cadence thus produced satisfies the Hebrew ear, though, very generally, the effect is improved by an actual equality in the number of words in the two clauses.

It is convenient to speak of parallelism as simple or complex according as the verse formed by it consists of two members or more than two.

The perfect form exhibits a symmetry both in form and expression; there is a balance not only in the sense, but in the order and arrangement of the words, the lines being of equal length and identical in structure, verb answering to verb, and noun to noun, as in Ps. xix. 2.

“Day to day uttereth speech.
And night to night sheweth knowledge.”

This form is variously called the synonymous or cognate parallelism. The second line may be an exact echo or repetition of the first, as in verse 1 of the same psalm.

“The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the sky sheweth his handy-work.”

But generally it either explains and illustrates the first line, as in Ps. xviii. 14.

“Yes, he sent out his arrows and scattered them,
And he shot out his lightnings and discomfited them.”

Or it gives a new turn to the thought, and carries it on, as Ps. lxvii. 1.

“My voice is unto God, and I cry aloud,
My voice is unto God, and he will hearken unto me.”

The Psalms offer endless modifications of this perfect form. Sometimes the similarity of sense is dropped, while that of form remains. Often a graceful diversity is introduced by inverting the order of the words, as in the example above given, from Ps. cxix. 1, where in the Hebrew the clauses run

“The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the works of his hands shews the sky.”

a figure which the Greeks called **echidna** and which in Hebrew poetry is often called introverted parallelism. Comp. Ps. vii. 9, 10, where the English partially repeats the figure.

Often again the principal element is not one of resemblance, but of progression, as in Ps. cxxix. 3.

“The ploughers ploughed upon my back,
And made long furrows.”

Here the echo is not so much in the sense as in the construction of the clauses. The balance is maintained in the number and order of the words employed, though an entirely new thought is introduced. Indeed, sometimes, the rhythm almost disappears. There is still a manifest intention of parallelism, but the charm of the echo is gone. We are very near prose in such verses as Ps. evii. 38, 40.

“He blessed them so that they multiply exceedingly,
And suffereth not their cattle to decrease.”

* Other names are “rhyme of sentiment;” “thought rhythm;” “sentence rhythm.”

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*Grätz has worked out this theory fully, and even goes so far as to adopt from the Hebrew (anarchia) a name for this class of Psalm-writing Levites. He justly observes that while poor in material thingings, they were intellectually and morally far above the rest of the nation.

† Instances of assonance indeed are common, and the appearance of the same suffix, sometimes in five or six words together, shows that the Hebrew ear was pleased with a frequent repetition of identical sounds. Some of the Liturgical Psalms, e.g., cvi., show a special tendency to this device.
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For this kind of parallelism the name synthetic was adopted by Lowth, but epithetic has been suggested as an improvement.

The alphabetical poems, presently to be noticed, show how the Hebrew poets of the later ages tried to supply to this kind of verse something of the definiteness wanting from the lax nature of their parallelism.

If contrast between the two clauses takes the place of resemblance, we get the second of the two principal forms of parallelism, the antithetic or, as it has been called from its prevalence in the Book of Proverbs, the gnomic or sententious rhythm. Here, as in the former case, the degrees of the antithesis are various. Sometimes the opposition extends to all the terms, as

"They are bowed down and fallen, But we are risen and stand."—Ps. xx. 8.

Sometimes it is confined to one, and sometimes it discovers itself only as a contrast of sentiment without extending to the several terms. The Psalms do not afford many examples for this kind of verse, but the following fall more or less distinctly under it, Ps. i. 6, xv. 4.

The poetic mood, however, does not at all times submit to the constraint of fixed metre, and even the simple style of Hebrew has to allow of many a licence to be elastic enough for the passion of lyric song.

In the development from the simple rhythm, the complex forms of verse followed the analogy of rhymed stanzas in English and other modern poetry. Just as the original rhyming couplets have developed into verses of every possible variety, so the simple Hebrew rhythm has undergone countless variations and numerous combinations. The rhyme of thought has been treated like the rhyme of sound. In this way grew up what is generally called the strophe system of the Psalms.

That a division of Psalms into stanzas, or strophes, is not an arbitrary arrangement, is proved by the occurrence of two marked features. The first of these is the Refrain, which itself in many of the hymns serves to mark the verse structure. This feature may, perhaps, be traced to the liturgical use of the Psalms, the chorus alone being sung by the full choir, while the priest or Levite chanted the rest. The most perfect examples are offered by Ps. xlii., xliii., xlvii., and xlviii. xxx.

The other, which still more convincingly points to the fact that psalms were composed in stanzas is afforded by the alphabetical or acrostic psalms. In these compositions, which are (counting Pss. ix. and x. as one) eight in number, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used as the letters of names and words are used in modern acrostics. There are as many as five variations in the mode and its use in the Psalter.

In the Psalms cxvi., cxvil. each line has its own initial letter, and in the original each line consists generally of three words.

In Pss. xxv., xxxiv., cxvil., which are arranged in couplets, only the first line of the couplet shows the initial letter.

Pss. xxxvii. is arranged in stanzas of four lines, the first line only of each having the initial letter.

The author of Psalms ix., x., apparently intended to begin every line of his quatrains with the same letter, but abandoned it for a simpler plan after the first stanza (comp. Lam. iii.).

This species of poem is not confined to the Psalter. Four out of the five chapters of the Lamentations and part of the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs are alphabetical.

In the cxviiith. Psalm the alphabetic system has been carried out most completely and elaborately. It consists of twenty-two long stanzas, composed each of eight couplets, each of the eight beginning with the same letter. This laboured result first suggested to Bishop Lowth his examination into the principle of Hebrew poetry. It certainly furnishes a proof of the existence of a verse structure and a guide for dividing other poems into their constituent stanzas.

VI. The purpose and scope of the Psalms.

—The covenant ideal in its bearing on individuals and on the nation at large in its relation to other nations (prominently put forward in the first two Psalms) may be said to furnish its purpose to the Psalter. This theocratic ideal was not born into the heart of the people at once, but was developed by a long and painful discipline after many failures and much suffering; and all this finds its reflection in the Psalms.

According to the two aspects under which it is viewed, this covenant ideal appears in the portrait of the perfectly just and upright individual, or in the picture of a prosperous and happy nation. The latter, however, is often represented in the person of its anointed king, or Messiah, to whom, even in the darkest and saddest days, the eyes of the race can hopefully turn. This identification of the ideal people with the ideal sovereign must always be borne in mind in reading the Psalms. It follows of necessity from the locus standi so commonly assumed by the writers, who, under their own personality, really present the fortunes of the community, its sufferings and trials, its hopes and fears. Thus the changeful destinies of the race are represented as involved in the fortunes of one individual, and this individual is very often the perfect King. It is in consequence of this that we can find in the Psalms, not only the Jews' Messiah, but the Christians' Christ, not only the victorious and triumphant monarch, but the despised and suffering Son of Man.

Another point in regard to the covenant ideal as presented in the Psalter must be noticed. The character of the upright individual is described from a religious rather than a moral point of view. The highest moral standard is touched in the Psalms, but it is, so to speak, touched from above, not from below; it is conceived of by reference to God and the heavenly requirements for one who would tread His courts, not by reference to the moral excellence of the qualities themselves that go to make up the perfect character. Hence proceeds a far stricter ethical sentiment than that which attends a merely moral code, a sentiment which regards a breach of the law not only as a lapse from the right, but as treason against God. Where, therefore, a moral standard would demand accusation and condemnation, the standard of the Psalmist cries for denunciation as of a recreant and apostate to a great cause. What are called the imprecatory psalms, may possibly, sometimes, combine with their religious and patriotic vehemence some elements less pardonable. Party and even personal bitterness may sometimes lend the words a sting. They are certainly not so suited for Christian worship as the prayers and praises which form the greater part of the Psalter. But their difficulty, as component part of a Jewish book of devotion, vanishes when we reflect that the wicked, on whose head the curses fell, were at once foes to their nation and apostates from their religion, and in many cases actually represented public enemies such as churches and states even of Christian times have thought it right to denounce with anathemas.
THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALM I.

(1) Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Psalm i. has generally been regarded as a kind of preface or introduction to the rest of the Psalter. The absence of an inscription favours this view, since this absence is rare in the first psalm. (See General Introduction.) It is still further favoured by the traditional arrangement which left the psalm without a number, combining it with Psalm ii.—a tradition supported by the reading of some MSS. in Acts xiii. 33 (see New Test. Com.). There are also some slight similarities of phraseology between the first two psalms, but no resemblance of style or matter, such as would be found if they had been originally one composition. At the same time, the two psalms seem to have been placed side by side by the compilers of the collection in order to form together such a general introduction. In the one we see the blessing attending the loyal fulfilment of the covenant of Jehovah in the case of the individual; in the other in the case of the nation at large, under its ideal prince. Just as the righteous man in Ps. i. is contrasted with the wicked individuals, so in Ps. ii. the chosen Israel is contrasted with the surrounding nations who do not submit voluntarily to Jehovah; and, combined, the two strike the key-note of the whole Psalter, the faithfulness of God's dealings with men, whether in their individual or national relation to Him, and the indissoluble connection between righteousness and blessing. It is true that in Ps. ii. the word "wicked" in connection with the heathen does not occur, but throughout the Psalter the two ideas are inseparable, and are undoubtedly implied there. It must be noticed too that Ps. i. presents the contrast of the just and the wicked in the same view which meets us in almost every psalm: not so much a moral as a religious view; the covenant relation is always presupposed. The just or righteous is the Israelite faithful to Jehovah and His Law; the ungodly or wicked is the Jew who makes light of his legal duties, whether in thought, act, or talk. (See Note 1.)

For determining the date, there is not only the indication of a comparatively late composition afforded by the growing reverence for the written Law (torah), but also the extreme probability that Jeremiah xvii. 8 is founded on this psalm, which approximately fixes the furthest limit to which it may be brought down. The use of the word "scorners," a word of frequent use in the Book of Proverbs (and actually defined in Prov. xxi. 24), but not found anywhere else in the Psalter, connects this psalm with the period which produced that book. It harmonises also with the dominant feeling of the later period of the monarchy. The conjecture that Solomon wrote it is interesting, but rests on insufficient ground.

In character, the psalm is simple and didactic, with an easy flowing style, not rising to any great height of poetry, either in its thought or diction. The parallelism is regular but varied.

(1) Blessed.—The Hebrew word is a plural noun, from the root meaning to be "straight," or "right." Literally, Blessings to the man who, &c.

Walketh . . . standeth . . . sitteth.—Better, went, stood, sat. The good man is first described on the negative side. In the short summary of evil from which he has been saved, it is the custom of commentators to see an epitome of the whole history of sin. But the apparent gradation was a necessity of the rhythm. The three terms employed, however, for evil have distinctive significations. (1) The ungodly. Properly, restless, wanting in self-control, victims of ungodly passion, as defined in Isa. lvi. 20. (2) Sinners. General term for wrong-doers. (3) Scorners. A proverbial word, defined in Prov. xxi. 24: Aquila has "mockers;" Symmachus "impersons;" the LXX. "peats;" Vulgate "pest." The words expressing the conduct and the career, "counsel," "way," are aptly chosen, and correspond with "went," "stood." Possibly "seat" should be "assembly." (Comp. Ps. cvii. 32.) It has an official sound, and without unduly pressing the language, we think of the graduation in vice which sometimes ends in deliberate preference for those who despise virtue. (Comp. Ps. xxvi. 4, 5.)

(2) But.—The Hebrew is an elliptical expression implying a strong contrast, "nay but," "on the contrary." The positive side of a good man's character is now described according to the standard which prevailed when the written law first came truly into force.

In the law of Jehovah is his delight.—Or, to the law of Jehovah is his inclination. The Hebrew word means primarily "to bend.

Meditate.—Literally, murmur (of a dove, Isa. xxxvii. 14; of men lamenting, Isa. xvi. 7; of a lion growling, Isa. xxxi. 4; of muttered charms, viii. 19). (Comp. Josh. i. 8, which might have suggested this.)

(3) And he.—Better, So is he. For the image so forcible in an Eastern clime, where vegetation depends on proximity to a stream, comp. Pss. lii. 8, xii. 12; Isa. xlv. 4; and its development in Jer. xvii. 7, 8. The full moral bearing of the image appears in our Lord's parabolic saying, "a good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit." The physical growth of a tree has in all poetry served as a ready emblem of success, as its decay has of failure. (Recall Wolsey's...
The Unhappiness

PSALMS, II.

of the Ungodly.

season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (4) The ungodly are not so but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. (5) Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The way of the ungodly shall perish. — This is explained by Ps. cxii. 10, “the desire of the wicked shall perish;” all his plans and ambitions shall come to nought. The metaphor is illustrated by Job vi. 18, where an unjust course is compared to a stream that suddenly dries up and disappears.

II.

As Psalm i. describes the results of fulfilling the covenant for the individual by contrasting the condition of those who fail in their allegiance, so Psalm ii. shows how the covenant relation exalts Israel over the heathen; but some particular political situation seems to be indicated. Jerusalem does not appear to be threatened by a confederacy of hostile and rebellious powers—a confederacy that took advantage of the succession of a young and inexperienced monarch to throw off the bonds of subjection and tribute. David, Solomon, Ahaz, and Uzziah, have each of them been regarded as the hero and theme of the poem, but in each case there is some lack of correspondence between the history and the psalm. The psalm must therefore be regarded as expressing an ideal view of the future—an ideal which the poet felt, from his historic knowledge of the past, would not shape itself except under difficulties and opposition. Doubtless there were in his mind the prophetic words spoken of David’s son, “I will be his father, and he shall be my son”—words embodying the vital principle of the Hebrew monarchy, the essential idea of the Israelitish polity, that the king was only a regent in God’s name, the deputy of Jehovah, and the chosen instrument of His will. Starting from these words, the poet shapes an ideal monarchy and an ideal king—one who, though encounters the worst forms of opposition, would prove himself a true son of David, and by his fidelity to his God and nation, a true son of God. Undismayed by the threatening aspect of things, and with prophetic words ringing in his ears, the youthful monarch aims at re-asserting God’s supremacy over the heathen, and imposing once more that restraint of His law and religion from which they longed to be free. Such a view of the psalm alone explains its want of exact historic coincidence, and vindicates the claims universally made for it of Messianic prevision; for there is but a step between the ideal king and the Messianic king—a step which, though perhaps unconsciously, the poets and prophets of Israel were for ever taking.

The psalm is lyric, with intense dramatic feeling. The poet begins and ends in his own person; but we hear the heathen muttering their threats, Jehovah answering them in thunder from heaven, and holding animated dialogue with His anointed, who, in turn, takes up the address, and declares His Divine mission and asserts His power. The strophical arrangement is fairly marked.

(1) Why do the heathen rage?—Better, Why did nations band together, or must they? The Hebrew occurs only here as a verb, but derivatives occur in...
The Kingdom of Christ.

PSALMS, II.

(2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, (3) Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

(4) a He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. (5) Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and 1 vex them in his sore displeasure.

Pss. Iv. 14, lv. 2: in the first, of a festive crowd; in the second, of a conspiracy allied with some evil intent. This fixes the meaning here, hand together, possibly as in Aquila's translation, with added sense of tumult. The LXX. have "grown restive," like horses; Vulg., "have haged.

Imaginate.—Better, meditate, or plan. Literally, as in Ps. i. 2, only here in bad sense, mutter, referring to the whispered treasons passing to and fro among the nations, "a maze of mutter'd threats and mysteries." In old English "imagine" was used in a bad sense; thus Chaucer, "nothing list him to be imaginatif," i.e., suspicions. The verb in this clause, as in the next, is in the present, the change being expressive: Why did they plot? what do they hope to gain by it?

(2) Set themselves—i.e., with hostile intent, as in Jer. xlv. 4, where the same word is used of warriors: "Stand forth with your helmets.

Rulers.—Properly, grave dignitaries.

Take counsel.—Better, have taken their plans, and are now mustering to carry them into effect. Notice the change of tense: in the first clause, the poet refers, as in mention of the Messiah (verse 4). The LXX. and Vulg. have "but I was appointed king by him," making the Anointed begin his speech here, instead of at the next verse.

(3) I will declare.—The anointed king now speaks himself, recalling the covenant made with him by Jehovah at his coronation.

I will tell.—Better, Let me speak concerning the appointment. The word rendered decree in our version is derived from a root meaning to engrave, and so stands for any formal agreement, but it is usually an ordinance clearly announced by a prophet or some other commissioned interpreter of the Divine will, and consecrated and legalised by mutual adoption by king and people.

The Lord hath.—Better, Jehovah said unto me: that is, at that particular time, the day which the great event made the new birth-day, as it were, of the monarchy, or perhaps of the monarchy. From the particular prince, of whose career, if we could identify him with certainty, this would be the noblest historical memorial, the Psalmist—if, indeed, any one historic personage was in his thought at all—let his thoughts and hopes range, as we certainly may, on to a larger and higher fulfilment. The figure of an ideal prince who was always about to appear, but was never realised in any actual successor on the throne, may possibly by the time of this psalm have assumed its great place in the nation's prophetic hopes. Certainly the whole line of tradition claims this passage in a Messianic sense. (See Note, verse 2; and in New Testament Commentary, Note to Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5, v. 5. For the king, spoken of as God's son, see Ps. lxxiii. 26, 27, and comp. 2 Sam. vii. 14.)

(9) Thou shalt break.—The LXX. translated, "thou shalt pasture them," understanding by the rod (Heb., shevet), as in Lev. xxvii. 32, a shepherd's crook. (Comp. Ezek. xx. 37; Micah vii. 14.) Elsewhere the rod is a sceptre (Ps. cxxv. 3); in Prov. xxii. 15 it is a rod of correction. The use to be made of it—to dash
Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

the nations in pieces, as one breaks a potter's vessel—points to the latter of these significations here.

"Then shalt thou bring full low With iron sceptre bruised, and them disperse. Like to a potter's vessel shivered so." (Milton's trans.)

Verse 10 begins the fourth section of the poem. Subject princes are warned to be wise in time, and, as a religious duty as well as a political necessity, to submit to Jehovah.

Rejoice with trembling.—Literally, quake, referring to the motion of the body produced by strong emotion, and therefore used both of joy and terror. Our version follows the LXX.; most of the old versions pronounce the Chaldee phrase, "son of Jehovah," cleave to him"; Arabic, "praise him." It is historically interesting to remember that the words of this verse—et nunc reges intelligit-eformed the legend of the medal struck in England after the execution of Charles I.

Kiss the Son.—This familiar translation must be surrendered. It has against it the weight of all the ancient versions except the Syriac. Thus the Chaldaic has, "receive instruction"; LXX., followed by Vulg., "lay hold of discipline." Symmachus and Jerome render "pay pure adoration." Aquila has "kiss with reverence." In Bar, in the sense of "son," is common in Chaldee, and is familiar to us from the Aramaic patronymics of the New Testament: e.g., Bar-Jonah, Bar-nabas, &c. The only place where it occurs in Heb. is Prov. xxi. 2, where it is repeated three times; but the Book of Proverbs has a great deal of Aramaic colouring. Our psalmist uses ben for "son" in verse 7, and it is unlikely that he would change to so unusual a term, unless nashshèka-bar were a proverbial saying, and of this there is no proof. Surely, too, the article or a suffix would have been employed. "Kiss son" seems altogether too abrupt and bald even for Hebrew poetry. The change of subject also in the co-ordinate clause, "lest he (i.e., Jehovah, as the context shows) be angry," is very awkward. As to the translation of the verb, the remark of Delitzsch, that it means "to kiss, and nothing else," is wide of the mark, since it must in any case be taken figuratively, with sense of doing homage, as in Gen. xli. 40 (margin), or worshipping (1 Kings xix. 18; Hosea xii. 2). The most consistent rendering is, therefore, proffer pure homage (to Jehovah), lest he be angry. It may be added that the current of Rabbinical authority is against our Authorised version. Thus R. Solomon: "Arm yourselves with discipline;" (so, with a slight variation, one of the latest commentators, E. Reuss: "Arm yourselves with loyalty") another Rabbi: "Kiss the covenant;" another, "Adore the corn." Among the best of modern scholars, Hupfeld renders "yield sincerely;" Ewald, "receive wholesome warning;" Hitzig, "submit to duty;" Grätz (by emendation), "give good heed to the warning."

From the way.—The LXX. and Vulg. amplify and explain "from the righteous way" It is the way in following which, whether for individuals or nations, alone there is peace and happiness. (See Note Ps. cxix. 1.)

When his wrath.—Better, for his wrath is soon kindled, or easily kindled.

Put their trust.—Better, find their refuge.

Notice in the close of the psalm the settled and memorable belief that good must ultimately triumph over evil. The rebels against God's kingdom must be conquered in the noblest way, by being drawn into it.

III.

With this psalm the hymn-book of Israel properly begins. The title indicates it as the first psalm of a Davidean collection formed at some time previous to the arrangement of the rest of the Psalter—a date, however, which we cannot recover. We also find ourselves on probable historical ground. The only reason to suspect the tradition embodied in the title which refers Ps. iii. to the time of the flight from Absalom, is in the mention of "the holy mountain," and this is explained as in Note to verse 4. There is a beautiful conjecture which connects the two psalms with the actual day of the flight from Jerusalem—the day of whose events we have a more detailed account than of any other in Jewish history. The close connection of the two psalms is seen by a comparison of Ps. iv. 7 with Ps. iii. 3, and Ps. iii. 5 with Ps. iv. 8, and of both with the narrative in 2 Sam. xv., xvi., and xvi.

The absence of any allusion to Absalom by name may be accounted for by the tender feeling of the fond father for the rebellious son. Ewald calls attention to the evidence in the tone of Ps. iii., not only of a tried religious sense, but also of the elasticity and strength supplied by a peaceful sleep. "The calmer mood of a cheerful morning" comes to crown the constancy of a faith which is not of yesterday, but has been built up by a lifetime. The same eminent critic declares that here "the elevation, the stamp, the style of David are unmistakable." The rhythmical arrangement is so artistic that we must suppose the poem composed at leisure, after the excitement of the rout was over.

Title.—A Psalm of David. Heb. Mízmír leDavid, the usual form of announcing authorship. Mízmír, which occurs only in the inscriptions to psalms, must be regarded as the technical term for a particular kind of lyric composition, and possibly originated with David. It corresponds to wáháš in the Greek version; and whether the root from which it is derived primarily means "to prance," or is, as some think, a word formed to express the sound of a harp-string when struck, it means a song composed for musical accompaniment, as is shown by its being sometimes united with shir, the generic name for song. (See titles to Ps. xlvii., xlviii.)

How ... many.—"And Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem" (2 Sam. xvi. 15). Ahithophel counsels Absalom to take 12,000 men, and go in instant pursuit of the fugitive. Hushai's advice shows, of course, the exaggeration of flattery: "Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally
trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. (2) Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.
(3) But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
(4) I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. (5) a I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. (6) I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand which is by the sea for multitude.
(7) There is no help.—According to the current creed, misfortune implied wickedness, and the wicked were God's forsaken. David, too, had sent back Zadok with the Ark, which in the popular view meant sending away the power and the presence of God. Even Zadok seemed to share this feeling; and David's words to him, "thou a seer" (2 Sam. xxv. 27), seem to contain something of a rebuke.
Selah.—This curious word must apparently remain for ever what it has been ever since the first translation of the Bible was made—the puzzle of ordinary readers, and the despair of scholars. One certain fact about it has been reached, and this the very obscurity of the term confirms. It has no ethical significance, as the Targum, followed by some of the old versions and by St. Jerome, implies, for in that case it would long ago have yielded a satisfactory meaning. There are many obscure words in Hebrew, but their obscurity arises from the infrequency of their use; but selah occurs no less than seventy-one times in the compass of thirty-nine psalms, and three times in the ode of Habakkuk (Hab. iii. 3, 9, 13). It is pretty certain that the sense "for ever," which is the traditional interpretation of the Rabbinical schools, does not suit the majority of these places, and no other moral or spiritual rendering has ever been suggested; nor is it a poetical word, marking the end of a verse or the division into strophes, for it occurs sometimes in the very middle of a stanza, as in Ps. xx. 3, 4, xxxii. 4, 5, and lii. 3, 4, and often at the end of a psalm (Ps. xlvi.). There is only one conclusion, now universally admitted, that selah is a musical term, but in the hopeless perplexity and darkness that besets the whole subject of Hebrew music, its precise intention must be left unexplained. The conjecture that has the most probability on its side makes it a direction to play loud. The derivation from selah, "to raise," is in favour of this view. The fact that in one place (Ps. ix. 16) it is joined to kiggaioun, which is explained as a term having reference to the sound of stringed instruments, lends support to it, as also does the translation uniformly adopted in the Psalms by the LXX.: στρήματα— if, indeed, that word means interlude. It is curious that the interpretation next in favour to Ewald's makes the meaning of selah exactly the opposite to his—piano instead of forte—deriving it from a word meaning "to be silent," "to suspend."
(3) For me.—Better, behind me. A protection from the emissaries of Absalom, now on his track.
My glory, and the lifter up of mine head. —Comp.—"o et praesidium et dulce decus meum." HORACE, Ode I. i. 2.

have set themselves against me round about.
(7) Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.
(8) Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

PSALM IV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David.

(1) Hear me when I call, O God of my

The significance of this sublime trust comes out as we read in 2 Sam. xv. 30 how the humiliated monarch went barefoot over Olivet, with head bent down and muffled in his mantle; no glory or dignity left; and humiliated under the insults and curses of Shimei.
(4) With my voice.—That is, aloud. The verbs are present, expressing the habit of the royal psalmist.
(6) That have set themselves—i.e., have arrayed themselves as for battle. (See 1 Kings xx. 12.)
(7) Thou hast smitten . . . broken.—Better, thou smitest . . . breakest. The enemies are conceived of as wild beasts, like the lion and bear of the adventures of David's own youth, whom God would render harmless to him.
(8) Thy blessing . . . Rather, let thy blessing be upon thy people. It is not the statement of a fact, but an intercessory prayer. The true Shepherd of His people was a noble and generous man. This close, as Ewald says, "throws a bright light on the depth of his noble soul."

IV.

This psalm most probably belongs to the same occasion as that which produced Psalm iii. (see Introduction to that psalm), but was sung in an hour of still greater trial. Standing by itself, indeed, it might have been written by any prophet struggling against the dislike and opposition of his fellow-citizens. The rhythm is irregular. Psalm iv. was one of those repeated by Augustine at his conversion.

Title.—To the chief musician.—(Margin, over­ser.) The rendering of a word occurring fifty-five times in the inscriptions, and in Hab. iii. 19. Whatever be the primary meaning of the root-word, whether to be bright or strong, the form here employed must imply "one who has obtained the mastery," or "holds a superior post." Hence "master," "director," or "overseer" (2 Chron. ii. 18, xxxiv. 12). But from the description in 1 Chron. xv. 16, et seq., we see that the musical directors, as they are considered to be (Asaph, Heman, and Ethan), had themselves cymbals, and took part in the performance, and hence the word would answer to a leader of the band; but in the case of the Psalms there is vocal music as well, perhaps "precentor" is the best equivalent. The LXX., followed by the Vulg., render "to the end"—a phrase difficult to explain, but which possibly had an eschatological reference rather than a musical.

On Neginoth.—Another musical term occurring, with a slight variation in the proposition, in the titles of six psalms. Its derivation from a root, meaning
righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; I have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

(2) O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leas­ ing? Selah.

(3) But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

(4) Stand in awe, and sin not: com­ mune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

(5) Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

(6) There be many that say, Who will

"to touch the strings," as well as the connection in which it is found, point to the explanation (almost universally given), "upon stringed instruments," or, "with harp accompaniment." It seems natural to join the two directions — "to the conductor of those playing on stringed instruments," or, "to the leader of the harps."

(1) Hear me.—Better, In my crying hear me, God of my righteousness.

The conception of God as supremely just, and the asserter of justice, is one of the noblest legacies from the Hebrew faith to the world. It is summed up in the question, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" The strength of the innocent in the face of calumny or oppression lies in the appeal to the eternal source of righteousness.

(2) Sons of men.—A literal rendering of a Hebrew phrase generally interpreted as "men of high degree." Luther translates "gentlemen" (see Ps. xlii. 9), where it is "high," as contrasted with "low." (Comp. Ps. xlii. 9, "men of high degree.")

(3) How long?—Literally, how long to shame my glory? which, after the analogy of Ps. xxxvii. 26, "his seed is for a blessing," must mean How long shall my glory be for shame (opprobrio)! The LXX. and Vulg. follow a different and probably correct reading: "How long shall ye be haughty (show) of heart?" They also indicate that an interrogative has dropped out before the second clause, so that it is rightly supplied by the Authorised Version.

Seek after.—In Hebrew the intensive conjunction, to seek earnestly, or again and again.

Leasing—i.e., lying. (Comp. verse 6.) So in Wycliffe's New Testament: "Whanne he spoketh leesong, he spoketh of his own; for he is a lere, and is fader of it" (John viii. 44). "Lesyngmongers" (1 Tim. i. 10). Chaucer uses the word; and it is common in Piers Ploughman. Shakespeare also knows the word:—

"Now Mercury induce thee with leasing,
For thou speakest well of fools."—Twelfth Night.

(See Bible Educator, iv. 3.) Milton's translation is—

"To love, to seek, to prize
Things false and vain, and nothing else but lies."

For "Selah," see Note, Ps. iii. 2.

From this verse we gather that the report of the calumny uttered against him in Jerusalem had reached the king's ears.

(5) But know.—It is the privilege of true and heroic natures to rise to a consciousness of their strength and dignity in the hour of peril, and when the victims of unjust persecution. Besides his innate greatness, David has a grandeur and dignity, derived from his deep sense of the covenant between God and His anointed, and his own imperfect but sincere en­ deavour to act worthily the part of God's vice-regent on earth. His selection by Jehovah is an unanswerable reply to his calumniators, and the surest proof of his own uprightness.

Hath set apart.—That is, has distinguished or honoured. So rightly the LXX. and Vulg. The Hebrew word occurs in Exod. viii. 22, ix. 4, xi. 7, of se­ rvenace between Israel and Egypt. (Comp. Ps. xvii. 7.)

Godly.—Heb. chasid, properly, graced or gracious, according as it is used of Israel or of the God of Israel. The covenant relationship is more prominent in the word than a moral excellence, though this is presup­ posed. See Ps. i. 5, where the word appears to be defined. There is a difficulty in the construction: lo (to him) may go either with the verb or the object. By comparison with Ps. xix. 7, we take it with the latter. LXX., "his holy one."

(4) Stand in awe.—Literally, tremble, whether with fear or anger. But the rendering of the LXX., "be angry," quoted in Eph. iv. 26, though etymo­ logically correct, is plainly inadmissible here. (See New Testament Commentary.)

Commune—i.e., reflect on your conduct, let the still hours of the night bring calmer and wiser thoughts with them. The LXX. and Vulg. translate "repet " instead of "be still." This supposes the words to be addressed to the enemies. But the next verse makes this doubtful. Probably the clause is a general reflec­tion on the proper conduct of Israelites when in trouble.

(5) Sacrifices of righteousness.—Comp. Ps. lii. 18, 19; Deut. xxxiii. 19. The context in both places directs to the translation "right" or "due" sacrifices, i.e., sacrifices duly and religiously performed.

(6) There be many.—Around the fugitive king were many whose courage was not so high, nor their faith so firm, as his. He hears their expressions of despair—

"Talking like this world's brood."—MILTON.

It is better to translate the words of these faint-hearted ones by the future, as in Authorised Version; not by the optative, as Ewald and others.

Lift thou up . . .—This is an echo of the priestly benediction (Num. vi. 24, et seq.), which must so often have inspired the children of Israel with hope and cheerfulness during their desert wanderings—which has breathed peace over so many death-beds in Christian times.

The Hebrew for "lift" is doubly anomalous, and is apparently formed from the usual word "to lift," with a play upon another word meaning "a banner." suggesting to the fearful followers of the king that Jehovah's power was ready to protect him. The Vulg. follows the LXX. in rendering, "The light of thy countenance
The Happiness of God's Favour. PSALMS, V. David's Prayer to God.

shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up
the light of thy countenance upon us.
(7) Thou hast put gladness in my heart,
more than in the time that their corn
and their wine increased.
(8) I will both lay me down in peace,
and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest
me dwell in safety.

PSALM V.

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth,
A Psalm of David.

(1) Give ear to my words, O Lord,
consider my meditation. (2) Hearken
unto the voice of my cry, my King,
and my God: for unto thee will I pray.
(3) My voice shalt thy hear in the
morning, O Lord; in the morning will
I direct my prayer unto thee, and will
look up.
(4) For thou art not a God that hath
pleasure in wickedness: neither shall
evil dwell with thee. (5) The foolish
shall not stand in thy sight: thou
hatest all workers of iniquity. (6) Thou
shalt destroy them that speak leasng:
the Lord will abhor the bloody and
deceitful man.

was made known by a sign over us," i.e., shone so that we
recognised it.
(7) Thou hast.—Either "Thou hast put a gladness
in my heart more than when their corn and new wine
are much," or, "More than when one has much corn," &c.
The expression is one of pregnant brevity for," A gladness greater than that when corn and wine are
plentiful."
(8) Both.—Better, and at once. So the LXX. and
Vulg: "At the very moment." (Comp. Isa. xlii. 14.)
This, too, is the meaning of "withal," used to render
the same Hebrew word in Ps. cxli. 10.

Thou, Lord, only.—The authority of all the
ancient Versions, including the LXX. and Vulg., is for
taking the adverb with the predicate, not with the
subject as in the Authorised Version: "Thou, Jehovah,
makest me to dwell alone in safety." We see from
Jer. xlix. 31, Micah vii. 14, that isolation from other
nations was, in the Hebrew view, a guarantee against
persecution. The psalm is therefore rightly assigned
as the words of a requiem for him.

Verse 7 makes the inscription to this psalm sus-
picious. (See Note.) The address, "my king," also
denoting the theocratic relation of Jehovah to His
people, seems more natural in an invocation supposed
to come from the entire faithful Israel—an invocation
for help against the idolatrous part of the nation now
in power, and preparing, if not actually beginning,
persecution. The psalm is therefore rightly assigned
to the troublous times of the later monarchy, possibly
the reign of Manasseh. The bitterness of possible
isolation from other people, seems more natural
the same Hebrew word in Ps. cxli. 10.

Verse 8 makes the inscription to this psalm sus-
picious. (See Note.) The address, "my king," also
denoting the theocratic relation of Jehovah to His
people, seems more natural in an invocation supposed
to come from the entire faithful Israel—an invocation
for help against the idolatrous part of the nation now
in power, and preparing, if not actually beginning,
persecution. The psalm is therefore rightly assigned
as the words of a requiem for him.

The parallelism is marked and well sustained.

Title.—Properly, to the leader on the flutes or to the
precantor, with flute accompaniments. (See Note to
inscription, Ps. iv.)

Nehiloth.—Properly, nechiloth: that is, bored
instruments. The LXX., followed by the Vulg., trans-
late, "on behalf of the heiress," i.e., according to
Augustine, "the Church;" but this is founded on
a wrong etymology. Some Rabbins, deriving from
a Chaldee word meaning "a swarm of bees," make
it refer to the multitudes reciting the psalm; others
to the humming or hoarse sound of the musical accom-
paniment; others to a particular tune, "the drones." Of the use of flutes in the religious services of the
Hebrews we have proof in 1 Sam. x. 5, 1 Kings i. 40,
Isa. xxx. 29. Possibly the plural form may indicate
the double flute. (See Bible Educator, ii. 88.)

(1) Meditation.—From a root cognate with the
word translated meditate in Ps. i. 2, with primary
sense of mitter or murmura. Here "whispered prayer," in
contrast to "words" in first clause, and to "voice of my cry" in the next. It echoes clause 1: "while
unto thee will I pray" corresponds to "meditation."
(3) The daily morning sacrifice sees the Psalmist in
the Temple. The word "direct," or, better, prepare, is
the same employed in Lev. i. 8, 12, vi. 12, of the priest
laying out the wood for the sacrifice, or the parts of
the offering itself, and suggest that the author may
himself have been a priest. The word "offering,"
should be supplied, instead of "prayer." Henry
Vaughan's fine hymn—
"When first thine eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
To do the like"—
was probably suggested by this verse.

Look up.—The Hebrew is from the root which
forms "Mirpeh," or "watch-tower." The psalmist looks
up for the answer to his prayer as the seer on his
tower (Hab. ii. 1) looked up for his inspiration. The
usual attitude of prayer in the East was then, as now,
either standing or prostrate, the hands lifted up or
spread out (Exod. ix. 33; Ps. xxviii. 2, xxxiv. 2, cxii.
2). To raise the eyes was not so usual. Virgil, de-
scribing the capture of Cassandra by the Greeks, makes
her look up, but only because her hands were bound.

"Ad oecum tendens ardentia lumina frustra,
Lumina-nam teneras arcebant vincula palmas."

(4) Neither shall evil.—Better, the wicked man
is not thy guest. For the same thought, see Ps. xv.;
and for the opposite, of God coming to dwell with
the godly, Isa. xlv. 15.

(5) Foolish.—Literally, shinners—i.e., displayers of
self; or, perhaps, self-praisers, boosters.
Shall not stand.—As distinguished men before
kings (Prov. xxii. 29); as angels in the court of the
heavely King (Job i. 6).

(6) Leasing.—See Ps. iv. 2.

Bloody.—Margin, literally, of bloods and deceit.
So LXX. and Vulg.
Prayer for God's Guidance.

(7) But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

(8) Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

(9) For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wicked; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

(10) Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out and their own counsels; cast them out and their own counsels.

(11) But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

(12) For thou, Lord, wilt be the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

PSALMS VI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Shemimithe, A Psalm of David.

(1) O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

(2) Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal desert him, replied, “under the shield of heaven.”

The image is finely elaborated in Browning’s Instans Tyrannus:

“When sudden—How think ye the end? Did I say ’without friend?’
Say, rather, from marge to blue marge,
The whole sky grew his targe
With the sun’s self for visible boss:
While an arm ran across
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
Where the wretch was safe pressed.
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete.
The man sprang to his feet.
Rood erect, caught at God’s skirts, and prayed—
So I was afraid.”

VI.

The end of this plaintive poem seems to belong to a different situation from the beginning. At first it sounds like a voice from a bed of sickness, of sickness likely to terminate fatally. But at verse 8 the tone changes. We hear no longer of sickness: but of enemies and wicked men, and prayer gives place to defiance and triumph. Can then the sufferings described in the former part be of the soul instead of the body? In any other than Hebrew literature we should answer in the negative. But with such passages as Isa. 1, 5, 6 before us we feel that no picture of physical pain and disease is too vivid or too personal to express moral evil. Rightly, therefore, has the Church made this the first of the penitential psalms. As the personality of the writer is thus merged we need, not attempt to recover it. Perhaps he intended it not only to be merged, but lost in the collective application to the suffering faithful in Israel. The Exile period best suits this confession of national sin. The rhythm is fine and well sustained.

Title. For chief musician and Neginoth, see introduction to Ps. iv. “Upon Shemimithe,” Heh, upon the Shemimithe, comp. title to Ps. xii. Margin, on the eighth, which has been very variously understood, and still waits for a satisfactory explanation.

(1) O Lord, rebuke me not.—Repeated with change of one word in Ps. xxviii. 1. The sublime thought that pain and sorrow are a discipline of love might be found in these words (as in Ps. xciv. 12; Prov. iii. 11, 12; Jer. x. 24; Heb. xii. 3, 11; Rev. iii. 19), but did not the context show that the sufferer in this case is praying for the chastisement to be altogether removed.

(2) I am weak.—Properly, wherein, or writhe with disease, or languish, as in Hosea iv. 8; Isa. xvi. 8.
me; for my bones are vexed. (3) My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?

(4) Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. (5) For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? (6) I am weary of my groaning; I all the night make my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.

(7) Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

Vexed.—So LXX. and Vulg. Literally, affrighted. (Comp. Virgil’s gelidusque per ima cucurrit Ossa tremens.)

(3) But thou, O Lord, how long?—Comp. Ps. xc. 13. This is “belief in unbeliever.” Domine quoque was Calvin’s motto. The most intense grief, it was said, could never extract from him another word. In its national form this faith amid despair is shown in Zech. i. 12. (Comp Rev. vi. 10.)

(5) For in death.—As in Ps. xxx. 9, the sufferer urges as a further reason for Divine aid the loss Jehovah would suffer by the cessation of his praise. The Israelite’s natural dread of death was intensified by the thought that the grave separated him from all the privileges of the covenant with God. (Comp. Isa. xxxviii. 18.) There can be neither remembrance of His past mercies there, nor confession of His greatness. The word translated grave, in exact parallelism with death, is sheol, or underworld, in the early conception merely a vast sepulchral cave, closed as rock-tombs usually were by gates of stone or iron (Isa. xxxviii. 10; Job xvii. 16). The derivation of the word is disputed, but the primary meaning appears to have been hollow—ness. It occurs sixty-five times in the Bible, and is rendered in the Authorised version three times “pit,” and then with curious impartiality thirty-one times “grave,” and as many “hell.” When it ceased to be merely a synonym for “grave,” and began to gather a new set of ideas, it apparently acquired the idea of a place of torment. It was before the time, into which we have any contemporary records. But it acquired these new ideas very slowly. Sheol was for a very long time only a magnified grave, into which all the dead, bad and good alike, prince and peasant, went; where they lay side by side in their niches, as the dead in the hollow earth, into deaf and unsympathising ears.

It would be of no use for God to show any wonders among those incapable of perceiving them (Eccles. ix. 5—10; Ps. lxxvi. 10). They have passed altogether from all the interests and relations of life, even from the covenant relation with Jehovah. (Comp. Isa. xxxviii. 18; Ps. cxv. 17.) How the Hebrew conscience, helped, possibly, by the influence of foreign ideas, gradually struggled into a higher light on these subjects, belongs to the history of eschatology. The fact that Ps. vi. reflects the earlier undeveloped doctrine, is an argument against any very late date for it.

(6) I water my couch with tears.—Comp. Odyssey, xvii. 102:

“Say, to my mournful soul shall I ascend? The couch deserted now a length of years, The couch for ever watered with my tears.”—Pope’s trans.

Orientals indulge in weeping and other outward signs of emotion, which Western nations, or, at all events, the Teutonic races, try to suppress or hide.

(7) Consumed.—i.e., sunken; literally, fallen away. The LXX. use the same word employed to render vexed in verse 2. Grief has brought the signs of premature age (Job xvii. 7; Ps. xxxix. 9, and Note there). (See Homer’s Odyssey, xix. 360, “Quickly do mortals grow old from trouble.”)

(8) Depart from me.—After the night of sorrow comes the morning of revived faith and confidence, if not of joy. The poet can turn to address his maligers with the assurance that God has heard his prayer, which in his agony he poured out, as he feared at the time, into deaf and unsympathising ears.

(10) Let all mine enemies.—Better rendered either by the present or future. The Psalmist with the eye of faith sees the answer to his prayer.

Return.—i.e., retire discomfited and in failure.

“My enemies shall all be blank, and dash’d With much confusion: then grow red with shame; They shall return in haste the way they came, And in a moment shall be quite ahash’d.”—Milton’s trans.

VII.

In this psalm we seem to be once more on sure historical ground. It not only breathes the feeling when David and his outlawed band were daily evading the snares laid for them by the emissaries of Saul, but seems to refer pointedly to the two most romantic incidents in all that romantic period—the chance encounter of pursuer and pursued—(1) In the cave of En-gedi, and (2) (if the two are not the same under different versions) in the wilderness of Ziph (1 Sam. xxiv. and xxvi.); at least, no other recorded incidents
**David Prays against the Malice of his Enemies.**

**PSALMS, VII.**

David's generosity into occasions of slander against him. The Greeks called such a composition *Dithyrambic*. Gesenius makes it simply "a song of praise." "Cush," or *Kush*, cannot be identified. The mistake of the LXX. in writing it *Chus* has led some to connect it with the Hebrew name for an Ethiopian, and to regard it as a nickname, "the blackamoor." The fact of the tribal relation with Saul is quite enough to allow us to conjecture that Cush was some person high in favour with that monarch, servilely eager to injure David.

**Concerning the words.**—This is better than the margin, "business," since verse 4 shows that the author's indignation arose from some calamity of him.

1. **In thee do I put my trust.**—Or, as I have taken refuge.

2. **Lest he tear.**—The poet turns from the thought of his enemies generally to the one who has just made himself conspicuous. Such a change from plural to singular often occurs in the Psalms. (Comp. Ps. xli. 5, 6.)

3. **Rending it in pieces.**—The LXX., followed by the Vulg. (so too the Syriac), take the verb in its primitive feeling in ejaculations, we see the excitement of the poet's mind.

4. **If there be iniquity.**—A comparison with 1 Sam. xxiv. 12, 13, and still more 1 Sam. xxvi. 18, shows how closely this psalm is connected with the two notorious instances of David's magnanimous and generous conduct towards Saul.

5. **Yea, I have.**—i.e., on the contrary, so far from returning evil for good, I have returned good for evil. With allusion, there can be little doubt, to the incidents referred to in the last Note. From metrical reasons, and also to avoid the abruptness or the change of construction, Ewald conjectures that two clauses have dropped out of the text, and restores as follows—

"If I have rewarded evil unto him that dealt friendly with me, and cunning unto him that was at peace with me, Yea, if I have not rewarded his soul with good, And delivered him that without cause is my enemy."

Milton's translation gives yet another colour to the passage—

"If I have wronged Ill to him that meant me peace, Or to him have rendered less, And not freed my foe for nought."

The conjecture of a corruption of the text is supported by the rendering of the LXX. and Vulg., and a very slight change gives the probable rendering: "If I have returned evil to him that dealt friendly with me, and injured my enemy without cause." (6) **Let the enemy.**—Better, let an enemy. Persecute.—Literally, burn. (See Note on Ps. x. 2.)

Tread.—Used of a potter treading the clay (Isa. xli. 25); of the trampling of horses (Ezek. xxvi. 11); of a herd trampling down their pasture (Ezek. xxiv. 28). Dust.—Either as Ps. xxii. 15, "the dust of death," and if so, then *khabod*.

Honour must be the soul or life, as plainly in Ps. xvi. 9, lvii. 8, where the Authorised Version has "glory." The parallelism is in favour of this. On the other hand, to lay one's honour in the dust is a common figurative phrase. Shakespeare, *K. Hen. VI.,* 1. 5. "Now, France, thy glory droppeth to the dust"; and *Coriol. iii. 1, "And throw their power in the dust."*

Selah.—See Note on Ps. iii. 2. This is one of the places which suggest its interpretation as a direction to the music, to strike up with passion and force.

In the rapid succession of abrupt utterance of feeling in ejaculations, we see the excitement of the poet's mind.

Of the rage.—Better, against the rage, unless we may correct to "in thy rage." The LXX. and Vulg. read, "in the ends of," which Jerome explains as meaning, "exult thyself by making an end of my enemies," Syrac., "Be thou lifted up upon the necks of my enemies."

And awake for me.—Better, arranged in two petitions: *yea, awake for me; prepare the judgment*. There is some difficulty about the syntax of the last clause, but the imperatives suit the parallelism of the context better than the past tenses. (7) **So shall.**—This clause is also in the optative: "let the communities of peoples be gathered round thee."

For their sakes.—Rather, over or above it, as in LXX. The poet has a vision of judgment. Je-
The Lord shall judge the people; he will judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

The Lord shall—Better, Jehovah judgeth the nations. Everything is complete, and the work of judgment begins. The poet prays that his sentence may be according to his own consciousness of righteousness and integrity. Of this plea of innocence Jerome says, “David could not say this; this properly belongs to the Saviour, who was sinless.” Others think it is for the ideal Israel, which stands before Jehovah’s tribunal. But we may compare Job’s protestations of innocence, and his persistent demand for a trial. David (if he is the author) refers naturally to his innocence of the charge calumniously-brought against him. As between Saul and himself, his conduct had been blameless.

Establish.—Literally, let him stand erect.

For the righteous God trieth. Better, thou trier of hearts and reins, thou just God. The Hebrew word translated try is used, like it, for testing metals (Ps. xii. 6; Prov. xvii. 3).

My defence.—Literally, as in margin, my shield is upon God. (Comp. Ps. xlii. 7, “In God is my salvation,” where the Hebrew is as here, “God is my shield-bearer.”) Another explanation appears in Milton’s translation—“On God is cast My defence, and in Him lies, In Him who both just and wise, Saves the upright at heart and list.”

God judgeth.—The two clauses answer to each other; so the margin, “God is a righteous judge, and God avengeth every day.” LXX., “God is a just judge, and strong and longsuffering, not letting loose his anger every day.” Vulg., “Still is he not angry with the wicked.” Syriac, “God is the judge of righteousness. He is not angry every day.” It has been proposed to read vel.—and not—instead of vel.—and God”—conformably to these versions, but unnecessarily.

If he turn not.—The Hebrew is doubly idiomatic. Translate eureka (see Heb. iii. 11, with Note in New Testament Commentary). He will again whet His sword. It is true that the verb to turn in the sense of repetition usually precedes the other verb immediately, without, as here, any other words intervening.

Hath made.—Better, he digged a pit, and hallowed it out. Milton: “He digged a pit, and delved it deep.”

Pate.—A word retained from Coverdale’s translation, and common in the Elizabethan age. In Shakespeare it is frequent—“My invention Comes from my pate, As birdlime does from frieze.”

For the moral, comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 29.

Verses 15 and 16 are quoted by Eusebius of the first chapter of Genesis. There is no reason to doubt the traditional ascription to David. This exquisite little poem is a record of his shepherd’s days, when, under the midnight sky of Palestine, brilliant with stars, he mused on things deep and high, on his invention Comes from my pate, As bird-lime does from frieze.”
thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.  

(2) a Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou 1 ordained strength played on earth in His name, His real glory is above the heavens. Probably only a general sense of the majesty of Him “that is higher than the highest” (Eccl. v. 8), and “whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain” (1 Kings viii. 27), occupied the poet’s mind.

(3) Babes and sucklings.—Better, young children and sucklings. A regular phrase to describe children from one to three years old (1 Sam. xv. 3, xxii. 19). The youth, or suckling, denotes an earlier stage of the nursing period (which, with Hebrew mothers, sometimes extended over three years, 2 Macc. vii. 27, and on Talmudic authority could not be less than two years) than the old, which is applied to children able to play about on the streets (Jer. ix. 21; Lam. iv. 4).

(4) Where I consider thy heavens, the beauty of the heavens, a thought parallel to the preceding amazement and admiration at the vast spaces of that midnight sky;” but, on the other hand, “many profounder and more abstruse comparisons of astronomy do more than supply the place of this splendour, in filling us with an amazement and admiration at the vast spaces the stars fill, and their mighty movements in their measured orbits.

Title.—Upon Gittith. (Comp. Pss. lxxxi. and lxxxiv.) The LXX. and Vulg. render, “for the wine-presses,” as if the word were gittith; and this has been explained to refer either to the festivities of the vintage time, or to the prophecies which describe how the nations would be trodden down as in a wine-press. Another derivation makes it a kind of flute, from a word meaning “to hollow out.” But the most probable and now generally accepted explanation connects it with Gath, the Philistine town. A Talmudic paraphrase for “upon Gittith” is “on the vinnor which was brought from Gath.” According to this, it was a Philistine lute, just as there was an Egyptian flute and a Doric lyre. Others think it refers to a particular tune, perhaps the march of the Gittite guard (2 Sam. xv. 18).

From a comparison of the three psalms so inscribed, it cannot be a title having any reference to the subject.

(1) O Lord our Lord.—Jehovah our Lord. For the first time in the Book of Psalms the personal feeling is consciously lost sight of in a larger, a national, or possibly human feeling. The poet recognises God’s relation to the whole of mankind as to the whole material creation. Thus the hymn appropriately lent itself to the use of the congregation in public worship, though it does not follow that this was the object of its composition.

Excellently.—The LXX. and Vulg., “wonderful.” Better, great or exalted.

(2) When I consider.—Literally, see, scan. Ordained.—Or, as in margin, founded—i.e., created, formed; but the English word aptly introduces the idea of order in the kosmos. Comp.—

“Know the cause why music was ordained?” —SHAKESPEARE.

In our humid climate we can hardly imagine the brilliance of an Eastern night. “There,” writes one of a night in Palestine, “it seems so, bearing down upon our heads with power are the steadfast splendours of that midnight sky;” but, on the other hand, the fuller revelations of astronomy do more than supply the place of this splendour, in filling us with an amazement and admiration at the vast spaces the stars fill, and their mighty movements in their measured orbits.
work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; (4) a what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (5) for thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. (6) Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; (7) thou hast put all things under his feet: (8) all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; (9) the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

(4) Man ... son of man ...—The first, possibly, with suggestion of frailty; the second to his life derived from human ancestry. The answer to this question must always touch the two poles, of human frailty on the one hand, and the glory of human destiny on the other. “O the grandeur and the littleness, the excellence and the corruption, the majesty and the meanness, of man.”—Pascal.

The insignificance of man compared to the stars is a common theme of poetry; but how different the feeling of the Hebrew from that of the modern poet, who regrets the culture by which he had been “brought to understand A and astrology, the boundless law That makes you tyrants in your iron skies, Immortal, pitiless, passionless eyes, Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand His nothingness into man.”—Tennyson: Maud.

And yet, again, how far removed from the other pole of modern feeling, which draws inanimate nature into close sympathy with human joy or sorrow, expressed in the following words:—“When I have gazed into these stars, have they not looked down upon me as if with pity from their serene spaces, like eyes glistening with heavenly tears over the little lot of man?”—Carlyle.

(5) The Hebrew poet dwells on neither of these aspects, but at once passes on to the essential greatness of man and his superiority in creation, by reason of his moral soul and his spiritual likeness to God. Another English poet sings to the stars:—

“Thy name in all the earth!”—Tennyson: Maud.

But the psalmist looks beyond the bright worlds to a higher kinship with God Himself.

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.—Literally, thou makest him want but a little from God: i.e., hast-made him little less than Divine. We should read, however, instead of “for thou,” “and thou hast made,” &c. The Authorised Version follows the LXX, in a translation suggested doubtlessly by the desire to tone down an expression about the Deity that seemed too bold. That version was adopted in his quotation by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. ii. 6, 7). (See Note in New Testament Commentary.) Undoubtedly the word Elohim, being used to express a class of supernatural beings, includes angels as well as the Divine being (1 Sam. xxviii. 13; Zech. xii. 8). But here there is nothing in the context to suggest limitation to one part of that class.

Crowned.—Or, compassed.

(6) The poet continues, in a rapturous strain, to complete the cycle of animated nature, and to describe man’s kingship over all other created beings. For St. Paul’s expansion of the thought, and elevation of it into yet a higher sphere, see 1 Cor. xv. 27.

(9) And whatsoever passeth.—This is more poetic than to render “the fish of the sea who pass,” &c.

Paths of the seas.—Comp. Homer’s ερήμων πλῆθος. The repetition of the first thought of the poem, binding the contents together as in a wreath, is the one touch of art it displays.

In the LXX. and Vulg., Psalms ix. and x. are combined into one. This arrangement appears the more ancient of the two, and possibly is original; for (1) Psalms xx. and xxxiii. are the only compositions of the original Davidic collection (Pss. iii.—xxii.) without a title. The absence in each case is accounted for in the same way—Psalms xxxiii. had apparently, by a mistake, been joined to Psalm xxxii. before the collection was made; Psalms ix. and x. had not been then separated.

(2) The whole piece was originally alphabetical. This acrostic arrangement was either in the beginning very imperfect, or has been deranged by some later hand. The latter is most probable, as it is not by any means likely that two pieces, each with an imperfect attempt at a structure as easy in accomplishment as fanciful in design, should have been first composed, then brought side by side in a collection, and finally combined; whereas a later writer, anxious to adopt to his purpose some earlier work, might either have disregarded the alphabetical arrangement, or possibly have overlooked it. For the details of the arrangement, see below; and for the alphabetical psalms generally, see General Introduction. (3) These two psalms have in common certain characteristic turns of expression, which occur rarely elsewhere.

The Hebrew division, no doubt, is based on the fact, that while at first sight Psalm ix. seems to be a thanksgiving for victory, breathing only triumph and hope, Ps. x. is a prayer against violence and blood. But Psalm ix. 13 is quite in the tone of Psalm x. And again, Psalm x. 12, 13 gives an exact echo of Psalm ix. 19, 20. From verse 12, indeed, Psalm x. is as triumphant and hopeful in its tone as Psalm ix. Probably when used by the later writer, the clouds had darkened round Israel, or round himself personally; for it is difficult to decide whether the psalms are expressions of individual or national feeling. But he still found that he could adopt the victorious ending as well as the pleasant beginning. The acrostic proceeds regularly from aleph to gimel (Ps. ix. 1—6); dalet is wanting. Four verses (8—11) begin with waw, and the arrangement proceeds regularly to yod (verse 18). For coph, which should succeed, koph is substituted (verse 20);
I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end; and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the nations his marvellous works.

and the arrangement is taken up correctly with lamed, in Psalm x. 1. Here it suddenly ceases.

Title.—For the "chief musician," see Introduction to Psalm iv.

Upon Muth-labben.—Al muth-labben. Of the perplexing titles, this is one of the most perplexing. No conjecture of the meaning of the Hebrew as it stands is satisfactory. The text must be emended.

It is evident from the LXX. rendering, "on account of the mysteries of the son," that they had before them a different text from ours. Our text has, therefore, probably become corrupted. Now Psalm xlv. has as part of its title libnay Kôrah al-alamath; and if these words were to be transposed, and al omitted from the beginning, and y from the end, we should have the same Hebrew letters as in Almuth-labben. Neither assumption is difficult to suppose; and though the emendation does not remove us from the region of conjecture, it narrows it.

For the meaning of al-alamath, see Introduction to Psalm xlv.

The alphabetic arrangement is begun in its complete form. Every clause of the first stanza begins with Aleph.

When.—Literally, in the turning of mine enemies back, which may be either when they turned, or because they turned, or possibly with both ideas combined. The older versions have when. Verses 2 and 3 form one sentence, "I will be glad and rejoice in thee . . . when mine enemies are turned back, (when) they fall and perish at thy presence."

Fall.—Better, stumble through weakness. So the LXX., "are weak."

Thou hast maintained my right.—Literally, thou hast made my judgment, as the LXX. and Vulg. For this confidence in the supreme arbiter of events compare Shakespeare:

"Is this your Christian counsel? Out upon you! Heaven is above all yet. There sits a judge That no king can corrupt."—Henry VIII.

Put out.—Better, blotted out. The family is extinct and its name erased from the civil register.

(2) I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

(3) When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

(4) For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.

(5) Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

(6) O thou enemy . . . This vocative gives no intelligible meaning. Translate, As for the enemy, they are made an utter wreck and perpetual ruin.

(7) But the Lord shall endure . . . This pronoun is emphatic.
people his doings. (12) When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them; he forgettest not the cry of the humble.

(13) Have mercy upon me, O Lord; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death; (14) that I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.

(15) The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

(16) The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgiaion. Selah. (17) The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. (18) For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.

(19) Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. (20) Put them in fear, O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

PSALM X.

(1) Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? (2) The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: 'let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.
sent) in the plot which they (the wicked) have devised.”

(9) For the wicked boasteth.—Literally, for the wicked speaketh praise to the last of his soul, which has been understood either as in the Authorised Version, “prides himself upon his evil desires,” or “prides himself in or according to his sinful wish,” as LXX., Vulg., Syriac, and Chaldee. The former of these follows most naturally on verse 2. His wiles, so successful in snaring his victim, are a cause of self-gratulation. The representation of the villain addressing his own evil passions in laudatory terms is highly poetic. So the rich fool in the parable congratulates his soul on his greed.

And blesseth.—Rather, curseth by a common exclamation. (Comp. 1 Kings xxxi. 23; Job i. 5.)

The covetous—properly, robber—may either be subject or object, as also may “Jehovah;” or being a participle, may be adverbial (as Ewald). Hence we get, besides the Authorised Version and the margin, either, “the robber curses (and) despises Jehovah,” or, “he greedily (literally, robbing) curses, despises Jehovah,” the last makes a better echo to the first clause. The LXX. and Vulg. read, “The wicked is praised; the sinner has irritated the Lord,” getting the second subject from the next verse.

(4) The wicked.—The Authorised Version has quite missed the meaning of this verse. Translate, the wicked in his haughtiness (literally, height of his soul). Comp. the common expression, “to turn up one’s nose at a person” saith He will not requite it (i.e., punish; comp. verse 13). There is no God in all his thought. (Comp. Ps. xiv. 1, lili. 1.)

(5) His ways are always grievous.—Better, his enterprises always succeed. This meaning is obtained from Job xx. 21, “nothing escaped his covetousness, therefore his prospering shall not last,” and from the cognate of the verb “strength.” Perhaps, however, “his ways are always strong” implies only the bold and reckless course with which a tyrant pursues his end. (Comp. Ps. lxxiii. 12.)

Thy judgments . . . . Literally, a height thy judgments far above him. (Comp. Ps. xxxvi. 6.)

Puffeth—i.e., in scorn. (Comp. Ps. xii. 5.) South uses the word in this sense, “It is really to defy heaven to puff at damnation, and bid omnipotence do its work.” It is especially forcible after the description of the haughty attitude of the wicked, with his nose high in the air, snorting out contempt against his foes, disdainfully and disdainfully.

I shall not.—The meaning of the verse is clear, but the construction is involved. Literally, I shall not be moved to generation and generation, which not in vain. The LXX. and Vulg. omit the relative altogether. The best rendering is, “I shall never be moved at any time: I who am without ill.”

(7) Cursing and deceit.—From the connection of cursing with deceit (comp. Hosea iv. 2, “swearing and lying”), we must understand perjury.

(10) In lurking places . . . .—i.e., in ambush.

Villages.—Properly, enclosed spaces, but then, like our “town” (ton, an enclosure), for any collection of dwellings; and in Lev. xxxvi. 31, “an unvalled place,” applied also to a nomadic encampment (Gen. xv. 16).

Privily set.—Literally, hid: i.e., watched secretly.

The poor.—The Hebrew word, occurring three times in this psalm (verses 10, 14), is peculiar to it. The root idea is darkness; hence here, by an easy transition, obscure, humble. Symmachus has “foolish.” But Mr. Burgess suggests that we may in all three places keep the root idea, darkness. Translate, his eyes hide (i.e., wait) for the darkness; and comp. Job xv. 15. “The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight.”

(11) He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones. (12) He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.
Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand; forget not the humble.

Wherefore doth the wicked contend God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. (14) Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committed himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.

The Lord is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.

Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: (19) To judge the fatherless and the orphan, that the wayfaring men shall be blessed.

Here the acrostic arrangement is resumed with loph.

The poor committed himself.—Better, the helpless leaveth it to Thee. By a slight alteration in the division of the Hebrew letters, and of the pointing, we should get, It is against thee that he is strong in darkness. (See Notes above, verses 8, 10.)

Seek out.—The meaning of the verse is clear, from Ps. xxxvii. 36, and Isa. xli. 12, where we see that to seek and not find was a proverb expressing “ridance of evil;” but the construction is difficult. The first clause should end at “wicked,” the words “and the evil” being absolute; and the verbs, which are in form either second or third person, should be taken in the second. Translate, and as for the evil man, thou shalt look for his wickedness, and not find it (thou=anybody, which preserves the proverbial tone. So the LXX., “his sin shall be sought, and not be found”).

The Lord is King.—If the psalm has hitherto been personal, it here swells out into a larger strain of national hope and faith.

Oppressed.—See Ps. ix. 9. “God’s choice acquaintance are humble men.”—Leighton.

That the man.—Literally, that may not continue to terrify (or defy) mere man from the earth, which may mean that mere mortals may have to confess their weakness in comparison with God. But Ps. ix. 20, where the same word is used, indicates that it is here used in a contemptuous sense of the “heathen.” “That the nations from the earth (i.e., spread over the earth) may know themselves to be but men, and no longer defy Israel and Israel’s God.”

XI.

The tradition assigning this psalm to David is accepted by some of the greatest of modern scholars, but it is difficult to assign it to any known period of his history. Both in his troubles under Saul and in the rebellion of Abishalom, he adopted the flight which this poet seems as unworthy of one whose conscience is clear, and whose faith in Jehovah is sure; and yet the tone of the psalm is too personal to allow it to be taken as merely representative of a type of character, though it certainly stands as a rebuke for ever to those pusillanimus friends who are always ready to counsel flight or compromise, even when the very principles of right and wrong are at stake.

The poetical form is irregular.

Put I my trust.—Better, as in Ps. vii. 1, I find my refuge.

Flee as a bird.—Literally, flee ye a bird. The plural verb, with the singular noun, offers a difficulty which is not obviated by the reading which changes the verb to the singular, since your mountain has the plural suffix. We may supply the sign of comparison, as elsewhere sometimes omitted (Ps. xxii. 14); “flee ye like a bird;” or we may, with Ewald, take the noun as collective—a flock of birds. The idea of trepidation is conveyed in the original by the verb, which suggests the hurried flap of wings. Dr. Thomson, in The Land and the Book, finds in the habits of the dove an illustration of the passage; and compares Ps. lv. 6, “Oh that I had wings as a dove!”

Privily.—See margin, which preserves the image of the archer lurking in a dark corner.

The foundations.—By this word must be understood the principles of morality, which are the foundation of society. Symmachus and Jerome render “laws.” But the rendering “What could the righteous do?” is doubtful. The image is of a house shuttered by an earthquake (comp. Ps. lxxxii. 8); in such a case how find safety? The LXX. and Vulg. have “Since they have destroyed what thou hast established, what has the righteous done?” The order of the Hebrew words seems to support this rendering, “While morality has been overthrown, the righteous what has he done?” A suggested emendation, involving but a slight change in the Hebrew letters, would produce, however, a far better sense: “If the foundations be destroyed, what will become of the tower, or superstructure?”

Temple.—Here, plainly from the parallelism, not any earthly building, but the heavenly palace of the Divine King. One thought of God’s supreme righteousness, high above earth’s anarchy and sin, is enough to reassure the psalmist and make him strong. “God’s in His heaven; all’s right with the world.”—Browning, Pippa Passes.
The Justice of God.

PSALMS, XII.

A Prayer for Help.

(6) Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

(7) For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

PSALM XII.

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David.

(1) Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. (2) They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

(3) The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: (4) who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

(5) For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

(6) Rain snares.—Or orasses. (Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 35.) This is certainly an extraordinary figure, and various emendations have been suggested. Ewald's "coals of fire" (pecham for pachim) is the best (comp. Ps. xviii. 13, where the Hebrew word, however, is gechalam, "live, or red coals"; while pacham is used in Prov. xxvi. 21 as fuel for fire, in contrast with live coals; but in Isa. xlv. 12 and liv. 16 it is itself plainly burning coals.) He arranges the clauses thus: "Caeseth to rain upon wicked men coals of fire with brimstone; a glowing blast is the portion of their cup."

"Put we our quarrel to the will of Heaven. Who, when he sees the hours ripe on earth, Will rain hot vengeance on offenders' heads."

—SHAKESPEARE: Rich. II., i. 2.

Horrible tempest.—Literally, wind of heats; Vulg., spiritus procollarum; Targum, storm and whirlwind; as in Latin, aestus combines the ideas of heat and violent motion; so the Hebrew word here. Probably, therefore, we must think of a hot, poisonous wind—the simoom.

Or may we see one more reminiscence of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah stamped indelibly on the Hebrew mind?

His countenance.—Better, the upright shall behold His countenance. This beautiful religious hope finds its highest expression in the beatitude on the pure in heart. The beatific vision in Dante is its most glorious poetical development. By the vision of God the Hebrew poet means triumph of right and the acknowledgment of his innocence—light and peace after darkness and trouble, as in Job xxxiii. 26. (Comp. Ps. xvii. 15, xli. 12.)

XII.

The tradition of the Davidic authorship must be discarded here. The psalm is an elegy, but not for personal suffering. It is a lament over the demoralisation of men and the corruption of social life. Neither faith nor law are left; falsehood, duplicity, and hypocrisy succeed everywhere, and the honest men are so lost in the mass of wickedness that they seem to have disappeared altogether. We find similar complaints in Micah vii. 2, Isa. lvii. 1, and Jer. v. 1. But God has not left Himself without a witness. Prophetic voices have been raised—perhaps Isaiah's—in noble assertion of truth and justice, and the poet recalls one such voice, proclaiming the coming and the establishment of a righteous kingdom upon earth, the hope of which had already become the consolation and stay of the faithful.

The insertion of this oracle in verse 5 interferes with the rhythm, which else is even and regular.

For Title, see Introduction to Ps. vi.

(1) Ceaseth.—Intransitive, as in Ps. vii. 9.

The faithful.—The Vulg. and Syriac treat this word as abstract: "truth," "faithfulness." So Ewald; but the parallelism here, as in Ps. xxxi. 23, requires it in the concrete. (Comp. 2 Sam. xx. 19.) The Hebrew is cognate with "amen," and Luther has "amen's leute; people as good as their word.

(2) Vanity.—So in Ps. xii. 6 and Job, xxxv. 13. Literally, evil. "Falsehood" would be better. This verse may have been in St Paul's mind (Ephes. iv. 25).

Flattering lips.—Literally, lips of smoothness. (Comp. Note, Ps. v. 9.)

With a double heart.—Literally, with a heart and a heart. (Comp. 1 Chron. xiii. 3.) "One for the Church, another for the Change; one for Sundays, another for working-days; one for the king, another for the Pope. A man without a heart is a wonder, but a man with two hearts is a monster."—Thos. Adams, A.D. 1614.

(3) The Lord shall.—Translate, May Jehovah cut off.

Proud things.—Literally, great things. Vulg., lingua magniloquem.

With our tongue.—This is the proud saying just mentioned, and is plainly a boast of the power possessed by those who have the ear of persons in authority, and can adroitly "make the worse appear the better cause"; or being themselves in high places, can, like Angelo in Measure for Measure, defy the accusations of their victims—

"Who will believe thee, Isabel? My place in the State Will so your accusation overweigh That you shall stifle in your own report, And smell of calumny."

But there is great difference of opinion as to the proper rendering, "with our tongues will we prevail." Some render, "we are masters of our tongues"; others, "with our tongues we confederate": i.e., "our tongues are our allies." The last rendering agrees best with the next clause.

Our lips are our own.—Literally, are with us: i.e., on our side. (Comp. 2 Kings ix. 32.)

(5) For the oppression.—i.e., on account of the oppression. Here, as in so many psalms and prophesies, we have an ancient oracle of God introduced. The poet first quotes it, and then, in verse 6 contrasts its truth and genuineness with the false speeches of hypocrites.

I will set.—Literally, I will set in safety; he blows at it: which may mean either, "I will ensure him of the
David Prays in Trouble, and Praises God for His Mercy.

(6) The words of the Lord are pure words. (7) Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. (8) The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted shall mine enemy be exalted over me? (9) Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; (10) lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. (11) But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. (12) I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

PSALM XIII.
To the 9 chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

(1) How long wilt thou forget me, 0 Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? (2) How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long

safety for which he panteth, or “I will set him in safety who panteth for it.” This sense is fixed by Hab. ii. 3: “it panteth to its end,” i.e., for its accomplishment.

(6) As silver. —This solemn promise of Jehovah may be relied on, for His words are not like those of deceitful men—alloyed with self and falsehood—but are pure as silver seven times smelted.

In a furnace. —Either a “workshop” or a “crucible,” according as derived.

Of earth.—These words are difficult; they must mean either in earth, referring to the ashes in which the smelted silver falls, or as to earth, i.e., as to the alloy, or as we say, purified of the alloy. But cressels is never else used for the material, earth, and Hitzig’s emendation, cressel = bar, or piece (Ps. lxvii. 30), “melted into a bar from the crucible,” is almost convincing in its simplicity and aptness.

(8) The wicked. —Genestius translates this verse, “The wicked walk on every side like the rising of a tempest upon the sons of men.” There seems no reason to question his rendering of the word zulluth (Authorised Version, “vilest”), which is peculiar to this passage; but by comparison with Ps. xxxix. 6, lviii. 7, we may render the first clause, the wicked vanish on every side; and a slight change gives for the second clause, at the rising of a tempest on the sons of men.

In this short poem we see the power of lyric expression for rapid changes of emotion. In the compass of three short stanzas, decreasing in length as they proceed, we have an alternation from the deepest despair to the profoundest peace. Perhaps here is the record of an eventful period of David’s life, when he had to turn to sorrows as they are frustrated. It is, however, so doubtful whether nephesh can stand for the mind, that it is better to render, how long shall I form plans against my soul (having) sorrow in my heart all the day? The next verse confirms the suspicion that suicide had been in the psalmist’s mind.

Daily. —There is a doubt about this rendering; but as Symmachus, and many moderns, relying on Ezek. xxx. 16, “distresses daily,”

(3) Lighten.—Literally, give light to my eyes that I may not go to sleep in death, i.e., to go to sleep and never wake; “sleep unto death,” as the LXX. (Comp. for the nature of the fear, Ps. vi. 5; and for the form of expression, 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 28.)

(5) But L.—Emphatic, but as for me. The most complete peace has taken the place of the despair with which the psalm opens. The rhythm of the Hebrew seems to express the restfulness of the thought. “It hath a dying fall.” The LXX. and Vulg. (comp. the Prayer Book version) have an additional clause not found in any MS., “Yea, I will praise the name of the Lord most high.”

XIV.
With some variations (for which see Notes), this psalm appears again as Ps. liii. The most striking variation consists in the change of Jehovah into Elohim. For this change, see General Introduction.

In this poem the dramatic element blends with the lyric. In the great drama of the world, as unfolding before the psalmist’s eyes, God is seen to look from the windows of His heaven down on the races of men, as He did before the flood, and He finds no vestige of good left, except in the oppressed nation of Israel; all the rest are hopelessly corrupt. Then (verse 4) comes His voice in some ancient oracular saying, proverbial in its form, and so associated with the visible tokens of Divine vengeance, that the foes of the chosen people are instantly cowed and thrown into panic. Possibly Babylon, the great representative of the giant powers of the heathen world, and the devourer of other nations, now itself already on the verge of ruin, was in the poet’s thought. There is nothing to indicate a date anterior to the fall of Jerusalem, even if the last verse be treated as a liturgical addition.

The rhythm is uneven, but fine in the opening verses.

(1) Fool. —Heb., nabal, from a root meaning “to wither;” hence flat, insipid (insipiens). But this is not
The Corruption of Man.

There is no God. They are corrupt, have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

(3) The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. (3) They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

(4) Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord. (5) There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous. (6) Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge.

(7) Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

PSALM XV.

A Psalm of David.

(1) Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

Between verses 3 and 4 the Alexandrian MS. of the LXX., followed by the Vulg. and the English Prayer-book version, and the Arabic, insert from Rom. iii. 13—18 the passage beginning: "Their throat is an open sepulchre." The fact of these verses, which are really a cento from various psalms and Isaiah, following immediately on the quotation of verses 2 and 3, led the copyist to this insertion. (See Note in New Testament Commentary to Rom. iii. 13.)

(4) Filthy.—Better, corrupt or putrid. Comp. the Roman satirist's description of his age:—

"Nothing is left, nothing for future times To add to the full catalogue of crimes. The baffled sons must feel the same desires And act the same mad follies as their sires. Vice has attained its zenith."—JOURNAL: SAT. I.

Therefore speculative atheism, but practical—a denial of the moral government of God—so that fool and wicked become almost synonymous.

They have done abominable works.—Literally, they have made to be abhorred their works. The LXX. and Vulg. have caught the sense, "They have become abominable in their practices." Instead of works, Ps. liii. has "iniquity." (5) There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous. (6) Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge.

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PSALM XV.

A Psalm of David.

(1) Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
The Psalmist Describes

PSALMS, XVI.

The Perfect Man.

He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. (3) He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. (4) In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own

hurt, and changeth not. (5) He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

PSALM XVI.

Michtam of David.

Preserve me, O God: for in thee
dealings among Israelites themselves, and were evidently enacted more with a view to the protection of the poor than because the idea of usury in itself was considered wrong (Exod. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 36). So here the context plainly seems to limit the sin of usury to unjust application of the principle, being connected with bribery. Against "biting" usury (the Hebrew word primarily means "bite") all governments find it necessary to legislate, as we see in the case of the money-lenders of our own time; but with the employment of capital put out on interest for legitimate purposes of trade, neither Hebrew feeling generally, as the whole career of the race shows, nor the higher minds among them, as we see by our Lord's parable of the talents, were averse. The best illustrations of invectives of prophets and psalmists against extortionate usurers are supplied by Shakspeare's play, The Merchant of Venice.

Ewald's arguments for grouping this psalm with Psalms xvii. and xlix., as those of one time, and even one author, are almost irresistible; and this not merely from the general similarity of language and sentiment, but especially from the feelings expressed about death. The vision of immortality wanting to the early Jews, to Moses, even to David, has at length, however faintly and dimly, dawned. It will be long before it becomes a world-belief, or even a definite individual hope. But the germ of a truth so great must grow, as we see it growing in the Book of Job, till the time is ripe for apostles to quote the words of the ancient poets, as if they had not only felt for themselves the necessity of an immortal existence, but had seen prophetically how in Christ it would be assured to men.

Psalms xvi. is decidedly individual in its experience, and the inscription to David as author receives a certain amount of probability from a comparison of verse 5 with 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. But such slight indications give way before the reference to the bloody sacrifices in verse 4, which brings the date down to a time subsequent at least to Solomon.

The parallelism in this psalm is scarcely traceable.

Title.—Michtam (Miktam) occurs in five other psalms (Ivi.—lx.)—all, like Psalm xvi., ascribed to David. The greatest uncertainty attaches to the word. The marginal explanation rests on the derivation from kethem (gold, Job xxviii. 16—19), and may be illustrated by the "golden sayings" of Pythagoras (comp. Golden Legend), an obvious expression for something rare and precious. Others compare the Moallakat of Mecca, poems written in "golden" letters. The LXX., "a pillar inscription" (Vulg. tituli inscriptio), follows another possible derivation, but does not suit the contents of those psalms so inscribed. Some take Miktam as a variety of Mikhleb (a writing). Most probably
The Idolatries of the Heathen.  

PSALMS, XVI.  The Lord is the Psalmist’s Defence.

The “libations of blood” seem to refer to the ghastly rites of Moloch and Chemosh. For the last clause comp. Exod. xxiii. 13. To the Hebrews the very name of a god included a predication of his power. Hence the avoidance of even mentioning baal, but substituting bosheth, i.e., shameful thing, for it, even in proper names.

The portion.—There is allusion here to the Levitical portion (Num. xviii. 20): “I am thy portion and thine inheritance.” The poet, whom we must imagine exiled from his actual inheritance in Canaan, consoles, and more than consoles himself, with the sublime thought that this “better part” could not be taken away from him. Perowne quotes Savonarola’s fine saying, “What must not he possess who possesses the possessor of all!” and St. Paul’s, “All things are yours; for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s;” which rather recalls Deut. xxxii. 8, where the correlative truth to Num. xviii. 20 occurs.

For the figure of the cup, see Ps. xi. 6. It had already become a synonym for “condition in life.”

Thou maintainest.—The Hebrew word is peculiar, and causes grammatical difficulties; but the sense is clear. God does not only dispose (cast) the lot of man in covenant relation to Him—He does that even for unbelievers—but holds it fast in His hand. (See this use of the verb, Amos i. 5, 8; Prov. v. 5.) At the same time Hitzig’s conjecture (tômîd for tômîkh), is very plausible, “Thou art ever my lot.”

The lines are fallen unto me.—The allusion is to the “measuring cords” by which allotments of land were measured, and they are said to “fall” possibly because after the measurement the portions were distributed by “lot!” (Josh. xvi. 5; Micah ii. 5).

Given me counsel.—i.e., led me to a right and happy choice of the way of life.

My reins—i.e., my heart.

Instruct me.—Better, warn me. Conscience echoes the voice of God. The Hebrew word, from a root meaning bind, includes the sense of obligation. Once heard, the Divine monition becomes a law to the good man, and his own heart warns him of the slightest danger of deviation from it.

At my right hand.—Comp. Ps. cxii. 3, ex. 5, cxxi. 5. The image seems to be a military one: the shield of the right-hand comrade is a protection to the man beside him.

Glory.—Heb., khabod; but probably the poet wrote khabed, i.e., liver, or (comp. “reins” above, and the common use of the word “bowels”) heart. The LXX. paraphrase wrongly. The passage was so quoted in Acts ii. 25. (Comp. Ps. lvi. 8, evii. 1.) “With the best member that I have” (Prayer Book).

Shall rest in hope.—This follows the Vulg. The LXX. also have “shall tabernacle in hope.” The true rendering, however, is “shall rest in security.” In heart, soul, flesh,” the poet comprises the whole
The Life Everlasting.

PSALMS, XVII. David’s Confidence in his Integrity.

my flesh also shall rest in hope. (10) For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. (1) Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

PSALM XVII.

A Prayer of David.

(1) Hear the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips. (2) Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

(3) Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. (4) Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me

depart from any evil.

living man. (Comp. 1 Thess. v. 23.) The psalmist feels that the body must share with the soul the immortality from evil which is insured by fellowship with God. Carried out to its full issue, the logical conclusion of this is the doctrine of immortality; but we must not see a conscious reference to it here.

(10) Leave.—Rather, commit, or give up.

In hell.—Better, to the unseen world (Sheol), as in Ps. vi. 5, where see Note.

Holy One.—Better, thy chosen, or favoured, or beloved One. Heb., chessed, which, starting from the idea of one standing in a state of covenant favour with Jehovah, gathers naturally, to this passive sense, an active one of living conformably to such a state; “ gracious” as well as “graced,” “blessing” as well as “blessed;” and so generally as in Authorised Version, “saint,” “ holy” (see Pss. iv. 3, cxlv. 17, and especially Ps. 1. 5, “My saints, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifices.”) The received Heb. text has the word in the plural, but with the marginal note that the sign of the plural is superfluous.

Corruption.—Heb., shachat, a pit (from root, meaning to sink in), as in Ps. vii. 15, where LXX. rightly “ abyss,” though, here and generally “ destruction” (not “corruption”), as if from shachat, “ to destroy.” Even in Job xvii. 14 “the pit” would give as good a parallelism to “womb” as “corruption.” The meaning of the passage is clearly that Jehovah will not abandon His beloved to death. “To be left to die,” just as “to see corruption.” (Eccles. ix. 9, Authorised Version, “live joyfully”) is “to be alive;” or, as in next clause, “to make to see the path of life.” At the same time we discern here the first faint scintillation of that light of immortality which we see struggling to break through the darkness in all the later literature of Israel; the veil over the future of the individual, if not lifted, is stirred by the morning breath of a larger faith, and so the use is justified which is made of this passage in the New Testament (Acts ii. 25). (See New Testament Commentary.)

(11) There are.—The italics in the Authorised Version spoil the triplet.

It is another image for the same thought which dominates the psalm—the thought of the happiness of being with God. The fair heritage, the serene happiness, the enduring pleasure always to be found at God’s right hand, are all different modes of expressing the same sense of complete satisfaction and peace given by
from the paths of the destroyer. (5) Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

(6) I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. (7) Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou 2 that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them. (8) Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, (9) from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about. (10) They are inclosed in their own fat:

for the expression comp. Job xxxi. 33; and Hos. vi. 7, where the margin has Adam.

By the word of thy lips.—Some take this clause closely with the foregoing, and render, “against the word,” &c.; but the Authorised Version is better. The Divine standard for action, not the human or worldly influences, influences the writer.

I have kept me.—Literally, I for my part have observed ways of violence. But usage (Prov. ii. 20) almost compels us to understand by this, “I have kept ways of violence,” which is impossible here. Hence we have either to give the verb the unusual sense “guard against,” or suppose an error in the text.

Hold up.—Not, as in the Authorised Version, imperative, which is directly opposed to the context. The psalmist still asserts his innocence. Render—

My course kept close in thy tracks, My footsteps have not wavered.

(Comp. Job xxiii. 11; Ps. xli. 12.)

Paths.—Literally, wheel-tracks.

I—is emphatic, “As for me, I,” &c.;

Shew.—Literally, Separate; but (comp. Ps. iv. 3), from its use to express God’s providential care of Israel in distinction to other nations, acquires in addition the idea of wonder and miracle (Exod. viii. 22, ix. 4, xi. 7, &c.). The LXX. and Vulgate, “make thy mercies appear wonderful.”

Apple of the eye.—Literally, little man, daughter of the eye. The manuval is, of course, the reflection seen in the pupil. Daughter is either a contraction of a word meaning cavity, or is the common Hebrew idiom which by son or daughter of expresses relation, as sons of the bow = arrows. In fact, the curious Hebrew phrase is substantially like the Greek ἐμφρυς and Latin pupa, or pupilla, even to the gender.

Hide me under the shadow of thy wings—The figure of the sheltering wings of the parent bird, so common in Hebrew literature, generally refers to the eagle or vulture, as in Deut. xxxii. 10, 11, the source of all the beautiful images of the text. Our Lord’s use of the figure is made more tender by the English rendering, “hen” (Matt. xxiii. 37). (See Note New Testament Commentary.)

Deadly.—Literally, with the soul, or life, or better, as in the Syriac, “against the life,” and so deadly. Others take it adverbially with the verb, “eagerly compass.”

They are inclosed.—Literally, Their fat have they shut up. So LXX. and Vulgate, without indicating the meaning. But the “pr Gould” of the next clause suggests that “fat” is only a figure for the concud of prosperity, and as that verb is active, the word should be joined with it as object from the next clause, “In their conceit they shut their mouth; (when they do speak) they speak proudly.

They have set.—Literally, they fix their eyes to cast on the earth, which may mean, “they fix their eyes on me, ready to strike me to the ground.” Ewald, “they direct their eyes through the land to strike.” But Mr. Burgess suggests a translation at once simple and convincing. He brings the first word back from the next verse, and points it our blood, instead of the awkward his likeness. He thus gets, “They have set their eyes to shed our blood on the earth,” For the Hebrew verb in similar sense, comp. Isa. lxvi. 12.

Young lion.—Heb., kephir. The Hebrew has seven different names for the lion. Milton’s description of Satan naturally recurs to the reader—

“About them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare.”

Disappoint.—Rather, go to meet, as a champion defending some one.

Which is thy sword.—This thought, making the wicked God’s weapons of wrath (Isa. x. 5), is arbitrarily introduced by the Authorised Version, and is quite out of keeping with the context. Translate “with thy sword,” either understanding a preposition, or treating the accusative as an adverb of manner; as an adverb of time and place it is common. Similarly in the next verse, “with thy hand from men of the world.”

(14) Of the world.—Literally, of time. Heb., cheled, “that which creeps on,” an expression anticipating the New Testament use of world. (Comp. Job xxi. 7—14.)

Their portion in this life—contrasts with Ps. xxvi. 5.

Thy hid treasure.—That which thou hast stored up, which is sometimes in a good sense (Ps. xxvi. 19; Prov. xiii. 22), sometimes in a bad (Job xxi. 19). But ought we not to translate—

“With thy treasure thou fillest their won: They are full of children.”

These two lines are thus in close parallelism, while the last clause of the verse, “and leave,” &c., answers to “which have their portion in this life.”

1 Heb., be not moved.
2 Or, that avow them with their mouth.
3 Heb., that they shut up.
4 Heb., my enemies environed the soul.
5 Heb., that I am sore; or the LXX. &c., against the life, &c., answers to “and leave,” &c., answers to the last clause of the verse, “and leave,” &c., answers to their eyes to shed our blood on the earth.”
6 The word, “&c.; but the Authorised Version is better.
7 The psalmist still asserts his innocence. Render—
8 The psalmist still asserts his innocence. Render—
9 The psalmist still asserts his innocence. Render—
10 The psalmist still asserts his innocence. Render—
11 Yet they have now  . . . .—Evidently the meaning is, “Wherever we go they surround us like curs, i.e., they dog our footsteps. But the text is confused.
12 Young lion.—Heb., kephir. The Hebrew has seven different names for the lion. Milton’s description of Satan naturally recurs to the reader—
13 Disappoint.—Rather, go to meet, as a champion defending some one.
14 Which is thy sword.—This thought, making the wicked God’s weapons of wrath (Isa. x. 5), is arbitrarily introduced by the Authorised Version, and is quite out of keeping with the context. Translate “with thy sword,” either understanding a preposition, or treating the accusative as an adverb of manner; as an adverb of time and place it is common. Similarly in the next verse, “with thy hand from men of the world.”

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17 Thy hid treasure.—That which thou hast stored up, which is sometimes in a good sense (Ps. xxvi. 19; Prov. xiii. 22), sometimes in a bad (Job xxi. 19). But ought we not to translate—
18 “With thy treasure thou fillest their won: They are full of children.”

These two lines are thus in close parallelism, while the last clause of the verse, “and leave,” &c., answers to “which have their portion in this life.”
As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

PSALM XVIII.
To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,

2) I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. (2) The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

(3) I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. (4) The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. (5) The sorrows of hell compassed me about:

My strength.—This strikes the keynote of the whole poem. The strong, mighty God is the object in David's thought throughout. It is a warrior's song, and his conception of Jehovah is a warrior's conception.

Rock.—Better here, cliq', keeping "rock" for the next clause. In the first figure the ideas of height and shelter, in the second of broad-based and enduring strength, are predominant.

Fortress.—Properly, mountain castle. We have the joint figure of the lofty and precipitous cliff with the castle on its crest, a reminiscence—as, in fact, is everyone in this "towering of epithets"—of scenes and events in David's early life.

My God . . . Better, my God, my rock, I trust in Him. God is here El, "the strong one." In Samuel, "God of my rock."

Horn of my salvation.—The allusion seems to be not to a means of attack, like the horn of an animal, but to a mountain peak—called "horn" in all languages—so ἄκρα, Xen. Anab. v. 6; "Cornua Parnassii," Statius, Theb. v. 532; and so in Hebrew, Isa. v. 1, see margin), such as often afforded David a safe retreat. Render "my peak of safety."

High tower.—The LXX. and Vulgate have "helper." (Comp. Ps. ix. 9.) The word comes in so abruptly, that doubtless the addition in Samuel, "and my refuge, my Saviour, thou savest me from violence," was part of the original hymn, completing the rhythm.

Presents a trifling verbal variation from Samuel.

The sorrows of death.—The Hebrew word may mean either birth pangs (LXX. and Acts ii. 24, where see Note, New Testament Commentary on this verse). The figure of the hunter in the next verse, "the snares of death," determines its meaning there to be cords (see margin). It is best, therefore, to keep the same rendering here: but there can be little doubt that the version in Samuel, breakers, or waves, is the true one, from the parallelism—"Waves of death compassed me. And billows of Belial terrified me."

If I had not believed that God is love, (15) I—is emphatic. The satisfaction of worldly men is in their wealth and family honours, that of the poet in the sun of God's presence and the vision of His righteousness. (Comp. Note, Ps. xi. 7.) Instead of "likeness," render image, or appearance. But what does the poet mean by the hope of seeking God when he wakes? Some think of rising to peace after a perplexing trouble; others of health after suffering; others of the sunlight of the Divine grace breaking on the soul. But the literal reference to night in verse 3 seems to ask for the same reference here. Instead of waking to a worldling's hope of a day of feasting and pleasure, the psalmist wakes to the higher conscious presence to him, assuring him of justice and righteousness. (Comp. Note, Ps. xi. 7.)

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,

1) I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. (2) The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, 1 my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

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For Belial, see Deut. xiii. 13. Here the parallelism fixes its meaning, "ruin." For the ideas of peril and destruction, connected by the Hebrews with waves and floods, comp. verse 16, also Pss. xxxii. 6, xlii. 7, lxix. 1. Doubtless the tradition of the Flood and of the Red Sea helped to strengthen the apprehensions natural in a country where the river annually overflowed its banks, and where a dry ravine might at any moment become a dangerous flood. The hatred of the sea arose from quite another cause—viz., the dread of it as a highway for invasion.

(5) Hell.—Heb., sheol. (See Note on Ps. vi. 5.)

Prevented—i.e., suddenly seized upon. The poet seems to feel the cords already tightening on his limbs.
Psalms, XVIII.

Praise to God.

A Psalm of David.

He is not dead yet, but like to them who go down to Sheol. This verse has one verbal difference from Samuel.

Out of his temple.—Rather, palace—plainly, as in Ps. xi. 4, xxix. 9, the heavenly abode of Jehovah.

My cry.—In Samuel only, “my cry in his ears.”

The earth shook.—The sudden burst of the storm is the Divine answer to the sufferer’s prayer. For similar manifestations comp. Ps. lixviii. 7, 8, lxvii. 14—20; Amos ix. 5; Micah i. 3; Hab. iii. 4; but here the colors are more vivid, and the language more intense. In fact, the whole realm of poetry cannot show a finer feeling for nature in her wrath. We first hear the rumbling of the earth, probably earthquake preceding the storm (for volcanic phenomena of Palestine see Stanley’s Sinai and Palestine, 124), or possibly only its distant threatening. Comp. Ps. lxxiv. 5.) it must be rendered as object, “Out of the brightness before him his clouds blazed from it.”

Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.”—Byron.

Foundations also of the hills.—In Sam., “of the heavens”—i.e., the hills, called also “the pillars of heaven” (Job xxvi. 11).

A smoke.—Now the thunder-cloud forms—smoke, as it were, from the nostrils of God (comp. Ps. lixviii. 1; Deut. xxix. 20: the literal rendering is, “there ascended smoke in his nostrils”)—and intermittent flashes of lightning dart forth and play about the distant summits, seeming to devour everything in its path. (Comp. the expression “lambent flame.”)

Coals were kindled by it.—Rather, flaming coals blazed from it.

Darkness.—Better, black cloud. The dark masses of rain-cloud are now gathered, and bend to the earth under the majestic tread of God. (Comp. Nahum i. 3, “and the clouds are the dust of his feet.” (Comp. Ps. xxiv. 5.)

Cherub.—See Exod. xxv. 19. This passage alone would show how naturally the idea of winged attendants on the Divine Being grew out of the phenomena of cloud and storm. No doubt many features of the developed conception were derived from contact with Assyrian art, but for the poetry of this passage we have only to think of those giant pinions into which cloud so often shapes itself, this clause being in close parallelism with “wings of the wind.” The variation in Samuel, “appeared” for “did fly,” is no doubt, a transcriber’s error. For the picture we may compare Oceano’s approach in Prometheus Vincit:—

“On the back of the quick-winged bird I glide, And I beheld my chariot In With the will of a God.”

Mrs. Browning’s translation.

It has been, however, conjectured that for kherub we should read rekhâb, “chariot,” as in Ps. civ. 3. Comp. “And rushed forth on my chariot of wings manifold.”—Bid.

(11) Secret place.—Better, veil. Comp. Job xxii. 14; Lam. iii. 44. A better arrangement of the members of this verse is, He made darkness His veil round about Him. His tread He made of dark waters and black clouds. Literally, darkness of waters and blackness of clouds. (Comp. Ps. xvii. 2; Job xxxvi. 29.) In Samuel, instead of “blacknesses” of clouds, the expression used is “bendings,” or “collectings,” and the parallelism is marred by the omission of “his veil.”

Always present to the Hebrew imagination, God is still invisible, veiled by thick clouds, and far withdrawn in His own ineffable brightness.

This verse gives suggestion of that momentary lull so common before the final fury of a storm bursts. In the Hebrew imagery Jehovah stays His winged car, and draws round Him, as if to take up His abode within, thick curtains of cloud.

“We often see, against some storm, A silence in the heavens, the rock stand still, The bold winds speechless, and the orb below As hush as death.”—Shakespeare: Hamlet.

(13) At the brightness.—This is obscure. Literally, From the brightness before him his clouds passed through (Heb., awar—LXX., ἀπορεῖν; Vulg., transierunt) hail and fiery coals. In Samuel it is “From the brightness before him flamed fiery coals,” which is the description we should expect, and, doubtless, gives the sense we are to attach to our text. Through the dark curtain of clouds the lightnings dart like emanations from the Divine brightness which they hide. The difficulty arises from the position of awar, “his clouds,” which looks like a subject rather than an object to awar. It has been conjectured, from comparison with Samuel, that the word has been inserted through error, from its likeness to the verb. If retained it must be rendered as object, “Out of the brightness of his presence there passed through his clouds hail and fiery coals.” And some obscurity of language is pardonable in a description of phenomena so overpowering and bewildering as “a tempest dropping fire.” A modern poet touches this feeling:—

“Then fire was sky, and sky fire, And both are one beast eaten in.”

“Then ashes.”—R. Browning, Easter Day.

In the Authorised Version the thought is of a sudden clearing of the heavens, which is not true to nature, and the clause “hailstones and coals of fire” comes in as an exclamation, as in the next verse. But there it is probably an erroneous repetition, being wanting in Sam. and in the LXX. version of the psalm. Notice how the feeling of the terrible fury of the storm is heightened by the mention of “hail,” so rare in Palestine.

(19) In the heavens.—The version in Samuel is “from the heavens,” which is better. For the thunder as God’s voice see Ps. xxix. 3, and Note.
Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. (14) Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. (15) Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. (16) He sent from above, he took me out of many waters. (17) He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. (18) They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. (19) He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

(14) He sent out.—In the majesty of the storm we have almost forgotten its cause, the Divine wrath against the enemies of the poet. They are abruptly recalled to our remembrance in the suffix (“them”) of the verbs in this verse. So the LXX. and Vulg. Many ancient interpreters, however, understood by them “the lightnings,” while Ewald would carry the pronoun on to the “waters” in the next verse. Instead of “shot” (rob) many render as if it were the adjective “many,” “his numerous lightnings.” But comp. Ps. cxliii. 6 and the verse in Samuel.

(15) The channels.—The description of the storm ends with the fury of the wind and the effects of the tempest on the earth’s surface. Comp. Ps. xxix., and Milton:—

“Either tropic now
Gan thunder and both ends of heaven the clouds,
From many a horrid rift abortive pour’d
Fierce rain with lightning mix’d, water with fire,
In ruin reconciled; nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush’d abroad
From the four hinges of the world and fell

Here, to suit the poet’s purpose (see next verse), the rage of the tempest is made to spend itself on the water-floods. The “channels” are either torrent beds (Isa. viii. 7; Ps. xliii. 1; Job vi. 15), or as in Samuel (where for “waters” the text has “sea”) the depths of ocean. (Comp. Jonah ii. 5.)

(16) He drew me.—By an exquisite transition from the real to the figurative the poet conceives of these parted waters as the “floods of affliction” (verse 5), from which Jehovah has rescued him by means of the very storm which was sent, in answer to his prayer, to overwhelm his enemies. Render at once more literally “He laid hold of me and drew me out of great waters.” The conception undoubtedly is that the “gates of death” are under these floods, and those being now parted, the sufferer can be reached and rescued.

Verses 17, 18, 19 show trifling variations between the two copies of the psalm.

(17) Prevented.—Better, fell upon me unawares. See this use of the verb, generally however used in a good sense, in verse 5.

(18) A large place.—Comp. Ps. iv. 1. But there is direct historical allusion to the settlement of Israel in Canaan, as will be seen by a comparison of the Hebrew with Exod. iii. 8, and Num. xiv. 8.

(20) The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the clearness of my hands he recompensed me. (21) For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. (22) For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. (23) I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. (24) Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the clearness of my hands in his eyesight.

(25) With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; (26) with the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself

(26-27) It is better to change all the futures into our present. We cannot explain this description of God’s attitude to man, as if the poet were merely dealing with the conception of the Divine formed in the breast. No doubt his words are amply true in this sense. The human heart makes its God like itself, and to the pure and just He will be a pure and just God, to the cruel and unjust, cruel and unjust. But the definite mention of recompense in verse 24, and the reference to active interposition in behalf of the just in verse 27, leave us no option but to understand by “shew thyself” in verses 25 and 26, not an inward conception, but an external manifestation. It is, in fact, nothing more than a re-statement of the truth of which the history of Pharaoh is the most signal historic declaration, and which we maintain whenever we speak of the natural consequences of sin as retributive justice, the truth which is summed up in the text, “whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” We must at the same time remember that the form of the statement in the poem is due to the view current in Israel before the development of the conception of Satanic agency, that all suggestions, evil as well as good, came from the mind of the Suprme Disposer of events.
thyself froward. (27) For thou wilt save
    the afflicted people; but wilt bring down
    high looks. (28) For thou wilt light my
    candle: the Lord my God will enlighten
    my darkness. (29) For by thee I have
    leaped over a wall.

(30) As for God, his way is perfect:
    "the word of the Lord is 3 tried: he is a
    buckler to all those that trust in him.

He maketh my feet like hind's feet, and
    setteth me upon my high places. (33) He
    teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow
    of steel is broken by mine arms. (34)

Thou hast also given me the shield
    of thy salvation: and thy right hand
    hath holden me up, and thy gentleness
    hath made me great. (35) Thou hast en-
    larged my steps under me, that 3 my feet
did not slip. (36) I have pursued mine
    enemies, and overaken them: neither
    did I turn again till they were consumed.

I have wounded them that they were
    not able to rise: they are fallen under
    my feet. (37) For thou hast girded me with
    strength unto the battle: thou hast 4 subdue
    d under me those that rose up against me. (38)
    Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies;
    that I might destroy them that hate me.

(39) They cried, but there was none to
    save them: even unto the Lord, but he an-
    swered them not. (40) Then did I beat
    them small as the dust before the wind:

I cast them out as the dirt in the
    desert. (41) Before the wind.-In Samuel, the weaker
    "right." "Froward" = (opposite to
    "toward" ), seems to have more of the latter idea, but
    may combine both—a disposition turned away from
    good. The poet therefore says, "God will turn away
    from those who turn away from him," a thought which
    even with the Christian revelation we must admit true,
    for still it is true that—

"He that shutteth love out, in turn shall be
    shut out from love."—TENNYSON.

The afflicted people.—Better, afflicted folk, with
    no distinctive reference to Israel, except, of course,
    when the poem became adapted for congregational use.

For thou wilt.—Better, Thou makest bright
    my lamp. In Samuel, "It is thou Jehovah who art my
    lamp." This obvious metaphor is common in Hebrew,
    as in all literature. Light is an emblem of prosperity,
    happiness, or life itself. (Comp. Job xviii. 6, xxi. 17;
    Prov. xiii. 9, &c.). It happens to be used very fre-
    quently of David and his family (1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4;
    2 Kings viii. 19). Comp. Ps. cxxxii. 17.

Better with the verbs in the present—
    "For by thee I scatter a troop,
    By these I scale walls."

A graphic reminiscence of warlike exploits. Some,
    however, read from Samuel "break down," instead of
    "leap over."

Tried.—"Sterling gold," not dross. (Comp. Ps.
    xii. 6; and for "shield," Ps. v. 12.) Comp. xxx. 5 seems
to be taken from this verse.

Comp. Deut. xxxii. 31, where we see that "rock"
    was a common term among the tribes of Canaan for
    their divinities. Notice some striking variations in Samuel.

The verse should run on closely from the last.

Girdeth.—The importance of the girdle in a
    country where the dress was loose and flowing is shown
    by many passages of Scripture. It is essential to the
    warrior as here (comp. Ephes. vi. 14, and the Greek
    expression, "to be girt" = "to be armed"), but also for all
    active exertion.

Way.—Here, not of conduct, but the military path,
    the march. Notice the variation in Samuel.

"right." "Froward" = from ward (opposite to
    "toward" ), seems to have more of the latter idea, but
    may combine both—a disposition turned away from
    good. The poet therefore says, "God will turn away
    from those who turn away from him," a thought which
    even with the Christian revelation we must admit true,
    for still it is true that—

"He that shuts love out, in turn shall be
    shut out from love."—TENNYSON.
for His Manifold

PSALMS, XIX.

and Marvellous Blessings.

Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me. (43)

As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. (44)

The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places. (45)

The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. (46)

It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me. (47)

He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man. (48)

Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name. (49)

Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

PSALM XIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God.
God's Glory  

God: and the firmament sheweth his handwork. (2) Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. (3) There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. (4) Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, (5) which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. (6) His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

nor is he merely enjoying beauty. Not only is his aesthetic faculty satisfied, but his spirit, his religious nature is moved. He has an immediate apprehension, an intuition of God. He is looking on the freshness of God before him. This constitutes the essence of the greater part of Hebrew poetry. This is the inspiration of the bard of Israel—a religious inspiration. The lower, the aesthetic perception of beauty, is ready at every moment to pass into the higher, the religious emotion. All truly great poetry partakes of this elevation—Hebrew poetry in its highest degree. Some lines from Coleridge's "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni" not only supplies a modern example, but explains the moral, or rather spiritual process, involved—

"O dread and silent morn! I gazed upon thee Till thou didst vanish from the bodily sense. Didn't vanish from my thought; entranced in prayer, I worshipped the Invisible alone."

(See an article on "God in Nature and in History," in the Expositor for March, 1893.)

(2) Uttereth.—Literally, pours out, or makes to well up, like a fountain, undoubtedly in reference to the light streaming forth.

Sheweth.—Literally, breathes out; perhaps with reference to the cool evening breeze, so welcome in the East. (See Cant. ii. 17, Note.) Notice that it is not here the heavens that are telling (as in verse 1) the tale of God's glory to man, or "to the listener," as in Addison's well-known hymn, but daily tells its successor day, and night whispers to night, so handing on, as if from parent to son, the great news.

(3) There is no speech.—The literal rendering is Not speech, not words, their voice is not heard. Explaining this is (1) the English version (Bible and Prayer Book) and (2) intelligible at all the LXX. and Vulg.: "There is no speech nor language without their (the heavens') speech being heard (i.e., understood)." But this gives an inadmissible sense to davar, which does not mean language, but a spoken word. Besides, it was not a likely thought for the psalmist, that the Divine tradition of the heavens, while it travels over the whole earth, would be everywhere intelligible. (2) "It is not speech, it is not words whose voice is heard," which is the meaning intended, on the contrary, it is a manifestation to all the world. But the parallelism is against this. The line "their voice is not heard" is but the rhythmic echo of "there is no speech nor word." (3) We therefore keep close to the literal rendering. There is no speech, there are no (uttered) words, their voice is inaudible; understood is the meaning to say, that the manifestation of the Creator's glory, which he has just imagined the heavens proclaiming, and of which each succeeding day hands on the tale, is not made audible words. The communication of the sky is eloquent, but mue; its voice is for the heart and emotion, not the ear. So Addison—

"What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball,
What though no real voice or sound
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine
The hand that made us is Divine."

(4) Their line.—Heb., kov, a cord, used of a plumb line (Zech. i. 16); a measuring cord (Jer. xxxi. 39, where also same verb, gone forth). In Isa. xxviii. 10, the word is used ethically for a definition or law. But neither of these seems very appropriate here. The verse wants sound or voice, and words of this intention actually appear in the LXX., Vulg., Symmachus, Jerome, and the Syriac.

The use which St. Paul makes of these words (Rom. x. 18) is as natural as striking. The march of truth has always been compared to the spread of light. But the allegorical interpretation based on the quotation, making the heavens a figure of the Church and the sun of the Gospel, loses the force and beauty of the Apostle's application.

In them hath . . . .—This clause is not only rightly joined to verse 4, but concludes a stanza: the relative in the next verse of the Authorised Version marks the true construction. A tabernacle.—The tent-chamber into which the sun retired after his day's journey, and from which he started in the morn, Aurora, or dawn (according to March, 1881.) sun of the Gospel, loses the force and beauty of the Apostles' application.

...—The suddenness of the Oriental sunrise is finely caught in the image of the uplifted tent-curtain and appearance of the radiant hero ("stron man;" Heb., gibbor. Comp. Judges v. 31). This want of twilight, this absence of silent preparation for the supreme moment, distinguishes Eastern songs of sunrise from the poetry of the West. There are no musterings of "unite companies of changeful clouds," no "avant couriers of the light," no "grey lines fretting the clouds as messengers of day." Unheralded, unannounced, the sun leaps forth in all his splendour—a young bridegroom with the joy of the wedding-day still on his countenance, a hero leaping forth on his path of conquest and glory. How different the suggested feeling of this from the wishful tenderness of the poet's intention coming forth "with pilgrim steps in amian grey," or Shakespeare's "morn in russet clad," that "walks o'er the dew" of the high eastern hill.

Chamber.—Heb., chuphah, a marriage chamber or bed (Joel ii. 16). In later Hebrew the canopy.
The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

The law . . . . the testimony. These are collective terms embracing, under different regards, the whole body of statutes and precepts in the Jewish code. The law, torah, means in its primary use the instruction, and therefore is used of prophecy (Isa. i. 16, viii. 16), but here undoubtedly bears its common and more limited sense. Testimony, from a root meaning to repeat, suggests the solemn earnestness and insistence of the Divine commands.

The description perfect and sure suggests the lofty ideal prescribed by the Law, and the reliance which the Hebrew might place upon it as a rule of conduct. The word simple is generally used in a bad sense, but here has its primary meaning, open, ingenuous, impressible, easily led either towards folly or wisdom.

Right. Here in its original sense of straight, or direct. A fine moral insight suggested this touch. The road of duty, when plain and unmistakable, inspires a sense of gladness, even if it be difficult and dangerous.

Enlightening the eyes. Not here as in Ps. xii. 3 (see Note) physically, but morally (comp. Ps. cxix. 105): the whole nature of one who lives in the light of truth is illuminated.

The fear of the Lord. Here not a moral quality of the individual, but, as in Prov. xv. 33 (comp. Dent. xvii. 19), religion, the service demanded by the Law, which, being pure and undefiled, endures, while the false systems of idolatrous nations perish.

Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; lest they not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

PSALM XX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

(1) The Lord hear thee in the day of
A Psalm of Prayer

PSALMS, XXI.

For Blessing on the King.

For it may be taken as a type of the sacrificial hymn. There is, however, a strong Jewish tradition which connects its use, if not its composition, with Hezekiah (Stanley, Jewish Church, ii. 461).

1 Day of trouble...God of Jacob.—This certainly recalls the patriarch's words (Gen. xxxv. 3), “I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress.” The “name” alone of the God of Jacob was a safeguard to the people, called after their great forefather “Israel.” Sore even under the shadow of the greatness of human monarchs and heroes whole peoples have often felt secure and strong, using no other weapon but his name.

2 Defend thee.—Better, set thee on high, or set thee above all things. This certainly recalls the patriarch's words (Gen. lxix. 29, xci. 14), which has secured the thought of the ark as the residence of the Divine power, and its symbol, the ark, being deposited there (1 Sam. iv. 4). The inspiration now expresses a yet higher conviction. The manifestation of succour will not be through any earthly symbol of God's might, but immediately from His dwelling-place on high.

3 With the saving.—Better, with the might of the heart.

4 Trust.—The poetry is weakened by the insertion of this word. Render, These in chariots and these on horses; but we in the name of Jehovah our God make boast. (5) Save Lord...Herein is the heart of the prayer. It is a thanksgiving after victory. Possibly, as many think, the rhythm is weak and ill-sustained. (6) The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! (7) Thou hast given him his right hand. (8) Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. (9) They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.

PSALM XXI.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1 The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! (2) Thou hast given him his right hand. (3) Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. (4) They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.

(5) Save, Lord: let the king hear us when we call.

(1) Day of trouble...God of Jacob.—This certainly recalls the patriarch's words (Gen. xxxv. 3), “I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress.” The “name” alone of the God of Jacob was a safeguard to the people, called after their great forefather “Israel.” Sore even under the shadow of the greatness of human monarchs and heroes whole peoples have often felt secure and strong, using no other weapon but his name.

(2) Defend thee.—Better, set thee on high. The mention of horses and chariots suggests a Syrian war, since the armies of Syria were peculiarly strong in this arm. For an interesting historical reference to this verse, see Macaulay's Hist. of England, chap. ix.

(3) All thy offerings.—The king is sacrificing, according to custom, before battle (1 Sam. xiii. 9), the burnt offering (olah, from root to “go up,” i.e., of the smoke) and the bloodless offering (minchah, from root “to portion out”) of fine flour. (4) We will set up our banners.—Rather, we will wave our banners. (5) From his holy heaven.—The prayer in verse 2 had mentioned the sanctuary as the residence of the Divine power, and its symbol, the ark, being deposited

indeed Mr. Burgess would render “smell” and “relish.”

Accept.—Literally, make fat (Ps. xxiii. 5, “anointed” i.e., regard or receive as a fat or a worthy offering. The objection to the alternative rendering, “turn to ashes,” i.e., “consume,” (Lev. ix. 24; 1 Kings xvii. 38), is that the Hebrew word never elsewhere has that sense, but the two refer to the same event, and are by the same root, “relish.” The preceding psalm was a prayer for success; this is a thanksgiving after victory. Possibly, as many think, the two refer to the same event, and are by the same author. The composition is also similar, since here also the arrangement is for a part song. The people—probably a chorus of maidens (see Note to verse 3), or of Levites—meet the returning hero, with their shouts of praise to Jehovah (verses 1-7). The monarch himself is then addressed, perhaps by the leader of the procession (verses 8-12), and the whole concourse again unite in a burst of praise to God at the end. The rhythm is weak and ill-sustained.

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A Thanksgiving for the King's Victory.

his heart's desire, and hast not withheld the request of his lips. Selah. (3) For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. (4) He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever. (5) His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. (6) For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made exceeding glad with thy countenance. (7) For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved. (8) Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. (9) Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. (10) Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. (11) For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform. (12) Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them. (13) Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.

PSALM XXIII.

To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.

(1) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from my request of his lips thou hast by no means withheld." The mention in verse 4 of a prayer for long life, or perhaps, rather, continuance of life, suggests that this "request," was uttered in sickness. On the other hand the general tone of the psalm connects it with a direct parallelism with "face" in last clause. (3) Thou preventest—i.e., comest to meet him. The word "prevent" is familiar in this sense in the English collect: "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings." (Comp. Ps. lxix. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 15.) The "crown" is by some identified with that won by David at Rabbah Moab. Others make it refer to a coronation. Ewald thinks of a birthday celebration. Probably no more is intended than a symbol of victory and rejoicing. Maidens were accustomed to meet a monarch returning in victory, and to offer a crown, or garland, which was reserved for extraordinary rejoicing. (Comp. 1 Sam. xviii. 6; Ps. lxviii. 11; Cant. iii. 11; Wisd. ii. 8; Judith xv. 13; 3 Macc. vii. 16.) (4) For ever and ever.—This is merely a term for indefinite length. (Comp. the common salutation of a king: 1 Kings i. 31; Neh. ii. 3; Dan. ii. 9.) An allusion to the eternal kingdom of the Messiah is not to be forced on the passage. (6) Most blessed.—Literally, blessings. The idiom is similar to that in Ps. i. 1. With thy countenance.—Rather, In thy presence. (Comp. Ps. xvi. 11.) Thine.—The psalm has hitherto been addressed to Jehovah. It now turns in prophetic strain to the king. Thou shalt make.—As it stands the figure is most obscure. Lam. v. 10 is not analogous. Here the fire and not the blackness of the smoky oven is the object of comparison. A very slight literal change gives the sense obviously required: Thou shalt put them into a fiery oven. The figure is not drawn from Sodom and Gomorrah, but from a smelter's furnace. (Comp. Isa. xxxi. 9; Mal. iii. 3. For the custom in its literal horror, see Jer. xlvii. 45, xlix. 2; Amos ii. 1, where the reference is to the Transjordanic tribes.) The Philistines subjected their enemies to a similar treatment (Judges xvi. 6).

In the time of thine anger.—Literally, of thy face, i.e., by thy very appearance. The dread majesty of God's face is often thus spoken of (Ps. xxiv. 16; Lev. xx. 6). Here the same awful power of withering the wicked with a glance is ascribed to the representative of Jehovah. (Comp. Prov. xvi. 14, 15; xix. 12.) But, as if startled by the boldness of his own figure, the poet instantly refers to Jehovah. In his wrath.—Literally, in his nostril, in direct parallelism with "face" in last clause. Their fruit.—More fully, "fruit of the womb" (Ps. cxxvii. 3, cxxxii. 11). For they.—Better, though they have intended evil against thee, have plotted mischief, they have no power at all. Therefore.—Literally, for thou shalt put them shoulder (pones eos dorum, Vulg.). Upon thy strings thou shalt aim against the face of them. Ewald renders: "Shall strike them back;" but the English version seems to explain rightly. To "give the neck of an enemy" (Ps. xviii. 4) is a similar form of expression. Thou.—Again the song turns to address Jehovah. So will we sing and praise.—Better, We will both with song and lyric celebrate Thy power. XXII.

The fact that Jesus uttered from His cross the words of bitter woe that begin this psalm, have given and must ever give it a special interest and importance. It was natural that Christian sentiment should fasten lovingly on it, and almost claim it, not only as a record of suffering typical of our Lord's suffering, but as actually in every detail prophetic of Him. But the signs of a true Messianic character of prophecy are to be looked for in moral likeness, not in accidental resemblances of situation, or coincidences of language, and in this sense Ps. xxii. must ever be considered Messianic.

Nothing in David's recorded life bears out the title. The identification of the sufferer with Jeremiah, though much more probable, is excluded by the joyous and hopeful tone of the conclusion of the poem. But is it an individual sufferer at all, and not rather suffering Israel whose profound misery in the first part, and whose happy restoration in the second, the poet depicts?

If such an interpretation suits the description of the suffering servant of Jehovah in Isa. lii., liii., as many
helping me, and from the words of my roaring?  
(8) O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and I am not silent.

(9) But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

(10) Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. (11) They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

(12) But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

(7) “All they that see me laugh at me: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, “He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”

(13) But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts.

(14) I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.

(15) Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. (16) Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls

i.e., far from listening to the words that escape me only in groans.

Roaring.—A word used generally of a lion (Isa. xxix. 9; comp. Judges xiv. 5); but also of a man (Ps. xxxviii. 9). Hitzig’s conjecture, “from my cry,” instead of “from my help,” is very plausible, since it makes the parallelism complete and involves a very slight change. The LXX. and Vulg. have “the words of my offences.”

And am not silent.—This misses the parallelism, which evidently requires “O my God, I cry in the daytime, and thou answerest not; in the night, and find no repose.”

But.—In spite of his seeming desertion the poet still believes Jehovah is the God of the covenant—still the Holy One in whom His people could trust.

The phrase “inhabiting the praises of Israel,” recalls the more usual “thou that dwellest between the cherubims” (1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2; Ps. lxxv. 1, xcv. 1, where see Note). But the idea here is more spiritual. The ever-ascending praises of His people become a throne for the Divine King, and take the place of the outstretched wings of the cherubim. Perhaps there is a reminiscence of Exod. xxi. 11, 12. This explanation is at once more literal and better than the Rabbinical, “enthroned as the praises” (Comp. Aquila: “as the hymns.”)

Confounded.—i.e., ashamed.

Worm.—An indication of extreme degradation and helplessness. (Comp. Isa. xii. 14.)

Laugh me to scorn.—LXX., ἄνυπερταραν, the verb used by St. Luke in his description of the crucifixion (Luke xxiii. 35).

Shout out the lip.—Literally, open with the lip (Ps. xxxv. 21; Job xvi. 10). We use the expression, “curl the lip.”

He trusted.—So the LXX. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 43.) So, too, Ewald among moderns. But generally the form gol (short for got) is taken as an imperative. Literally, roll thyself on God. (Comp. Ps. xxvii. 5; Prov. xvi. 3, margin.)

But.—Better, For. Faith that turns to God in spite of derision is the best answer to derision. Thou didst make me hope.—Better, thou didst make me repose on my mother’s breast.

Bulls of Bashan.—For “Bashan” see Num. xxii. 33; for its pastures and cattle, comp. Deut. xxi. 14; and for the figures, Amos iv. 1. Instead of “fat bulls,” the LXX. and Vulgate paraphrase “strong oxen of Bashan.” The point of the comparison lies in the wantonness and insolence of pampered pride, displayed by the minions of fortune.
of Bashan have beset me round. (19) They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

(20) I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. (21) My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. (22) For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. (23) My strength, haste thee to help me. (24) Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. (25) Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. (26) I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. (27) Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. (28) For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. (29) My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. (30) The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that it is better to understand here a binding of the hands and feet so as to cut them.”
seek him: your heart shall live for ever. (27) All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. (28) For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. (29) All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. (30) A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. (31) They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

PSALM XXIII.

A Psalm of David.

(1) The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (2) He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (3) He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (4) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (5) Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

XXIII.

Under two images equally familiar in Hebrew poetry—that of the shepherd watching over his flock, and of the banquet where Jehovah presides over the just—this psalm expresses the tranquillity and happiness of those who are conscious of the Divine protection. But, after the Hebrew lyric manner, direct allusions to circumstances mingle with the images. We think therefore of some real person and some actual experience, and not of an allegorical reference to the return of the people of Israel from exile, or of the guidance of the rescued nation from Egypt through the wilderness, which were favourite modes of explanation among the Rabbis. The mention of the house of Jehovah seems decisive against the Davidic authorship, which else it would be fascinating to accept, breathing, as the exquisite verse does, the freshness and beauty of the "sweet singer's" early shepherd days. The feast, too, under the enemies' eyes, might have been a reminiscence of Mahanaim; but if David's fortunes have thus coloured the psalm, it must have been through the mind of some later writer. The rhythm of the poem is as tender as the thought.

(1) Shepherd.—This image, as applied to God, appears in Hebrew literature first (Gen. xlviii. 15, xlix. 24) of his relation to the individual (comp. Ps. cxix. 176); as the shepherd of His people the image is much more frequent (Pss. lxviii. 52, lxxv. 1; Isa. x. 11, liii. 11; Ezek. xxxiv.; Micah vii. 14). (2) The verbs in these verses are not to be understood as future, but as presents, describing the customary condition of the poet. "The psalmist describes himself as one of Jehovah's flock, safe under His care, absolved from all anxieties by the sense of this protection, and gaining from this confidence of safety the leisure to enjoy, without satiety, all the simple pleasures which make up life—the freshness of the meadow, the coolness of the stream. It is the most complete picture of happiness that ever was or can be drawn. It represents that state of mind for which all alike sigh, and the want of which makes life a failure to most; it represents that heaven which is everywhere if we could but enter it, and yet almost nowhere because so few of us can" (Eccle Homo, 5, 6). (3) Restoreth my soul.—i.e., refresheth, recreateth, quickeneth. For his name's sake.—God's providential dealings are recognised as in accordance with His character for great graciousness. (4) The valley of the shadow of death.—This striking expression, to which the genius of Bunyan has given such reality, was probably on Hebrew lips nothing more than a forcible synonym for a dark. Indeed, the probability is that instead of tsal-maweth (shadow of death), should be read, tsalmuth (shadow, darkness), the general signification being all that is required in any one of the fifteen places where it occurs. It is true it is used of the "grave" or "underworld" (Job x. 21, 22). But it is
fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
(6) Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
(6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord 2 for ever.
also used of the “darkness of a dungeon” (Ps. evii. 10), of “the pathless desert” (Jer. ii. 6); or, possibly, since it is there parallel with drought, of “the blinding darkness of a sandstorm,” and metaphorically of “affliction” (Isa. ix. 2), and of the “dull heavy look” that grieves wears (Job xvi. 16).
By valley we must understand a deep ravine. Palestine abounds in wild and gloomy valleys, and shepherd life experiences the actual peril of them. Addison’s paraphrase catches the true feeling of the original—
“Though in the path of death I tread,
With gloomy horrors overhead.
Thy rod and thy staff.—Used both for guiding and defending the flock.
(9) Such a sudden transition from the figure of the flock to that of a banquet is characteristic of Hebrew poetry.
Preparè—which, spreadest or furnishest, the usual phrase (Prov. ix. 2; Isa. xxi. 5). (For the same figure of the hospitable host applied to God, see Job xxxvi. 10; Isa. xxv. 6; and the well-known parables in the New Testament.)
In the presence of mine enemies.—We must imagine the banquet spread on some secure mountain height, in sight of the baffled foe, who look on in harm­less spite.
My cup runneth over.—Literally, My cup is abundant drink. Cup, in the sense of portion, has already occurred (Pss. xi. 6, xvi. 5). The LXX. has, “Thine intoxicating cup, how excellent it is;” Vulg. the same, but with “my” instead of “thy.”
(6) I will dwell.—As the text stands it must be translated I will return (and abide) in the house of Jehovah.
The house of the Lord can hardly be anything but the Temple; though some commentators treat this even as figurative of membership in the Divine family.

PSALMS, XXIV.

Psalm 24.

A Psalm of David.

(1) The s earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
(2) For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.
(3) Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? (4) He that hath clean

which was understood by its presence to secure victory, which is brought in triumph to that hill where it was henceforth to have its home. The fact that in the early part of the psalm Jehovah appears in full possession of His mountain, which is already a centre for pious worshippers, seems to bring its composition down to a time posterior to the removal of the ark to Zion. Apart from the rhythmical difficulty, the unity of the poem might possibly be vindicated by the supposition that it was composed not for this first removal, but for some subsequent return of the ark.
This hymn was naturally adopted by Christians as figurative of the Resurrection and Ascension.

(1) The Lord’s.—The majesty of Jehovah as Lord of the universe is a reason to the psalmist for insisting on rectitude and sincerity in those who become His worshippers. St. Paul uses the same truth, referring to this place (1 Cor. x. 26), to show that all things are innocent and pure to the pure; so that a Christian (apart from a charitable regard for the weak) may eat whatever is sold in the shambles, without troubling himself to inquire whether it has been offered to idols or not.
Upon the seas.—For the idea of the earth resting on water, comp. Ps. xxxvi. 6; Prov. viii. 25—29. In Genesis the dry land emerges from the water, but is not said to be founded on it. In Job xxvi. 7 the earth is said to be hung upon nothing. The idea of a water foundation for the earth naturally grew out of the phe­nomenon of springs, before it was scientifically explained.

(3, 4) For the elaboration of this answer, see Ps. xv. and Isa. xxxiii. 15, 18. “The answer is remarkable, as expressing in language so clear that a child may understand it, the great doctrine that the only source, the only character which can be thought worthy of such a habitation, is that which conforms itself to the laws of truth, honesty, humility, justice, love. Three thousand years have passed, Jerusalem has fallen, the Jewish monarchy and priesthood and ritual and religion have perished; but the words of David still remain, with hardly an exception, the rule by which all wise and good men would measure the worth and value of men, the greatness and strength of nations” (Stanley, Canterbury Sermons).

(4) His soul.—The Hebrew margin is “my soul,” a reading confirmed by the Alexandrian Codex of the LXX. The Rabbis defend it by saying soul here = name (comp. Amos vi. 8; Jer. lii. 14), and to lift up to vanity = to take in vain.

Vanity.—Evidently, from the parallelism, in the sense of falsehood, as in Job xxxi. 5.

Deceitfully.—Literally, to fraud, from a root meaning to trip up. The LXX. and Vulg. add (from Ps. xv.) to his neighbour.”
hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. (6) He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. (7) This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

(7) Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. (8) Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. (9) Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. (10) Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

PSALM XXV.
A Psalm of David.
(1) Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. (2) O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. (3) Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. (4) Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. (5) Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation: on thee do I wait all the day. (6) Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses: for they have been ever of old. (7) Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy goodness’ sake, O Lord.

(8) Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. (9) The meek will be guide in judgment: and the meek will be teach his way. (10) All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

(5) Righteousness.—This is the real blessing that comes from God. That virtue is her own reward, is the moral statement of the truth. The highest religious statement must be looked for in Christ’s “Beatitudes.” (6) O Jacob.—The address to Jacob is certainly wrong, and therefore many critics, following the LXX. and Syriac, rightly insert, as in our margin, the words “O God of.”

(7) Gates.—The LXX. and Vulgate miss this fine personification, by rendering “princes” instead of “heads.”

“The sacrifice of the poetry to antiquarianism, by introducing the idea of a “portcullis,” is little less excusable. The poet deems the ancient gateways of the conquered castles far too low for the dignity of the approaching Monarch, and calls on them to open wide and high to give room for His passage.

Everlasting doors.—Better, ancient doors, “gates of elders;” an appropriate description of the gates of the grim old Jebusite fortress, “so venerable with unconquered age.” For olam in this sense comp. the giants “of old” (Gen. vi. 4), the “everlasting hills” (Gen. xlix. 26, &c.), and see Note to Ps. lxxxi. 1. The King of glory shall come in.—This name, in which the claim for admission is made, connects the psalm immediately with the ark; that glory, which had fled with the sad cry Ichabod, has returned; the symbol of the Divine presence and of victory comes to seek a lasting resting-place.

Who . . . .—But the claim is not unchallenged. The old heathen gates will not at once recognise the new-comer’s right of admission.

The Lord strong and mighty.—But it is the right of conquest—

“Jehovah, the strong, the mighty, Jehovah, mighty in battle.”

(10) The Lord of hosts.—A second challenge from the reluctant gates serves as the inauguration of the great name by which the Divine nature was especially known under the monarchy. (For its origin and force, see Note on 1 Sam. i. 3.)

XXV.

This acrostic psalm offers nothing definite for ascertaining its date, but is usually referred to the exile times, when the faithful among the captive Israelites were “waiting” (verses 3, 5, 21) for the redemption of their race. It is full of plaintive appeal to God for help, and reflects that disposition to trust entirely to the Divine pity, which is characteristic of the better minds of Israel under affliction. Indeed we may hear here the voice of the community acknowledging the sins of its younger days (verse 7) before trouble had come to teach the Divine lesson of penitence and hope of forgiveness.

(1) Wait on thee.—More literally, as in LXX., wait for thee, with idea of strong endurance. The root means to make strong by twisting. (Comp. verses 5 and 21, where the same word occurs, though in a different conjugation.) The Vulgate has qui sustinent te, “who maintain thee,” i.e., as their God. The Authorised Version is in error in following the imperative of the LXX. in this verse. It should run, none that wait for thee shall be ashamed.

Transgress without cause.—Better, practise treachery in vain. The Hebrew word is translated dealt treacherously, Judges ix. 23.

Without cause.—Literally, empty.

(5) Lead me in thy truth.—Better, make me walk in—i.e., make me to have an actual experience of the Divine faithfulness in my passage through life.

(6) Ever of old.—Better, from ancient times

(8) “With recollections clear, august, sublime, Of God’s great Truth and Right immutable, She quenched it o’er her weakness.”—A. H. Clough.

(10) Mercy and truth.—Or, grace and truth; recalling John i. 4—17, and showing how the conception
Prayer for Help in Trouble.

PSALMS, XXVI.

David's Integrity.

(11) For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.
(12) What man is he that heareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. (13) His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.
(14) The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.
(15) Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall 3pluck my feet out of the net.
(16) Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.
(17) The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.
(18) O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.
(19) Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

of God and His ways was gradually passing over from the domain of the Law to that of the Gospel.
(12) What man is he . . . ?—For the emphatic question compare Ps. xxxiv. 12.
The way that he shall choose.—Rather, the way that he should choose—i.e., the way of right choice. The LXX. and Vulg., however, refer it to God—the way in which He took delight.
(13) Shall dwell.—Literally, shall lodge the night (comp. margin); but here, as in Ps. xlix. 12, with added sense of permanency.
(14) Secret.—Rather, familiar intercourse (so Symmachus). The Hebrew word primarily means couch, and then the intimate talk or conversation on it. In Jer. vi. 11, xv. 17, the word is rendered "assembly." The English word board offers a direct analogy. The word davan seems to have had a history exactly the reverse. (Comp. Ps. lv. 14, "sweet counsel").
And he will shew them his covenant,—Literally, and his covenant to make them know. This is closely paralleled with the preceding clause. The communion enjoyed by the pious is the highest covenant privilege.
(17) The troubles.—The consensus of commentators is for a different division of the Hebrew words.
... "Relieve my sore heart, And release me from my distress.
(20) This verse, beginning with Pe, was apparently a later addition. Not only is it an isolated line, interfering with the alphabetical arrangement, but it also differs from the rest of the psalm by employing Elohim in the place of Jehovah. (Comp. Ps. xxxiv. 22.)

XXVI.

A priestly or Levitical psalm (see verses 6–8), calm and regular, composed of twelve verses, each verse a distich. The writer has nothing to reproach himself with; he can appeal to the strict tribunal of God without fear. The protest against apostasy is evidently made not for himself alone, but for the pious part of the community.

(1) Judge me—i.e., do me justice, "vindicate me.
I shall not slide.—Rather, I have trusted in Jehovah without wavering.
(2) Try.—Rather, purify, according to the right reading. LXX., try by fire.
(3) For thy lovingkindness . . . —God's favour was before him as an encouragement, and God's truth formed the rule of his life.
(4) Dissembler.—i.e., hypocrites.
(5) Evil doers.—With idea of violence; from a root meaning to break in pieces.
(6) I will wash.—First a symbolical action (Deut. xxi. 6 seq.; Matt. xxvii. 24), then a figure of speech (Job ix. 30; Ezek. xxxvi. 25). The Levitical authorship or, at all events, the Levitical character of the psalm appears from comparison of this with Exod. xxx. 17 seq.
So will I.—Better, that I may, &c. There is no other reference in Jewish literature to the custom of paving round the altar, but it was a very natural and obvious addition to a gorgeous ceremonial—like the processions in churches where a high ceremonial is adopted. It is, however, implied from the Talmud that it was part of the ceremonial of the Feast of Tabernacles for people to march round the altar with palms.
(7) That I may . . . —Literally, to make to hear the voice of praise.
(8) Gather not.—Better as in margin. The psalmist prays that he may be spared to worship in the sanctuary, when doom falls on evildoers and carries them off. The LXX. and Vulg. have "destroy not."
The Psalmist Sustains his Faith

PSALMS, XXVII.

by the Power of God,

nor my life with bloody men: (10) in whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes. (11) But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me. (12) My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

PSALM XXVII.

A Psalm of David.

(1) The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? (2) the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (2) When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. (3) Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

(4) One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. (5) For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

(12) My foot standeth.—It seems more in accordance with the general drift of the poem to take this verse 7 as coming in an even place [i.e., when I am rescued from the difficulties which now beset me] I will praise Jehovah in the congregation.

XXVII.

The opening of this ode reads like the expression of a warrior's faith. On the other hand, verses 4 and 6 point to a Levitical origin. Probably a priest or Levite speaks here for the nation at large, deprived for the present, by foreign persecution, of the regular Temple services. The tone is confident and even triumphant till we come to verse 7, when an abrupt change occurs both in feeling and rhythm. The situation which inspired these latter verses was plainly sad—quite changed from the confidence of the earlier part. Nor is it only that the attitude of praise is changed for that of prayer, but the religious experience of this writer is plainly of a different kind from that of the author of the earlier part. He has had "fears within" as well as "fightings without." He shrinks from the anger of God, and dreads that the Divine favour may be withdrawn (verse 9). Many therefore regard the poem as composite, the work of two different minds. The opening rhythm resembles that of Ps. xi. 7—9, and this part of the psalm may be arranged in six verses of four lines each, resembling English common metre verse (see General Introduction, V.). The latter part is irregular. The Codex Vat. of the LXX. and Vulg. add to the title the words "before he was anointed," which only serve to make the question of date of composition still more perplexing.

(1) The Lord is my light.—This noble thought appears nowhere else so grandly, though we may compare Isa. lx. 1. The Latin of the Vulgate, "Dominus illuminatio mea," is the motto of the University of Aix-la-Chapelle. The opening rhythm resembles that of Ps. xi. 7—9, and this part of the psalm may be arranged in six verses of four lines each, resembling English common metre verse (see General Introduction, V.). The latter part is irregular. The Codex Vat. of the LXX. and the Vulg. add to the title the words "before he was anointed," which only serve to make the question of date of composition still more perplexing.

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A mere transposition of letters would give an easy sense, "to offer in thy Temple." (5) Pavilion.—A booth or hut; also of the lair of wild beasts (Ps. x. 9; Jer. xxv. 38). (Comp. Job xxxviii. 40.)

Secret of his tabernacle.—Better, hiding place of his tent (σκήνη), the regular word for the tent of the congregation, but also used generally of a habitation of any kind—not necessarily of the tent set up for the ark by David at Zion (2 Sam. vi. 17). The clause, "He shall set me up upon a rock,"—i.e., for safety—shows that the tent is also used figuratively for shelter; but there may also be a thought of the
And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When thou didst seek me, ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsaketh me, then the LORD will take me up.

Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Sit down and put thy foot on the rock; be not silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

This psalm gives no distinct indication of its authorship or date of composition. The writer appears to be a royal personage to ask a favour. He might render, "turn not a deaf ear to me," or "turn not from me in silence." The word rendered "silent" appears, like ἄσφαλς in Greek, to have the double meaning of deaf and dumb, and is apparently from an analogous derivation. (See Gesenius, Lex., sub voces.) Hence we might render, "turn not a deaf ear to me," or "turn not from me in silence."

They that go down into the pit—i.e., the dead, or those just about to die (Ps. xxx. 3). In Ps. lxxviii. 4, the expression is parallel to "My life draweth nigh unto the grave;" pit (חֹק) is either the sepulchre (as Isa. xiv. 19), or the world of the dead (Ps. lxxviii. 4). The two significations pass one into the other. This expression suggests that the psalmist was on a bed of death as a mark of Divine punishment, involving him, though innocent, with the wicked. If the psalm is the product of one pen and time, and is really the expression of individual feeling, the writer was a king (verse 8). But the last two verses seem, both in rhythm and tone, to be from another hand, and to be the expression of national, not individual, confidence and hope. In the first seven verses the parallelism is hardly marked at all.

unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

My rock.—Heb., tsôr, from a root implying "bind together" (Deut. xiv. 25), not necessarily therefore with sense of height, but with that of strength and solidity. Thus Tyre (or Tsur) is built on a broad shelf of rock. We see from Deut. xxxii. 30, 31; 1 Sam. ii. 2, that "rock" was a common metaphor for a tutelary deity, and it is adopted frequently for Jehovah in the Psalms and poetical books. Sometimes in the Authorised Version it is rendered "strong" (Ps. ix. 9, lxii. 3; see margin). The LXX. (followed by Vulg.) here, as generally, apparently through timidity, suppresses the metaphor, and renders "my God." In the song of Moses in Deuteronomy, the metaphor occurs nine times, and Stanley thinks it was derived from the granite peaks of Sinai (Jewish Church, p. 195).

Be not silent to me.—Vulg. and margin, rightly, "from me." The word rendered "silent" appears, like ἄσφαλς in Greek, to have the double meaning of deaf and dumb, and is apparently from an analogous derivation. (See Gesenius, Lex., sub voces.) Hence we might render, "turn not a deaf ear to me," or "turn not from me in silence."

Lift up my hands.—For interesting illustrations of this Oriental custom see Ex. ix. 29; 1 Kings viii. 22, &c. Compare the well-known line:—

"If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer."

TENNISON: Morte d'Arthur.

Holy oracle.—Better, the shrine of thy sanctuary (see margin)—i.e., the holy of holies, the adytum, or inner recess of the Temple in which the ark was placed, as we see from 1 Kings xi. 19—22. The Heb. word, which is of doubtful derivation, is, with the exception of this place, only found in Kings and Chronicles. The margin, "the oracle of thy sanctuary," is a better rendering than the text.
A Prayer against Enemies.

A Psalm of David.

Praise of God.

(3) Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts. (4) Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert. (5) Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up. (6) Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. (7) The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. (8) The Lord is their strength, and he is the 2saving strength of his anointed. (9) Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

PSALM XXIX.

A Psalm of David.

(1) Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

(3) Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts. (4) Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert. (5) Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up. (6) Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. (7) The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. (8) The Lord is their strength, and he is the 2saving strength of his anointed. (9) Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

PSALM XXIX.

A Psalm of David.

(1) Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

This is a piece of storm-music which the poetry of no country or age has surpassed, so vividly, or rather audibly, is the tempest—and an Oriental tempest—presented to us. To the Hebrew a storm, at once terrible and magnificent, was the direct manifestation of the grandeur of God, and here the poet gives the liveliest expression to that feeling by representing all the phenomena as the immediate result of the Divine utterance—consequent on, if not produced by, the thunder, the Divine voice. The very form—in the monotone of its short, incisive, strictly parallel clauses—has been rightly supposed to be intended as an echo of successive peals of thunder, always equal, and always terrible. Some commentator has suggested that this hymn was composed by David to be sung during a thunderstorm. But it wants no such inept conjecture to discern the fitness of the psalm to take its place in a religious service. The poet himself has prepared for such an adaptation by his conception. Two scenes are presented—one on earth, where we see the storm sweeping majestically along from the north to the south over the length of Palestine; the other in heaven, where the “sons of God”—i.e., all the angelic intelligences and powers—stand as spectators of the grand drama below, and at the invocation of the poet raise the cry, “Glory.” In praise of the Divine greatness and power. The versification is perfectly regular, but presents instances of that step-like progression which characterises Deborah’s song, and the psalms of Degrees. The two concluding lines are evidently a liturgic addition, and did not form part of the original ode. (See Note.)
The Glory and Power

PSALMS, XXIX,

of God Manifested.

(2) Give unto the Lord 1 the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord 2 in the beauty of holiness.

(3) The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon 3 many waters. (4) The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. (5) The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. (6) He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. (7) The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.

Job i. 6; Isa. vi. 3) in the widest sense as ministers of God, and so including the lightning and storm. (Comp. Ps. civ. 4.) The poet calls on the grand forces of nature themselves to offer praise to their Divine Master, for the glory which they have been commissioned to reveal. It is they who at the beginning and end alike of the psalm sing the praises of Him, who summoned them to speak to men in His name, and make His voice to be heard. The Prayer Book version, "bring young rams," comes from the LXX. and Vulg. The reading probably arose from a marginal gloss. It is the reading of five MSS. of Kennicott and five of De Rossi.

(2) In the beauty of holiness.—Better, in holy attire; an image borrowed from the splendid vestments of the priests and Levites (2 Chron. xx. 21; Ps. cx. 3). So the presents that attend the courts of heaven are bidden to be robed in their most magnificent attire, as for a high and sacred ceremony.

(3) The voice.—The invocation to the angels over the storm bursts, and seven successive peals of thunder mark its course of fury and destruction. It is first heard rolling over the waters from the west (comp. 1 Kings xviii. 44), unless the "waters" and "many waters," as in Ps. xlvii. 12, refer to the gathered masses of rain-cloud, when we might compare it to the thunder, as in Ps. lxxvii. 18; but it seems better to take it for the combined noise of the storm, thunder, wind, and rain, as in Shakespeare—

"Then broke the thunder
Like a whole sea overhead."

SHOWING: Pippa Passes.

The Hebrew kōl ("voice"), used also of any loud sound (2 Sam. xv. 10, of the trumpet; Ezek. i. 24, of water), is sometimes used (Gen. iv. 10; Isa. iii. 5) to call attention, like our "Hark!" So Ewald here. Others refer it to the thunder, as in Ps. lxvii. 18; but it seems better to take it for the combined noise of the storm, thunder, wind, and rain, as in Shakespeare—

"The gods who keep this pandar o'er our heads."

(4) Powerful: full of majesty.—Better literally, as in LXX. and Vulg., in might, in majesty.

(5) The voice of the Lord breaketh.—Better more literally. The voice of Jehovah breaking the cedars, and Jehovah hath shivered the cedars of Lebanon. (The verb in the second clause is an intensive of that used in the first.) The range of Lebanon receives the first fury of the storm. Its cedars, mightiest and longest-lived of Eastern trees, crash down, broken by the violence of the wind. (For cedar, see 2 Sam. vii. 2.) It has been objected that the thunder should not be made the agent in the destruction; but comp. Shakespeare—

"And thus, all-shaking thunder,
Smite flat the thickest rotundity o' the world!
Crack Nature's moulds, all germsen spill at once.
That make ingratitude man!"—King Lear, Act iii., sc. 2.

(6) Those trees that are not snapped off, bending to the storm, and swaying in the wind, seem to bound like wild buffaloes. (Comp. Ps. xcv. 4.)

Siron, according to Deut. iii. 9 (which see), was the Sidonian name of Hermon. Here the whole of the range of Anti-Libanus.

Unicorn.—See Ps. xxii. 21, Note.

There is some ambiguity about the suffix, them. It may relate to the mountains instead of the cedars, and some commentators divide the clauses thus: "He maketh them skip; like a calf Lebanon, and Sirion like a young buffalo." It is not, however, necessary to suppose, with some, that an earthquake accompanies the storm; the apparent movement of the hills being introduced to heighten the effect of the violence of the tempest.

(7) The voice . . .—Literally, the voice of Jehovah cleaving flames of fire. The word is used of hewing stone and wood (Isa. x. 15). The reference to lightning in this verse is universally admitted, some even seeing an allusion to the brief and sudden flash in the single clause of which the sentence is composed. But the most various explanations are given of the image employed. One of these—that of beating out as from an anvil—may be set aside as clumsy and unworthy of the poet. But the comparison with Isa. 9, and Hosea vi. 5, where the same verb is used of God's "judgments," makes it possible that the lightnings here are regarded as "thought-executing fires," and if language would allow, we might translate "howling with flames of fire," and illustrate by

"And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burnt through the pine-tree roof, here burst and there.
As if God's messenger through the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me."

SHOWING: Pippa Passes.

But this, though the usual ancient translation, is now generally rejected in favour of the allusion to "forked lightning," as we call it, the ignes trisulci of Ovid, a natural metaphor by which to try to represent the "nimble stroke of quick cross-lightnings." For the apparent physical mistake in making the thunder the agent in producing the lightning, see Note on verse 5.

(8) The voice of the Lord shaketh.—Literally, maketh to tremble. The allusion is, doubtless, to the effect of the storm on the sands of the desert. The tempest has moved southward over Palestine, and spends its last fury on the southern wilderness, and the poet seizes on what is one of the most striking phenomena of a storm in such a district—the whirlwind of sand. "But soon Red Sea and all were lost in a sandstorm, which lasted the whole day. Imagine all distant objects entirely lost to view, the sheets of sand flying along the surface of the desert like streams of water, the whole air filled, though invisibly, with a tempest of sand, driving in your face like sleet" (Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 67). For Kadesh, see Num. xiii. 26. Here the term appears to be used in a large and general sense for the whole southern desert.
The Power of God.

PSALMS, XXX.

Thanks for Deliverance.

ness of Kadesh. (9) The voice of the Lord maketh the hills 1 to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple 2 doth every one speak of his glory. (10) The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever. (11) The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

PSALM XXX.

A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David.

(1) I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. (2) O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. (3) O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. (4) Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks 3 at the remembrance of his holiness. (5) For 4 his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure 5 for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

(9) Maketh the hills to calve.—Literally, maketh the hills writhen (with pain). (See margin. Comp. LXX., xxvi. 1, where the "hill's habit of hiding its young for safety is alluded to, a habit which the violence of the storm makes it forget.) Both Plutarch and Pliny notice the custom of shepherds to collect their flocks during a thunderstorm, for such as are left alone and are separated, are apt, through terror, to cast their young. Discovereth the forests.—The word "discovereth" comes from the LXX. and Vulgate. Literally, poel or strips—the effects both of wind and lightning. Passing over the sands of the Arabah, the storm has reached the "acacias and palms and vegetation which clothe the rocks of granite and porphyry in the neighbourhood of Petra." Forests may seem rather a large word for such vegetation, but Stanley remarks of the Arabah that "the shrubs at times give it almost the appearance of a jungle." Similar effects of a storm upon a forest are described by Tennyson in Vivien:

"Searce had she ceased when out of heaven a bolt
(For now the storm was close above them) struck,
Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
With darted spikes and splinters of the wood
The dark earth round. He raised his eyes and saw
The tree that shone white-listed thro' the gloom."

In his temple.—Better, in his palace—i.e., the heavenly palace, as in Pss. xi. 4, xviii. 6. (See verse 1.) The angelic spectators of the magnificent drama enacted below them cry not (merely speak of, as Authorized Version, but utter the word) with the "Glory," obeying the poet's invocation in the prelude.

Notice that the effect of the storm on men is supposed to be all summed up in the poet's own attitude of listening awe. There is no actual mention of this part of creation; but one feels from the poem that while inanimate nature trembles and suffers, and the godlike intelligences of heaven are engaged in praise, 'man listens and is mute.

(10) The Lord sitteth.—Better, Jehovah was throne upon the flood, and Jehovah will be throne a king for ever. The word translated "flood" is exclusively, except in this place, applied to the Deluge (Gen. vi. vii.). Hence we must suppose that the poet was recalled to the thought of the great Flood by the torrents of rain now falling. Jehovah sat then upon the waters as their King, and so He will for ever be throne on high above the storms of earth. Or, perhaps the Deluge may have passed into a proverbial term for any great rain.

(11) The Lord will give.—This verse appears to have been a liturgie addition, to give the poem a religious tone. (See Introduction.)

XXX.

This psalm, which is plainly an expression of thankfulness for recovery from a dangerous, and nearly fatal, sickness, does not in a single line or word bear out the title, which suggests either the dedication of the site of the future temple (2 Sam. xxiv.; 1 Chron. xxii.) or of the citadel on Zion (2 Sam. v. 11), or of the re-dedication of the palace profaned by Absalom. On the other hand, the fact that the psalm is, in the Jewish ritual, used at the Feast of Dedication, the origin of which is to be found in 1 Mace. iv. 52 seq., suggests that the title may have been appended after the institution of that feast, in order to give an historical basis for the use of the psalm. The reason of its choice we must look for in the feelings produced by the first successes in the war of independence. After the sad period of humiliation and persecution, the nation felt as if saved from the brink of the grave. Thus the psalm is in application national, though in origin and form individual. Who the author was, it is vain to conjecture; the tone and even the language suggest Hezekiah or Jeremiah. (See Notes.) The parallelism is not strongly marked.

(1) Thou hast lifted me up.—The Hebrew word seems to mean to dangle, and therefore may be used either of letting down or drawing up. The cognate noun means bucket. It is used in Exod. ii. 19, literarily of drawing water from a well; in Prov. xx. 5, metaphorically of counsel. Here it is clearly metaphorical of restoration from sickness, and does not refer to the incident in Jeremiah's life (Jer. xxxviii. 13), where quite a different word is used.

(9) Grave.—Sheol. (See Note to chap. vi. 5.) That I should not go down to the pit.—This follows a reading which is considered by modern scholars ungrammatical. The ordinary reading, rightly kept by the LXX. and Vulg., means from these going down to the pit, i.e., from the dead. (Comp. Ps. xxvii. 1.) (4) Sing unto...Better, Play to Jehovah, ye saints of his. (See Note, Ps. xvi. 10.) And give thanks.—Better, and sing praises to his holy name. (See margin.) Possibly Ex. iii. 15 was in the poet's mind. (Comp. Ps. xxvii. 12.)

(6) For his anger.—Literally, "For a moment (is) in his anger, life in his favour; in the evening comes to lodge weeping, but at morning a shout of joy." Some supply comes to lodge with the last clause, but the image is complete and finer without. It is tho-
The Psalmist Declares

PSALMS, XXXI.

God's Dealings with him.

(8) And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. (9) Lord, by thy favour thou hast made me stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. (10) I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication.

(9) What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

(10) Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper.

(11) Thou hast turned for me my mourn-

|roughly Oriental. Sorrow is the wayfarer who comes to the tent for a night's lodging, but the metaphor of his taking his leave in the morning is not carried on, and we have instead the sudden waking with a cry of joy, sudden as the Eastern dawn, without twilight or preparation. Never was faith in the Divine love more beautifully expressed. (Comp. Isa. liv. 7, 8.)

(6) And in.—Better, But as for me, in, &c. The pronoun is emphatic. The mental struggle through which the psalmist had won his way to this sublime faith is now told in the most vivid manner, the very soliloquy being recalled.

Prosperity.—Better, security. I shall never be moved.—Better, I shall never waver.

(9) I cried to thee.—The very words of “this utter strait” “my prayer” are given. But it is better to keep the figures in verse 8, instead of translating them as preterites, and make the quotation begin here. So Symmachus, “Then I said, I will cry to thee, O Lord,” &c.

(9) What profit . . . —i.e., to God. For the conception of death as breaking the covenant relation between Israel and Jehovah, and so causing loss to Him as well as to them (for Sheol had its own king or shepherd, Death) by putting an end to all religious service, comp. Hezekiah’s song; Isa. xxxviii. 18. Comp. also Ps. vi. 5, and note Ps. lxxviii. 11.) Plainly as yet no hope, not even a dim one, had arisen of praising God beyond the grave. The vision of the New Jerusalem, with the countless throngs of redeemed with harps and palms, was yet for the future.

(11) Thou hast turned for me.—This verse gives the answer to the prayer. Mourning is literally beating the breast, and therefore dancing forms a proper parallelism; or else, according to one derivation of the word, machol would suggest piping. (See margin, Ps. cxlix. 3, et al.; see Smith’s Bible Dictionary under “Dances,” and Bible Educator, vol. ii., p. 70; and comp. Note to Song of Solomon vi. 13.)

(12) My glory.—The suffix is wanting in the Hebrew, and in all the older versions except LXX. and Vulg.

The Chaldee versions make the word concrete and render “the nobles.” The Syriac, reading the verb in a different person, makes glory the object—then will I sing to thee, Glory.” My glory would, as in Ps. cxviii. 1, mean my heart. (See Note, Ps. xvi. 9.) Without the pronoun, we must (with Jerome) understand by “glory” renown or praise, which, as it were, itself raises songs; or it must be concrete, “everything glorious.”

PSALM XXXI.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

(1) In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

XXXI.

This psalm is full of tantalising expressions, which raise the expectation of a satisfactory historical basis for its composition, only to disappoint by the obscurity of their allusion. On the one hand, the figures of the stronghold and rock (verses 2, 3) not only suggest David as the author, but, from the mode of their introduction, at first seem to point to some definite locality, as Keilah or Ziklag (verse 7). But we are instantly transported into another circle of images and situations which recall Jeremiah and his fortunes. Moreover, the psalm oscillates between plaintive prayer and assured trust in a way to indicate that we cannot here have the experience of one single event, but the gathered sentiments of a whole lifetime; or, perhaps, which is more likely, the expression of a universal sentiment, the picture of a national situation where power was on one side and right on the other, in which the interests of religion and the discharge of religious duties were opposed by the contemptuous hostility of an idolatrous society. The enemies, at all events, who appear here are those who hate the pious Israelite because they themselves adore other gods (verse 6)—they are the wicked—their arms are recrimination, calumny, contempt, the insolation of the powerful against the humble and weak. The psalm seems, therefore, to reflect the later times of the monarchy, when the pure religion of Jehovah had to struggle against idolatrous tendencies favoured in high places. The recurrence of phrases very common in his writings show that if Jeremiah was not the author of the psalm, he was very familiar with it, or the writer of the psalm was imbued with his style. The versification is irregular.

(1) The words of this verse are interesting as being the last words of Xavier, and as concluding the Te Deum.

Verses 1–3 occur again with slight variations in Ps. lxxi. 1–3.

Let me never.—Literally, let me not for ever be ashamed.

(2) My strong rock.—Literally, “Thou art to me for a rock of a stronghold, for a house of fortresses to save me.”

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down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. (3) For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name’s sake lead me, and guide me. (4) Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.

(5) Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

(6) I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord. (7) I will be glad and rejoice in thy logic, if not of the intellect; the logic, it was in life, amid its troubles and dangers, that he felt, it was in thought, it was in the heart, if not of the intellect; the logic, it was in the heart. In the logic of the heart if not of the intellect; the logic, it was in thought, it was in life, amid its troubles and dangers, that he felt, it was in thought, it was in life, amid its troubles and dangers, that he felt.

(8) The net.—This image is a common one in the Psalms. (Comp. Ps. x. 9, &c.)

Laid privily.—Literally, hidden. Translate still by the future, thou wilt lead and guide me.

(9) I commit.—Most memorable, even among expressions of the Psalms, as the dying words of our Lord Himself (Luke xxiv. 46), and a long line of Christian worthies. Polycarp, Bernard, Huss, Henry V., Jerome of Prague, Luther, Melanchthon, are some of the many who have passed away comforted and upheld by the psalmist’s expression of trust. But death was not in his thought, it was in life, amid its troubles and dangers, that he trusted (Hebrew, deposited as a trust) his spirit (rūach, comp. Isa. xxxviii. 16) to God. But the gift brought to the altar by the seer of old, has been consecrated anew and yet anew.

Lord God of truth.—Comp. 2 Chron. xv. 3, where, as here, there is a contrast between Jehovah and idols; but also, in Deut. xxxii. 4, the “faithful God.”

(10) Lying vanities.—Literally, breath of lies (Jonah ii. 8), undoubtedly idols, as the parallelism in Jer. viii. 19 shows. It was the term adopted by the Deuteronomist (chap. xxxii. 21) and apparently brought into use by him.

(11) Shut me up into the hand. —This is the exact phrase used by David (1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12) in consulting the Divine oracle by the ephod. But this does not prove the authorship, for it was evidently a common phrase. (See 1 Sam. xxiv. 18, xxvi. 8; 2 Kings xvii. 4.)

Large room.—Comp. Ps. iv. 1 and xviii. 19.

I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. (10) For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. (11) I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. (12) I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. (13) For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

(14) But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. (15) My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and...
from them that persecute me. (16) Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake. (19) Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. (18) Let the lying lips be put to silence: which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteouss.

(19) "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for the sons of men! (30) Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence before the sons of men:

The sense of security in this trusting prayer may be contrasted with the feeling of danger in another Hebrew phrase, "my soul is continually in my hand," Ps. cxix. 109.

(19) Make thy face to shine. - As in chap. iv. 6, an echo of the priestly blessing. (Num. vi. 24—26.)

(18) Silence. - As a different word is used from that rendered silent in verse 17, translate let the lying lips be made dumb.

Grievous. - Better, arrogant, as in 1 Sam. ii. 3. (Comp. Ps. xciv. 4.) So in Ps. lxv. 5, "a stiff neck" is a neck thrown impudently back.

Proudly and contemptuously. - Literally, in pride and contempt. (19) Laid up. - Better, hidden, (Heb. tsaphan; comp. Ps. xvii. 14; Obad. 6), as a treasure for the faithful, and now brought out and displayed in the presence of the sons of men.

(19) The secret of thy presence. - Better, in the hiding-place of his countenance, a beautiful thought and common in the Psalms, although expressed by different images. In Ps. xxvii. 5, "the hiding-place of his tabernacle;" Is. 4, "of his wings;" xci. 1, "of his shadow.

The form the same image takes in the Christian's hope is beautifully expressed by Tennyson:

"To lie within the light of God as I lie upon your breast, And the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

Pride. - Better, rough or wrangling talk, as the parallelism shows and the LXX. confirm; and, referring back to verse 15, Gesenius renders the word "conspiracies." (21) Shewed me his marvellous kindness. - Better, made his kindness distinguished or manifest, referring to verse 19. In a strong city. - Some see a reference to David's adventures at Ziklag or Keilah; others to Jeremiah's in Jerusalem (Jer. xxxviii.). It is, however, better to regard it merely as a general image of the Divine protection.

(22) In my haste . . . Literally, in my fleeing away in fear. Jerome, Aquila, and Symmachus, "in my confusion.

Preserveth the faithful. - Or, perhaps, by rendering by the abstract instead of the concrete, keeps faith. The LXX. and Vulg. have "requireth truth." (22) Blessed be the Lord: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. (23) For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

(20) O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. (24) Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.
Confession of Sin

PSALMS, XXXII.

Gives Ease to the Conscience.

 forgiven, whose sin is covered. (2) Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.  

(3) When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. (4) For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

(5) I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

standing;" the Vulg., intellectus; and Jerome, intellectus eruditis. (Comp. the margin.) Against this, however, must be set the fact that only two out of the thirteen hymns with this title can possibly be considered didactic. But in Ps. xlvii. 7, the word is joined to a term meaning to play or sing (Authorised Version, "sing ye praises with understanding") in such a way as to indicate a musical reference, a reference fully borne out by some of the titles, and also by the description of the Levitical musicians, 2 Chron. xxx. 22, by the participle of this verb, as "those who play skillfully with good taste." Hence render "a skilful song."

(1, 2) Transgression—sin—iniquity. —The same terms used here to express the compass and heinousness of sin are found, though in different order, in Exod. xxxiv. 7. For St. Paul's reading of this passage, see Rom. iv. 6, 7.  

(4) My bones waxed old. —For this expression comp. Ps. vi. 2.

(5) Thy hand was heavy. —The verb, as in "kept silence" in verse 3, is properly present—the agony is still vividly present.

My moisture. —The Hebrew word is found only once besides (Num. xi. 8), where the Authorised Version has "fresh oil;" the LXX. and Vulg., "an oily cake." Aquila has "of the breast of oil," reading the word erroneously. Here both LXX. and Vulg. seem to have had a different reading. "I was turned to sorrow while the thorn was fixed in." Symmachus translates somewhat similarly, but by "to destruction" instead of "to sorrow." Aquila, "to my spoiling in summer desolation." These readings, however, mistake the lexema, which is part of the brevis of "water." Gesenius connects with an Arabic root, to suck, and so gets the meaning juice or moisture.

Into the drought of summer. —This is the best rendering of the Hebrew, though it might be either "as in summer dryness" or "with summer heat." Some understand literally a fever, but it is better to take it figuratively of the soul-fever which the whole passage describes.

(5) I acknowledged. —The fact that this verb is future, as also "I will confess" in the next clause, as well as the requirements of the passage, uphold Hupfeld's suggestion that "I said" has changed its place, and should be replaced at the beginning of the verse. (Comp. Ps. lixiii. 15, and Note.) The sense is,

"I said, 'I will acknowledge my sin unto thee,' And I did not hide mine iniquity. (I said) 'I will confess my transgression unto Jehovah, And thou forgavest the guilt of my sin."

(6) For this—i.e., for this cause. Shall every one. —Better, let every one. In a time. . . See margin. The expression, "time of finding," is, of course, elliptical. The Authorised Version explains by Isa. iv. 6; but Isa. xlv. 8 would suggest that "forgiveness" or "acceptance" is the word to be supplied. More probably still some general word, as "goal" or "object," is required, the phrase being rendered by the LXX., "in the appointed time," by the Vulg., "opportune."

Surely. —This adds emphasis to the statement, whether we render after Prov. xiii. 10, "only unto him," or as in Authorised Version. "He—the godly—is the man whom, when the floods rise, they shall not harm." The floods may either be an image of Divine judgment, as in Nah. i. 8, or of temptation and trial, as in Matt. vii. 24—27.

(9) Whose mouth. —Here the text has evidently suffered, and the exact meaning is lost. There are also verbal difficulties. The word translated "mouth" elsewhere (except Ps. ciii. 5, where see Note) means "ornament," and the literal rendering of the text as it stands is, with bit and bridle his ornament to hold, not approaching to thee. This may mean that the animal is harnessed, either "that it may not approach," or "because without harness it will not approach."
God is to be Praised

PSALMS, XXXIII. for His Goodness and Power.

(10) Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. (11) Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

PSALM XXXIII.

(1) Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright. (2) Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. (3) Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. (4) For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth. (5) He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. (6) By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (7) He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap; he layeth up the depth in storehouses. (8) Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. (9) For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. (10) The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. (11) The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. (12) Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. (13) The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. (14) From

In either case the general application is the same. Horses and mules can only be rendered obedient by restraints that are unworthy of a rational creature. The LXX. and Vulg. have “jaws” instead of “mouth,” and Ewald follows them, and renders the last clause, “of those who approach thee unfriendly.”

XXXIII.

This is a hymn of praise to Jehovah, as at once Almighty Creator and Ruler of the universe, and the Protector of His chosen people. It was plainly for liturgical use, and beyond this, as even the compilers of the collection left it anonymous, it is useless to inquire into its authorship or date. All that we see clearly is that faith in the protection of Jehovah and in the promises of His covenant, and in their being true and enduring, is the inspiration of the psalm. The number of strings probably varied, as different accounts are given. (See Bible Educator, i. 19.)

With the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.—Properly, as LXX. and Vulg., “with the ten-stringed psaltery.” (See 1 Sam. x. 5.) Evidently a more elaborate instrument than the khinnor, and with greater capacities. (See Bible Educator, i. 70, and art. “Psaltery” in Smith’s Biblical Dictionary.) From the Greek psalteryion comes the title “psalter” for the Book of Psalms. By its derivation it meant an instrument played with the fingers. The word was in use in old English: “And before him went minstrels many one, As harpers, pipes, lutes, and a psalter.”—CHAUCER: The Flower and the Leaf, 237.

(3) A new song.—This expression occurs in Pss. xcv. 1, cxxviii. 1, cxlix. 1; Isa. xlii. 10; Judith xvi. 13, and was adopted in Rev. v. 9, xiv. 3. The term apparently marked the revival of national psalmody after the Captivity. “Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare... Sing unto the Lord a new song” (Isa. xlii. 9, 10).

Play skilfully with a loud noise.—The latter words represent a Hebrew expression of common hymnic use, describing the full choral effect when instruments and voices were joined in the service of the sanctuary (Pss. xcv. 1, c. 1, &c.). Some, however, limit it (after Lev. xxv. 9) to the trumpet accompaniment, and render—“Strike the harp delightfully, Amid the blare of trumpets.”

(4) Right.—The first inspiring cause of praise for a faithful Israelite is the righteousness of the God of the Covenant. But the pregnant expression, “word of Jehovah,” naturally leads him on from the thought of its truth to the thought of its power, and in verses 6 and 7 we have praise of the creative act of the Almighty.

(5) The breath of his mouth.—This is plainly only a synonym for word. (Comp. Isa. xii. 4, where “breath of his lips” is used for the Divine sentence of judgment upon the heathen.)

(6) As an heap.—The image explains itself (so we speak of waves “mountains high”) without reference to the passage either of the Red Sea or the Jordan. Still less is there a comparison to heaps of corn, some think, since storehouses in the next clause are not necessarily barns, but reservoirs. But the LXX., Vulg., and all ancient interpreters read ἄλοδ ("a skin"), instead of ἄλοδ ("a heap"), and make the reference to the rain, the clouds being considered as bottles. With this comp. Job xxxviii. 37.

(10) The Lord bringeth.—The thought now passes on to the irresistible rule of Jehovah. His counsel stands for all generations, and being righteous as well as eternal, frustrates the counsel and thoughts of the heathen, while His chosen people (verse 12) rest in stable peace under the Theocracy. (Comp. Acts v. 38.)

The word devices in verse 10 should be thoughts, as in verse 11, or, better in both, purposes.

Verse 12 is the pivot, as it were, on which the whole psalm turns, and was doubtless sung in full chorus.
the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. 
(15) He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. (16) There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. (17) An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. (18) Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; (19) to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. 
(20) Our soul waiteth for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. (21) For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. (22) Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

by which to appropriate the psalm to any particular period, still less to any particular event or individual, and it reads more like a gnomic composition expressive of the faith of the pious community than as the outpouring of individual feeling.

Title.—There seems little doubt that this title was suggested by the form of the word rendered "taste" in verse 8, taamu, reminding the compiler of taamé ("his behaviour," 1 Sam. xi. 13), combined with that of tithkáhîl ("shall boast," verse 2), with tithkáhîl ("he is mad," 1 Sam. xii. 14). At least no other conjecture can account for an inscription so entirely foreign to the contents of the psalm, and containing besides an historical blunder in the king's name (the margin corrects it).

(2) Humble.—See Note on Ps. ix. 12. The LXX. and Vulg., "the meek." It means here those who have learnt patience in the school of suffering.

(3) Were lightened.—The Hebrew verb means properly "to flow," but by a natural process, as in the common phrases "streams of light," "floods of light," acquired in Aramaic the sense of "shining." Such must be its meaning in Isa. ix. 5, almost the echo of the thought in the psalm, the thought of a reflex of the Divine glory lighting up the face of those who in trouble seek God. (Theodoret has "He who approaches God, receives the rays of intellectual light.") We naturally think of the dying Stephen.

As to the construction, the subject must either be supplied from verse 2, or it must be general. The LXX. and Vulg. avoid the difficulty by changing to the second person.

(4) This poor man.—Better, this sufferer—i.e., either the writer, or Israel personified.

(7) The angel of the Lord is an expression which has given rise to much discussion. From comparison with other passages it may be (1) any commissioned agent of God, as a prophet (Haggai i. 13). (2) One of the celestial court (Gen. xxii. 11). (3) Any manifestation of the Divine presence, as the flame in the bush (Exod. iii. 2), the winds (Pss. xxxv. 5, 6, civ. 4). (4) Jehovah Himself, as in the phrase "the angel of
PSALMS, XXXV.

are Protected by Him.

A Psalm of David.

(1) Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. (2) Take hold of his presence” (Isa. lixii. 9). It may very well be, therefore, that the psalmist uses it here in a general sense for the Divine manifestation of protection. We thus avoid the difficulty in the image of one angel encamping round the sufferer, which other commentators try to avoid by supposingangel to mean either a troop of angels, or captain or chief of an angelic army. But for this difficulty, we should connect the psalmist’s words immediately with the well-known incident in Jacob’s life at Mahanaim, or with the story of Elisha and “the horses and chariots of fire” round about him. We certainly must not let go the beautiful thought that round God’s elect—

“The spangled hosts keep watch in squadrons bright.”

(8) Taste.—Comp. Hab. vi. 4; 1 Peter ii. 3.
(10) Young lions.—See Note, Ps. xxvii. 12. The young lion is the emblem of power and self-resource. Yet these sometimes lack, but the earnest seekers after Divine truth and righteousness never. Instead of “lions,” the LXX. and Vulgate have “the rich.”
(11) “Come, ye children ...” —A common proverbial style. See Prov. i. 8, and passim. (Comp. also 1 John ii. 1, &c.)
(12) Desireth life.—Better, the man delighting in life. These gnomic sayings are echoes from the book of Proverbs. (See especially Prov. iv. 23.)
(14) And do good.—Negative goodness is not sufficient. Practical good must be added.
(15) The eyes.—A verse quoted in 1 Pet. iii. 12. (See New Testament Commentary). This psalm had a deep hold on the national mind. With the expression, “his ears to their cry,” we may compare the phrase, “to have a person’s ear.”
(19) To cut off.—Notice the fear, so intense and recurring to the Semitic mind, of the extinction of race. (Comp. Ps. xxi. 10; Job xviii. 17, &c.)
This verse, according to the sense, should certainly change places with verse 15. This would disarrange the acrostic, bringing pe before ayin; but, as in Lam. ii., iii., and iv., the same sequence of letters occurs, we are led to the conclusion that the order of the alphabet was not definitely or invariably fixed in respect of these two letters, a licence intelligible enough when we remember that tsade, which follows pe, was often interchanged with ayin, which precedes it.

(20) Broken.—See John xix. 36, N. Test. Commentary.
(21) Desolate.—Better (as in margin), shall be found guilty, or condemned.
(22) Redeemeth.—Comp. Ps. xxv. 22, which begins with the same letter, out of its place, and the same word.

XXXV.

This psalm opens in a warlike tone, so as to suggest a soldier for its author, and for its occasion the eve of some battle. But we soon (verses 7, 8, 11, 12) perceive that these warlike expressions are only metaphors, and that the foes of the poet are malicious slanderers and scoffers of the pious Israelites—it may be the court party in the time of one of the later kings, or, more probably, the anti-national party (see Note, verse 16) at a later time, the innovators affected by Persian or Grecian influence.

Few good critics, at all events, consider the psalm Davidic. Some ascribe it to Jeremiah. But whoever was its author, it expresses, not an individual feeling alone, but that of a community despised and maligned for its piety, and appealing to Jehovah against its oppressors, with that longing for retributive justice which in an individual becomes, in a Christian view, wickedly vindictive, but to the Old Testament Church was the vindication of the Divine honour which was pledged to do justice to the chosen but afflicted people. The parallelism is fine and well sustained.

(1) Plead my cause.—Better, Strive, O Jehovah, with them that strive with me. The construction requires this, and the parallelism suggests recourse to arms rather than to the law.

Fight.—Literally, devour. (Comp. Num. xxiv. 8. “He shall eat up the nations.” So a Latin author—

“Qua medius pugnae vorat anguis vortex.”

SILIUS : Punic. iv. 220.
Comp. Shakespeare—

“If the wars eat us not up.” —Coriolanus, Act I., Sc. 1.)

(2) Shield and buckler.—Better, buckler and shield, as the first (Heb. magen) suggests a small, the
shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. (5) Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. (4) Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul; let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt. (5) Let them be as chaff before the wind, and let the angel of the Lord chase them. (6) Let their way be dark and slippery; and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.

(7) For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul. (5) Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

(9) And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation. (10) All my bones shall say, Lo, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

(11) False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. (12) They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

(13) But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer clause, thus doing away with the necessity of supplying a relative, and improving the rhythm.

"For unprovoked they hid a net for me. Unprovoked they digged a pit for my soul."

(8) Let destruction.—There is considerable difficulty here, and the ancient versions, by their variations, seem to point to some confusion in the text. The LXX., no doubt, are right in reading the pronouns as plurals, instead of singular. The word translated "destruction" means, primarily, a storm, or the crash that accompanies a storm (Prov. i. 27), and if with the Syriac we might supply a clause, both parallelism and sense would be complete.

"Let men come upon him (them) unawares. Let the net which he (they) had catch himself, the pit which he (they) digged, let him (them) fall into it, In ruin let him (them) fall into it."

For "unawares," see margin and Note, Song of Sol. vi. 12.

(10) All my bones. As we say, "all the fibres of my body." (Comp. Pss. vi. 2, xxxiv. 20.)

The poor . . . the poor. Better, the sufferer . . . the sufferer.

(12) To the spoiling of my soul. Literally, desolation to my soul. We may paraphrase, "They rewarded me evil for good, Which to me was desolation."

(13) And my prayer returned into mine own bosom. This has been most variously explained. The context evidently implies something done for the benefit of the whilome friends for whom, in their sickness, the poet had worn sackcloth, and had fasted and adopted all the other signs of mourning. We must therefore set aside (1) the idea of fruitless prayer, in spite of the analogy of Matt. x. 13,Luke x. 6. (2) The notion that the answer to the prayer came back to the psalmist himself, instead of to those for whom it was offered, must also be set aside. And (3) we must reject the notion of secret, i.e., silent prayer, in spite of Prov. xvii. 23, xxi. 14, since all the "outward and visible" signs of mourning are indicated, and the very object was to show sympathy and interest.

There remains (1) the literal, and my prayer turned upon my bosom, referring to the posture described in verse 14. (Comp. 1 Kings xviii. 42, where, however, there is no express mention of prayer.) The words
The Psalmist Prays for Help,

PSALMS, XXXVI. and for his Enemies' Confusion.

I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. (15) But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not: (16) with hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

(17) Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions, my friend, I bowed down heavily again and again to my bosom, i.e., was repeated over and over again: just as we say, "the thought recurred to my mind." (Comp. the common phrase for thoughts coming upon the heart, Jer. iii. 16, vii. 31, etc.) The Hebrew verb has this frequentative sense in one of its conjugations.

(18) I bowed down heavily. Better, I went squalid, and bowed down, alluding to the neglected beard and person, and to the dust and ashes of Oriental mourning.

(19) In mine adversity. Better, at my fall.

The abjects. - The Hebrew word occurs only here. It is derived from a root meaning to smile, but its form is perplexing. The ancient versions all give it an active sense. LXX. and Vulg. "whips"; Symmachus, "smiters"; Chaldee, "the wicked who smite me with their words," probably a correct paraphrase. The passive, "these smitten," or "abjects," is due to R. Kimchi.

And I knew it not. - i.e., either (1) "unawares," as in verse 8; (2) "for what reason I knew not"; (3) "whom I knew not"; (4) "and I was innocent." Of these possible explanations (2) is to be preferred.

(20) With hypocritical mockers in feasts. - This clause is full of difficulty. The LXX. and Vulg. have, "they tempted me, they mocked me with a mocking"; Symmachus, "in hypocrisy, with feigned words"; Chaldee, "with derisive words of flattery." All these take the word rendered in the Authorised Version "feasts" as a correlative word in Isa. xxviii. 11, translated "stammering," but which means rather, "barbarians." (Comp. Isa. xxxiii. 19.) The word rendered "hypocritical" more properly means "profane" or "impious." With these meanings we get a very good sense (with evident reference to the malicious attacks of foreigners, or of the anti-national party that affected foreign ways) in the manner of profane barbaric barbarians, or with profanity and barbaram.

As to the rendering "feasts," it comes from treating the word as the usual used (1 Kings xxii. 13) for a "cake." "Cake-mockers" are explained to be parasites who hang about the tables of the rich, getting their dinner in return for their buffooneries. (Comp. the Greek ὑπορεπται; Latin, bucellarii.)

(21) Yea, they opened their wide mouth against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

(22) This thou hast seen, O Lord: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me. (23) Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

(24) Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me. (25) Let them not say in their hearts, 'Ah, so would we have it; let them not say, We have swallowed him up. (26) Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.

(27) Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

(28) And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.

PSALM XXXVI.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord.

(1) The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no
fear of God before his eyes. (2) For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. (3) The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit; he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. (4) He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.

The first stanza has led some critics to pronounce the psalm composite. But what else can the heart, which would not sink beneath the oppressive sense of the accumulated sin and misery of earth, do, but turn suddenly and confidently to the thought of an infinite and abiding goodness and truth. The only resource of faith that would not fail is to appeal from earth to heaven, and see, high over all the fickleness and falsehood of men, the faithfulness of God: strong above all the insolence and tyranny of the wicked His eternal justice; large, deep, and sure, when all other supports seem to fail, His vast and unchanging love. Those who understand by “God's house,” in verse 8, the Temple, reject the Davidic authorship. But understood of the world generally, or, better, of the heavenly abode of the Divine, it does not serve as an indication of date, and there is nothing else in the poem to decide when it was written. The parallelism is varied.

Title.—For “servant of the Lord,” as applied to David, see Ps. xvii. (title).

(1) The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart. —The literal rendering of the present Hebrew text is, An utterance of sin to the wicked within my heart. The common phrase rendered in our version, “Thus saith Jehovah,” is here imitated, “Thus saith sin.” “To the wicked” cannot, as some explain, mean “concerning the wicked.” The only possible meaning of the text as it stands is therefore, “Thus saith sin to (me) the wicked man in my heart.” But there can be no question that the psalmist wrote “in his heart,” since all the ancient versions, with the exception of the Chaldee Paraphrase, followed this reading, and some MSS. still show it. This gives us a very fine sense. Sin is personified as the evil counsellor or prompter sitting in the heart of the wicked to suggest evil thoughts: Sin in the wicked man’s heart is his oracle. Conscience is on the wrong side.

There is no fear. —This is not the suggestion of sin just mentioned, but an explanation of the condition into which the wicked man has sunk. Impiety and irreverence have so corrupted his nature, that sin has become his oracle.

(2) For he flattereth. —Literally, For he (or, it) makes smooth to him in his eyes to find out his evil to hate. (See margin.) A sentence of great difficulty. We must seek for the key to the interpretation of these words in the balance of the two phrases, “before his eyes,” “in his own eyes,” and must take the two verses together. They form, in fact, an example of introverted parallelism. (See Gen. Introduction.) Sin is the wicked man’s oracle in his heart; No fear of God is before his eyes; He makes all smooth to himself in his eyes. As to the discovery of his guilt that is his hate.

Or, The discovery of his guilt is the only thing he hates.

This reading takes the two infinitives as subject and complement with the copula understood. It would be strange if Hebrew, which, above all languages, makes the infinitive do duty in various ways, offered no instance of such a use. (For mase aven in the sense of the discovery of guilt, comp. Gen. xlv. 16; Hos. xii. 8, etc.)

(3, 4) From the secret promptings of sin, the description of the ungodly passes on to its issues in words and deeds. It is an awful picture of wickedness of a man abandoning himself without check or remorse to the inspiration of his own evil heart. He goes from bad to worse. In a great English tragedy, the murderer, though he has determined to evade farther in blood, yet prays against the horror of nightly temptations:

“Merciful powers, Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature Gives way to in repose. But this man “deviseth mischief upon his bed.” When even the worst criminals shudder at their own deeds, whispering to their “deaf pillows” the agonies that creep over them with darkness and silence, this ungodly man of the Hebrew poet’s picture is occupied rather in scheming fresh villainies; even then he abhorreth not evil, or better, rejecteth not, catches rather at every fresh suggestion, and shapes it to his end.

(5) Thy mercy, O Lord, is in . . . —Better, Jehovah, to the heavens (reacheth) thy grace, Thy faithfulness to the sky.

i.e., there are no narrower bounds of divine mercy and truth.

(6) Great mountains. —See margin, and compare Ps. lxxx. 10, “cedars of God.” So too the rain is called “God’s brook.” The epithet not only implies greatness and dignity, but also has reference to God as Creator.

A great deep. —The reference, as usual, with the words deep, depth, is to the great abyss of waters, of which the seas were regarded as the surface. The twofold comparison in this verse recalls Wordsworth’s lines—

“Two voices are there: one is of the sea, One of the mountains—each a mighty voice.”

but while to the modern poet the voice is Liberty, to the ancient Hebrew it is Righteousness. The majesty of the hills has often suggested the supremacy of right over wrong—

“Then hast a voice, great mountain, to repeal Large codes of fraud and woe.”

The calm of the infinite sea has often soothed agitated souls. Hebrew poetry connected both immediately with God, the uplifted strength of the hills became an emblem of His eternal truth; the depth and expanse of the infinite seas of His outspread goodness and inexhaustible justice.

(7) How excellent. —Better, how precious. Therefore . . . —Better, the simple conjunction, and some of men, they find shelter, &c.
put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. (9) They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. (10) For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light. (10) O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart. (11) Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me. (12) There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

PSALM XXXVII.

A Psalm of David.

(1) Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. (2) For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

(3) Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. (4) Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. (5) Commit thy way to the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. (6) Be not rage with evil thoughts, and let the thoughts of thine heart be no more upon sins. (7) And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart, and shall perform all the desires which are in thine heart. (8) Be not rash with thine words, nor let thine mouth hurry thee to sin. (9) For the mouth of a fool is his ruin; and he that lieth in wait for mischief shall be destroyed. (10) A just man shall be in inheritance; and he that acquitteth the unrighteous shall not inherit the land. (11) But the mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom; and his heart speaketh righteousness. (12) The mouth of the unrighteous shall be stopped; and they shall be ashamed of their unrighteousness. (13) There shall be a river of water in the light of the Lord, and the workers of iniquity shall be withered. (14) The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. (15) In that day shall the Lord be a light to the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles. (16) None shall be cast down, and none shall be ashamed in the house of the Lord. (17) The light of the Lord shall be a light unto the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles. (18) And the Lord shall be a light unto the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles. (19) The Lord shall be a light unto the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles. (20) The Lord shall be a light unto the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles. (21) The Lord shall be a light unto the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles. (22) The light of the Lord shall be a light unto the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles. (23) The light of the Lord shall be a light unto the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles. (24) The light of the Lord shall be a light unto the house of Judah, and a light in the land of the Gentiles.
also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

(5) **Commit thy way unto the Lord;** trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. (6) And he shall bring forth thine righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

(7) **Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him:** fret not thyself because he hath enlarged his right hand, and strengthened his right arm. (8) For the Lord changeth not, therefore ye, O children of Jacob, are not destroyed.

(9) Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. (10) For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

(11) **Cease from anger, and be not rude:** know the Lord and his works, and the children of men his righteousness.

(12) **As for the man that doeth richteousness and feareth the Lord, he shall be established by Jehovah, i.e., his stability in human conduct comes from His guidance.**

(13) **Shall laugh.**—Comp. Ps. ii. 4; Note; his day, i.e., the day of trouble or retribution for the wicked, as we see from Ps. xxxvii. 7; Job xviii. 20, etc.

(14) **Their sword.**—The lex talionis. (Comp. Ps. vii. 15, 16.)

(15) **A little.**—A natural reflection, when it is remembered that great riches bring corresponding cares (Prov. xv. 16), and often lead to ruinous indulgence and luxury (Prov. xiii. 25; Job xx. 12.) Besides, the contentment which is often enjoyed in virtuous poverty seldom dwells with the mammon of unrighteousness.

(16) **The arms.**—i.e., of the body, not the sword and bow mentioned above. In contrast, the arms of Jehovah are under the righteous, and uphold him.

(17) **Knoweth.**—See Ps. i. 6; Note.

(18) **As the fat of lambs.**—It is now generally allowed that this should be rendered as the glory of the meadows, recurring to the image of verse 2. The next clause may then be either, they are consumed, with smoke they are consumed; or, they pass away, like smoke they pass away.

(19) **The steps.**—Comp. Prov. xx. 24, xvi. 9; passages which are in favour of a general interpretation here, not confined to the good man. Render, man's steps are established by Jehovah, i.e., all the stability in human conduct comes from His guidance.

(20) **For the Lord.**—In the Hebrew the stanza that should begin with the letter ayin is wanting, but may be restored by a very slight change, to agree with the

own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

(10) **A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.**

(11) **For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.**

(12) **The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.**

(13) **They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.**

(14) **But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.**

(15) **The wicked shall be cut off for the Lord up­holdeth him with his hand.**

(16) **He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.**

(17) **Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.**

For the psalmist's thought, for the faithfulness of God is the security of man.

(5) **Commit.**—See margin, and Ps. xxi. 8. (Comp. Prov. xvi. 3.) In Ps. lv. 22 the word is different.

(6) **The light.**—The image is from an Eastern dawn and the progress of the sun to its meridian glory. (Comp. Job xvi. 17; Isa. lvii. 10.)

(7) **Rest.**—Better, Hush! Be still! See margin. The good man, seeing merit unrewarded and wicked­ness, on the other hand, constantly successful, is tempted to repine. For a later echo of the poet's thought, irritated by Christian hope, we may recur to Coleridge's well-known " Complaint " and its " reproof."

(8) **In any wise to do evil.**—But, better, only to do evil, i.e., only evil can come of it. Comp. Prov. xiv. 23, " lendeth only to penury."

(9) **For yet a little.**—Better, For yet a little while, and the wicked is not; Thou lookest at his place, and he is not; i.e., he has dropped out of his place in society, his tribe knows him no more.

(10) **Shall inherit.**—A repetition of verse 3.—Better, are heirs of the land, i.e., Canaan. Christ's Beatitude (see Matt. v. 3, N. Test. Commentary) widens the promise and lifts it to a higher level. The quiet, unpretending, contented servant of God gets more true blessedness, out of the earth, and so more truly possesses it, than the ungodly, though they be lords of broad acres.
The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

(39) The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. (30) The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. (31) The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. (32) The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. (33) The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

(34) Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. (35) I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. (36) Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

(37) Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. (38) But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

(39) But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: he is their strength in the time of trouble. (40) And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

PSALM XXXVIII.

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

(1) O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. (2) For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. (3) There is no soundness in my flesh by reason of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of the Lord, rebuke.—See Note, Ps. vi. 1, of which verse this is almost a repetition.

The Hebrew is translated, since acharith must here mean, as in Ps. cix. 13; Amos. iv. 2, ix. 1, “posterity.” The parallelism decides in favour of this.

Mark the honest man, and behold the upright.

For a posterity (shall be) to the man of peace.

But transgressors are altogether destroyed.

The posterity of the wicked is destroyed.

So the LXX. and Vulg.

XXXVIII.

Reading only the first part of this psalm (verses 1—11), we should positively assign it to some individual sufferer who had learnt the lesson which St. Jerome says is here taught: “if any sickness happeneth to the body, we are to seek for the medicine of the soul.” But, reading on, we find that the complaint of bodily suffering gives way to a description of active and deadly enemies, who, in the figure so common in the Psalms, beset the pious with snares. It is better, therefore, to think rather of the sufferings of the community of the faithful, who have learnt to attribute their troubles to their own sins, here described, after the manner of the prophets (Isa. i. 6) but even more forcibly, under the figure of distressing forms of sickness.

Title.—Comp. title Ps. lxx. In 1 Chron. xvi. 4 we read, “And he appointed certain Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel.” In the words thank and praise it is natural to see allusion to the Hodu and Hallelujah psalms, so called because beginning with those words, and as “to record” is in Hebrew the word used in this title and that to Psalm lxx., it brings these two psalms also in connection with the Levitical duties. “The memorial was a regular name for one part of the meat offering, and possibly the title is a direction to use these psalms at the moment it was made. The LXX. and Vulg. add, “about the Sabbath,” which is possibly a mistake for “for the Sabbath.”

(1) O Lord, rebuke.

For thine arrows . . .—Better, health. The Hebrew is from a root meaning to be whole. Peace (see margin), the reading of the LXX. and Vulg. is a derived meaning.
my sin. (4) For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. (5) My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.

(6) I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. (7) For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. (8) I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

(9) Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. (10) My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. (11) My lovers and my friends stand aloof from me. (12) They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

(13) But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. (14) Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.

(15) For in thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

(16) For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me. (17) For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. (18) For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. (19) But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and that they hate me wrongfully are multiplied. (20) They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.

(21) Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. (22) Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.

PSALM XXXIX.

To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

(1) I said, I will take heed to my

(2) Wounds.—Better, stripes, as in LXX.

Stink and are corrupt.—Both words denote suppuration; the first in reference to the offensive smell, the second of the discharge of matter; the whole passage recalls Isa. i. 6, seq.

Disquietness.—Men are generally even more loth to confess their folly than their sins.

I am troubled.—Better,

I am made to writhe (see margin), I am bowed down exceedingly. All day long I go about squalid.

(3) Sore is rather stroke, as in margin, or plague. His friends, looking on him as “one smitten of God,” and thinking “he must be wicked to deserve such pain,” abandon him as too vile for their society.

Kinsmen.—Render rather, as in margin, neighbours, or near ones.

Those who should have been near me stand aloof.

(4) Reproofs.—Better, replies or justifications.

(5) He shall hear.—Thou art emphatic.

(6) Lest.—It is better to carry on the force of the particle of condition:

For I said, Lest they should rejoice over me;

Lest, when my foot slipped, they should vaunt themselves against me.

(7) Sore is either stroke, as in margin, or plague.

(8) Foolishness.—Men are generally even more loth to confess their folly than their sins.

(9) I am feeble and sore broken.—Better, I am become deadly cold, and am quite worn out.

(10) All my desire.—Notice the clutch at the thought of divine justice, as the clutch of a drowning man amid that sea of trouble.

(11) I am troubled.—Better, pulpitatus. The Hebrew word, like pulpitate, expresses the beating of the heart, by its sound, echarchar.

(12) Disquietness.—Properly, roaring. Thus, of the sea (Isa. v. 30), of lions (Prov. xix. 12, xx. 2). A very slight alteration once suggested by Hitzig, but since abandoned, would give her, “I roared more than the roaring of a lion.”

(13) All my desire.—Notice the clutch at the thought of divine justice, as the clutch of a drowning man amid that sea of trouble.

(14) Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.

(15) For in thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

(16) For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me. (17) For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. (18) For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. (19) But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and that they hate me wrongfully are multiplied. (20) They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.

(21) Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. (22) Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.
ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

(2) I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. (3) My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue, (4) LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am.

(5) Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

(6) Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heareth up riches,
and knoweth not who shall gather them.

(7) And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. (8) Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

(9) I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it. (10) Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

(11) When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah.

(12) Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: "a for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. (13) O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

PSALM XL.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

(1) I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. (2) He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay,
Rock.—The common image of security (Pss. xviii. 2, xxvii. 5), the occurrence of which makes it probable that the “pit” and “clay” are also actual realities, but emblems of confusion and danger.

(4) New song.—See Ps. xxxiii. 3. It seems natural to suppose that this new song is incorporated here; that we have at least the substance of it, if not the words. Possibly the very words are taken up in verse 4. And we are to find the “newness” in the magnificent vindication of spiritual above formal worship.

Shall see it and fear.—Comp. Ps. li. 6, where there is plainly a reminiscence of this passage.

(4) Respecteth not.—Better, turneth not towards proud men and false apostates. The words are, however, somewhat obscure. The LXX. and Vulg. have “vanities and false madnesses.” The words we have rendered false apostates are by some translated “turners after idols.” Idolatry is doubtless implied, but not expressed.

(5) Many, O Lord.—Better.

“In numbers hast Thou made, Thou Jehovah my God, Wonderful deeds and purposes for us. There is nothing comparable to Thee. . . . Would I declare, would I speak, They are too many to number.”

For the third clause, “There is nothing comparable with Thee,” which is the rendering of the LXX., Vulg. and Syriac, comp. Isa. xi. 17.

(6) Mine ears hast thou opened.—Literally, Ears hast thou dug for me, which can hardly mean anything but “Thou hast given me the sense of hearing.” The words are an echo of 1 Sam. xv. 22. The attentive ear and obedient heart, not formal rites, constitute true worship. Comp. the words so frequent on the lips of Christ, “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.” The fact that the plural ears is used instead of the singular, sets aside the idea of a revelations, which is expressed in Isa. xlviii. 8 by “open the ear,” and 1 Sam. ix. 15 “uncover the ear.” Not that the idea is altogether excluded, since the outward ears may be typical of the inward. The same fact excludes allusion to the symbolic act by which a slave was devoted to perpetual servitude (Ex. xxi. 6), because then also only one ear was bored. For the well-known variation in the LXX. see New Testament Commentary, Heb. x. 5. The latest commentator, Grätz, is of opinion that the text is corrupt, and emends (comp. Ps. li. 16) to, “Shouldest thou desire sacrifice and offering I would select the fattest,” a most desirable result if his arguments, which are too minute for insertion, were accepted.

(7) Then said I.—This rendering, which follows the LXX. and Vulg., and is adopted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, must be abandoned. The Hebrew means, Lo! I come, bringing the book written for me, which no doubt refers to the Law, which in the person of the poet, Israel here produces as warrant for its conduct. Some see a particular allusion to the discovery of the Book of Deuteronomy in Josiah’s reign. But if the conjecture of Grätz be accepted (see preceding Note), the reference will be rather to the Levitical regulation of sacrifice. “Shouldest thou require burnt-offering and sin-offering, then I say, Lo! I bring the book in which all is prescribed me,” i.e., I have duly performed all the rites ordained in the book.

The rendering “written on me,” i.e., “on my heart and mind,” might suit the contents of the book, but not the roll itself.

(9) I have preached.—Literally, I have made countenances glad.

Notice the rapid succession of clauses, like successive wave-beats of praise, better than any elaborate description to represent the feelings of one whose life was a thanksgiving.

(13) Be pleased.—From this verse onwards, with some trifling variations which will be noticed under that psalm, this passage occurs as Ps. lxx., where see Notes.
seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.

(17) But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

PSALMS XLII.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

(1) Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. (2) The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the sick man was propped up. But such literalness is not necessary. To turn here is to change, as in Ps. lxi. 6, cv. 29, and what the poet says is that, as in past times, Divine help has come to change his sickness into health, so he confidently expects it will be now, in his sickness "being equivalent to "in the time of his sickness."

(4) I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee. (5) Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish? (6) And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it. (7) All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt. (8) An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto

will of his enemies. (3) The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

"Should dying men flatter with those that live! No, no; men living flatter those that die."

(8) An evil disease.—Margin, thing of Belial. (For "Belial," see Deut. xiii. 13.) The expression may mean, as in LXX. and Vulg., "a lawless speech," so the Chaldee, "a perverse word," Syriac, "a word of iniquity," or "a physical evil," as in Authorised Version, or "a moral evil." The verse is difficult, not only from this ambiguity, but also from that of the verb, which, according to the derivation we take, may mean "cleave" or "pour forth." Modern scholars prefer the latter, understanding the image as taken from the process of casting metal. An incurable wound is poured out (welded) upon him. (Comp. "molten," 1 Kings vii. 24, 30.) This does not, however, suit the context nearly so well as the reading;

"A wicked saying have they directed against me: Let the sick man never rise again," which has the support of the LXX. and Vulg., though they make of the last clause a question, "Shall not the sleeper rise again?"
him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more. (9) A Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath 2 lifted up his heel against me. (10) But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. (11) By this I know that thou favorest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. (12) And as for me, thou up­holdest me in mine integrity, and setteth me before thy face for ever. (13) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from ever­lasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

Book II.

PSALM XLII.

To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah.

(1) As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. (2) My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? (3) My tears have been my meat day and night.

(9) Hath lifted up his heel.—See margin. The meaning is, possibly, kicked violently at me. But Bottcher’s conjecture is valuable, “has magnified his fraud against me,” which is supported by the LXX. and Vulg., “has magnified his supplanting of me.” (For the quotation of this verse in John xiii. 18, see New Testament Commentary.) The rights of Oriental hospitality must be remembered, to bring out all the blackness of the treachery here described. The expressive Hebrew idiom, “man of my peace,” is retained in the margin. Possibly (see Note, Obad. 7) the second clause recalls another idiom, “man of my bread.”

(10) By this I know.—Better, shall know. His restoration would be a sign of the Divine favour, and a pledge of his victory over his enemies.

Triumph.—Literally, shout; “sing a psalm.”

(12) Thou upholdest.—Here we seem to have the acknowledgment that the prayer just uttered is answered.

(13) Blessed.—This doxology is no part of the psalm, but a formal close to the first book of the collection. (See General Introduction.)

Book II.

XLII.

It is needless to waste argument on what is seen by every reader at a glance, that Pss. xlii., and xliii., form in reality one poem. In style, in subject, in tone, they might have been recognised as from one time and pen, even if they had been separated in the collection instead of following one on the other, and even if the refrain had not marked them as parts of one composition. (For expressions and feelings interlacing, as it were, the text together, comp. Pss. xlii., xliii., xlii. 2, 4, with xlii. 2, 4, 4, respectively.) The poems thus united into one are seen to have three equal stanzas. All three stanzas express the complaint of a sufferer sinking under the weight of his misfortunes; the refrain in contrast expresses a sentiment of religious resignation, of unshaken confidence in Divine protection and favour. We can even realise the very situation of the sufferer. We find him not only far from Jerusalem, and longing anxiously for return thither, but actually on the frontier, near the banks of the Jordan, not far from the sources of the river, on the great caravan route between Syria and the far east, on the slopes of Hermon. We seem to see him strain his eyes from these stranger heights to catch the last look of his own native hills, and from the tone of his regrets—regrets inspired not by worldly or even patriotic considerations, but by the forcible separation from the choral service of the Temple, we conjecture him to have been a priest or a Levite.

Title. (See title, Pss. iv., xxxii.) “For the sons of Korah.” This is a title of Pss. xlii., xliiv.—xlix., lxxiv., lxxv., lxxvii., lxxviii.

We see from 1 Chron. vi. 16—23, that the Korahites were, when that history was written, professional musicians. Kuenen, in History of Religion, p. 204, has pointed out that in the older documents the singers and porters are mentioned separately from the Levites (Exx. vii. 7, 24, x. 23, 24; Neh. vii. 1), and it is only in those of a later date that we find them included in that tribe, when “the conviction had become established, that it was necessary that every one who was admitted in any capacity whatever into the service of the Temple should be a descendant of Levi,” the pedigrees which trace this descent cannot be relied on, and therefore we regard these “sons of Korah” (in one passage a still vaguer appellation, “children of the Korahites,” 2 Chron. xx. 19), not as lineally descendants from the Korah of Num. xvi. 1, but as one of the then divisions of the body of musicians who were, according to the idea above noticed, treated as Levitical.

(1) As the hart panteth.—“I have seen large flocks of these panting harts gather round the waterbrooks in the great deserts of central Syria, so subdued by thirst that you could approach quite near them before they fled” (Thomson, Land and Book, p. 172).

(2) Thirsteth.—The metaphor occurs exactly in the same form (Pss. xlii. 1), and only calls for notice since “God” Himself is here made the subject of the thirst, instead of righteousness, or knowledge, or power, as in the familiar and frequent use of the metaphor in other parts of the Bible, and in other literature.

The living God.—Evidently, from the metaphor, regarded as the fountain or source of life. (Comp. Pss. lxxiv. 2, xxxvi. 9.)

Appear before God.—Exod. xxiii. 17 shows that this was the usual phrase for frequenting the sanctuary (comp. Ps. lxxiv. 7), though poetical brevity here slightly altered its form and construction.

(8) My tears.—Comp. Pss. lxxx. 5, cii. 9; and Ovid Metam. x. 75, “Curae doloroque animi lucinamque a li­menta fuere.”

Where is thy God?—For this bitter taunt comp. Pss. lxxix. 10, cxxv. 2; Joel ii. 17, etc.
and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from +the hill Mizar.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his praise will I render: I will remember the name of the Lord my God.
song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. (9) I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? (10) As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? (11) Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

**PSALM XLIII.**

(1) Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. (2) For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? (3) O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. (4) Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God. (5) Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

(1) We have heard.—The glorious traditions of ancient deliverances wrought by Jehovah for His people were a sacred heritage of every Hebrew. (See Exod. x. 2, seq.; Deut. vi. 20, etc.) This, and all the historical psalms, show how closely interwoven for the Jew were patriotism and religion.

(2) Thou, Thy hand, which may be, as in the Authorised Version, taken as accusative of instrument, or as a repeated subject.

(3) We have heard.—The glorious traditions of ancient deliverances wrought by Jehovah for His people were a sacred heritage of every Hebrew. (See Exod. x. 2, xii. 26, seq.; Deut. vi. 20, etc.) This, and all the historical psalms, show how closely interwoven for the Jew were patriotism and religion.

(4) An ungodly nation.—In the Hebrew simply a negative term, a nation not khasid, i.e., not in the covenant. But naturally a positive idea of ungodliness and wickedness would attach to such a term.

(5) O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me.—Instead of the violent and contemptuous escort of Assyrian soldiers, leading the exile away from the “holy hill,” the poet prays for God’s light and truth to lead him, like two angel guides, back to it. Light and truth! What a guidance in this world of falsehood and shadow! The Urim and Thummim of the saints (Deut. xxxiii. 8), the promised attendants of Israel, have been, and are, the escort of all faithful souls in all ages.

(6) God my God.—An expression used in this collection instead of the more usual “Jehovah my God.” (Comp. xlv. 7, and for its import see General Introduction, and Ps. 1. 7, Note.)

**PSALM XLIV.**

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

(1) We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. (2) How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people,
and cast them out. (3) For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

(4) Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob. (5) Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. (6) For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. (7) But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us. (8) In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.

(9) But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies. (10) Thou maketh us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves. (11) Thou hast given us 1 like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen. (12) Thou sellest thy people 2 for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price. (13) "Thou maketh us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us. (14) Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people. (15) My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me, (16) for the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.

(17) All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. (18) Our heart is not turned back, neither have our 3steps declined from thy way; (19) though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

(20) If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; (21) shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. (22) Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. (23) Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever. (24) Where-

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(3) The light of thy countenance.—Notice the contrast to this in verse 24; in times of distress God's face seemed hidden or averted.

(4) Thou art my King.—Literally, Thou, He, my king, an idiomatic way of making a strong assertion, Thou, even thou, art my king, O God. (Comp. Isa. xliii. 25.) What God has done in the past may be expected again, and for a moment the poet forgets the weight of actual trouble in the faith that has sprung from the grateful retrospect over the past.

(5) Push down.—The image of the original is lost here, the LXX. have retained it. It is that of a buffalo or other horned animal driving back and goring its enemies. Deut. xxxiii. 17 applies it as a special description of the tribe of Joseph. The figure is continued in the next clause; the infuriated animal tramples its victim under foot.

(6) For themselves—I.e., at their own will, an expression denoting the completeness of the overthrow of the Jews; they die absolutely at their enemies' pleasure.

(11) Like sheep.—The image of the sheep appointed for the slaughter; and unable to resist, recalls Isa. lili. 6, 7, but does not necessarily connect the Psalm with the exile period, since it was a figure likely to suggest itself in every time of helpless peril.

(13) For nought.—Literally, for not riches (comp. Jer. xv. 13); notice the contrast to Ps. lxxii. 14.

(15) My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me, for the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.

(17) All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. (19) Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; (21) shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. (23) Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever. (24) Where-

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(13, 14) These verses become very suggestive, if we refer them to one of those periods under the Seleucidae, when the Jews were so frequently attacked on the Sabbath, and from their scrupulous regard to it would make no resistance.

(14) Shaking of the head.—Comp. Ps. xxii. 7.

(23) Why sleepest.—Comp. Ps. vii. 6, and see refs.
fore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression? 1
(25) For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.
(26) Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies’ sake.

PSALM XLV.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah. A Song of loves.

(1) My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have

made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

(2) Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

(3) Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. (i) And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

XLV.

From Calvin downwards this psalm has been recognised as an ode celebrating the nuptials of some king. Indeed, the retention, as part of its title, of “a song of loves,” when the poem was incorporated into the Temple hymn-book, seems to show that this secular character was admitted even then. There is just enough of historical allusion in the psalm to invite conjecture as to the monarch who is its theme, and too little to permit of his identification. (See Notes to verses 8, 9, 12.) But, as in the case of the longer and more pronounced epithalamium, the Song of Solomon, religious scruples soon rejected this secular interpretation, and sought by allegorical and mystical explanations to bring the poem more within the circle of recognised sacred literature. With the glowing prophetic visions of a conquering Messiah floating before the imagination, it was most natural for the Jews to give the psalm a distinctive Messianic character. Equally natural was it for Christians to adopt the psalm as allegorical of the marriage of the Church with the Divine Head—a mode of interpretation which, once started, found in every turn and expression of the psalm some fruitful type or symbol. The rhythm is flowing and varied.

Title.—Upon Shoshannim, i.e., upon lilies. The same inscription occurs again in Ps. lxix. and in an altered form in Ps. lx. and lxxx., where see Notes. The most probable explanation makes it refer to the tune to which the hymn was to be sung. (Comp. the title of Ps. xxii. &c.) As to the actual flower intended by shoshannim, see Note, Song of Sol. ii. 1. The expression, a song of loves, means either a love song (so Aquila), or a song of the beloved, or a song of charms, i.e., a pleasant song. The first is more in keeping with the evident origin and intention of the poem. (See besides titles Ps. iv., xlili., xxxii.)

(1) Inditing.—A most unhappily rendering of a word, which, though only used here, must, from the meaning of its derivative (a “pot,” or “cauldron”), have something to do with a liquid, and means either to “bowl over” or to “bubble up.” The LXX. and Vulg. have apparently thought of the bursting out of a fountain: crucerâ. Symmachus has, “been set in motion.” The “spring,” or “fountain,” is a common emblem of inspired fancy:

“Ancient fonts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.”

Tennyson: Locksley Hall.

A good matter.—That is, a theme worthy a poet’s song. Luther: “A fine song.”

I speak of the things which I have made touching the king. This rendering follows the LXX., Vulg., and most of the older translations. Perhaps, however, we are to understand Aquila and Symmachus as rendering “my poems;” and undoubtedly the true rendering is, I am speaking: my poem is of a king (not the king, as in Authorised Version).

My tongue . . .—So lofty a theme, so august a subject, inspires him with thoughts that flow freely. The ready or expeditious answer (LXX. and Vulg. “A scribe writing quickly”) was, as we learn from Ezra vii. 6, a recognised form of praise for a distinguished member of that body, one of whose functions was to make copies of the Law.

(2) Thou art fairer.—Better, Fair art thou; eye, fairer than, &c. We may thus reproduce the Hebrew expression, which, however, grammatically explained, must convey this emphasis. The old versions render: “Thou art fair with beauty;” or, “Thou hast been made beautiful with beauty.”

Grace is poured into thy lips.—Better, A flowing grace is on thy lips, which may refer either to the beauty of the mouth, or to the charm of its speech. Cicero, himself the grandest example of his own expression, says of another that “Persuasion had her seat upon his lips;” while Christian commentators have all naturally thought of Him at whose “words of grace” all men wondered.

Therefore.—This word is apparently out of place. But there is nothing harsh in rendering: Therefore, we say, God hath blessed thee for ever. And we are struck by the emphasis of its occurrence in verses 7 and 17, as well as here. Ewald seems to be right in printing the clause so begun as a kind of refrain. The poet enumerates in detail the beauties of the monarch and his bride, and is interrupted by the acclaim of his hearers, who cannot withhold their approving voices.

(3) Gird thy sword . . . O most mighty.—Or, perhaps, Gird on thy sword in heroic guise; or, Gird on thy hero’s sword. The object of the poet’s praise is as heroic in war as he is beautiful in person.

With thy glory and thy majesty.—This adverbial use of the accusatives may be right, but it seems better to take them in apposition with sword. His weapon was the monarch’s glory and pride. Some commentators see here a reference to the custom of girding on the sword said to be still observed at the elevation to the throne of a Persian or Ottoman prince. But the next verse shows that we have rather an ideal picture of the royal bridegroom’s approach in war.

(4) And in thy majesty.—The repetition of this word from the last verse (conjunction included) is suspicious, especially as the LXX., followed by the Vulg., render, “Direct (thine arrows or thine aim”).

Ride prosperously . . .—Literally, proceed, ride; expressing, according to a common Hebrew
The Might of the King.

(5) Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.
(6) Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.
(7) Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
(8) All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

The usage, by two verbs what we express by adverb and verb.

Because of . . .—Better, In behalf of. So LXX. and Vulg. There is a difficulty from the absence of the conjunction in the Hebrew before the last of the triad of virtues. The LXX. have it, but may have supplied it, as the Authorised Version does. Some render, “meek righteousness,” or, slightly changing the pointing, “the afflicted righteous.”

And thy right hand shall teach . . .—If we keep this rendering, we must picture the warrior with his right hand extended, pointing to the foe whom he is about to strike with his deadly arrows. But even this seems somewhat tame; and as the verb rendered “teach” is in 1 Sam. xx. 20 used for “shooting arrows,” and “arrows” are mentioned immediately in the next verse, it seems obvious to render: And thy right hand shall shoot terrors, or, terribly. (Comp. Ps. lxxv. 5.)

(5) Thine arrows.—Our version has transposed the clauses of this verse. The original is more vivid.

Thine arrows are sharpened—
The people under Thee fall—
Against the heart of the king’s enemies,

The poet actually sees the battle raging before him.
(6) Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.—This is the rendering of the LXX., Vulg., and of the versions generally. But whether they supposed the words to be addressed to the Divine Being, or that the theocratic king is thus styled, is uncertain. The Christian use of the verse as applied to the Messiah (Heb. i. 8, Note, New Testament Commentary) does not help us to explain how the monarch, who is the poet’s theme here, could be addressed as God. The use of Elohim in Ps. lxxxi. 6, xvii. 7, Exod. xxi. 28, hardly offers a satisfactory parallel, and even 1 Sam. xxvii. 13 (where we should render, “I saw a god, &c.”) hardly prepares us to find such an emphatic ascription to an earthly king, especially in an alternative renderings present themselves—(1) Thy throne of God is for ever . . . i.e., thy divine throne. (Comp. Ps. xxxii. 2, “thy refuge of strength.”) (2) Thy throne is of God for ever, which is grammatically preferable, and with which may be compared 1 Chron. xxix. 23, “the throne of the Lord.”

(7) The oil of gladness.—Comp. “oil of joy.” Isa..ix. 3. Here too it may be merely employed as a figure of happiness, but the bath, and no doubt, subsequent anointing, formed part of the Oriental marriage proceedings. (See Arabian Nights, passim.)

Fellows—i.e., the paranymphs, or attendants on the bridegroom.

All thy garments smell of . . .—Or, perhaps from the last verse (and comparing Ps. cxxxii. 2, and the customs there referred to), are anointed with. The spices mentioned may have been ingredients of “the oil of gladness.”

Myrrh . . . cassia.—These spices formed part of the sacred oil described Exod. xxx. 23, 24. On the other hand, for the custom of perfuming clothes, beds, &c., comp. Song of Sol. v. 5; Prov. vii. 17.

For myrrh see Gen. xxvii. 25.
Aloes.—Heb. ahaloth (sometimes ahalim), a word formed from the native name aghil (Cochin China and Siam are its homes), which also appears in eagle-wood (Aquilaria Agallochum). The bill alos of Num. xxxiv. 6, was most probably a different tree from that whose resin forms the precious perfume here mentioned. (See Bib. Ed. i. 243.)
Cassia.—See Note Exod. xxx. 24.

The Oriental’s love for these mixtures of many fragrant spices has been finely caught in some modern lines.

“Heap cassia, sandal-buds, and stripes
Of labdanum, and aloes-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
From out her hair, such balsam falls
From seaside mountain pedestals
From tree-tops where tired winds are faint—
Spent with the vast and howling main—
To treasure half their island gain.”

R. BROWNING: Paracelsus.

The oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.—Rather, out of the ivory palaces music (literally, strings) has made thee glad.

Of the many conjectured explanations this, though somewhat grammatically doubtful, is in all other respects preferable. Indeed, it would have been strange if a nuptial ode, giving a picture of the splendour and pomp accompanying the marriage, had missed the mention of music, and at this verse we may imagine the doors of the palace thrown open for the issue of the bridal train (comp. the procession immediately after the bath in the weddings in the Arabian Nights), not only allowing the strains of music to float out, but also giving a glimpse into the interior, where, surrounded by her train of ladies, the queen-bride stands.

The word rendered “palace” (generally “temple,”) may from its derivation be only a spacious place, and so a receptacle. On the other hand, Amos iii. 15 shows that ivory was frequently used as an ornament of the houses of the rich, and Abab’s “ivory house” (1 Kings xxii. 39) is familiar.

(9) Honourable women.—Literally, precious ones, i.e., possibly the favourites of the harem. See Prov. vi. 26, where this word precious is used (comp. Jer. xxxi. 20), or there may be an allusion to the costliness and magnificence of the harem rather than to affection for its inmates. Perhaps both senses are combined in the word, and we may compare Shakspere’s—

“The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
Cordelia leaves you.”

Upon thy right hand.—Comp. 1 Kings ii. 19.
Did stand.—Better, was stationed, referring to the position assigned to the bride when the marriage procession was formed.

In gold of Ophir.—Or, possibly, as (i.e., precious as) gold of Ophir, a common use of this particle. For
PSALMS, XLVI.

Of the Bride.

(10) Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; (11) so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. (12) And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour. (13) The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. (14) She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. (15) With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

Ophir and its gold see 1 Kings ix. 28. The LXX. and Vulg. miss the proper name, and read, "clothed in golden vesture and many-coloured."

(10) Hearken.—The address now turns to the bride. (11) Worship thou him.—Literally, Bow down or prostrate thyself. (12) And the daughter of Tyre—i.e., Tyre itself and the Tyrians. (See Note Ps. ix. 14.)

The Tyrians with a gift entreat thy favour, The rich ones of the people. The objection that Tyre was never subject to Israel is not conclusive, since the gifts may be complimentary presents, such as Hiram sent to Solomon, not tribute. (See next Note.)

Entreat thy favour.—Literally, stroke thy face (comp. Job xi. 19, Prov. xix. 6); or since the root-idea is one of polishing or making bright, we may render "makes thy face bright or joyful," i.e., with pleasure at the splendid gifts.

(13) The king's daughter is all glorious within—i.e., in the interior, in the inner room of the palace. The next clause would alone dismiss the reference to moral qualities from which has sprung such a wealth of mystic interpretation. But what palace is intended? Certainly not that of the royal bridegroom, since the procession (see verse 14) has not yet reached its destination. We must therefore think of her waiting, in all the splendour of her bridal array, in her own apartments, or in some temporary abode.

Wrought gold—i.e., textures woven with gold. The Hebrew word is used also of gems set in gold. The Eastern tales just referred to speak of the custom of repeatedly changing the bride's dress during the marriage ceremonies, every time presenting her in all the splendour of her bridal array, in her own apartments, or in some temporary abode.

In raiment of needlework.—This is now more generally understood of rich tapestry carpets spread for the procession. (Comp. Æsch. Agam. 906—910.)

Whom thou mayest make princes.—Historical illustrations have been found in 1 Kings xxii. 26, where Joash, David's son, appears as a governor or a prince of a city (comp. Zeph. i. 8), and in the division of his realm into principalities by Solomon. (1 Kings iv. 7.)

(16) Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. (17) I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

PSALM XLVI.

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth.

(1) God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (2) Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; (3) though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

This psalm reflects the feelings with which a people, secure in the sense of Divine protection, looks on while surrounding nations are convulsed, and calmly awaits the issue. Such a situation was that of Israel in the seventh century B.C., while the giant powers of Egypt and Assyria were rending the East by their rivalries, and also during the wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucids. The former period suggests itself as the more probable date of the psalm, from its resemblance to much of the language of Isaiah when dealing with events that culminated in the destruction of Sennacherib's army. Compare especially the recurrence of the expression, "God is with us," Elohim immanu, with the prophet's use of the name Immanuel. The refrain, though missing after the first stanza, marks the regular poetical form.

Title.—For the first part see titles Pss. iv., xlii., A song upon 'alamoth. This plainly is a musical direction, but the precise meaning must still remain matter of conjecture. Since 'alamoth means maidens, the most natural and now generally received interpretation is "a song for sopranos." (Comp. title Ps. vi.)

(1) Refuge and strength.—Better, a refuge and stronghold, or a sure stronghold, as in Luther's hymn, Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.

A very present help.—Better, often found a help. (2) Though the earth be removed.—Literally, at the changing of the earth. Possibly with the same figure implied, which is expressed, Ps. cii. 26, of the worn-out or soiled vesture. The psalmist was thinking of the sudden convulsion of earthquake, and figures Israel fearless amid the tottering kingdoms and falling dynasties. Travellers all remark on the signs of tremendous volcanic agency in Palestine. It is interesting to compare the heathen poet's conception of the fearlessness supplied by virtue (Hor. Ode iii. 3).

(3) Though the waters...—The original is very expressive in its conciseness: "They roar, they foam, its waters."

Comp. Homer's equally concise description, including
(4) There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. (5) God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, 1 and that right early. (6) The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. (7) The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

(8) Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. (9) He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

The rhythms are fine and varied.

Title.—See titles Pss. xlii. and iii.

(1) Of triumph.—Or, of exultation, as LXX. and Vulg. For the hand-clapping at a time of national rejoicing, such as the coronation of a king, see 2 Kings xi. 12 (comp. Ps. cxxviii. 8); and for the "shout," comp. Num. xxiii. 21, "the shout of a king"; and 1 Sam. x. 24. With the Hebrews, as with our own English forefathers, this sign of popular assent, "In full acclaim, A people's voice, The proof and echo of all human fame," played a large and important part.

(2) Most high.—Or, possibly, a predicate, is exalted. Terrible.—Literally, "feared." (Comp. 2 Chron. xx. 29).

(3, 4) Shall subdue . . . shall choose.—Rather, "subdues, chooses," indicating a continued manifestation of the Divine favour.

(5) Our inheritance.—The LXX. read, "his inheritance," suggesting that originally the passage may have run, "He chooses us for His inheritance," an even commoner thought in the Hebrew mind than that of the present text, that Jehovah chose Canaan as an inheritance for Israel.

(6) The excellency of Jacob.—This phrase, which literally means the loftiness of Jacob, is used in Nah. ii. 2 of the national glory, in Ezek. xxiv. 21 of the Temple, but in Amos vi. 8 has a bad sense, "the pride of Jacob," Here, as the text stands, it is to be understood of the country. (Comp. Isa. xiii. 19.)
PSALM XLVIII.

A Song of Praise.

PSALMS, XLVIII. The Glory of Zion.

(5) God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. (6) Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. (7) For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. (8) God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. (9) The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

PSALM XLVIII. A Song and Psalm 2 for the sons of Korah.

(1) Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. (2) Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. (3) God is known in her palaces for a refuge. (4) For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. (5) They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. (6) Fear took mean northern recesses or secret recesses, according as we adopt the derived or the original meaning of tsaphon.

With the former of the two meanings we should see a reference to the relative position of the Temple and its precincts to the rest of the city. For the identification of the ancient Zion (not to be confounded with the modern Zion) with the hill on which the Temple stood, see Smith's Bib. Dict., art. "Jerusalem." (Comp. Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 171.)

If, on the other hand, we elect to render secret, or hidden, or secure recesses, we have a figure quite intelligible of the security and peace to be found in God's holy city:

Beautiful for elevation, The whole earth's joy; Mount Zion, a secure recess, City of the great King.

And the thought is taken up in the word refuge in the next verse. (Comp. Ezek. vii. 22, where the Temple is actually called "Jehovah's secret place").

(3) Refuge.—See Note, Ps. xlvii. 1. Prominence should be given to the idea of security from height. We might render, "God among her castles is known as a high and secure tower."

(4) The kings.—With the striking picture of the advance and sudden collapse of a hostile expedition that follows, comp. Isa. x. 28–34; possibly of the very same event.

The kings.—Evidently known to the writer, but, alas! matter of merest conjecture to us. Some suppose the kings of Ammon, Moab, and Edom, who attacked Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 25); others, the tributary princes of Sennacherib. In his annals, as lately deciphered, this monarch speaks of setting up tributary kings or viceroyes in Chaldaea, Phoenicia, and Philistia, after conquering those countries. (See Assyrian Discoveries, by George Smith, p. 303.) Others again, referring the psalm to the time of Ahaz, understand Pekah and Rezin (2 Kings xv. 37). The touches, vivid as they are, of the picture, are not so historically defined as to allow a settlement of the question.

Assembled.—Used of the master of confederate forces (Josh. xi. 5).

Passed by—i.e., marched by. So, according to the true reading, the LXX. A frequent military term (Judg. xi. 29; 2 Kings viii. 21; Isa. viii. 8). Others, "passed away," but it is doubtful if the verb can have this meaning.

Together.—Notice the parallelism, they came together, they passed by together.

(5) They saw.—A verse like Ps. xlvii. 6, vivid from the omission of the conjunctions, wrongly supplied by
hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. (7) Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.

(8) As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

(9) We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. (10) According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.

(11) Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. (12) Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. (13) Mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

(14) For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.

PSALM XLIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm 2 for the sons of Korah.

(1) Hear this, all ye people; give ear,

Thy right hand is full of righteousness.—Not like Jove's, as heathen say, full of thunderbolts, but of justice.

(11) Daughters of Judah.—Not the maidens of Jerusalem, but the towns and villages of Judah.

Judgments.—Perhaps here, as in Ps. cxix. 132, with prominent idea of God's customary dealings with His people.

(12) Walk about Zion.—Notice here the strong patriotic feeling of Hebrew song. The inhabitants of the city are invited to make a tour of inspection of the defences which, under God's providence, have protected them from their foes. We are reminded of the fine passage in Shakspere's Cymbeline, which gracefully recalls the natural bravery of our own island home, or of the national songs about our own wooden walls. Comparison has also been drawn between this passage and a similar burst of patriotic sentiment from the lips of a Grecian orator (Thuc. ii. 53); but while the Greek thinks only of the men who made Athens strong, the Hebrew traces all back to God.

(13) Tell.—i.e., count. So in Milton, "Every shepherd tells his tale," i.e., counts his sheep.

(14) Unto death.—The words (al mu'ath) are proved by the ancient versions and various readings to be really a musical direction, either placed at the end instead of the beginning, as in Hab. iii. 19, or shifted back from the title of the next psalm. See Ps. ix. title, 'alamoth.

XLIX.

This psalm, though didactic, does not altogether belie the promise of lyric effort made in verse 4. Not only is it cast in a lyrical form, with an introduction and two strophes, ended each by a refrain (see Note, verse 12), but it rises into true poetry both of expression and feeling. Indeed, it is not as a philosophical speculation that the author propounds and discusses his theme, but as a problem of personal interest (verses 15, 16); hence throughout the composition a strain of passion rather than a flow of thought.

Title.—See titles Ps. iv., xliii.

(1) Hear this.—For the opening address, comp. Dent. xxiii. 1; Micah i. 2: Ps. i. 7; Is. i. 2.

World.—As in Ps. xvii. 14; properly, duration. (Comp. our expression, "the things of time.")
all ye inhabitants of the world: (2) both low and high, rich and poor, together. (3) My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. (4) aI will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp. (5) Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about? (6) They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; (7) none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (8) (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever;) (9) that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. (10) For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. (11) Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they

(8) Both high and low.—The two Hebrew expressions here used, bene-adam and bene-isk, answer to one another much as homo and vir in Latin. The LXX. and Vulg., taking idam in its primary sense, render “sons of the soil and sons of men.” Symmachus makes the expressions stand for men in general and men as individuals.

Shall be understood.—The copula supplied by the Authorised Version is unnecessary. The word rendered meditation may mean, from its etymology, “muttered thoughts,” and it is quite consistent to say, my musings speak of understanding. So LXX. and Vulgate.

(4) I will incline mine ear.—The psalmist first listens, that he may himself catch the inspiration which is to reach others through his song. It was an obvious metaphor in a nation to whom God’s voice was audible, as it was to Wordsworth, for whom nature had an audible voice:

“The stars of midnight shall be dear To her: and she shall tend her ear To many a secret place, Where rivulets dance their wayward round, And beauty, born of murmuring sound, Shall pass into her face.”

Parable.—Heb. mishal, root idea, similitudo. It is the term used of Balaam’s prophecies, and of the eloquent speeches of Job. Hence here proverb-song (Ewald), since the psalmist intends his composition for musical accompaniment.

Dark saying.—Either from a root meaning to tie, and so “a knotty point;” or to sharpen, and so a sharp, incisive saying. The LXX. and Vulgate have “problem,” “proposition.”

To open the riddle is not to solve it, but to propound it, as we say to “open a discourse.” (Comp. St. Paul’s phrase, “opening and alleging.”) The full phrase is probably found in Prov. xxxi. 26, “She openeth her mouth with wisdom.”

Should I fear?—Here the problem is stated not in a speculative, but personal form. The poet himself feels the pressure of this riddle of life.

When the iniquity of my heels.—The Authorised Version seems to take “heels” in the sense of footsteps, as Symmachus does, and “when the evil of my course entangles me,” is good sense, but not in agreement with the context. Render rather, when iniquity dogs me at the heels, i.e., when wicked and prosperous men pursue him with malice. This is more natural than to give the word heel the derived term of supplanter; the sense, too, is the same. There is no direct reference to Gen. iii. 15, though possibly the figure of the heel as a vulnerable part, and of wickedness lying like a snake in the path, may have occurred to the poet. The Syriac, however, suggests a different reading, “malice of my oppressors.”

(6) They that—i.e., the rogues implied in the last verse.

(7) None of them can.—Brother is here used in the wide sense of Lev. xix. 17, Gen. xiii. 11 (where rendered “the one”), “the sense is the same whether we make it nominative or accusative. Death is the debt which all owe, and which each must pay for himself. No wealth can buy a man off. God, in whose hand are the issues of life and death, is not to be bribed; nor, as the next verse says, even if the arrangement were possible, would any wealth be sufficient.

(9) That—i.e., in order that; introducing the purpose of the imagined ransom in verse 7. Others connect it consecutively with verse 8, “He must give up for ever the hope of living for ever.”

(10) For he seeth.—The clauses are wrongly divided in the Authorised Version. Translate—

"On the contrary he must see it (the grave), Wise men must die Likewise the fool and the stupid must perish."

The wealth of the prudent will not avail any more for indefinite prolongation of life, than that of fools.

(11) Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever. These eleven words represent three in the Hebrew, and, as the text stands, give its sense, which is intelligible and consistent:

“They believe their houses will last for ever. Their dwelling places from generation to generation; they call the lands by their own names.”

The reading followed by the LXX., Chaldee, and Syriac, kirbam for kirbah gives a different thought—

“There are their homes. Their dwelling places for ever.”

(Comp. “his long home,” Eccles. xii. 5.)

The last clause, which literally runs, they call in their names upon lands, is by some explained (see
call their lands after their own names. (12) Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.

(13) This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

(14) Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. (15) But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me. Selah.

(16) Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; (17) a for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. (18) Though 6 while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou dost well to thyself. (19) He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

Man that is in honour, and understanding, is like the beasts that perish.

PSALM L.
A Psalm of Asaph.

(1) The mighty God, even the Lord,
God come to Judgment.

PSALMS, L. His Pleasure not in Ceremonies.

hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. (2) Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

(3) Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. (4) He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. (5) Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. (6) And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

was also by tradition a psalm writer (2 Chron. xxix. 30, Neh. xii. 46). It is certain, however, that all the psalms ascribed to Asaph (lxxiii.—lxxxiii.) were not by the same hand, or of the same time (see Introduction to Ps. lxxiv.); and, as in the case of the Korahite psalms, probably the inscription, “to Asaph,” only implies the family of Asaph, or a guild of musicians bearing that name (1 Chron. xxv. 1; 2 Chron. xx. 14; Ezra ii. 41).

(1) The mighty God, even the Lord.—Heb., El Elohim, Jehovah, a combination of the Divine names that has been very variously understood. The Authorised Version follows the rendering of Aquila and Symmachus. But the Masoretic accents are in favour of taking each term as an appellative. Hitzig objects that this is still, but it is so on purpose. The poet introduces his vision of judgment in the style of a formal royal proclamation, as the preterite tenses also indicate. But as in this case it is not the earthly monarch, but the Divine, who is “Lord also of the whole earth,” the range of the proclamation is not territorial, “from Dan even unto Beersheba,” as in 2 Chron. xxx. 5, but it is couched in larger terms, “from sunrise to sunset,” an expression constantly used of the operation of Divine power and mercy. (Comp. Ps. ciii. 12; cxii. 3; Isa. xii. 25, xlv. 6.)

(2) Perfection of beauty—i.e., Zion, because the Temple, the residence of Jehovah, was there. (Comp. Ps. xlvii. 2; Lam. ii. 15; 1 Mac. ii. 12.)

Hath shined.—Comp. Ps. lxxv. 1; Deut. xxxii. 2. A natural figure of the Divine manifestation, whether taken from the dawn or from lighting.

(3) Our God shall come . . . shall devour . . . shall be.—Better, comes . . . devours . . . is. The drama, the expected scene having been announced, now opens. The vision unfolds itself before the poet’s eye.

(4) He shall call.—Better, He calls. The poet actually hears the summons go forth calling heaven and earth as witnesses, or assessors (comp. Micah vi. 2), of the judgment scene. (Comp. Deut. iv. 26; xxxi. 1; Isa. i. 2; Micah 3. 1; 1 Mac. ii. 37.)

Israel, politically so insignificant, must have been profoundly conscious of the tremendous issues involved in its religious character to demand a theatre so vast, an audience so august.

(5) My saints.—This verse is of great importance, as containing a formal definition of the word chashidim, and so a direction as to its interpretation wherever it occurs in the Hebrew hymn book. The “saints” are those in the “covenant,” and that covenant was ratified by sacrifices. As often, then, as a sacrifice was offered by an Israelite, it was a witness to the existence of the covenant, and we are not to gather, therefore, from this inscription that outward acts of sacrifice were annulled by the higher spirit taught in it; they were merely subordinated to their proper place, and those who thought more of the rites that bore testimony to the covenant than of the moral duties which the covenant enjoined, are those censured in this part of the psalm.

(6) The heavens.—Here is an exceedingly fine touch. In obedience to the Divine summons the heavens are heard acknowledging the right of God to array the nations before Him in virtue of His moral sway. Rend the verb in the present: And the heavens declare. The verse is adapted to Ps. xcvi. 6.

In the language of modern thought, order and law in the physical world are an evidence of an ordered moral government, and the obedience of the unconscious stars to that sway which, as Wordsworth says, “preserves them from wrong,” is a challenge to man to submit himself consciously to the same will.

(7) Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thou God. (8) I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. (9) I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. (10) For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. (11) I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. (12) If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

(13) Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?
Condemnation of the Wicked.

PSALMS, LI. The Reward of the Righteous.

(14) Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: (15) and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

(16) But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? (17) *Seeing thou hastest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. (18) When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. (19) *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

(20) Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. (21) These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

(22) Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.

(23) Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him *that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

PSALM LI.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, *when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

(1) Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

(14) Offer.—Gratitude, and the loyal performance of known duties, are the ritual most pleasing to God. Not that the verse implies the cessation of outward rites, but the subordination of the outward to the inward, the form to the spirit. (See Ps. li. 17—19.)

(19) *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. This psalm has always been held, as addressed to the sincere formalist, as indifferent to evil as themselves.

That I was altogether.—We might render, that I was actually. And set them in order.—The insertion of "them," referring back to "these things," is rather confusing. Better supply thine offences. All the sins of the wicked are marshalled before them.

(23) *Thou that ordereth.—Better, sacrifce and thanksgiving, as in verse 14; the poet here sums up what he has previously said. This clause must therefore be considered as addressed to the sincere formalist, the next to the openly wicked.

To him that ordereth . . . —Literally, as the text stands, placeth his way, which is hardly intelligible. The version of Symmachus suggests the readingiam, instead of am. *To him who walks uprightly." But being plainly intended for the ungodly, we want in this clause some mention of amendment; and if the poet wrote šab, we get, literally, him who has turned his way, i.e., who has changed his course of life.

LI.

This psalm has been so identified with David, that to surrender the tradition which ascribes it to him seems a literary crime. Indeed, the character of the man has been read so constantly through the medium of Ps. xxxii. and li., that we must admit that a personality, dear to all the religious world, recedes and becomes less distinct before the criticism which questions the genuineness of the Davidic authorship of either of them. Yet in the case before us we must either break this long cherished association, or admit the last two verses of the psalm to be a later addition for liturgical use.

But the question of authorship does not affect the estimation in which this psalm has always been held, and always will be held, in the Church, as the noblest expression of penitence. Even if it was not originally, directly, and exclusively the expression of an individual's repentance, but rather the voice of the people of Israel deploring, during the exile, its ancient errors and sins (the only conclusion which completely explains verse 4, see Note), and praying for a new lease of covenant-favour, yet the associations of the psalm with individual experience of sin and repentance from it are now far too close to be broken, and it must ever remain in the truest sense one of the penitential psalms, suited for private use as well as for that of the Church. It presents as has been rightly said, the Hebrew and Christian idea of repentance; not remorse, not mere general confession of human depravity, not minute confessions of minute sins dragged to light by a too impulsive casuistry, but change of life and mind; and, in the words of Carlyle, "all earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best." The parallelism is distinct and well sustained.

Title.—See title Ps. iv.

(1) Blot out.—The figure is most probably, as in Exod. xxxii. 32, 33, taken from the custom of erasing a written record (comp. Num. v. 23; Ps. lxix. 28). So
David, confessing his Sin, 

PSALMS, LI. prays for Forgiveness.

(2) Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (3) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. (4) Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. (5) Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. (6) Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. (7) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (8) Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. (9) Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

LXX. and Vulg. Isaiah, however (Isa. xlv. 22) uses the same word in a different connection, “I will blot out thy sins as a cloud.” A fine thought that the error and guilt that cloud the mind and conscience can be cleared off like a mist by a breath from heaven.

Transgressions.—See Ps. xxvii. 1. The word seems to imply a wilful throwing off of authority or restraint, perhaps here the breach of the covenant-relation irrespective of any particular sin by which the breach was brought about. Whether it is an individual or the community that speaks, the prayer is that Jehovah would act according to His covenanted or covenant-favour towards the suppliant, and wipe out from His records whatever has intervened between the covenant parties.

(2) Wash me thoroughly.—Literally, Wash me much, whether we follow the Hebrew text or the Hebrew margin. The two clauses of the verse are not merely antithetic. The terms wash and cleanse seem to imply respectively the actual and the ceremonial purification, the former meaning literally to tread, describing the process of washing clothes (as blankets are washed to this day in Scotland) by trampling them with the feet, the latter used of the formal declaration of cleanliness by the priest in the case of leprosy (Lev. xiii. 6-34). (For the iniquity and sin, see Ps. xxvii. 1.)

(3) For I.—There is an emphatic pronoun in each clause which we may preserve, at the same time noticing the difference between the violation of the covenant generally in the term transgressions in the first clause, and the offence which made the breach in the second. (4) Against thee, thee only .—This can refer to nothing but a breach of the covenant-relation by the nation at large. An individual would have felt his guilt against the nation or other individuals, as well as against Jehovah. The fact that St. Paul quotes (from the LXX.) part of the verse in Rom. iii. 4 (see Note, New Testament Commentary) has naturally opened up an avenue for discussion on the bearing of the words on the doctrines of free-will and predestination. But the immediate object of his quotation appears to be to contrast the faithfulness of the God of the covenant with the falsehood of the covenant people (“Let God be true, and every man a liar”). The honour of God, as God of the covenant, was at stake.
He Prays for Purity.

PSALMS, LII. The Sacrifice of Righteousness.

(10) Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
(11) Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
(12) Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.
(13) Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.
(14) Deliver me from 3 blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
(15) O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
(16) For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.
(17) **The Sacrifice of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.**
(18) Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
(19) Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

PSALM LII.

To the chief Musician, Maschil, A Psalm of David, b when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.
(1) Why boastest thou thyself in mischiefs, O mighty man? the goodness of

(10) Right spirit.—So LXX. and Vulg.: but the constant of the margin is nearer the Hebrew, and better.
(11) Cast me not away.—This phrase is used of the formal rejection of Israel by the God of the covenant (2 Kings xii. 23; xvii. 20; xxiv. 20; Jer. vii. 15). Its use here not only confirms the explanation of the notes above, but makes in favour of understanding the whole psalm of the community.
(12) Take not thy holy spirit.—Commentators have discussed whether this means the spirit of office given to the king on his anointing (1 Sam. xvi. 13), or of grace, and Calvinists and Lutherans have made the text a battle-ground of controversy. Plainly, as the parallelism shows, the petition is equivalent to a prayer against rejection from the Divine favour, and is not to be pressed into any doctrinal discussion.
(13) Joy of thy salvation.—This again points to a sense of restoration of covenant privileges.
(14) Thy free spirit.—Rather, with a willing spirit. Or we may render, a willing spirit shall support me.
(15) Shall be converted.—Better, shall turn to the (See Note Ps. 1: 23.)
(16) Blood-guiltiness.—Literally, as in the margin, bloods. So in LXX. and in Vulg., but thus hardly making it clear whether the word implies the guilt of blood already shed or anticipated violence. The latter would rather have taken the form of Ps. lxix. 2: "from men of blood." Probably we should read "from death," as in Ps. lxi. 13.
(15) My lips.—Comp. Ps. lxxi. 15. The sense of forgiveness is like a glad morning to song-birds.
(16) Sacrifice.—The rabbinical commentators on this verse represent the penitence of David as having taken the place of the sin-offering prescribed by the Law. In the mouth of an individual, language with such an intention would not have been possible. To the nation exiled and deprived of the legal rites, and by that very deprivation compelled to look beyond their outward form to their inner spirit, the words are most appropriate.
(18) Do good.—The last two verses have occasioned much controversy. They do not fit in well with the theory of Davidic authorship. Theodoret long ago saying that they better suited the exiles in Babylon. They seem at first sight to contradict what has just been asserted of sacrifice. On both grounds they have been regarded as a liturgical addition, such as doubtless the compiler made, without any sense of infringement of the rights of authorship. On the other hand, it is not only these two verses which harmonise with the feelings of the restored exiles, but the whole psalm, and the contradiction in regard to the worth of sacrifices is only apparent. While vindicating spiritual religion, the psalmist no more abrogates ceremonies than the prophets do. As soon as their performance is possible they will be resumed.

Title.—See title Pss. iv., xxxii. This is one of a series of three Elohist psalms.

The historical reference in this inscription serves to cast discredit on the inscriptions generally, as showing on what insufficient grounds they could be received. There is not a syllable in the poem which conveniently applies to Doeg, or to the occurrence narrated in 1 Sam. xxii. 17; on the contrary, the accusation of lying (verses 1—3), the imputation of trust in riches (verse 7), as well as the general tone in which the psalm is couched, are quite against such an application.

(1) Mighty man.—Better, hero, used sarcastically. LXX. and Vulg., "a mighty one at mischief." (Comp. Isa. v. 22: "a hero at drinking.") The order of the Hebrew is, however, against this, and in favour of the English, why dost thou cast in wickedness, O hero, i.e., perhaps, not only his own, but in the wickedness the people are led into by his means. This seems necessitated by the next clause. In spite of man's
PSALMS, LIII.

The Doom of the Deceitful.

God endureth continually. (2) Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. (3) Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah. (4) Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.

(5) God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

(6) The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: (7) lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

I will wait on thy name . . . . Better, I will wait for thy glory; “name,” here, after the mention of God’s works in the last clause, being evidently, as so often, synonymous with “fame” and “reputation.” For it is good before thy saints.—This may mean that such a trustful expectation in the presence of the saints is good, or that it is pleasant in the eyes of the saints thus to wait, or we may take “name” as the subject. The mention of the “saints” (chasideim) is by some supposed to indicate the Asmonean period as that of the composition of the Psalm.

LIII. This Psalm is a variation from Psalm xiv. Which was the original, or whether both are not corruptions of some lost original, are questions involving minute comparisons and examinations of the Hebrew text, and possibly do not admit of satisfactory answers. Instead of “Jehovah” in Ps. xiv., Ps. liii. has Elohim, according to the style of this part of the collection. The other differences are discussed in the Notes. (See Introduction and Notes to Ps. xiv.)

Title.—See title, Ps. iv.

Upon Mahalath.—One of the most perplexing of the perplexing inscriptions. We have a choice of explanations from derivation between upon a flute, and after the manner of sickness. The word occurs again in the Title of Ps. lxxxviii., with the addition of “to sing.” It is against the analogy supplied by other inscriptions to refer this to the sad nature of the contents of the Psalm, though in the case of Ps. lxxxviii. such an interpretation would be very appropriate and not inappropriate here. As in other cases, we look for some musical direction here, and if we take the root, meaning “sick” or “sad,” we must render “to a sad strain,” or “to the tune of a song beginning with the word ‘sadness.’”

(1) And.—The conjunction is wanting in Ps. xiv. 1.
God. (3) Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

(4) Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

(5) There were they in great fear, where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.

(6) Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

PSALM LIV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

(1) Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength. (2) Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. (3) For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.

(4) Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. (5) He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth. (6) I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O Lord; for it is good. (7) For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.

PSALM LV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David.

(1) Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.

Title.—See Notes to titles of Ps. iv., xxxii.; and comp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, xxvi. 1.

(1) By thy name.—See Note, Ps. xx. 1. (Comp. Isa. xxx. 27.)

Judge me by thy strength—i.e., in Thy power see that justice is done me.

(3) For strangers.—This verse, with some variations, occurs again (Ps. lxxxvi. 14); some MSS. even reading here "proud," instead of "strangers." With the received reading we must understand by the word "foreign oppressors"—though, doubtless, the inscription of the Psalm may be defended by taking the word in a derived sense of those Israelites who have degenerated, and so deserve the name "aliens."

(4) With them . . .—Better, is a supporter of my life. So LXX. and Vulgate.

(5) Cut them off.—Or, put them to silence.

In thy truth.—Or, according to thy faithfulness.

(6) I will freely sacrifice.—Better, I will offer a willing (or freewill) sacrifice.

For it is good.—Comp. Ps. lii. 9.

(6) This verse does not actually state what has happened, but, according to a well-known Hebrew idiom, should be rendered, When he shall have delivered, &c.

Hath seen his desire.—Or, hath gazed on.

The Hebrews use the words seeing and looking very expressively, making the simple verb do almost what the eye itself can do: show hatred, love, triumph, defeat, wretchedness, despair, &c. (See Pss. xxxvi. 21, lii. 6, lx. 10, xii. 11; Song of Sol. vi. 13; &c.)

LV.

This is one of the most passionate odes of the whole collection—bursts of fiery invective alternating with the most plaintive and melancholy reflections; it has supplied to Christianity and the world at least two expressions of intense religious feeling, the one (verses 6, 7) breathing despair, the other (verse 22) the most restful hope.

Its date and authorship must be left in the region of mere conjecture. The traditional ascription to David cannot on any ground be maintained. That
A Prayer for the Psalmist

PSALMS, IV.

in his Distress.

(2) Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise; (3) because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

(4) My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. (5) Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

(6) And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. (7) Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. (8) I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.

(9) Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city. (10) Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it. (11) Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.

(12) For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: (13) but it was thou, a man mine

Hate me.—Better, persecute me.
(4) Is sore pained.—Better, withises with pain.
Terrors of death.—i.e., terrors caused by death, a horror of death.
(10) But it was thou.—Literally, who will give me ?—The bird that was in the psalmist’s thought was doubtless the Rock Pigeon (Columba livia), which selects for its nestling the lofty cliffs and deep ravines far from the neighbourhood of man. (Comp. Song of Sol. ii. 14, Note.)

Be at rest.—So the LXX. and Vulg., and the reading is consecrated by long use; but the parallelism seems to require the more literal dwell or abide.
(7) Remain.—Better, lodge.
(9) Destroy.—Literally, swallow up. So the LXX., forcibly, “drown in the sea.” The object them must be supplied.

This sudden change from plaintive sadness to violent invective is one of the marked features of this poem. Some think there has been a transposition of verses, but in lyric poetry these abrupt transitions of tone are not uncommon nor unpleasing.

Divide their tongues.—i.e., cause division in their councils. “Divide their voices” would be almost English, being exactly the opposite of Shakspere’s “a joint and corporate voice.”

For I have seen.—With the sense, and see still.
(10) They go.—It is quite in keeping with the Hebrew style to suppose mischief and strife personified here as the ancient versions do, and not only occupying the city as inhabitants, but prowling about its walls. So in the next verse corruption (see Ps. x. 9, Note), deceit, and guile are personified. Comp. Virgil’s

“ubique
Lactus, ubique Pavor, et plurima morris imago.”

(11) Deceit.—Rather, oppression, or violence.

Streets.—Rather, squares, the open space at the gate of an Oriental city where public business was conducted. It is a miserable picture of misgovernment; in the very seat of justice is nothing but oppression and guile.

(12) For.—The ellipse must be supplied from verse 9, I invoke destruction for, &c.

Then I could . . . —Better, then (or else) I might bear it.
(13) But it was . . . —Better, But thou art a man of my own standing. The word ereb is used (Exod.
PSALMS, LVI. with God’s sustaining Grace.

He Comforts Himself

As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. (17) Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. (18) He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me; for there were many with me. (19) God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah.

(20) For there were many with me.—This is only necessary. Render, in their dwellings, in their very midst.

(21) He hath delivered.—The Targum rightly makes this the petition just mentioned, “Deliver,” &c.

(22) From the battle.—The reading of the LXX. is preferable, “from these drawing near to me.”

For there were many with me.—This is only intelligible if we insert the word fighting. “For there were many fighting with me,” i.e., “against me.” But the text seems corrupt.

(23) God shall hear.—Render this verse, God shall hear and afflict them, He abideth of old; One in whom are no changes, And yet they fear not God. (Comp. James i. 17, “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”) As the text stands, for afflict we should have answer; but the LXX. and Vulg. have the true reading. The Selah must be removed as plainly out of place. The plural pronoun is used poetically for the singular. The word changes, chattipoth, is used of troops relieving guard (Job xiv. 14), of servants taking their turn of work, of a change of clothing, &c. Here generally variability. The rendering of the Authorised Version does not suit the context. The reason of the assertion that, in spite of his invariableness, the wicked do not fear God, appears in the next verse. Instead of respecting those in covenant with one who does not change, they have not feared to attack and oppress them.

(24) He hath.—As in verse 12, the individual specially prominent in the traitorous crew is here singled out, and his treachery exposed.

He hath broken . . .—Literally, he perforated. In a note in his work on the Creed, referring to Col. ii. 14, Bishop Pearson says one mode of cancelling a bond was to drive a nail through it.

(25) The words of his mouth.—The ancient versions and the grammatical anomalies point to a corruption of the text. Read, Smoother than butter is his face. The reading face for mouth is suggested by the LXX., though their version has wandered far from the text even thus amended.

(26) Drawn swords.—The comparison of the tongue to a sword is frequent; that of the words themselves not so usual, but apt. We may compare Shakspere’s

I will speak daggers to her, but use none.—Hamlet.

(27) Burden.—A word peculiar to this passage, probably meaning “gift,” hence “lot” or “condition.”

The Taimud, however, uses the word as meaning “burden” and the LXX. by rendering “care” have prepared the way for the Christian consolation in 1 Peter. v. 7.

LVI.

If the title referring to an imprisonment of David at Gath is to be defended, it must be from 1 Sam. xxi. 10—15, on the supposition that the feigned madness did not succeed in its object, although the narrative gives reason to suppose that it did. The alternative of rejecting the inscription appears less objectionable. We have

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.

(28) Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

(29) But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

PSALM LVI.

To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim. A Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

(1) Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting
daily oppresseth me. (2) Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.

(3) What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. (4) In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

(5) Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil. (6) They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

(7) Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.

no clue, however, either to the person of the author or his time (beyond the general picture of danger and hostility), and the language rather gives the idea of large combined forces than of individual foes, especially in the prayer of verse 7. Probably the speaker is here again only the mouthpiece of oppressed and suffering Israel. The poetical form is irregular, but is plainly marked by the refrain in verses 3 and 11.

Title.—See Ps. iv., xvi. Title.

Upon Jonath-elem-rochokim—i.e., upon a silent dove of distant places. Of the conjectures on the meaning of this title it is in accordance with the conclusions accepted in other cases to take the one which makes it the first words of some well-known song to the tune of which this psalm might be sung.

(1) Man . . .—Heb., enosh, either as in Ps. ix. 19, "mortal man," or, contemptuously, "a rabble, a multitude."

(2) Swallow me up.—The root idea of the Hebrew word so rendered is by no means clear. In many passages where it is used the meaning given here by the LXX., "trample on," will suit the context quite as well as, or even better than, the meaning, "pant after," given in the Lexicons. (See Job v. 5; Isa. xiii. 14; Eccles. i. 5; Amos ii. 7, viii. 4.) And this sense of bruising by trampling also suits the cognate verb, shilph, used only three times (Gen. iii. 15; Job xiv. 17; Ps. cxxix. 11). Symmachus also here has "bruise," or "grind." On the other hand in Ps. cxix. 131; Job vii. 2, &c., we want the idea of "haste" or "desire." Possibly the original meaning of "trample" may have passed through the sense of physical haste to that of passion. Or we may even get the sense of "greedily devouring" by the exactly similar process by which we come to talk of devouring the road with speed. The same verb is used in the next verse with the cognate verb, lachrymacies, as they are called, of glass, which have been found in Syria (see Thomson, Land and Book, page 103). If these were really in any way connected with "tears," they must have formed part of funeral customs. The LXX., "Thou hast put my tears before thee," and Symmachus and Jerome, "put my tears in thy sight," suggest a corruption of the text; but, in any case, the poet's feeling here is that of Constance in Shakspere's King John—

"His grandam's wrongs, and not his mother's shames,
Draw these heaven-moving pearls from his poor eyes,
Which heaven shall take in nature of a fee;
Which heaven shall be bril'd with tears,
To do him justice and revenge on you."

(3) What time.—Heb., gom, apparently with same meaning as bosom in verse 10, "in the day."

(4) I am afraid . . .—No doubt the right reading is, "I cry."

(5) In God.—This verse, which forms the refrain (verses 11 and 12 are wrongly separated), is as it stands hardly intelligible, and the text is rendered suspicious by the fact that the LXX. read "my words," instead of "his word," and by the omission of the suffix altogether in verse 11, where the first clause of the refrain is doubled. The obvious treatment of the verse is to take the construction as in Ps. xlix. 5, "I praise God with my word," i.e., in spite of all my enemies I find words to praise God.

I will not.—Rather, I fear not. What can flesh do?

Wrest.—Properly, afflict; and so some, "injure my cause." But "torment my words" is intelligible.

Mark my steps.—Literally, watch my heels. (See Ps. xxxix. 5, lxxxiv. 51.)

(7) Shall they . . .—Literally, upon iniquity escape to them; the meaning of which is by no means clear. The ancient versions do not help us. If we adopt a slight change of reading, "sin," "palers for pullet," the meaning will be clear, for iniquity thou wilt requite them.

(8) Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle; for they are not in thy book?

(9) When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.

(10) In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word. (11) In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

(12) Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. (13) For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?
PSALMS, LVII.—LVIII.

in the Midst of Affliction.

PSALM LVII.

To the chief Musician, 1 Al-taschith, Michtam of David, 2 when he fled from Saul in the cave. 3

(1) Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. (2) I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.

(3) He shall send from heaven, and save me 4 from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

(4) My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

(5) Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.

How grandly the refrain in verse 8 rises from such a situation.

A net.—For this image, so common in Hebrew hymns, see Ps. ix. 15, &c., and for that of the pit, Ps. vii. 15, &c.

My soul is bowed down.—The verb so rendered is everywhere else transitive. So LXX. and Vulg. here, "And have pressed down my soul." Despite the grammar, Ewald alters "my soul" into "their soul." But no conjecture of the kind restores the parallelism, which is here hopelessly lost. We expect, They have prepared a net for my steps; They are caught in it themselves.

(7) Fixed.—Better, steadfast. (See Ps. li. 10, Note.)

(8) My glory.—See Note, Ps. vii. 5.

I myself will awake early.—Perhaps, rather, I will rouse the dawn. Comp. Ovid. Met. xi. 397, where the cock is said evocare Aurora; and Milton, still more nearly: "Oft listening how the hounds and horn, Cheerily rouse the slumbering morn."—"L'Allegro."

LVIII.

After a challenge to certain corrupt magistrates, the poet in this piece shows his detestation of the wicked, and anticipates their fate. There is nothing in the contents of the psalm to bear out the traditional title; but neither is there anything to help us to fix on any other author or date. The same complaints of the maladministration of justice often meet us in the prophetic books, and there is therefore no need to bring the composition of the psalm down to a very late age, especially when the vivacity of the language, and the originality of the imagery, indicate the freshness and power of an early and vigorous age of literary activity. The rhythm is elegant and sustained.

Title.—See title to last psalm.

(1) Congregation.—This rendering comes of a mistaken derivation of the Hebrew word ʿelem, which
The Unjust are

O ye sons of men? (2) Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

(3) The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. (4) Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; (5) which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

(6) Break their teeth. The change is abrupt from the image of obstinacy deaf to all charms, to that of violence that must be tamed by force.

Great teeth.—Literally, biters, grinders.

(7, 8) After the types of obstinate and fierce malignity, come four striking images of the fatuity of the wicked man's projects, and his own imminent ruin. The first of these compares him to water, which, spilt on a sandy soil, sinks into it and melts away. (Comp. 2 Sam. xiv. 14.) Perhaps a phenomenon, often described by travellers, was in the poet's mind, the disappearance of a stream which, after accompanying the track for some time, suddenly sinks into the sand. The words which run continually, even if the Hebrew can bear this meaning, only weaken the figure. The verb is in the reflexive conjugation, and has "to" or "for themselves." This certainly should be joined to the clause following. Here, too, we must suppose that the sign of comparison, khenou, was dropped out by the copists in consequence of the lamou just written, and afterwards being inserted in the margin, got misplaced. We must bring it back, and read:

They are utterly gone, as when One shoots his arrows.

This figure thus becomes also clear and striking. The arrow once shot is irrevocably gone, probably lost, fit emblem of the fate of the wicked. For the ellipse in bend (literally, tread, see Ps. vii. 12), comp. Ps. liv. 3, where also the action properly belonging to the bow is transferred to the arrow.

The words, "Let them be as cut in pieces," must be carried on to the following verse, which contains two fresh images: So they are cut off (LXX. "are weak") as shabbil melas; (as) the abortion of a woman passes away without seeing the sun. The word shabbiil, by its derivation (balal = to pour out) may mean any liquid or moist substance. Hence some understand a watercourse, others (LXX. and Vulg.) wax. The first would weaken the passage by introducing a bald repetition of a previous image. The second is quite intelligible. But the Talmud says shabbiil is a slug or shellless snail, and there may be a reference in the passage to the popular notion derived from the slimy track of the creature, that the slug dissolves as it moves, and eventually melts away. Dr. Tristram, however (Nat. Hist. Bib., p. 295), finds scientific support for the image in the myriads of snail shells found in the Holy Land, still adhering, by the calcareous exudation round the orifice, to the surface of the rock, while the animal itself is utterly shrivelled and wasted. The last image

mystery, strikes the walls with a short palm stick whistles, makes a clacking noise with his tongue. The art of serpent charming, and the magic connected with it, was of great antiquity in Egypt, and passed thence to surrounding countries.

Charming never so wisely.—Literally, one tying knots wisely, i.e., a most skilful charmer.

(3) Their poison . . .—Better, they have a venom like, &c. The term for serpent is the generic nachash. The most forcible images of determined wickedness, and of the destruction it entails, now follow. The first is supplied by the serpent, the more suggestive from the accumulated evil qualities of which that animal has from the first been considered the type. Here the figure is heightened, since the animal is supposed to have been first tamed, but suddenly darts forth its fangs, and shows itself not only untamed, but untameable.

Adder.—Heb., pethen, translated asp in Deut. xxxii. 33; Job xx. 14; Isa. vi. 8 (and here by the LXX.) In the Bible Educator iv. 103, the pethen is identified with the Egyptian cobra, the species upon which the serpent charmers practise their peculiar science.

Deaf.—So Jer. viii. 17 refers to various kinds of serpents, all will "wax deaf." Here, however, it would seem as if the poet were thinking of some individual of a species, generally tractable, that obstinately resists the spells and incantations of the charmer.

The image of the deaf adder was a favourite with Shakespeare, who, no doubt, derived it from this psalm.

"Pleasure and revenge Have ear no more of deaf than adders to the voice Of any true decision." Troilus and Cressida, iii. 2.

(Comp. 2 Hen. VI., iii. 2.)

(5) Charmers.—Heb., melachashin, a word undoubtedly formed from the sound made by the charmer in imitating the snake, in order to entice it from its hole. Lane, in Modern Egyptians, describing a snake charmer at his task, says: "He assumes an air of
The End of the Wicked.

shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. (8) As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. (9) Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.

(10) The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

(11) So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

presents no difficulty either in language or form, except that the form of the noun woman is unusual.

That they may not.—That this refers to the abortion which passed away without seeing the sun, is certain. The grammatical difficulty of want of concord may be got over by taking abortion as a collective noun.

(9) Before.—The figure in this difficult verse is generally intelligible, though the text as it stands resists all attempts to translate it. As in the preceding images, it must convey the idea of abortive effort and sudden ruin, and, as has generally been understood, some experience of eastern travel undoubtedly supplied the figure which accident or a copyist's error has rendered so obscure. The Hebrew literally runs, Before (shall) understand your pots a bramble as (or so) living as (or so) heat sweeps them off. The ancient versions mostly render thorns instead of pots, and make the simile to lie in the destruction of the bush before growing to maturity. The English versions have undoubtedly caught the figure more correctly. But it is doubtful if the Hebrew word rendered feel could be used of inanimate objects, and even if a kettle might be said to feel the fire, we should hardly speak of its feeling the fuel. Some change in the text must be made. A very slight change in one letter gives excellent sense. Before (taking the word avid which in Judg. ix. 15 is translated bramble collectively) make your pots ready. But the second clause remains very difficult. Even if (with Grätz) we read charól (Job xxx. 7; Prov. xxiv. 31, “nettles”) for charón, and render thorny bush, the words as living still offer a puzzle. And even if with the Prayer Book we might render raw instead of living, yet burning heat could not stand for cooked meat. Apparently the poet intends to compare the sudden overthrow of the wicked before their arms could succeed, to the disappearance of the fuel before it had time to heat the cooking-pot; and it is quite possible that he compressed all this into a condensed expression, which we must expand: “As, before the thorns make the pots ready, they are consumed, so He will whirl them (i.e., the wicked) away alive, as the fierce heat consumes the thorns.” Hebrew poetry is always more satisfactory with metaphor than with simile, and here, as often, seeming to fall between the two, and so becomes obscure.

(10) Wash his feet.—So in Ps. lxviii. 23. “Wading deep in blood” is the picture suggested.

To the chief Musician, A Psalms of David; a when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

(1) Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: 2 defend me from them that rise up against me. (2) Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

(3) For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord. (4) They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake 5 to help me, and behold.

(5) Thou therefore, O Lord God of

The fascinating conjecture of Ewald which connects this psalm with the Scythian irruption into Judea in the reign of Josiah is not easily surrendered. Some wild nomad tribe supporting itself by pillage, terrify­ ing the inhabitants of a beleaguered city with an out­ landish gesture and speech, seems indicated by the recur­ ring simile of the “dogs” (verses 6, 14, 15). And, again, the mode in which the heathen are spoken of in verse 8, and the effect to be produced far and wide by the evidence of Jehovah’s power (verse 13) seems to point to a foreign invasion. But, on the other hand, the prominence given to the utterances of this poet’s foes (verses 7, 12), seems to indicate that his danger was rather from calumnious and false accusations than from hostile violence. Was he merely the mouthpiece of the righteous part of the community, whom a hostile or renegade party is trying to devour, body and soul, character and substance, as the gaunt scavenger dogs devour in an Eastern city? At first sight an apparent double refrain (verses 6, 14; 9, 17) promises a regular poetical form, but the strophes are unequal and the parallelism loose.

Title.—See titles, Pss. iv., lvii., xvi., and see Intro­ duction.

(0) Defend me.—Literally, set me on high, i.e., place me on some lofty and secure height.

(9) For, lo, they lie in wait . . . —Better, for look, they have laid an ambush.

Mighty.—Perhaps with the idea of insolence in their strength.

Not for my transgression . . . —Better, Without transgression or fault of mine, as in next verse.

(4) They run and prepare.—These words might both be taken in a military sense. For “run,” see Ps. xxviii. 29; Job xv. 26, xvi. 14.

Help me.—Literally, as in margin, meet. It is found in a hostile sense, and never in the sense of helping. A suggested emendation, “Awake to my calling, and behold,” removes the difficulty.

(5) Therefore . . . —Better, Yea, even Thou . . . Not only is there an emphatic “thou,” but the passion of prayer cannot exhaust itself without piling up all the customary names of the Divine Being.

God of Israel.—This is added so emphatically because of the “heathen,” against whom aid is invoked.
hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

(6) They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. (7) Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?

(8) But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

(9) Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.

(10) The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.

(11) Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.

All the heathen . . . wicked transgressors.—These two terms are not synonymous, but contrasted. There were not only foreign, but domestic foes, viz., the party who, pretending to be loyal Israelites, were yet intriguing with the foreigners. The literal “coverers of wickedness” implies concealment and treachery.

(6) A dog.—This comparison to the gaunt half-starved wild dogs of an Eastern town has met us before (Ps. xxii. 16). The verbs should be rendered as futures here and in verse 15.

Make a noise.—Better, howl. (See Note Ps. lv. 7.) An English traveller has described the noise made by the dogs of Constantinople: “The noise I heard then I shall never forget. The whole city rang with one vast riot. Down below me at Tophane; over about Stam-boul; far away at Scutari; the whole 60,000 dogs that are said to overrun Constantinople appeared engaged in the most active extermination of each other without a moment’s cessation. The yelping, howling, barking, growling, and snarling were all merged into one uniform and continuous sound.” (Albert Smith, A Month at Constantinople, quoted from Spurgeon’s Treasury of David.)

(7) Behold.—Without question this word should, as Mr. Burgess suggests, be emended (chanith instead of hinneh), to give—

“She speaks poniards.”—As You Like It.

(8) Laugh.—Comp. Ps. ii. 4, Note. Probably the same contrast is intended in these clauses as in verse 5.

(9) His strength.—This gives no intelligible meaning, and verse 17 shows that the ancient versions (and some MSS.) are right in reading “my strength” (vocative). The first two words of the next verse must also be brought back to this: “My strength, on Thee let me wait. For God is my fortress, God of my grace or mercy,” i.e., my gracious or merciful God.

(10) Prevent.—i.e., come to meet. (See Ps. xxi. 3, Note.)

See my desire.—See Note, Ps. liv. 7. (Comp. Ps. xxi. 11.)

(11) Slay them not, lest my people forget . . .—The Spartans refused to allow the destruction of a neighbouring city, which had often called forth their armies, saying, “Destroy not the whetstone of our young men.” Timon, in the play, is made to say—

“For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak. (13) Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah. (14) And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. (15) Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. (16) But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. (17) Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.

For the sin . . .—As the text stands, it runs: Sin of their mouth, word of their lips, and they are taken in their pride, and cursing and lying they say; where some would supply a copula, “The sin of their mouth is the word of their lips,” which seems tautological nonsense. But, perhaps, we should take the accusative as adverb of instrument: By the sin of their mouth, by the word of their lips, let them even be taken in their pride.

And for cursing and lying which they speak.—That is, let their own malignant slanders, their blasphemous lies, recall on their own heads; a frequent thought in the Psalms.

(12) For the sin . . .—Better, That they may be no more. These words are to be taken closely together. The signal overthrow of the poet’s foes is to be a proof to the ends of the world of the sovereign rule of the God of Jacob.

(13) Let them wander.—This verse is variously understood. The margin gives the rendering of most modern scholars; but what does it mean by “They will pass the night”? To say they will not go away unsatisfied seems poor. Ewald’s conjecture, “They will satisfy themselves forsooth, and remain,” i.e., die, seems strained. The slightest change in the vowel-points gives the interpretation adopted by the LXX., Vulg., Jerome, Luther, &c.: “If not satisfied they will growl,” which admirably suits the context.
PSALM LX.

To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth, 1Michtam of David, to teach; 2when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, whom Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand.

(1) O God, 4thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; 0 turn thyself to us again.
(2) Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it; heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh. 3Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment. 4Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.
(3) That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me.
(4) God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

PSALMS, LX. 
and Love to his People.

This psalm is composite; certainly two (verses 1—5, 6—12), probably three, independent pieces (verses 1—5, 6—8, 9—12) compose it.

Verses 5—12 appear again at Psalm eviii. The fact that the compiler of that psalm began his adaptation with verse 5, and not where the ancient original piece begins (verse 6), as well as the trilling variations, show that this psalm was in its present state when the later arrangement was made. Most scholars agree in thinking that the oracular verses, 6—9, are Davidic, or belong to a period as old as David’s; and the inscription no doubt refers us to the series of events which this part of the poem reflects.

There is nothing to guide conjecture as to the time when the ancient oracular promise of victory was embodied in a poem, which evidently reflects a period of national depression, either from some crushing defeat by a foreign enemy, or from civil strife, in which the pious part of the community had suffered. The poetical form is necessarily irregular.

Title.—See title, Ps. iv., xvi. 
Upon Shushan-eduth (comp. Ps. lxx., and Ps. xlv., title)—i.e., upon a lily of testimony; which has been variously explained to mean, “Upon lily-shaped bells,” “A harp with six strings,” &c. After the analogy of other titles, it is better to take it as the beginning of some hymn, to the tune of which this psalm was to be sung.

To teach.—This recalls 2 Sam. 1. 18: “To teach the sons of Judah the [song of the] bow.” This Psalm, like the elegy over Saul and Jonathan, was possibly intended to kindle the martial ardour of youthful Israel.

When he strove with . . .—The allusion to “Aram-naharaim”—i.e., Aram of the two rivers—and “Aram-zobah,” are to be explained by the events narrated in 2 Sam. viii. and x. The English rendering of 2 Sam. viii. 13 reads as if Syrians, and not Edomites, were then slain in the valley of salt; but the Hebrew seems rather to be, “And David gat him a name in the valley of salt [eighteen thousand], when he returned from smiting the Syrians.” This still leaves a discrepancy in the numbers; but it may be noticed that the mode of the introduction of the number in the history looks suspiciously like a gloss which may have been made from memory and afterwards crept into the text.

(1) Hast scattered us.—Literally, hast broken us. A word used of a wall or fence, Ps. lxxx. 12, but in 2 Sam. v. 20 applied to the rout of an army, an event which
The Leader of the Hosts of Israel.

PSALMS, LXI.

Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. (11)
Through God we shall do valiantly: for he is that shall tread down our enemies. (12)

To the chief Musician upon Neginah, a Psalm of David.

(1) Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. (2) From the end of the

(7) Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; (8) Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? (9) Will not thou, O God, which hast cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?

In his holiness...—The LXX. and Vulg. have “in his sanctuary” which suits the utterance of an oracle.

I will rejoice...—Rather, I will raise a shout of triumph.

I will divide Shechem...—Rather, I may divide, &c., implying unquestioned right of ownership.

Strength of mine head...—i.e., the helmet, or possibly with reminiscence of the patriarchal blessing on Joseph, Deut. xxi. 17.

Lawgiver.—In Hebrew a participle of verb meaning to cut or engrave, and is applied as here to the law-maker (comp. Deut. xxxiii. 21), or to the staff or sceptre which was the emblem of law, Gen. xlix. 10, Num. xxi. 18. The LXX. and Vulg. have “my king.”

Moab is my washpot—i.e., probably the footbath, a figure expressing great contempt, which receives illustration from the story told of Amasis (Herod. ii. 172) and the golden footstool which he had broken to pieces and made into an image of one of the gods—from base use made divine—as allegorical of his own transformation from a private person to a king. Others explain, from analogy of Arabic proverbs, that the conqueror would as it were wash his face white, i.e., acquire renown in Moab.

Possibly the comparison of Moab to a bath was suggested by its proximity to the Dead Sea, which might be said to be at the foot of Israel.

Over Edom...—The most natural explanation of this figure is that Edom is disgraced to the character of the slave to whom the conqueror tosses his sandals (not if collective), that they may be cleaned. (Comp. Matt. iii. 11.) The symbolic action of Ruth iv. 7 had a different meaning, the transfer of a right of ownership, and so cannot be employed in illustration.

Of the “shoe,” as a figure of what is vilest and most common, Dr. J. G. Wetstein quotes many Arabic proverbs. A covering for the feet would naturally draw to it such associations. (Comp. the use of footstool repeatedly in the Psalms, and Shakespeare’s use of footstool.)

Philistia, triumph thou because of me...—This cannot be the meaning intended by the clause, since it is quite out of keeping with the context, and is Ps. cviii. we have the very opposite, “over Philistia will I triumph.” We must therefore change this reading so as to get, over Philistia is my triumph, or render the text as it stands, from analogy with Isa. xv. 4: Upon (i.e., because of) me, Philistia, raise a mournful wail.

The LXX. and Vulg. indicate this meaning while translating the proper name, “the foreigners have been subdued to me.”

Who will...—i.e., how can this ancient Divine oracle be fulfilled now in present circumstances? This is the poet’s question. He may be a king himself eager for triumph, or more probably Israel personified. (See the plural in verses 10, 11, 12.) Edom is the particular foe in view, and as the difficulties of the undertaking present themselves, misgivings arise and the assurance gained from the triumphs of olden time turns into prayer, half plaintive, half confident, that the Divine favour and power may be once more on the side of the chosen people.

The strong city.—As in the Hebrew the article is wanting, any strongly fortified city might be intended, were it not for the parallelism. Here it must stand for Selah or Petra, the capital of Edom. For its impregnable position (see Note Obad. 3). The question, “Who will lead me into Petra?” is explained by the fact that there are only two possible approaches to the city, each a long narrow tortuous defile, and that the place itself is so buried in its ravines that it cannot be seen from any spot in its neighbourhood far or near.

LXI.

Here we have the prayer of an Israelite living at a distance from his country, and declaring in the simplest possible manner that in spite of this banishment he does not feel remote from God nor deprived of the Divine protection. It is a forecast of the great principle of spiritual worship which Jesus Christ was to proclaim.
earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

(3) For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. (4) I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah. (5) For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given the heritage of those that fear thy name.

(6) Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations. (7) He shall abide before God for ever: I will abide in thy tabernacle, and shall daily perform my vows.

 Tradition assigns this exquisite little song, with its fine spiritual discernment, to David. The repetition of the imagery of the high tower is in the Davidic style, but many critics think it breathes rather of the time of the captivity. Three equal stanzas of six short lines and elegant rhythm compose the poem.

Title.—See title Ps. iv.

Neginah, properly neginath, probably an error for neginath, as in Ps. iv., as the LXX. and Vulg. ("in hymns") evidently read it. It may be an anomalous form of neginah, which, in Job xxx. 9, means a satirical song.

(2) From the end of the earth ... A hyperbolic expression for a great distance. Isaiah (v. 26) uses the expression of Assyria, and it would be natural in an exile's mouth, but must not be pressed to maintain any theory of the psalm's date.

When my heart is overwhelmed.—Literally, in the covering of my heart, the verb being used (Ps. lxv. 13) of the valleys covered with corn, and metaphorically, as here, of "the garment of heaviness," which wraps a sad heart (Ps. cii. title; Isa. lvii. 16). (Comp. Tennyson's "muffled round with woe.")

Lead me to the rock ... Literally, upon the rock lead me, which is probably a constructio pragnans for lead me to the rock too high for me to climb by myself, and place me there. The elevated rock is a symbol of security, which cannot be obtained without the Divine help. Others take the expression as figurative for a difficulty which it needs God's help to surmount.

(3) A strong tower.—Comp. Prov. xviii. 10.

I will abide.—Rather, Let me be a guest in, etc. (Comp. Ps. xvi. 1; xxvii. 4.)

Thy tabernacle, ... It is difficult to decide whether this indicates the Mosaic tabernacle, and so may be used as an index of the date of the poem; or whether the tent is a general figure for the protection of God, wherever it may be found. It certainly recalls Ps. xxii. 6.

For ever.—Literally, for ages or ages. For the same plural, see Ps. cxlv. 13.

I will trust.—Rather, let me find refuge under the shelter of thy wings. (For the image, see Note Ps. xrvii. 8.)

(5) Heritage.—As the Authorised Version runs, the heritage is length of days, one promised generally to those who fear Jehovah (Prov. x. 27, xix. 23), and particularly to Israel (Deut. vi. 2) and its kings (Deut. xvii. 19, 20, which passage may have been in the psalmist's mind). But the LXX. and Vulg. read, "to them that fear thy name," meaning, of course, by the heritage, Canaan.

(6) See margin, and render as a prayer.

(7) He shall abide.—Better, may he sit enthroned.

Prepare.—Rather, appoint. But the LXX. had a different reading, and an ingenious emendation has been suggested in comparison with Ps. xi. 11, viz., "let mercy and truth continually preserve him."

PSALM LXII.

The many close resemblances between this psalm and Ps. xxxix. lead to the inference that it belongs to the same time, and is even from the same pen. The author and his age are, however, alike unknown; and there is no indication to guide to their discovery. The psalm records an experience common in every age, of the vanity of those objects on which man is apt to set his affections; but an experience particularly likely to find expression in days such as so many of the psalms reflect, when there was open conflict between the national sentiment and the ruling classes. The poet's is a voice raised in behalf of pious Israel suffering under tyranny. A refrain (verses 1, 2, 5–7) marks the rhetorical structure, but the form is irregular.

Title.—See titles, Ps. iv., xxxix.

(1) Waiteth upon God.—Literally, unto God (is) silence my soul. (Comp. Ps. xxii. 2, xxxix. 2, xxv. 1.) The LXX. and Vulg., "shall be in subjectio to," which no doubt gives one side of the feeling; but another may be illustrated by Wordsworth's—

"The holy time is quiet as a nun.
Breathless with adoration."

(2) Defence.—Properly, high tower, as so often. The metaphor is important here from the contrast with the tottering wall of next verse.

Shall not be greatly moved ... i.e. (as in Ps. xxxvii. 24), shall not be made to totter or fall.

(3) Imagine mischief.—This is the Rabbinical rendering of a word that occurs only here. The LXX. have "fall upon": Vulg., "rush upon," a meaning supported by an Arabic root meaning to storms or assault, and is so far preferable to Aquila's and Jerome's "plot against," and Symmachus' "labour in vain," or Syriac, "act foolishly."

Ye shall be slain.—The reading varies, the Tiberian school reading the verb pastive, the Babylonian,
as a tottering fence. (4) They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

(5) My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. (6) He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. (7) In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

(8) Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

(9) Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. (10) Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

active. The latter is supported by the ancient versions. The primary meaning is given to break, and we get:

How long will ye try to break him down, As if he were a bowing wall, a tottering fence.

The metaphor of the falling wall is common in Eastern proverbs. "The wall is bowing," is said of a man at the point of death. "By the oppression of the headman, the people of that village are a ruined wall." (4) Their mouth. — Literally, his mouth. They bless each with his mouth, &c.

Excellency. — Rather, height, carrying on the metaphor of preceding verse. (3) As in verse 1. Truly to God, be silence my soul. The state of resignation is one which can only be preserved by prayer. We may say, I will, but only can feel it through prayer.

(7) In God. — Literally, upon God, as in Ps. vii. 10. (8) Are vanity. — Or, were breath. To be laid in the balance. — Literally, in the balances to go up, which may mean in the scales they must go up, i.e., kick the beam. But a slight change in one letter gives the more probable, when weighed in the scales.

(10) If riches increase. — Even if by honest means you grow rich, distrust your wealth. (11) Once; twice. — The usual Hebrew mode of emphasising a numerical statement, and one growing naturally out of the structure of the verse, which loves a climax. (Comp. Prov. vi. 16-19.) The union of power and love is proved to the poet by the fairness and justice mentioned in the last clause.

LXIII.

The figure of the first verse misunderstood (see Note) led to the insertion referring this psalm to the wandering period of David’s life, a reference entirely out of keeping with the contents of the poem, even if it were Davidic. The conjecture is far more probable which makes it the sigh of an exile for restoration to the sacred scenes and institutions of his country, now cherished in memory; and so truly does it express the sentiments which would be common to all the pious community of Israel, that we need not vex ourselves with an enquiry, for which the data are so insufficient, into the precise individual or even the precise time to which it first refers. The last verse seems to carry us back to the troubled times immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem, when the existence of monarchy was trembling in the balance, and when some of those already in exile might be supposed to be watching its fortunes with feelings in which hope contended with misgiving, and faith with fear. The poetical form is irregular.

(1) Early will I seek thee. — LXX. and Vulgate, “to thee I wake early,” i.e., my waking thoughts are toward thee, and this was certainly in the Hebrew, since the verb here used has for its cognate noun the dawn. The expectancy which even in inanimate nature seems to await the first streak of morning is itself enough to show the connection of thought. (Comp. the use of the same verb in Song of Sol. vii. 12; and comp. Luke xxi. 28, New Testament Commentary.) Soul. . . flesh. — Or, as we say, body and soul. (Comp. Ps. lxxxiv. 3, “my heart and my flesh.”) Longeth. — Heb., khamah, a word only occurring here, but explained as cognate with an Arabic root meaning to be black as with hunger and faintness.

In. — Rather, as. (Comp. Ps. cxvii. 6.) This is the rendering of one of the Greek versions quoted by Origen, and Symmachus has “as in,” &c.

Thirsty. — See margin. Painting is perhaps more exactly the meaning. (See Gen. xxv. 29, 30, where it describes Esau’s condition when returning from his hunt.) Here the land is imagined to be faint for want of water. The LXX. and Vulgate have “pathless.” The parched land thirsting for rain was a natural image, especially to an Oriental, for a devout religious soul eager for communion with heaven.

(3) To see thy power. . . . — The transposition of the clauses in the Authorised Version weakens the sense. Render, So (i.e., in this state of religious fervour) in the sanctuary have I had vision of thee in seeing thy might and glory. The psalmist means that while he saw with his eye the outward signs of Divine glory, he had a spiritual vision (the Hebrew word is that generally used of prophetic vision) of God.
The Remembrance of God.  

PSALMS, LXIV.  

The Craft of the Wicked.

(3) Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.  

(4) Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.  

(5) My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: (6) when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.  

(7) Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.  

(8) My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upheldeth me.  

(9) But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.  

(10) They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. (11) But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

PSALM LXIV.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.  

(1) Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.  

(2) Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: 

(3) a who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:  

(4) that they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.  

(5) They encourage themselves

Thus—i.e., in the spirit in which he now speaks.  

For the attitude of the uplifted hands, see Note, Ps. xxviii. 2.  

(5) Satisfied.—This image of a banquet, which repeats itself so frequently in Scripture, need not be connected with the sacrificial feasts.  

(6) Remember.—Better, remembered.  

Bed.—Literally, beds.  

Night watches.—According to the Jewish reckoning, the night was divided into three watches: the "beginning," or head (roach); the "middle" (tikhôn, Judg. vii. 19); and the "morning" (boker, Exod. xiv. 24).  

(7) Because . . . . Better, For thou hast been my helper; and under the shadow, &c. (For the image see Ps. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7; liii. 1; lii. 4.)  

(8) My soul . . . . Literally, my soul cleaved after thee, combining two ideas. (Comp. Jer. xiii. 16.) The English phrase, "hung upon thee" (comp. Prayer-Book version), exactly expresses it.  

For "depths," or "abysses of the earth," comp. Ps. lxxxix. 15; Eph. iv. 9. It means the under world of the dead.  

(10) Shall fall.—See margin. But more literally, they shall pour him upon to the hands of the sword, where the suffix him is collective of the enemy, and the meaning is, "they shall be given over to the power of the sword." (Comp. Jer. xviii. 21; Ezek. xxxv. 5.)  

Foxes . . . . Rather, jackals. Heb., shwalmim. (See Note, Song of Sol. ii. 15.)

(12) Sweareth by him.—This is explained as meaning, "swear allegiance to him as the king," on the analogy of Zeph. i. 5. And this suits the context. On the other hand, the natural way to understand the phrase, "swear by" or "in him," is to refer it to the only oath allowed to the Israelite, "by the name of Jehovah." (Deut. vi. 13; Isa. lxv. 16; comp. Amos viii. 14), in which case we must explain by Deut. x. 20, 21. "Swear by his (Jehovah's) name; He is thy praise." Those who are loyal to Jehovah, who appeal to Him in all troubles, will find this promise true, "They shall glory," while the unfaithful and false, not daring to make the solemn appeal, will have their mouth stopped. (Comp. Rom. iii. 19.)  

LXIV.

The situation indicated in this psalm is one that frequently occurs in Israel's hymn-book. A prey to calamity, the poet for himself, or, more probably, for the community, implores the protection of God, and then suddenly takes up the prophetic strain—persuaded, from the known order of Providence, that retribution must come—and foretells the sudden dissipation of the deep-laid schemes of those who vex and oppress God's chosen people.  

The last couplet is probably a liturgical addition, and not part of the original poem, which without it divides into three regular stanzas of seven lines.  

Title.—See title, Ps. iv.  

(1) My prayer.—Rather, my cry, complaint, as in Ps. i. 2.  

(2) Secret counsel . . . insurrection—Better, secret tongue (sōd) . . . noisy gathering (rigshah). For sōd see Ps. xxv. 14, and for rigshah see Note to Ps. ii. 2.  

(3) For the figure in this and the following verse, see Ps. x. 7, xi. 2, ii. 2, livi. 4, lix. 7.  

Whose edge is sharper than the sword,"—Shakespeare.  

For the ellipse in "they bend (literally, tread) their arrows," see Ps. lvii. 7.  

(4) And fear not.—These are utterly unscrupulous, fearing neither God nor man.  

(5) They encourage themselves—Literally, they strengthen for themselves an evil thing (or
in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily: they say, Who shall see them? They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.

But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

They accomplish a diligent search. They search out iniquities — i.e., they plan wicked schemes. They communec — i.e., they calculate how they may lay snares privily. The conspirators carefully and in secret go over every detail of their plot. The question “Who shall see them?” is equivalent to, “Who is likely to see us?” The last clause seems to pronounce the law which obtains in Divine judgment. While God orders the retribution overtakes the wicked, and all their calamities, invented with such cunning, fall back on their own heads. But the construction is most perplexing.

The feeling pervading this psalm is indicated by the initial words quiet and praise. The attitude of Israel towards God is one of silent expectation, or expressed thankfulness — it waits hopeful of blessing to be vouchsafed in history and nature, and then bursts forth, like the refreshed and renewed earth, into a loud song of praise. There is only one direct indication of the probable date of the poem — the mention of the Temple, which sets aside the traditional ascription to David. Some have seen reference to a great national deliverance, such as that from Sennacherib, and to an abundant harvest following it. Others, even as early as some MSS. of the LXX. (see Note to title), date the psalm during the exile. The language of the latter part certainly recalls the glowing pictures of the blessings of the Return painted by the later Isaiah. But we can afford to leave undiscovered the author and date of a poem which is perennially fresh and true — a harvest song for the whole world and for all time. The parallelism is symmetrical throughout, but in form the psalm is an ode without regularity of stanza.

Title. — See titles to Pss. iv., xiv.

The Vulgate and some MSS. of the LXX. add to the word song, “of Jeremiah or Ezekiel, for the people of the dispersion, as they were about to return home.”

Praise waiteth — Literally, To thee silence praise, which recalls Ps. lixii. 1 (see Note), but must be differently explained. To say, Praise is silence to thee, is hardly intelligible. The LXX. and Vulg. read differently, “praise is comely.” Better supply a conjunction, To thee are quiet and praise, i.e., submissive expectation till the deliverance come (Ps. lixii. 1), and then exulting praise.

Shall the vow. — Better, Is the vow paid, i.e., by the praise just mentioned.

Unto thee shall all flesh come. — This has usually, and most truly, been taken as prophetic of the extension of the true religion to the Gentiles. But we must not let what was, in the Divine providence, a fulfilment of the psalmist’s words, hide their intention as it was conscious to himself. The psalm shows us the exclusiveness of Hebrew belief, and, at the same time, the nobler and grander feelings which are from time to time found struggling against it. The peculiar privilege of Israel has been stated in the first verse. Silent, yet confident, waiting for Jehovah’s blessing, and then exultant praise for it (Tephillah). In this and other nations save; but all flesh may approach Jehovah in prayer (Tephillah). (Compare verse 5.)

Iniquities. — Literally, Words (or, things) of iniquities, i.e., details of crime, or instances of wickedness. (Comp. Pss. xxxv. 29, ev. 27, chav. 5.)

God’s Sudden Vengeance.

PSALM LXV. God Hears the Prayers of All.
for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

(4) Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

(5) By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea: (6) which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: (7) which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. (8) They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening 1 to rejoice. (9) Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. (10) Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: 3 thou settlest the furrows thereof: 4 thou makest it soft with showers: thou

Preval.—Better, have prevailed, have overcome me, been too much for me. No doubt, though the pronoun is singular, we are to think of Israel at large here, confessing, by the mouth of the poet, its unworthiness of that Divine communion for which still (see next verse) God had chosen them. This is more in keeping with the general tone of the psalm than to refer the antithesis to an individual. The LXX. and Vulg. owe their stability to God.

The confidence of all the ends of the earth. —This might refer to Israel in exile; but it seems more in accordance with the general tenor of the psalm to give the words their widest range. Consciously or unconsciously the whole world rests in God.

Of them that are afar off upon the sea.—Literally, of the sea of those at a distance, i.e., of the farthest seas. (Comp. Isa. xi. 11: “of the islands of the sea.”)

Girded.—We see the Divine Architect of the world, girt for his labours in the Oriental fashion (see Note, Ps. xviii. 32), setting the mountains firm on their bases (comp. Ps. lxix. 3). In a well-known passage, the Latin poet Virgil reverses the simile, likening the sudden calm which succeeds the storm that wrecked Æneas to the effect produced by a leader of men in a sedition city. (Virgil, Æn. i. 148.)

Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: 3 thou settlest the furrows thereof: 4 thou makest it soft with showers: thou

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A Song of Praise

PSALMS, LXVI. to God for His Power.

blessest the springing thereof. (11) Thou crownest 1 the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. (12) They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. (13) The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

PSALM LXVI.
To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm.

(1) Make a joyful noise unto God, 3 all ye lands: (2) sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious. (3) Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. (4) All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.

(5) Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. (6) He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him. (7) He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

(8) O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: (9) which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

(10) For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

Showers.—Literally, multitudes (of drops).

(11) Thou crownest.—Better, hast crowned. We generally connect the idea of completion with this metaphor, but the original thought in the Hebrew word, as in the Greek στίφω, is probably to encompass. Comp. the Latin corono in Lucretius, ii. 802—

"Sylva coronat aquas ingens nemus omne."

All “the circle of the golden year” had been attended by Divine goodness. The meaning seems to be that God had made a year which was naturally prosperous still more abundant.

Paths.—The root from which the Hebrew word is formed means to roll, or revolve, and it often means the track made by a wheel. This idea may be present since God is often represented in Hebrew poetry as riding on a chariot of clouds, generally with the association of wrath and destruction (Pss. xxvii. 10; lxviii. 4), but here, with the thought of plenty and peace following on His track, as in the Latin poet—

"Te fugient venti, te nubila creli Aquas tandemque ridet Submittit flores, tibi rident
Placatumque ridet adventumque tuum, tibi suaves dextra tellus"

Lucretius, i. 6.

But it is more natural to give the word the meaning revolutions, and to think of the blessings brought by the “seasons as they roll.”

Fatness.—A cognate accusative to the word “drop” used absolutely in the next verse. (Comp. Prov. iii. 20.)

(12) They drop upon.—Supply “fatness” from the last verse.

And the little hills.—See margin. The freshness and beauty of plant life, which suddenly, as by a miracle, in Eastern lands clothes the hill-sides, resembles a fair mantle thrown round their shoulders, as if to deck them for some festival.

LXVI.

The compilers of the Psalter found no tradition of authorship attached to this Psalm, and did not themselves conjecture one, nor have we any guide towards the time of its composition beyond the tone of innocence assumed in the last part, which marks that part as belonging to a period subsequent to the captivity, when persecution and suffering were no longer regarded as punishment for national disloyalty to the covenant. The poetical form is uncertain, but there is a marked change in the rhythm at verse 13, and some commentators regard the psalm as composite.

Title.—See titles, Pss. iv., lxviii.

Here there is a peculiarity in the absence of any author’s name after the double title song, psalm. (Comp. Ps. lxvii., where the words are reversed.)

(1) Make a joyful noise.—Better, sing aloud, or shout.

All ye lands.—The margin is better.

(2) Sing forth.—Literally, play on the harp.

Make his praise glorious.—So the LXX., but the construction is dubious. Literally, put glory his praise. meaning perhaps, in parallelism with the first clause, “make the Divine glory the subject of your praise.” But the opening words of the next verse, “say unto God, how,” &c., are so bold that a suspicion arises as to the arrangement of the text. Perhaps by bringing back the initial words of verse 3 we get the true sense, “acscribe glory (and) speak praise to God.”

(6) Flood.—Hebrew, nahar, which generally stands for the Euphrates, but here, as in Ps. lxxiv. 15, for either the Jordan or the Red Sea.

There did we rejoice.—The verb is properly optative—there (i.e., in those works) let us rejoice, and thus rendered is more in keeping with the first verses of the psalm. The LXX. and Vulg. have the future, “There we will rejoice in him.”

(7) His eyes behold.—Better, his eyes keep watch on the nations. God is, as it were, Israel’s outpost, ever on the alert to warn and defend them against surrounding nations.

Let not . . . Literally, the rebellious, let them not exalt for themselves, where we may supply “horns” as in Ps. lxxv. 4, 5, or “head” as in iit. 3, c. 7. For the rebellious, comp. Ps. lxv. ii. 6.

(9) Which holdeth . . . The LXX. literally, which putteth our soul into life, i.e., keeps us alive, as the parallelism shows.
For the people called to praise God.

Praise for Deliverance.

PSALMS, LXVII.

(1) Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.
(2) Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads: we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. (3) I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. (4) I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.

(5) Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. (6) If I regard iniquity in my heart, he will not hear me: (11) I cried unto him in my trouble. (12) He will not hear thee, if thou art a complacent view of wickedness in others.

(13) He will not hear me, but verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. (14) Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, not his mercy from me.

PSALM LXVII.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song.

(1) God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. (2) That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. (3) Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

(4) O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. (5) Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

(6) Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. (7) God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

(1) Not.—The Hebrew in Ez. xii. 13 certainly means "net," as LXX. and Vulg. here. But Aquila, Symmachus, and Jerome prefer the usual meaning, "stronghold" (2 Sam. v. 7, &c.), which is more in keeping with the other images of violence and oppression. The fortress, the hard labour, the subjection as by foes riding over the vanquished, the passage through fire and water, all raise a picture of the direst tyranny.

(2) Ride over our heads.—For the figure comp. Isa. li. 23.

We went through fire and water.—A figure of extreme danger. (Comp. Isa. xiii. 2.)

A wealthy place.—The LXX. and Vulg., "to refreshment," which is certainly more in keeping with the figures employed, and may perhaps be got out of the root-idea of the word, "overflow." But a slight change gives the frequent figure "a broad place."

(3) Uttered.—Literally, opened.

(4) I will offer.—Such a holocaust could hardly have been vouched for a single person. It is the community that speaks. Besides, the ram was not a sacrifice for any individual, but particularly enjoined for the high priest (Lev. ix. 2), the head of a tribe (Num. vii.), or a Nazarite (Num. vi. 14). Incense is here the ascending smoke of the sacrifice.

(5) Come.—Refers back to verse 9.

(6) And he . . .—Literally, exaltation (i.e., praise) was under my tongue, apparently an Hebrew idiom akin to our "on the tip of the tongue," i.e., ready at any moment for utterance.

(7) If I regard . . .—Rather, if I had seen evil (i.e., had it purposely in view) in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me. One may not "be pardoned and retain the offence." The reference may be either to the forming of wicked schemes, or to the complacent view of wickedness in others.

The protestation of innocence in this verse, being made by or for the community at large, marks a late period for the composition. (See Introduction, and Ps. xlv., Introduction and Notes.)

(8) Who hath not turned . . .—i.e., he found himself able to pray, was not silenced. Notice the συγκαταγος. God had not rejected his prayer nor withdrawn His grace.

LXVII.

This is a noble hymn of praise, which for its fine and free expression of grateful dependence on the Divine grace was worthy to become, as it has become, a Church hymn for all time. The last two verses connect the hymn immediately with harvest, and it would look as if this allusion had actually been added for some special occasion to what was a general song of praise, since the refrain in verse 5, besides marking its choral arrangement, indicates what appears to be the proper ending of the psalm.

Title.—See titles, Ps. iv. and lxvi.

(1) This verse is an adaptation of the priestly benediction (Num. vi. 24-26).

(2) Saving health.—The Hebrew word is that generally rendered "salvation," but often better rendered "help," or "deliverance." By "health" the translators meant "healing power," as in Shakspeare, King John, Act V., Scene 2:—

"For the health and physic of our right."

(3) Praise.—Better, give thanks.

(4) For thou shalt judge.—Better, for thou judgedst.

(5) And govern . . .—Better, and dost lead. The word is used in Ps. xxiii. 3 of the "pastoral" care of God.

(6) Then shall the earth yield her increase.—It seems more in keeping with the expression of thanks to render here with the LXX. and Vulg., "The land hath yielded her increase."
PSALM LXVIII.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David.

1. Let *God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.
2. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
3. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.
4. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.
5. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

LXVIII.

"It is no easy task," writes Hitzig of this psalm, "to become master of this Titan." The epithet is apt. The psalm is Titanic not only in its unmanageable resistance to all the powers of criticism, but also in its lyric force and grandeur. It steels too, Titan-like, the very divinest heights of song.

In the case where there is still room for so many contradictory theories, it is best to confine an introduction to certainties. Ps. lxxviii. will no doubt remain what it has been called, "the cross of critics, the reproach of interpreters;" but it tells us some facts of its history and character that are beyond question.

1. The mention of the Temple in verse 29, in a context which does not allow of the interpretation sometimes possible, palace, or heavenly abode, brings down the composition to a period certainly subsequent to Solomon.

2. The poet makes free use of older songs. Indeed M. Renan calls the psalm "an admirable series of lyric fragments" (Langues Semitiques, p. 129). Most prominent among these references are those to Deborah's magnificent ode (Judg. v.) which is with the writer throughout, inspiring some of his finest thoughts.

3. The ode, while glancing ever and anon back over Israel's ancient history, is yet loud and clear with the 'lyric cry' of the author's present. See verses 4, 5, 6, 7, 21, (where there is probably a veritable historic portrait), 22, 30 seqq.

4. The interest of this present, though we lack the key to its exact condition, centred, as far as the poet was concerned, in the Temple, which is represented as the object of the reverence and regard of foreign powers, who bring gifts to it.

5. Notwithstanding the warlike march of the poem, and the martial ring of its music, it appears from verses 5, 10, 19, 20, not to have been inspired by any immediate battle or victory, but by that general confidence in the protection of God which Israel's prophets and poets ever drew from the history of the past.

These few features, obvious on the face of the poem, lend probability to the conjecture which sees in this psalm a processional hymn of the second Temple. That Temple needed gifts and offerings from the Persian monarchs, and was rising into completion at a time when Israel could boast of no military greatness, but found its strength only in religion. The poetical form is irregular, varying with the subject and tone.

Title.—See titles, Ps. iv. and lxvi.

(1) Let God arise.—A reminiscence of the battle-cry raised as the ark was advanced at the head of the tribes (Num. x. 25). For interesting historical associations with this verse, see Gibbon (chap. lviii.), and Carlyle, Cromwell's Letters and Speeches (Vol. II., 185).

(2) Smoke.—The figure of the vanishing smoke has occurred before (see Ps. xxxvii. 20); for that of the melting wax see Ps. xcvii. 5. Both figures are too obvious to need reference to the cloud and fire of the ancient encampment.

(3) Sing praises . . .—Better, play on the harp. Extol him that rideth upon the heavens. Rather, cast up a highway for him that rideth on th'steppes. (Comp. Isa. xi. 3, of which this is apparently an echo.) The poet's voice is the herald's who precedes the army of God to order the removal of all obstructions, and the formation of cairns to mark the road. Isa. lvi. 14, lxii. 10, are passages alluding to the same custom.

The translation, "upon the heavens," rests on a rabbinical interpretation of 'araboth. By derivation it means "a dry sandy region," a "steppe." The singular of the noun forms with the article a proper name designating the Jordan valley. (In the poetical books, however, any wild tract of country is called 'Arabah—Isa. xxxv. 1, 6.) The plural often designates particular parts of this region, as the plains of Moab or Jericho (2 Kings xxv. 4, 5). Such a restricted sense is quite in keeping with the allusions to the early history which make up so much of the psalm.

By his name JAH.—Better, his name is Jah. This abbreviated form of Jehovah is first found in Exod. xvi. 2. No doubt the verse is a fragment of a song as old as the Exodus.

It may be noticed here that the dependence of this psalm on older songs is nowhere more conspicuous than in the very various use of the Divine names, Elohim, Adonai, El, Shaddai, Jehovah, Jah.

(4) The LXX. and Vulg. prefix to this verse, "They shall be troubled by the face of Him who is," &c., which seems to indicate that the abrupt introduction of this description of God is due to some loss in the text.

A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows.—These epithets of God seem to have become at a very early period almost proverbial.

(5) Solitary . . .—This might refer to the childless (comp. Ps. exiii. 9), but it is better, in connection with the next clause, to think of the exiles scattered and dispersed, and who are by the Divine arm brought home.

With chains.—The Hebrew word is peculiar to this passage, and is derived by the Rabbis from a root meaning to bind. Modern scholars give "to prosper" as the meaning of the root, and render, he bringeth the captives into prosperity.

But.—Literally, only.

Rebellious.—As in Ps. lxvi. 7; stubborn, refractory.

In a dry land.—Or, desert.

It is natural, remembering the connection between the imagery of verse 4 and parts of the great prophet of the Return, to refer its expressions to those who...
lies: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

(7) O God, when thou west forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah: (8) The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. (9) Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereunto the earth melted from before Jehovah, This Sinai from before Jehovah, God of Israel. (10) Heh, shake out. Thy life dwells in her, i.e., in the people of Israel. (Comp. Ps. exliii. 3.) The vigour consequent on the heavenly food might be called the Divine life, and conceal a higher application.

 Wentest forth... didst march.-The parallel clauses as well as the words employed have, in the sound and sequence, a marial tread. The latter word, “didst march,” is peculiar to Judges v., which, directly or indirectly, coloured so much of later Hebrew poetry (see Deut. xxxiii. 2; Hab. iii. iii.) is in his ears throughout. The demonstrative “this Sinai” appears more natural if we suppose the verse, even in Deborah’s song, to be an echo of some older pieces contemporary with the Exodus itself. Such fragments of ancient poetry actually survive in some of the historical books—e.g., Num. xii. 17, 18; Exod. xiv. 1—19. The mountain melted from before Jehovah, This Sinai from before Jehovah, God of Israel.”

Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a

hence, Thy life dwells in her, i.e., in the people of Israel. (Comp. Ps. cxliii. 3.) The vigour consequent on the heavenly food might be called the Divine life, and conceal a higher application.

(11) The Lord gave...—Literally, The Lord gives a word. Of the women who bring the news, the host is great. The Hebrew for a word is poetical, and used especially of a Divine utterance (Pss. xix. 4, lxviii. 8; Hab. iii. 9). Here it might mean either the signal for the conflict, or the announcement of victory. But the custom of granting to bands of maidens the privilege of celebrating a triumph (Exod. xv. 20, 21; Judges v. xli. 34; 1 Sam. xviii. 6; 2 Sam. i. 29), here evidently alluded to, makes in favour of the latter. The fact that they have thus been torn from their original context accounts for the great obscurity which hangs over them.

And she that tarried...—i.e., the woman keeping the house: so the Hebrew. (Comp. Judges v. 29, “Women of the tent;” and the fond anticipations of Sisera’s mother, verse 29.) So the Greeks called the mistress of the house σίσεφάαι. (Eur. Herc. Fur. 45.) Though this sense thus gives a general description of war, and the women waiting eagerly for the victorious home-coming is a picture true to life, yet the next verse indicates that we must suppose a latent reference to some tribe or party who shirked the dangers of battle, and played the part of the stay-at-home.

The agreement of the ancient versions in rendering these difficult verses shows that their obscurity does not arise, as in the case of so many passages of the Psalms, from any corruptions in the text, but from the fact that they are an adaptation of some
ancient war-song to circumstances to which we have
no clue. If we could recover the allusions, the language
would probably appear clear enough.

"Why rest ye among the sheepfolds?"

"A dove's wings are (now) covered with silver, and her
feathers with the sheen of gold."

"When the Almighty scattered kings there,
It was snowing on Tsalmon."

Even in our ignorance of these allusions we at once
recognise in the first member of this antique verse
the denunciation of the heretical belief that preferred
the gloomy tribe that preferred ease at home to the
dangers and discomforts of battle.

The word here rendered "sheepfolds" (in the Author-
ised Version *pola*, a meaning which cannot represent
the Hebrew word or its cognates in any other place) is
cognate to that used in Judges v. 16, and occurs in
its present form in Ezek. xl. 43, where the margin
renders, "andirons, or two hearthstones." The deriva-
tion from to set would allow of its application to any
kind of barrier.

Whether Reuben, as in Deborah's song, or Issachar,
as in Gen. xlix. 14, where a cognate word occurs
"[barken]s" or "[barken]s 1 westward the original stay-at-home, does not matter.
The interest lies in the covert allusion made
by the psalmist in his quotation to some cowardly or
re Learnt party now playing the same disgraceful game.

The next clause, which has caused so much trouble
to commentators, appears perfectly intelligible if treated
as the answer made to the taunting question, and as
simply a note of time—they stayed at home because
all nature was gay and joyous with summer. This dove
appears, indeed, in the Bible as a type, but only, as
in all other literature, as a type of love (Song of Sol.
ii. 14); whereas the appearance of this bird was in
Palestine, as that of the swallow with us, a customary
mark of time. (See Note, Song of Sol. ii. 12. 14.) And a verse
of a modern poet shows how naturally its full
plumage might indicate the approach of summer:

"In the spring a lovelier iris changes on the burned
dove."—Tennyson: Locksley Hall.

This reply calls forth from the first speaker a re-
joinder in companion terms. The inglorious tribe
plead summer joys as an excuse for ease. The reply
tells of the devotion of those who, even
amid the rigour of an exceptional winter, took up arms
for their country: When the Almighty scattered kings
there, it was snowing on Tsalmon. (For the geography
of Tsalmon, see Judges ix. 48.) Whether intentionally
or not, the sense of the severity of the snowstorm—
rare in Palestinian winters—is heightened by the
contrast implied in the name "Dark," or "Shadow Hill."

The peculiarity of the position of the locative there
(literally, in it), coming before the mention of the
locality itself, is illustrated by Isa. viii. 21.

(19) The hill of God is . . .—Better,
"Mountain of God, mount Bashan;-
Mountain of peaks, mount Bashan."

Even if the range of Hermon were not included, the
basalt (basanite, probably from the locality) ranges,
always rising up before the eyes of those looking east-
ward from Palestine, must have been doubly impressive
from their superior height, and the contrast of their
bold and rugged outlines with the monotonous rounded
forms of the limestone hills of Judaea. And it is quite
possible that, in a poetic allusion, the term "mountains
of Bashan" might include all the heights to the east-
ward of Jordan, stretching southward as well as north-
ward. There would then be an additional propriety in
their introduction as jealously watching the march of
Israel from Sinai to take possession of the promised
land. Why these trans-Jordanic ranges should be
styled "mountains of God " has been much discussed.
Some explain the term to denote ancient seats of reli-
gious worship; others take it simply as a general term
expressing grandeur—"a ridge of god-like greatness.

(20) Why leap ye?—The verb occurs only here, but
is explained by Delitzsch, by comparison with an Arabic
root, to express the attitude of a beast crouching down
for a spring on its prey; a fine image: the jealous
hills lying, like panthers, ready to spring on the pass-
ing Israelites. Or does the old feeling of jealousy of
the tribes on the other side of Jordan still show itself
lurking in this verse? Browning has an image somewhat
similar:

"Those two hills on the right
Crouched like two bulls."

Others make the meaning simply "to look enviously
on." The older versions have caught the sense, "Why
watch with suspicion?" We may translate the verse,
Why, mountains of many peaks, glare ye at the moun-
tain which God hath desired for a residence? Yea,
Jehovah will dwell there for ever.

(21) The chariots.—As the text stands, this verse
can only be brought into harmony with the context by a
certain violence to grammar. Its literal reading is, God's
chariots, two myriads of thousands, and again myriads
of thousands (literally, of repetition), the Lord among
them, Sinai in holiness; which, by strict rule, must

The Glory of God.

dove covered with silver, and her
feathers with yellow gold. (14) When
the Almighty scattered kings 1 in it, it
was white as snow in Salmon.

(19) The hill of God is as the hill of
Bashan; an high hill as the hill of

1 Or, for her, she.

2 Or, even many thousands.
The Conqueror

PSALMS, LXVIII. in his Triumph.

Sinai, in the holy place. (18) Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

(19) Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. (20) He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.

mean: "God's chariots are innumerable, and the Lord rides in them to Sinai, into the holy place." But this rendering is quite against the whole tenor of the passage, which is descriptive of a march from, not to, Sinai. Hence some suggest the rendering, "The Lord is among them—a Sinai in holiness," meaning that Zion has become Sinai, a common enough figure in poetry (comp. In medio Tiburc Sardinia est—Mart. iv. 60), but only discovered here by a roundabout process. There can hardly be a question as to the propriety of the emendation suggested by Dr. Perowne, The Lord is with them; He has come from Sinai into the holy place. (Comp. Deut. xxxii. 2, which was undoubtedly in the poet's mind.)

Of angels.—This rendering arose from a confusion of the word which means repetition with a word which means shining. LXX. "of flourishing ones"; Vulg., "of rejoicing ones." But the mistake is a happy one, and Milton's sonorous lines have well caught the feeling and music of the Hebrew:

"About His chariots numberless were poured
Cherub and seraph, potentates and thrones,
And virtues, winged spirits and chariots winged.
From the armory of God, where stand of old
Myrinds."—Paradise Lost, vii. 196.

(19) Thou hast ascended on high.—Or, to the height, i.e., Mount Zion, as in Ps. xcv. (Comp. Jer. xxxi. 12; Ezek. xx. 40.)

Captive captive.—Or, captives into captivity. (See Judg. v. 12, Note.)

For men.—This rendering is inadmissible. Literally, for man, which is equivalent to our of men. Gifts of men are therefore captives or hostages, viz., the rebellions in the next clause, i.e., the heathen, whom the poet describes as subjected to Jehovah, and their land made His dwelling-place. (For St. Paul's citation of this verse, or its original, see Note, Eph. iv. 8, New Testament Commentary.)

(19—23) The abrupt transition from the scene of triumph just described to the actual reality of things which the psalmist now for the first time faces, really gives the key to the intention of the poem. It is by God's favour and might, and not by the sword, that deliverance from the enemies actually threatening the nation is to be expected.

(19) The verb, as the italics of the Authorised Version show, is of somewhat indefinite use. It appears to have both an active and passive sense, meaning to lay a burden, or to receive a burden. Here the sentence seems to require the latter: who daily loadeth us for us, i.e., either the burden of trial or of sin. (Comp. a somewhat similar passage, Ps. xxix. 8, "thou art a God who liestest for us," i.e., as Authorised Version, "forgivest us.") But it is quite possible to render, if any put a burden on us, God is our help.

(20) He that is.—The insertion is unnecessary. Render, God unto us (i.e., our God) is a God of salvation.

Issues from death.—Literally, for death goings out. The same word rendered issues in Prov. iv. 23, there means sources. Here it will mean sources of death, or escapes from death as we connect the clause with what precedes or follows. Jehovah would provide an issue out of death for Israel, but a source of death to Israel's enemies. The LXX. and Vulgate apparently take it in the former connection.

(21) Hairy scalp.—Literally, crown, or top, or head of hair. The word is rendered "pate" in Ps. vii. 16. This is probably a portrait of some historical person hostile to Israel. Others take it as a type of pride and arrogance, comparing the use of the Greek verb ἑκοφρ. The word "scalp," properly shell (comp. "skull"), was a word in common use at the time of the translation of the English Bible—

"White beards have armed their thin and hairless scalps Against thy majesty."—Shakespeare: Richard II.

(21) I will bring.—The meaning of this verse is very obscure. It is plainly another fragment of some ancient song quoted, we can hardly doubt, with reference to the return from captivity. "Bashan" and the "depths of the sea" (comp. Amos. ix. 1—10) may, in the quotation, only stand generally for east and west, the sea being here the Mediterranean. But most probably the original verse referred to the passage of the Red Sea and the contest with the king of Bashan.

(22) That thy foot.—This makes an unnecessary transposition of a very involved sentence. The image is perfectly clear, though the syntax, as often happens in all languages, goes tripping itself up. The conqueror, after wading in the blood of his enemies, is met by the dogs, who lick his gory feet. With a change of one letter we may render, "That thou mayest wash thy foot in blood—yea, the tongue of thy dogs in (the blood of) thine enemies.

(24—27) These hopes of national deliverance are kept alive in the worship of the sanctuary, which the poet now proceeds to describe. A solemn procession advances to the Temple, and we have a description of it by one evidently as interested in this ritual as familiar with it.

(24) Goings.—Better, processions. (Comp. Ps. xlii. 4.)

In the sanctuary.—Rather, into the sanctuary.
my King, in the sanctuary. (25) The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.

(26) Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

(27) There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. (28) Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

(29) Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee. (30) Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war. (31) Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

(32) Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:

(33) To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. (34) Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. (35) O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.

Players—i.e., harpers.

Playing with timbrels.—Or, beating the tambourine. For this instrument (Heb., töph) see Exod. xx. 20, and comp. Judges xi. 34.

Bless ye.—Apparently these words are part of the processional hymn. But in Judges v. 9 a similar outburst of praise appears to come from the poet.

From the fountain of Israel.—A comparison with Isa. liviii. 1; lii. 1. certainly allows us to understand this in the congregations sprung from the head waters (as we say) of the races, i.e., the patriarchal ancestors. At the same time if there were any mode of taking the words literally instead of figuratively it would be preferable.

There is . . . .—The procession is apparently a representative one, and the conjecture is probable which refers the selection of Zebulun and Naphtali to their prominence in Deborah's song. Benjamin may owe its position to the fact that it gave the nation its first king, and Judah would naturally figure in the pomp as the tribe of David. But other considerations besides may have had weight. The selection may have been made as representative of the two kingdoms.

Their ruler.—The Hebrew word has always a sense of a high-ended conqueror's rule, with the possible exception of Jer. v. 31. There is probably still a reference to Saul and his conquests—"little Benjamin who conquered for thee," or, possibly, here Benjamin takes the victor's place as leader of the procession.

Their council.—The reading must certainly be changed in accordance with Ps. lv. 14. Their crown, or company.

Thy God hath commanded.—Rather, with LXX. and the ancient versions generally, Ordain, O God, thy strength.

Kings.—This verse is a strong argument for referring the psalm either to the time of the rebuilding of the Temple, or its re-dedication after the pollution by Antiochus Epiphanes.

Rebuke . . . .—See margin, which (if we change beasts to beast) gives the right rendering. So LXX. and Vulgate. The beast of the reed is undoubtedly symbolical of Egypt, whether it be the crocodile or the hippopotamus.

Bulls . . . calves—These are possibly emblems respectively of the strong and the weak—the princes and the common people. (Comp., for a somewhat similar description of the Egyptians, Ps. Ixvii. 5, 6.) But a slight emendation suggested by Grätz gives the herd of bulls despisers of the people, a reading quite in keeping with the ordinary use of this figure. (See Ps. xxii. 12, Jer. i. 11.) The figure in connection with the bull-worship of Egypt is especially significant.

Till every one submit.—This clause still waits for a satisfactory explanation. The Authorised Version is intelligible, but grammatically indefensible. The LXX. are undoubtedly right in taking the verb as a contracted infinitive preceded by a negative particle (comp. Gen. xxvii. 1), and not as a participle. The meaning submit or humble (Prov. vi. 3) is only with violence deduced from the original meaning of the verb, which (see Dan. vii. 7) means to stamp like a furious animal. One cognate is used (Ezek. xxxiv. 18) of a herd of bulls fouling the pasture with their feet, and another means to tread. The form of the verb here used might mean set oneself in quick motion, which is the sense adopted by the LXX. in Prov. vi. 3. Hence we get rebuke . . . from marching for pieces of silver, the meaning being that a rebuke is administered not only to Egypt, but also to those Jews who took the pay of Egypt as mercenaries, and oppressed the rest of the community, a sense in keeping with the next clause.

Scatter.—The verb, as pointed, means hath scattered, but the LXX. support the alteration to the imperative which the context demands.

Princes.—Or, magnifies.

Ethiopia.—Literally, Cush shall make to run his hands to God, an idiom easily intelligible, expressing hasty submission.

Sing praises . . . .—Better, play and sing. The Selah, as in some other cases, is introduced where our sense of rhythm it is quite out of place.

Out of thy holy places—i.e., out of Zion. The plural "places" occurs also in Ps. Ixviii. 17 (Heb.).
PSALM LXIX.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, A Psalm of David.

(1) Save me, O God; for the waters are come into my soul. (2) I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

(3) I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. (4) They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.

The following English lines have caught the feeling of these verses:

"How have I knelt with arms of aspiring
Lifted all night in irresponsive air,
Dazed and amazed with overmuch desiring,
Blank with the utter agony of prayer."

- St. Paul, by F. Myers.

(4) They that would destroy me... - Properly, my exterminators. It seems a piece of hypercriticism to object to this as too strong a word. It is a very allowable prolepsis. At the same time the parallelism would be improved by adopting, as Ewald suggests, the Syriac reading "my enemies without are more numerous than my bones," and the construction would be the same as in Ps. xl. 12.

Wrongfully.—Better, without cause. Comp. Ps. xxxv. 19.

Then I restored.—Rather, what I did not steal I must then restore, possibly a proverbial saying to express harsh and unjust treatment. Comp. Ps. xxxv. 11; Jer. xv. 10.

(5) My foolishness.—This does not conflict with a true Messianic application of the Psalm, but is fatal to that which would see in the author not an imperfect type, but a prophetic mouthpiece of Christ.

(6) Let not them.—We again meet the feeling so common in the Psalms (see especially xlv. 17—22), that the sufferings of any member of Israel must bring dishonour on the name of Jehovah and on His religion. Here, however, it seems to touch a higher chord of feeling and to approach the true Churchmanship—the esprit de corps of the Kingdom of Heaven—which attaches a greater heinousness to the sin because it may harm the brethren. Not only would Jehovah be dishonoured in the sight of the heathen if He seemed to be disregarding His part of the covenant, but for an Israelite to have violated His part brought shame on all Israel.

(7) Because.—Better, for.

For thy sake.—It is plain from verse 9 that these words can only mean that the reproach under which the psalmist (or the community of which he was the spokesman) laboured was borne in the cause of religion.

(Comp. Jer. xv. 15.)

(8) Mother's children.—See Note Song of Sol. i. 6.

(9) Of thine house— i.e., for thine house. Hos. viii. 1, shows that house might stand for congregation, but very probably we are to understand zeal for the restoration or repair of the Temple, or more likely
When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.
(11) I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. (12) They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.
(13) But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.
(14) Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.
(15) Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.
(16) Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.
(17) And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble:

regard for its purity and honour. So at least one applied the words long after, John ii. 17 (where see Note in New Testament Commentary).

And the reproaches.—See St. Paul’s application of these words Rom. xv. 3. If the author had been thinking chiefly of his sin as the cause of the reproach of God, surely he would have said “the reproaches of these that reproach me are fallen upon Thee.” The intention seems to be that though in his own eyes a very insignificant and unworthy member of the community, yet being one who burned with zeal for it, he felt as personally directed against himself all the taunts aimed at Jehovah and His religion.

When I wept . . . —The expression I wept (or lamented) my soul with fasting is hardly intelligible, though perhaps we might say I wept out my soul with fasting. The LXX. and Ps. xxxv. 13 suggest an emendation to “I humbled my soul with fasting.”

My reproach.—Quite literally and better, a reproach to me. Those who made light of the covenant altogether, who were in heart apostates both to faith and patriotism, would naturally treat with contempt those outward signs by which an erring Israelite owned his offence and sought reconciliation.

In the gate . . . —The place of public resort where justice was administered. (See Ps. ix. 14 Note.) And I was the song.—Literally, and songs of those drinking strong drink, but we must supply the pronoun.

But.—A better arrangement of the clauses of this verse is:

But as for me my prayer (is) to Thee Jehovah in a time of grace.
God in the abundance of Thy (covenant) mercy Hear me with the faithfulness of Thy help.

For the favourable or gracious time comp Isa. xlii. 8. Whatever the sin of verse 5, &c., it had not cut the offender off from the sense of the blessings of the covenant, or he had been by pardon restored to it.

Pit.—Properly, well. A stone usually covered the wells (Gen. xxix. 10), which explains the phrase, “shut her mouth.” Is this merely figurative; or have we here a reminiscence of some terrible crime, analogous to that of Cawnpore?

I am full of heaviness.—Rather, I am sick. The word here used (with its cognates), as well as that rendered pity in the next clause, are favourite words with Jeremiah, as also are the figures of the next verse. (See Jer. vii. 14. ix. 15. xxiii. 15.)

Gall.—Heb., rōsh, i.e., head. (Comp. poppy heads. See Deut. xxxii. 32.) In Hos. x. 4 it is translated hemlock, but is most probably the poppy (papaver arenarium), which grows everywhere in Palestine, and answers all the conditions. The rendering, gall, comes from the LXX.

Vinegar.— Sour wine would not be rejected as unpalatable (see Note Ruth ii. 14). It was forbidden to Nazarites as a luxury (Num. vi. 3). Was the author of the psalm possibly a Nazarite? or are the expressions in the psalm merely figurative. Comp.

“The banquet where the meats became As wormwood.”—Tennyson: Elainé.

Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.
Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.
Four out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.
Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.
(26) For they persecute 

him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. 

(27) Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. 

(28) Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. 

(29) But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. 

(30) I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. 

(31) This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs. 

(32) The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God. 

(33) For the Lord hearkeneth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners. 

(34) Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that creepeth. 

(35) The Lord is exalted in Judah, and he shall be exalted in the cities thereof. 

(36) He shall judge the poor of the people: he shall save the children of the needy. 

(37) He shall redeem his servants: and they that are appointed for destruction shall have grace under the shadow of his wings. 

(38) And shall sing praises unto the Lord, while they that are appointed for destruction are線上. 

(39) The poor shall eat and be satisfied: they that seek the Lord shall be fat with grace. 

(40) The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein. 

PSALM LXX. 

Set me up on high.—Or, lift me up, i.e., into a secure place out of the reach of enemies. 

The pre-eminence of praise above sacrifice is not infrequent in the Psalms. (Comp. Ps. i. 14.) 

That hath ... Literally, showing horns and dividing the hoofs, marking at once clean animals, and those of fit age for sacrifice. 

Humble.—Rather, afflicted. 

And your heart ... Better, may your heart live. (See Ps. xii. 5.) 

For the Lord.—This and the following verses evidently bring the psalm within the circle of literature, of which Isa. lxv. 17 seq. is the noblest example—the literature inspired by the hope of the restoration and of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. 

LXX. 

For this detached fragment, broken off even in the middle of a clause, see Ps. xli. 13—17. 

Title.—See titles Ps. iv., xxxviii. 

(2) There are two omissions here from Ps. xli. 14, "together" and "to destroy it." 

(4) For a reward of ... Ps. xli. 14, "and put to shame." The change is probably a copyist's error. 

(5) Make haste unto me, O God.—In Ps. xli. 18, "The Lord (Adonai) thinketh on me."
God the Hope of the Righteous

PSALM LXXI.

The Palestinian collectors of the sacred songs of Israel found no traditional inscription to this psalm, and left it without conjecture of its authorship. In Alexandria it appears to have been attributed to David, but with the addition that it had some peculiar connection with the son of Jonadab and the first exiles. This connection, together with the resemblance between this psalm and Jeremiah’s writings, has led many critics to ascribe it to that prophet, a conjecture also borne out by the fact that it is, in great part, an adaptation of other psalms, chiefly xxii., xxxi., xxxv., and xl., since such dependence on older writings is a prominent feature in Jeremiah. His life of danger and adventure, his early consecration to his office, the high position which he took at one time in the councils of the nation, all agree with what the author of this psalm says of himself. (Comp. verse 6, with Jer. i. 5, and see Note, verse 21.) Still it is quite as likely that we have here another of those hymns composed, or, more properly speaking, in this case, arranged, to express not individual feeling and experience, but that of suffering Israel. (See Note, verses 6 and 20.) In a cento of passages from older compositions the rhythm is necessarily irregular.

(1–3) These verses are borrowed, with some verbal alterations, from Ps. xxxi. 1–3, where see Note.

(3) Rock.—Better, cliff (Hebrew selah), to distinguish it from tsir, above.

(4–6) These verses are manifestly founded on Ps. xxxi. 8–10; but the variations are more marked than usual, and indicate a definite purpose of adaptation rather than copying.

(5) My hope.—Comp. Jer. xiv. 8, i. 7. Also in New Testament, 1 Tim. i. 1, “The Lord Jesus Christ our hope.” Shakspere, with his fine ear for scriptural expressions, caught this.

“Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faieth.” (9) Psalms, LXXI.

“God, our hope, shall succour us.”—2 Henry VI.

(6) Took me out.—Comp. Ps. xxii. 10. The Hebrew is not the same, but the Authorized Version renders by the same word, treating it as a transitive participle of a word that elsewhere only means to go through, a doubtful expedient. The LXX. (and Vulg.) have “protector,” ἐκκαταρχή, which is probably an error for ἐκκαθαρίζω (following xxii. 10, ἐκκαθάριζω), which would support the rendering, “he that severed me,” a rendering for other reasons probable. This allusion to birth and retrospect of life from the earliest infancy, is not unsuitable to Israel personified as an individual, or rather it suits both the individual and the community of which he is the mouthpiece. So it has often been in application treated as an epitome of the history of the Christian Church.

(7) A wonder—i.e., not a miracle of preservation, but a monster. Though men point at him as something to be avoided or mocked, God is his refuge.

(9–11) This piece may be compared with Ps. xli. 6–9. The formal “saying” (verse 11), introducing a quotation, is an indication of a late date, the early literature employing no signs of quotation. (See, e.g., Ps. lviii. 12, 26.)

(12, 13) These verses recall Ps. xxii. 11, xxxv. 4, 6, xxxviii. 21, 22, xl. 13, 14.

(14) Hurt.—Literally, evil.

(15) Comp. Ps. xl. 5, which indicates the meaning here. More reminiscence must give place to actual calculation, which too must fall before the sense of Divine interference in his favour.

(16) I will go . . .—Rather, I will come with the Lord Jehovah’s mighty deeds, i.e., come with the tale of them (as last verse) and praise of them into the Temple. (Comp. Ps. v. 7, lxvi. 13.)
God the constant

PSALMS, LXXII.  Deliverer of His People.

Now also when—Literally, yea, even to old age and grey hairs. Ps. cxxix. I shows that this may be a national as well as an individual prayer.

My tongue.—Comp. with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. (22) My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. (24) My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

PSALM LXII.
A Psalm *for Solomon.

(1) Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

Title.—According to usage, this inscription can mean only of Solomon, denoting authorship. (See Introduction.)

(1, 2) The order of the words should be noticed—"judgments," "righteousness," "righteousness," "judgment,"—as offering a good instance of introverted parallelism. With regard to the meaning of the words we are placed on practical ground; they refer to the faculty of judging in affairs of government, of coming to a great and fair decision. In fact, whether Solomon be the intended subject of the poem or not, the prayer made in his dream at Gilboa (1 Kings iii. 9) is the best comment on these verses. (Comp. Isa. xi. 4, xxxii. 1.)

(1) The king ... the king's son.—The article is wanting in the Hebrew.
(2) He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. (3) The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. (4) He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

(5) They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. (6) He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. (7) In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of grain and wine shall be in all the land.

(8) He shall judge the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment. (9) The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. (10) He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

(11) They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. (12) He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.

The mountains . . .—Better, literally, Let the mountains and the hills bring forth to the people peace in (or by) righteousness. This imperative sense, instead of the future, is by most modern commentators preserved throughout the psalm. The LXX. give it here and in verse 17, but else use the future.

The verb here employed (properly meaning “lift up”) is used in Ezek. xvi. 8, for “bearing fruit,” and in Isa. xxxii. 17 peace is described as the natural work or fruit of righteousness. (Comp. Ps. lxxxv. 10.) For the same prominence given to its hills as the characteristic feature of Palestine, a land which is “not only mountainous, but a heap of mountains,” comp. Joel ii. 18.

They shall . . .—Literally, may they fear Thee (coevaly) with the sun, and in the face of the moon, generation of generation. For the preposition, “co-evaly with,” see Dan. iii. 33; (Hebrew) and comp. the Latin uso of cum—

“Cum sole et luna semper Aratus erit.”

The phrase “in the presence of the moon” (see the same expression, verse 17, and compare Job viii. 18), means, not by the moonlight, but as long as the moon shines. (Comp. verse 7.) On the other hand, our phrase “under the moon” refers to the nomad tribes wandering over the desert. The LXX. and ancient versions generally have “Æthiopians.”

Lick the dust.—The allusion is to the Eastern etiquette of prostration before a sovereign.

Tarshish.—The question of the identity of this place (or district) with the “Tartessus” of the Greeks is too long for a note. (See Jonah i. 3.) But painfully the mention here of “the isles,” i.e., islands and coasts of the Mediterranean (comp. Dan. xi. 18; Isa. xi. 11), is in favour of the identity.

Bring presents.—Literally, return presents, but not in the sense of an interchange of royal gifts (as i Kings x. 13) but of “payment of tribute.” The expression is illustrated by the words “revenue,” “custom-house returns,” &c. (Comp. the Latin, reditua.)

Sheba.—The Jottankan kingdom, embracing the greater part of Yemen or Arabia Felix, and so here representing Arabia, (the LXX. and Vulg. have “kings of Arabians”) while “Seba” (or “Saba”), which was Cushite, and was by Josephus (A. J., ii. 10, s. 2), identified with “Meroë,” represents Africa. (See Gen. x. 7, 28, and Smith’s Bible Dictionary, articles “Sheba” and “Seba.”)

Yea, all kings shall . . .—Better, as before, Let all kings.

For he shall deliver.—Here the verb must be present, “for he delivereth” giving the reason of the wide sway asked for this monarch. The prayer is based on the justice and beneficence of his reign ("to him that hath shall be given"), in which the weak and poor find their lives safe from violence, and their property protected against fraud. The verse is almost word for word the same as Job xix. 12.

Poor.—Rather, afflicted.

peace 1 so long as the moon endureth. (9) He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. (10) They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. (11) Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. (12) He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls
PSALMS, LXXIII.

of the needy. (14) He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. (15) And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

(16) There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. (17) His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun:

and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

(18) Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. (19) And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

(20) The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

Book III.

PSALM LXXIII.

A Psalm of Asaph.

(1) Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

The motive of this psalm shows itself clearly in verse 3—perplexity at the sight of the prosperity of the wicked. Two psalms have already dealt with the question at some length, viz., Pss. xxxvii. and xlix. (See Introduction to those psalms.) The problem is stated here more fully, the poet trying to account not only for one, but for both sides of the paradox, the troubles that beset the righteous as well as the good fortune that befalls the ungodly. The solution, however, on the first side falls short of that reached in Ps. xlix. The author contents himself with the thought that the wicked stand in slippery places, and may at any moment come to ruin. On the other hand, he is beginning to feel the way towards a higher truth than was discerned before, the truth that while the success of evil is apparent and momentary, that of good is real and final; he even catches a glimpse of the still higher truth revealed in the pages of Job, that communion with God is itself a bliss above happiness, and that the consciousness of possessing this gives a joy with which the pleasures of mere temporary prosperity are not to be compared. The versification is almost regular.

Title.—See Title to Ps. 1.

(1) Truly.—See Note, Ps. lxiii. 2. This particle often, like the Latin at, introduces a rejoinder to some supposed statement.

Dryden's lines express the feeling of this opening—

"Yet sure the gods are good! I would fain think so; If they would give me leave!"

The question arises whether the second clause of the verse limits, or only repeats, the first. No doubt in
But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.

They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.

They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

Behold, these are the ungodly, who

Theory God was understood to be good to Israel generally, but the very subject of the psalm seems to require a limitation here. The poet sees that a moral correspondence with their profession is necessary, even in the chosen people—the truth which St. Paul stated with such assurance, “For they are not all Israel which are of Israel.”

Slipped.—Literally, were poured out. This metaphor for weakness and instability is obvious. Comp. “Disolvuntur enim tum demum membri Figurum.” Lycricus, iv. 320.

Foolish.—Better, arrogant.

When I saw.—Perhaps the conjunction is wrongly supplied, and the word “saw” here is synonymous with “envied” in the first clause. (Comp. Latin invideo.)

For there are no bands in their death.—This is quite unintelligible, and does not fairly render the Hebrew, which gives, For there are no bands to their death. And by analogy of the derivation of tormenta from torqueré, we might give the Hebrew word banda the sense of pangs, rendering, “they have a painless death,” if such a statement about the wicked were not quite out of keeping with the psalm. The ancient versions give no help. Some emendation of the text is absolutely necessary.

In the only other place it occurs (Isa. lviii. 6) the word means specially the bands of a yoke; hence a most ingenious conjecture, which, by only a change of one letter, gives there are no bands to their yoke, i.e., they are “chartered libertines,” men of libido effrenata et indolentia, a description admirably in keeping with that of the animal grossness in the next clause, “fat is their belly.” (Comp. the image of an animal reviving from over-feeding, Deut. xxxii. 15; Burgess, Notes on the Hebrew Psalms.)

Strength.—The word is curious, but explained by Arabic cognates to mean belly, possibly from its roundness (“a fair round belly with good capon lined”); from root meaning roll.

Therefore.—Better, “Therefore pride is their necklace, And violence their mantle.”

The first metaphor might have been suggested either by the fact that the rich lavished large sums on jewellery, especially necklaces (see Note, Song of Sol. i. 10), or possibly from the usual description of the proud as “stiffnecked.”

Stand out with fatness.—Literally, go out from fat. Which, if referring to the appearance, is exactly the opposite to what we should expect. Sunken in fat would express the idea of gross sensuality. The eyes and heart are evidently used as in Jer. xxii. 17, the eyes as giving the outward index of what the heart wishes; and if we take the eyes here to mean not the organs of sight, but, by metonymy, the looks (comp. Song of Sol. iv. 9), “they look out of fatness,” the expression is intelligible enough. Or we might perhaps take the eyes to stand for the countenance. (See Gesenius, sub voc.), their countenance stands out because of fatness. Or, by taking this clause in direct parallelism with the following, we might understand that restless looking about for fresh excitement which comes of satiety. The following lines illustrate the whole verse:

“Triumphant plenty, with a cheerful grace, Basks in their eyes, and sparkles in their face; How sleek they look, how goodly is their mien, When big they strut behind a double chin.”—Dryden.

They have more.—See margin. Or the verb may be intransitive: the imaginations of their hearts overflow.

They are corrupt.—This, which is the Rabbinical rendering, is now universally abandoned in favour of another derivation of the verb. The Masoretic arrangement of the clauses may be also improved on:

“They scoff and speak of wickedness, Of violence from their eminence they speak,” where the first clause means, they speak mockingly of wickedness, or make a jest of sin.

They set.—The last clause is repeated here under a figure more defined:

“They have set their mouth in (not against) the heavens, While their tongue walketh through the earth.”

where an image very expressive of a towering pride, vaunting itself to the skies, and trumpeting its own praises through the world.

Therefore.—The Prayer Book version has undoubtedly caught the meaning here. It plainly describes the popularity gained (the surest way) by the self-applause described in the preceding verse. This version depends on the Hebrew margin, Therefore do the people turn hither (i.e., to them), and full waters (i.e., a cup full of adulation and flattery) are sucked out by them.

The mutual relation of these verses has been the subject of many conflicting opinions. The following is the arrangement that seems preferable—

“And people say, How shall God know? And does the Most High take notice of it? Lo! there are wicked men, And yet, always at ease, they amass riches. It is in vain then that I have kept my heart pure, And washed my hands in innocence: For I have been plagued every day, And my punishments (come) every morning.”

—this reflection being put into the mouth of the public who are onlookers at the career of these timeservers.
Their speedy Destruction.

Prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

(12) Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

(13) For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

(15) If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

(16) When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; till I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

(18) Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

(19) How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

(21) As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awaketh, thou shalt despise their image.

(22) Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

(23) Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

(24) Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

(25) Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

(26) My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

(27) For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

(28) But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

The thought is not of a reward after death, but of that true honour which would have been lost by adopting the views of the worldly, and is only to be gained by loyalty to God.

And there . . .--Or, Besides thee I have no delight on earth.

Works.--Not God's doings, but works prescribed to the psalmist, messages entrusted to him; no doubt here the conclusions he had come to, or the truths that had been revealed to him, in contrast with the false opinions from which he had been freed.

LXXIV.

Two periods only in the history of the Jews offer possible place for the composition of this psalm—that immediately after the Chaldaean invasion, and that of the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes (3 B.C. 167). Against the former of these is the statement in verse 9 (see Note), which could not have been spoken while Jeremiah was alive. Hence, with a certainty allowed by no other of the psalms, this, with Psalm lxxix., can be referred to the year before the patriotic rise of the Asmonaeans. Indeed, as Delitzsch remarks, their contents coincide with the prayer of Judas Macabeus preserved in 2 Mace. viii. 1–4. The only argument of any weight against this conclusion is the expression in verse 3, “ruins,” which appears at first sight too strong a term for the mischief wrought by the Syrians at the command of Antiochus. But we must allow at such a crisis a little licence to patriotism and poetry; and, unless the words must be limited to the sanctuary (which is not absolutely necessary; see Note), the picture given in the Book of Maccabees of the state of the Holy City, is such as to bear out the psalm. The poetical form is irregular.

Title.--See titles, Pss. xxxii., 1.

(1) Why hast . . .--Better, why hast thou never ceased abandoning us?

Anger.--Literally, nostril, as in Ps. xviii. 8, “there went a smoke from his nostril.”

1 Heb., my char­

2 Heb., it was la­

3 Heb., I knew not.

4 Heb., with thee.

5 Heb., rock.

6 Or, A Psalm for Asaph to give in­

struction.

PSALMS, LXXIV.

God's Love is above all else.

LXXIV.

Maschil of Asaph.

1 O God, why hast thou cast us off
The sheep of thy pasture.—An expression peculiar to the Asaphic psalms and Jer. xxiii. 1.

(3) Purchased.—Or, as in LXX., acquired. This word, together with the word "redeemed" in the next clause, and "right hand" in verse 11, show that Exod. xv. was in the writer's mind. (See especially verses 12, 13, 16 of that chapter.)

The word "congregation" here, as in the Mosaic books, presents the people in its religious aspect, as the expression "rod (or tribe) of thine inheritance" presents it in its political character.

The rod of . . .—Better, which thou hast redeemed as the tribe of thine inheritance, i.e., as thine own tribe.

The expression, "rod of thine inheritance," comes from Jer. x. 16, li. 19. (Comp. Isa. lix. 17.) It refers not to the shepherd's crook, but to the sceptre, or leading staff, of the prince of a tribe, and so passes into a term for the tribe itself (Exod. xxviii. 21; Judges xx. 2).

(3) Lift up thy feet.—Better, Lift thy steps. A poetical expression. God is invoked to hasten to view the desolation of the Temple. A somewhat similar expression will be found in Gen. xxxix. 1 (margin).

Perpetual desolations.—The word rendered "desolations" occurs also in Ps. lixiii. 18, where it is rendered "destruction." Here, perhaps, we should render ruins which must be ever ruins, or complete ruins, or possibly, taking the first meaning of neboshim, ruins of splendour. Isa. xi. 4 does not offer a parallel, since the Hebrew is different, and plainly refers to the long time the places have been in ruins.

Even all . . .—Better, the enemy hath devastated all in the holy place. 1 Macc. i. 38—40, iii. 45 ("Now Jerusalem lay void as a wilderness") give the best explanation of the verse, descriptive, as it is, of the condition of the whole of Zion.

(4) Thine enemies . . .—As the text stands, render, Thine enemies have roared in the midst of thine assembly, but many MSS. have the plural as in verse 8, where see Note for the meaning of the word.

For "roared," see Ps. xxii. 1, Note, and comp. Lam. ii. 7, where a similar scene is described. Instead of the voices of priest and choir, there have been heard the brutal cries of the heathen as they shouted at their work of destruction like lions roaring over their prey; or if, as some think, the reference in the next clause is to military terms, we have a picture of a wild soldier exulting round the emblem of their triumph.

They set up their ensigns for signs.—The Hebrew for ensigns and signs is the same. Possibly the poet meant to have written some word meaning idols, but avoids it from dislike of mentioning the abominable things, and instead of places their idols as signs, writes, places their signs as signs.

(5) The Authorised Version, with the ancient versions, has entirely mistaken the meaning of this verse, though, unlike the LXX., and Vulgate, it has the merit of being intelligible. Literally the words run, he (or it) is known like one causing to come in on high against the thicket of trees, which is generally understood, it seems as if men were lifting up axes against a thicket of trees. The ruthless destroyers go to work like woodcutters in a forest—the carved pillars are no more than so many trees to fell. But though this is intelligible, it does not read like Hebrew, and the contrast apparently intended between the signs of the heathen and the signs of Israel in verse 9 is not preserved. If, with the LXX., we read the verb in the plural, are known instead of is known, and supply the subject from the last clause, we get this contrast clearly brought out:

"They have set up their idols as signs, They these signs are known in the lifting up on high.""These visible idols are easily seen and recognised as soon as set up, but (verse 8) we see not our signs." According as . . .—We have now, as so frequently, to supply the sign of comparison, and this clause with the next verse runs plainly enough—

"As in a thicket of trees with axes, So now they break down all the carved work thereof with axes and hammers." The "carved work" of Solomon's Temple represented palm-trees and flowers (1 Kings vi. 29), and possibly these were imitated in the second Temple; if so, the image is very appropriate.

(7) They have cast fire into.—Literally, They have cast into fire thy sanctuary. Probably a hyperbolic expression, and purporting to express the vastness of the conflagration. Others compare with the English "set on fire," and French mettre à feu.

We learn from 1 Macc. iv. 38, and Josephus, Antt. xii., vii. 6, that Judas Maccabaeus, in coming to restore the Temple, found that the gates had been burnt.

(8) All the synagogues of God in the land.—This expression excludes from mode either of the meanings possible for it in verse 4, "the Temple" or "the assembly." Buildings, and these places of worship, must be meant, and it is implied that they are scattered over the land, and can therefore mean nothing but synagogues. The "high places" would not be called God's, nor would Bethel and Dan have been so called, being connected with irregular and unorthodox worship. Thus we have a clear note of time, indicating a period not only later than the rise of the synagogue in Ezra's time, but much later, since it takes time for a new institution to spread over a country. Aquila and Symmachus actually render "synagogues." Possibly the LXX. are right in putting the latter clause into the mouth of the enemies, "let us burn," &c.
An instance of pregnant construction (comp. verse 7), is the and is plainly equivalent to, and all later cry, from the to the next verse, where its repetition would nor one who knows), right hand once stretched out to save (now thrust in deliverances of old rush into his mind. He recalls the words is right) we have here another expression of a prophesying, and the complaint took quite a different none into which the rest of the psalm would fit. (10-15) In the true prophetic spirit, as Moses brought we conclude that the tannim, here as in Ezek. xxix. 3, xxxii. 2 (margin), Isa. xxvii. 1, li. 9 (where it is also, the minute and faithful description of the crocodile in Job xli. does not leave a doubt, and therefore we be devoured (comp. Ezek. xxix. 3-5) by the "wild beasts," called here "people," as the ants and conies are (Prov. xxvi. 2). Besides its abundance, another fact leading to the crocodile becoming an emblem of Egypt, was the adoration paid to it. (See Herod. ii. 69.) In the waters. Literally, on the waters. Leviathan. See last note. And gavest him. The crocodile was eaten by the people of Elephantine (Herod. ii. 69), but there is no allusion here to that custom, nor to the Ichthyophagi mentioned by Agatharchides, nor to the Ethiopians (as in the LXX.). It is the Egyptian corpses thrown up by the Red Sea that are to be devoured (comp. Ezek. xxix. 3-5) by the "wild beasts," called here "people," as the ants and conies are (Prov. xxx. 25, 26). Thou didst cleave. Another pregnant expression for "thou didst cleave the rock, and a Fountain came forth." Flood. Better, brook. Heb. náchal. Mighty rivers. See margin. But, perhaps, rather, rivers of constant flow, that did not dry up in summer like the "brooks." The same word is used of the sea (Exod. xiv. 27), to express the return to the regular flow of the tide. The verb "driest up" is that used (Josh. ii.10) of the Red Sea, and chaps. iv. 23, v. 1 of the Jordan. (16-18) An appeal from the God of history to the God of nature. Not only did He work wonders, but even the universe is the work of His hand.
Prayer for Divine Aid

PSALMS, LXXV.

(17) Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast 1 made summer and winter.

(18) Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.

(19) O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.

(20) Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

(21) O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.

(22) Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.

(23) Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee 2 increaseth continually.

PSALM LXXV.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song 4 of Asaph.

(1) Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

(2) When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.

(3) The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

Title.—See titles Pss. iv., lvii., lviii.

(1) For that ... The wonders first wrought for Israel have repeated the old conviction that God’s name, a word of power to save (comp. Pss. xxxiv. 18, cxlv. 18), is near. (Comp. Ps. ev. 1.)

(2) When I ... I will judge uprightly. This sense: “my time” being shown by the emphasis of the Hebrew. (Comp. Acts xvii. 31.) The word rendered in the Authorized Version “congregation” (moed), has plainly here its first derivative sense of a set time, or “occasion.” (Comp. Ps. cii. 13; Hab. ii. 3.) So LXX. and Vulg. here, but Symmachus gives “synagogue.”

It is quite clear that the speaker of these words is God Himself, who suddenly, as in Ps. xvi. 10, breaks in with the announcement of judgment. But how far the Divine utterance extends in the psalm is not quite clear. Some end it with verse 3; others with verse 5.

(3) The earth ... Better—

Are earth and all its inhabitants dissolved? It was I adjusted its pillars.

(See Hannah’s song, 1 Sam. ii. 8.) Though the crisis be such that all is confusion and anarchy (comp. Isa. xxiv. 19, 20 for the figure), there is no cause for fear; there is still a Ruler in heaven, Who built up the edifice which now seems to totter to its fall. The verb rendered in the Authorised Version “bear up,” is used in Job xxviii. 15, Isa. xl. 12 in the sense of “weig!ring” or “measuring;” but with the same allu-
I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn: lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

PSALM LXXVI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is}

sion to the creative work of God. Here it plainly means, so to adjust the pillars as to make them equal to the weight they have to bear.

The "pillars" are the "mountains," as in Job xxvi. 11. (See Note, Ps. xxvi. 2.) Comp. Shelley—

"Sunbeam proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns are."

Fools . . . foolishly.—Better, arrogant . . . arrogantly. See Ps. lxxiii. 3. (Comp. 1 Sam. ii. 3.)

Lift not up your horn.—The "horn" is a symbol of honour (Ps. xxii. 8); of strength (Micah iv. 13; Deut. xxxiii. 17). The figure is taken from horned animals. (See 1 Sam. i. 1, 10.)

With a stiff neck.—Better, with the neck proudly or wantonly raised.

For promotion . . .—The Authorised Version has here rightly set aside the pointing of the text, which, as the LXX. and Vulg., reads—

"For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the wilderness of mountains,"

a sentence which has no conclusion. The recurrence also of parts of the verb "to lift up" in verses 4, 5, 7, makes in favour of taking harim as part of the same verb here, instead of as a noun, "mountains." That the word midbar (wilderness) might be used for "south," receives support from Acts viii. 26. Ewald thinks the four points of the compass should be completed by inserting a conjunction, and taking the "desert" and "mountains" to represent respectively the south and north. He then supplies the conclusion of the sentence from the following verse:—

"For neither from east nor west, Neither from desert nor mountains, Cometh judgment: but God is Judge."

This agrees with 1 Sam. ii. 10; but it is hardly needful to expect such scientific accuracy as to the points of the compass in Hebrew poetry.

A cup.—The figure of the cup of Divine fury is developed, as Psalm xi. 6 compared with Psalm xvi. 5 shows, from the more general one which represents life itself as a draught which must be drunk, bitter or sweet, according to the portion assigned. It appears again in Psalm ix. 3, and is worked out in prophetic books, Isa. li. 17; Hab. ii. 16, &c.; Ezek. xxiii. 32—34, and frequently in Jeremiah. The mode of its introduction here, after the statement that God "putteth down one and setteth up another," shows that the poet, in speaking of a "mixture of the good and bad commingled in the cup," which are, of course, poured out to those whose portion is to be happiness and misery in Israel; while for the heathen, the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

PSALM LXXVI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is
his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. (2) There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

(3) Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. (4) The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands. (5) At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a deep sleep.

(6) Thou, even thou, art to be feared; and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? (7) Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, (8) when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

(9) Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shall thou restrain.

(10) Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared. (11) He shall cut off the spirit of princes; he is terrible to the kings of the earth.

PSALM LXXVII.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph.

(1) I cried unto God with my voice,
even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. (2) In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. (3) I remembered God, and was troubled: I ran in the night, my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

(4) Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. (5) I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. (6) I call to remembrance my song in the night: I

and not in any display of divine goodness toward the author individually, it is safe to conclude that the troubles described are also national rather than personal. At all events, for the time the poet's individuality is entirely merged in the sense of public calamity. The question whether the psalm, or Hab. ii. 10-15, which at its closest resembles, is the original, would, if it could be decided, be some guide in ascertaining the date of the composition. But there appear arguments equally strong on both sides of this question. There is a striking change of rhythm at verse 16, otherwise the structure is regular.

**Title.**—See title Pss. iv., xxxix.

(1) I cried . . .—Better, following the Hebrew literally,

"My voice to God—and let me cry: My voice to God—and He hears me.

The Authorised Version has followed the LXX. and Vulg. in neglecting the striking changes in mood running through this psalm. Soliloquy and narrative alternate as the poet's mood impels him—now to give expression to his feelings in solos and cries, now to analyse and describe them.

(2) My sore ran . . .—The text of this verse is evidently faulty. As it stands it is unintelligible. My hand was poured out and grew not dull (like a corpse). The LXX. and Vulg. have, "with my hands against Him, and I was not deceived," pointing to a different reading. Symmachus has, however, "my hand was stretched out," which may be a possible meaning of the Hebrew, though a comparison with Lam. iii. 49 (comp. chap. ii. 18) suggests that eye was written instead of hand. The Authorised Version's sore comes from the Rabbins, who thought of the hand beating the breast, and rendered, "my blows were poured out." Though the probable text may be beyond recovery, the feeling of the verse is quite palpable. It expresses the anguish of the poet's soul.

"His vews in the night, so fierce and unavailing, Stings of his shame and passion of his tears."

(3) I remembered.—Better,

"If I remember God I must sigh; I meditate, and my spirit faints."

Or,

"Let me remember God, and sigh: I must complain, and my spirit faints."

The word rendered overwhelmed (comp. Pss. cxiii. 3, cxlili. 4) means properly covers itself up. In Ps. cvii. 5 it is translated failed. (4) Thou holdest mine eyes waking.—Rather, Thou hast closed the guards of my eyes—i.e., my eye-lids. The Authorised Version mistakes the noun, guards, for a participle, and mistranslates it by the active instead of the passive. For the verb hold in the sense of shut, see Nehem. vii. 3, and Job xxvi. 9, where God is described as veiling His throne in cloud, and so shutting it up, as it were, from the access of men.

I am so troubled.—The word is used elsewhere of the aventure state into which the mind is thrown by a mysterious dream (Gen. xlii. 8; Dan. ii. 1, 3), and once (Judges xiii. 25) of inspiration, such as impelled the judges of old to become the liberators of their country. The parallelism here shows that it is used in the first connection. The poet has been struck dumb (the verb is rendered strike in the Lexicons) by a mysterious dream; he is too overawed to speak.

(5) I call to remembrance.—Better,

"Let me recall my harpings in the night; Let me complain in my own heart, And my spirit questions and questions."

(7-9) The self-questionings here follow as they rise after sigh in the poet's heart. God's silences have always been more appalling to the human spirit than even the most terrible of His manifestations. To the pious Israelite, to whom the past history of his race appeared one scene of opportune interpositions to save at the moment when distress became too intolerable, it seemed as if the divine protection was altogether withdrawn when the misery was protracted and the sign of help withheld.

(10) And I said . . .—The word rendered "infirmitie" may, by derivation, mean "wounding" or "piercing." So Symmachus, "my wound;" Aquila, "my sickness." Gesenius says, "that which makes my sickness." If we keep this meaning we must understand mental sickness or "madness," and understand the poet to say that to indulge in despairing cries is mere madness (comp. King Lear's, "Oh! that way madness lies"), he will recall God's ancient deliverances, and so re-establish his faith. But it seems more natural to take a sense which the cognate verb very commonly bears (Lev. xix. 8; Ezek. xxxvi. 22; Pss. lxxiv. 7, lxxix. 39), and render, "I said this (such despair) is on my part profanation, profanation of the years of the right hand of the Most High." To despair of continued help from One who had been so gracious in the past is a kind of blasphemy. The word "profanation" must be understood as repeated for the sake of the grammar.

(11) I will remember.—The written text is, "I will celebrate." The intention is the same in both cases. Instead of continuing to despair, the poet re-
and His Deliverances

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

surely I will remember thy wonders of old. (12) I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

(13) Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God? (14) Thou art the God that dost wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people. (15) Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

(16) The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. (17) The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad. (18) The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. (19) Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

(20) Thou leaddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM LXXVIII.

This is the first and the longest specimen in the Hebrew hymn-book of a species of composition peculiar to it, and indeed peculiar to the literature of the Jews, as combining narrative with instruction. It has been rightly called "epi-didactic." It does not tell the story of the past with any view of celebrating heroic ancestors, or exalting conspicuous national virtues. On the contrary, it is a long confession of national failings. The Biblical conception of history is always religious, and, therefore, practical, and here the utmost prominence is given to those lapses from loyalty to Jehovah, against which the poet is covertly warning his own generation.

But while it thus expresses the pious feelings of the writer and his age, it is entirely characteristic in giving equal emphasis to their exclusiveness, and that not the exclusiveness of a nation only, or a religion, but of one tribe of a nation, and one doctrine of the religion. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the author is quite as much concerned to establish the Divine purpose in rejecting Ephraim in favour of Judah, as in choosing Israel as a nation in distinction from the heathen. At the very outset, as soon as the faithlessness and perversity of the nation have been mentioned, Ephraim is singled out as the chief and typical example of disloyalty (verse 19). The conclusion of the psalm from verse 67 dwells with genuine satisfaction on the rejection of the northern tribes, and on the exclusive choice as the seat of the theocracy of the southern tribe, Judah. This prominence given to the disruption has led some critics to date the poem at the time of that event. But other considerations enter into the question. The "high places" are mentioned (verse 58) as one of the causes of the disruption; but this is not all that distinguished the author. He is so far concerned with the apparent revolution of the sky. The "whirlwind" has the same derivation as "vault" (volutum, from velo). It is strange that this rendering, which so well suits the parallelism, should have been set aside by modern scholars in favour of "whirlwind" or "rolling chariot wheels." The LXX. and Vulg. have "wheel," but possibly with reference to the apparent revolution of the sky. The word, where it occurs in Isa. xvi. 13, means something rolled by the whirlwind, not the whirlwind itself.

Are not known.—"We know not, they knew not, by what precise means the deliverance was wrought; we know not by what precise track through the gulf the passage was effected. We know not; we need not know. The obscuring, the mystery, here as elsewhere, was part of the lesson.... All that we see distinctly is, that through this dark and terrible night, with the enemy pressmg close behind, and the driving sea on either side, He led His people by sheep by the hand of Moses and Aaron." (Stanley, Jewish Church, i. 128.)

To some minds the abruptness of the conclusion of the psalm marks it as unfinished. But no better end could have been reached in the poet's perplexity than that to which he has been led by his musings on the past, the thought of the religious aids ready to his hand, in the faith and worship left by Moses and Aaron. We are reminded of him who recalled the thoughts of the young man, searching for a higher ideal of duty, back to the law and obedience. Or if the psalm is rather an expression of the feeling of the community than of an individual, there is a pointed significance in the conclusion given to all the national cries of doubt and despair—the one safe course was to remain loyal and true to the ancient institutions.

Title.—See Ps. xxxii. 1.

(1) Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
Better, taking the relative of time
Following sela,
God's Dealings
ing to the generation to come the
praises of the
and his wonderful works that he hath
done.
our fathers have told us.
I will utter dark sayings of old:
they should make them known to their
children:
and might not be as their fathers, a stub-
born and rebellious generation;
a generation
that set not their heart aright,
and whose spirit was not stedfast with
God.
The children of Ephraim, being
armed, and
carrying bows, turned back
in the day of battle.
They kept not the covenant of
God, and refused to walk in his law;
and forgot his works, and his won-
ders that he had shewed them.
Marvellous things did he in the
sight of their fathers, in the land of
Egypt, in the field of Zoan.
He divided the sea, and caused them to pass
through; and he made the waters to
stand as an heap.
In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all
the night with a light of fire.
He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and
gave them drink as of the great
depths.
He brought streams also out
of the rock, and caused waters to run
down like rivers.

(2, 3) I will open.—A difficulty is started by the
fact that the psalm deals with history, and is neither
a proverb (mashal) nor riddle (chidah). But the Divine
rejection of the northern tribes may be the covert
meaning which the poet sees to have been wrapped up
in all the ancient history. The word mashal is also
sometimes used in a wide, vague sense, embracing
prophetic as well as proverbial poetry. (See Num.
xxi. 27.)
For “dark sayings,” literally, knotty points, see
For the use of this passage in Matt. xiii. 35, see
(5) For he . . .—Better, taking the relative of time
(comp. Deut. xi. 6; Ps. cxxix. 15). For he established
(it as) a testimony in Jacob and (as) a law appointed
(it) in Israel when he commanded our forefathers
to make them (the “wonderful works” of last verse) known
to their children.
For the custom see reference in
margin.
(9) Stubborn.—Refractory.
That set not their heart aright.—Literally,
did not establish their heart, which preserves the
parallelism better.
(9) Armed, and carrying bows.—Following
Jer. iv. 29, and from analogy with Jer. xlv. 9 (“handle
and bend the bow”) we get as literal rendering of the
Hebrew here, drawing and shooting with the bow.
LXX. and Vulgate, “bending and shooting with the
bow.” But a close comparison of this verse with verse
57 of this psalm, and with Hos. vii. 16, has suggested
to a recent commentator a much more satisfactory
explanation. *The sons of Ephraim (are like men)
drawing slack bowstrings which turn back in the
day of battle. “Both the disappointment on the day
of battle and the cause of the disappointment, which
are mentioned in the text, will be appreciated by
the English reader who remembers that the result of
the battle of Crecy was determined at the outset
by a shower of rain which relaxed the strings of our
enemy’s bows” (Burgess, Notes on the Hebrew
Psalms).*

By taking this sense of a comparison of the general
character of Ephraim to a bow with a relaxed string
that fails at the moment it is wanted (a figure made
more expressive by the fact that archery was a practice
in which Ephraim excelled), we are freed from the
necessity of conjecturing a particular incident to
account for this verse, which seems to break the
sequence of thought. The whole historical retrospect
is intended to lead up to the rejection of the northern
kingdom (represented by Ephraim), but the poet is
unable to keep back his climax, and thrusts it in here
almost parenthetically.
(12) Field of Zoan.—See Num. xiii. 22. It is the
classical “Tanis,” merely a corruption of *Tzoon,* i.e.,
low country (LXX. and Vulgate), Tanis is situated
on the east bank of what was formerly called the
Tanite branch of the Nile. Between it and Pelusium,
about thirty miles to the east, stretched a rich plain
known as “the marshes,” or “the pastures,” or “the
field” of Zoan.
The psalm now turns to the adventures in the wilder-
ness, postponing the marvels in Egypt till verse 43.
(13) As an heap.—See Note, Ps. lxxix. 7.
(15) And gave . . .—Literally, and gave them to
drink as it were a great deep, or as we might say,
“oceans of drink”—a poetical exaggeration; or are we
rather to think of the gift of water as produced by
striking or boring through the rock to the great ocean
on which the earth was supposed to rest?
(16) Rock.—Rather, clif—sela, the word always
used of the event that took place at Kadesh (Num. xx.
8—11), as tsur is of the rock in Horeb. The plural
of this latter word in verse 15 is poetical and general.

* This translation assumes that “the primitive meaning of the
verb riphah is was slack. Certainly the root idea of the word
(comp. the cognate riphah and the meaning of the derivation
hard of Prov. x. 4, 11-12) here seems to have been relaxation. That
turned back, both here and in verse 57, refers to the recoil of a
bow, seems indubitable.
And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. (18) And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. (19) e Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? (20) b Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? (21) Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; (22) because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: (23) though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, (24) c and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. (25) d Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full. (26) He caused an east wind to blow in the south wind. (27) No doubt there is poetical hyperbole here, but merely poetical details. (28) See references in margin. (29) Desire.-See Num. xi. 34, margin. (30, 31) Evidently from Num. xi. 33, They did not yet loath in consequence of their lusts, the meat was yet in their mouths when, &c. For the expression, comp. the Latin alienari ab aliqua re, to be disinclined to a thing, and our own " stranger to fear," &c.

Their lust. But e while their meat was yet in their mouths, (32) the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and 5 smote down the chosen men of Israel. (33) For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. (34) Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. (35) And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. (36) Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. (37) For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant. (38) But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. (39) For he remembered that they were but flesh: a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. (40) How oft did they 7 provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! (41) Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. (42) They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. (43) How he

7. See references in margin.
had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:
and had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink. He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. He gave also their increase unto the caterpiller, and their labour unto the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycomore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them. He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; and smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham: but made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased. He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents. Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies; but turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. Their priests fell by the sword; and their maidens made no lamentation.

Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and heard the groanings of the children of Israel: and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed them for a testimony unto Jacob, and gave them a charge unto Israel. And he made them heartstones, and put up pillars unto the LXX. and Vulg., but in the Hebrew angels (or messengers) of ills (so Symmachus), with evident reference to the destruction of the firstborn. Made a way. Literally, levelled a path. So Symmachus. This mountain—i.e., Zion, though from its apposition to border some prefer to take it of all the mountain country of Judaea. Purchased. Rather, acquired. Turned aside. Better, turned like a relaxed bow. The bows of the Hebrews, like those of other ancient nations, were probably, when unstrung, bent the reverse way to that assumed when strung, which makes the figure more expressive of the disposition which cannot be relied upon in the moment of need. Forsook. The reference is of course to the disastrous defeat by the Philistines (1 Sam. iv). See especially verse 21 in connection with glory or ornament as applied here to the Ark. For strength in the same connection see Ps. cxxii. 8. Were not given. See margin. The desolation and misery were marked by the absence of the glad nuptial song. And their widows. Undoubtedly referring to the fact that the wife of Phinehas died in premature labour, and so could not attend the funeral of her husband with the customary lamentations, which in Oriental countries are so loud and marked. The Prayer-Book version, therefore, gives the right feeling—there were no widows to make lamentations. That shouteth. For the boldness of the image which likens God to a giant warrior exhilarated
of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. (60) And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.

Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: (68) but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. (69) And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: (71) 2 & from following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

**PSALM LXXIX.**

A Psalm of Asaph.

(1) O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. (2) The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.

(5) Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them. (6) *e We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

(7) *f How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever?* shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

(8) *f Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.* (7) For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.

(9) *f O remember not against us* former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are

Heaps—i.e., ruins. (Comp. Micah iii. 12; Jer. xxvi. 18; and in singular, Micah i. 6.)

(2) In addition to references in Margin see Deut. xvii. 26.

Saints.—Heb., chasidim. (See Note, Ps. xvi. 10.) Here with definite allusion to the Asedivans of 1 Macc. vii.

(3) Their blood.—In 1 Mac. vii. 17, we read “The flesh of thy saints and their blood have they shed round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them,” introduced by “according to the word which he wrote.” This is evidently a free quotation from this psalm, and seems to imply a reference to a contemporary.

None to bury.—For this aggravation of the evil comp. Jer. xiv. 16; xxi. 18, 19.

(4) This verse occurs Ps. xlv. 13. Also possibly a Maccabean psalm. (See Introduction to that psalm.) The scene still witnessed by travellers at the Jews’ wailing-place, offer a striking illustration of the foregoing verses, showing, as they do, how deep-seated is the love of an ancient place in the Oriental mind. (See a striking description in Porter’s Giant Cities of Bashan.)

(5) How long, Lord?—The dominant cry of the Maccabean age. (See Ps. lxxiv. 9.)

(6-7) The poet prays in prophetical strain, that the fire of indignation may be turned from Israel and directed against the heathen oppressors. (For the relation to Jer. x. 25, see Introduction.)

(7) Dwelling place.—Literally, pasture, as in Jer. xxiii. 3, xlix. 20. 19. The figure is a favourite one in the Asaphic group of psalms.

Former iniquities.—Better, iniquities of former ones, i.e., of ancestors. (Comp. Lev. xvi. 45, “covenant of their ancestors,” and for the thought Exod. xx. 5; Lev. xxvi. 30.)

Prevent.—Better, come to meet. Daniel lx. 18 seems to combine the language of this verse and verse 4.

Title.—See Title, Ps. l.

(1) Inheritance.—Probably intended to embrace both land and people. (Exod. xv. 17; Ps. lxxiv. 2, &c.)

With wine we may range this with the picture in Ps. lx. (See Notes.)

(60) He smote.—Possibly an allusion to 1 Sam. v. 9, or else to the repeated defeats of the Philistines under Saul and David.

(69) He built.—The first clause is vague, but evidently the poet is drawing attention to the grandeur and splendour of the Temple. Perhaps, high as heaven—firm as earth.

(71) Ewes great with young—So also in Isa. xl. 11; but properly, ewes with lambs. Literally, giving suck.

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brought our very low. (9) Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake. (10) Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed. (11) Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die; (12) and render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, where­with they have reproached thee, O Lord.

(9) Purge away.—Rather, put a cover on. So Cicero speaks of political crimes being covered by the plea of friendship.

Our sins.—How is this to be taken in connection with verse 8? Does the psalmist admit guilt in his own generation, as well as in those of former times? Or is he thinking only of the inherited guilt and punishment? The general tone of post-exile psalms inclines towards the latter view.

(10) Wherefore.—Taken from Joel ii. 17. Let him be known.—Better, Let it be known, i.e., where God is. Let the answer to the question be given in vengeance, and let us see it.

(11) Appointed to die.—See margin. This expression, as well as the “sighing of the prisoners,” occurs, Ps. cii. 20, of the sufferers in the Captivity.

(12) Neighbours.—The sharpest pang of the suffer­ing came from the taunts of “neighbours.” (See verse 4.)

Sevenfold.—As in Gen. iv. 15. We naturally con­trast the law of Christian forgiveness.

Into their bosom.—The deep folds of the Eastern dress were used as a pocket. (Comp. Ruth iii. 15; Isa. lxv. 7; Jer. xxxii. 18; Luke vii. 38, 44.)

(33) “The last word of the psalm is Tehillah; the one crowning privilege of God's people; the exulting and triumphant confidence in God, which only His chosen can entertain and express. It is here placed in splendid contrast with the reproach of the heathen, and of the malicious neighbours mentioned in the preceding verse. Let them curse so long as thou dost bless” (Burgess, Notes on the Hebrew Psalms).

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That this plaintive cry for restoration to a state which should be indicative of the Divine favour, arose from Israel when groaning under foreign oppression which it was powerless to resist, is plain and in­contestable. And if, with the almost unanimous consent of critics, we are right in rendering verse 6, “Thou makest us an object of strife to our neighbours,” we should be able to approximate very nearly to the date of the poem. For there are only two periods when Palestine became an object of dispute between rival powers: when Assyria and Egypt made it their battleground; and, at a much later date, when it was the apple of discord between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae. But at the earlier of these two periods the language of the poet descriptive of utter prostration and ruin (verse 16) would hardly have been suitable. We hear, too again, in verse 4, the pathetic “how long?” of the Maccabean age. No argument for date or authorship can safely be drawn from the mode in which the tribes are mentioned and arranged in verse 2. (See Note.) The refrain at verses 3, 7, and 19 indicates the structure of the poem.

Title.—See Psa. xlv., lx., and comp. title of Psa. lxxix.

(1) The reference to the shepherd, so characteristic of the Asaphic psalms, is, no doubt, here chosen especially in recollection of Gen. xlviii. 15, xlix. 24. “Shepherd” and “Rock” were Jacob's especial names for God, as the “Favor” was that of Isaac, and the “Mighty” that of Abraham; but in the blessing of Joseph the patriarch seems to have made more than usually solemn pronun­ciation of it. It is, therefore, very doubtful whether we must press the selection of Joseph here as a distinct and intended reference to the northern tribes or kingdom, in distinction to Judah or the southern kingdom.

Dwellest.—Rather, sitteth (enthroned). (Comp. Ps. xxix. 1.) That this is not a merely poetical idea drawn from clouds (as possibly in Ps. xviii. 10), but is derived from the throne, upheld by the wings of the sculptured cherubim in the Temple, is proved by Exod. xxv. 22. (Comp. Num. vii. 88. Comp. also “chair of the cherubim,” 1 Chron. xxvii. 18; Eccles. xliii. 8; also Isa. vi. 1, xxvii. 16; Ezek. i. 26.)

(3) Before Ephraim . . .—The tribes named from Joseph's sons and his uterine brother naturally range together; they encamped side by side on the west of the Tabernacle, and when the ark moved forward they took their places immediately behind it to head the procession. The preposition “before” would alone show that this ancient arrangement, and no recent political event, determines the manner in which the poet introduces the tribes. It is used of a funeral proces­sion (2 Sam. iii. 31; Job xxii. 33).

Turn us again.—i.e., “restore us,” not neces­sarily with reference to the Captivity, but generally, restore us to our pristine prosperity.

Cause thy face to shine.—The desert encamp­ment and march is still in the poet's thought. As in Ps. lxvii. 1 (see Note) we have here a reminiscence of the priestly benediction.

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The Vine brought out of Egypt

PSALMS, LXXX.

Cut Down and Burnt.

(4) O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? (5) Thou feestest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure. (6) Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

(7) Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

(8) Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. (9) Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. (10) The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like 2 the goodly cedars. (11) She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.

(12) Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by way do pluck her? (13) The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

(14) Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; (15) and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.

(16) It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

(17) Let thy hand be upon the man of
thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself. (18) So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.

(19) Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

PSALM LXXXI.
To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph.

(1) Sing aloud unto God our strength:

A fine instance of the mode in which the thought can pass naturally from the figurative to the literal. The man of God’s right hand is evidently the man protected by the right hand, but the expression introduced is a tautology that we suspect a misreading.

In the words “son,” “son of man,” some see a reference to the Messiah. But the parallelism and context produces such a tautology that we suspect a misreading.

(20) Turn us.—By a fine gradation in the style of the address to God, the refrain has at last reached its full tone, expressive of the completest trust and perverseness which, with these significant records continually before them, the nation so sadly displayed. After the prologue the poem falls into two nearly equal strophes.

Title.—See Titles, Ps. iv., viii. i.

(2) Take a psalm.—Rather, Strike up a tune (with voice and harp).

Prayer for Grace.

1 Or, for Asaph.

(3) Turn us again.—Heb., shophar. (See Exod. xix. 16; Ps. xlvii. 5.)

(4) For this.—Better, for it is a statute. Referring either to the feast itself or to the mode of celebrating it.

Law.—Literally, judgment, as LXX. and Vulg.

(5) Joseph.—The prominence given to this name indicates, according to some critics, that the author belonged to the northern kingdom; but when a poet

Bring hither the timbrel.—Literally, Give a timbrel (or, drum), which evidently means “sound the timbrel,” and may, perhaps, be explained by a phrase sometimes found in Hebrew—“Give a voice,” i.e., speak. Such phrases as “Let them have the drum,” “Give them the drum,” may illustrate the expression. (For the instrument, tōph, see Exod. xv. 20, and consult Bible Educator, ii. 214 seq.)

Harp . . . psaltery.—See Note, Ps. xxxii. 2.

(3) Trumpet.—Heb., shophar. (See Bible Educator, Vol. ii. 242.)

In the new moon.—Standing by itself this might mean the beginning of every month (comp. Num. x. 10), and so many scholars are inclined to take it here. Others render “in this month.” But see next Note.

In the time appointed.—This is the rendering given of the Hebrew kēseḥ by a long array of authorities. But in Prov. vii. 20, the only other place where the word is found, the Vulg. gives “after many days,” and while the English margin has “new moon” Aquila and Jerome give “full moon.” This latter meaning is supported by the fact that the Syrian version gives kēseḥ for the 15th day of the month (1 Kings xi. 32). But in 2 Chron. vii. 10 the same word is used for the 23rd day; hence, it is supposed to denote the whole time of the moon’s waxing from the full. It seems, therefore, hardly possible that kēseḥ as well as chadesh can mean new moon here as some think; though it is strange to find both the new and the full moon mentioned together. Some remove the difficulty by reading with the Syriac, Chaldee, and several MSS. feast-days in the plural, but the authority of the LXX. is against this reading. But apparently the festival in question was the Feast of Tabernacles. The word chāg here used is said by Gesenius to be in the Talmud used pre-eminently of this feast, as it is in 2 Chron. v. 3; 1 Kings viii. 2 (comp. Ps. xliii. 4), and the Jews, always tenacious of ancient tradition, regularly use this psalm for the office of the 1st day of Tisri. Thus the new moon is that of the seventh month, which in Num. xxix. 1 is called especially “a day of trumpet blowing” (see Note verse 1), and the full moon denotes this feast. (See Num. xxi. 12; Lev. xxv. 24.)

(4) For this.—Better, for it is a statute. Referring either to the feast itself or to the mode of celebrating it.

Law.—Literally, judgment, as LXX. and Vulg.

(5) Joseph.—The prominence given to this name indicates, according to some critics, that the author belonged to the northern kingdom; but when a poet
The Disobedience

PSALMS, LXXXII.

of the Israelites.

(6) I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.

(7) Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

(8) Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; (9) there shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. (10) I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

(11) But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. (12) So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. (13) Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! (14) I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. (15) The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. (16) He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

PSALM LXXXII.

A Psalm of Asaph.

(1) God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

was wishing to vary his style of speaking of the whole people—the names Israel and Jacob have just been used—the name Joseph would naturally occur, especially with the mention of Egypt, where that patriarch had played such a conspicuous part.

Through the land of Egypt.—The Hebrew means either upon, over, or against, but none of these meanings will suit with Israel as the subject of the verb. Hence, the LXX., in disregard of use, give “out of Egypt.” But God is doubtless the subject of the verb, and we may render, over the land of Egypt, in allusion to Exodus xii. 23, or against the land of Egypt, in reference to the Divine hostility to Pharaoh.

Where I heard.—The insertion of the relative adverb, where, makes this refer to the Egyptian tongue (comp. Ps. exiv. 1), giving an equivalent for, “when I was in a foreign country.” So apparently the LXX. and Vulg. But the expression, words unknown to me I heard, when followed by an apparent quotation, most naturally introduces that quotation. The poet hears a message, which comes borne to him on the festival music, and this he goes on to deliver.

Pots.—Deriving from a root to boil, and with allusion to potteries, which, probably, together with the brick-kilns, formed the scene of the forced labour of Israel. The LXX. and Vulg. have “slaved in the basket,” but the basket, which is represented on Egyptian monuments, is doubtless meant by the burden of the last clause.

Thou calledst.—The recital of God’s past dealings with the people usual at the Feast of the Tabernacles (Deut. xxxi. 10–13; Neh. viii. 18) appears to follow here as if the feast were actually in progress and the crowd were listening to the psalmist.

I answered thee in the secret place of thunder.—Mr. Burgess is undoubtedly right in taking the verb as from anah, “to cover,” instead of anah, “to answer.” I sheltered thee in the thundercloud, with plain allusion to the “cloudy pillar.” The same verb is used in Ps. cv. 99, “He spread out the cloud for a covering.”

Hear, O my people.—The Divine voice here repeats the warnings so frequently uttered during the desert-wandering.

Open.—A condensed statement of God’s gracious promise (Deut. vii. 12, 13, viii. 7, 9, xi. 13, 16). It is said to have been a custom in Persia, that when the king wishes to do a visitor especial honour he desires him to open his mouth wide, and the king then crams it full of sweetmeats, and sometimes even with jewels. And to this day it is a mark of politeness in Orientals to tear off the daintiest bits of meat for a guest, and either lay them before him, or put them in his mouth. (See Thomson, Land and Book, p. 127.)

Lust.—Rather, stubbornness, or perversity, from root meaning “to twist.”

Hearken... subdue.—The verbs should be taken in a future sense, “Oh that my people would hearken... I should soon subdue,” &c. The poet changes from reminiscences of the past to the needs of the present.

Submitted.—See Note, Ps. xviii. 44.

Him—i.e, Israel; Jehovah’s enemies being also Israel’s enemies.

Their time—i.e, Israel’s. One of the sudden changes of number so frequent in Hebrew poetry. As a nation Israel would continue to live and prosper.

Finest of the wheat.—See margin, and comp. Ps. cxlvii. 14. The construction of this verse is matter of difficulty. Properly we should render, And he fed them with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock satisfied thee. The change of person is harsh, though perhaps it may be illustrated by Ps. xxii. 27, &c., but the past tense seems out of keeping with the context. The conclusions of Ps. lxxvi. and lxviii. are hardly analogous. The pointing should be slightly changed to give, “And I would feed them also,” &c.

LXXII.

This psalm represents the conviction which was so profoundly fixed in the Hebrew mind, that Justice is the fundamental virtue of society, and that its corruption implies total disorganisation and ruin. The mode in which this conviction is presented is also distinctively Hebrew. We have here once more a vision of judgment. But it is not the whole nation of the Jews, or the nations of the world generally, that are here arraigned before the Divine tribunal; nor are there introduced any of those elements of grandeur and awe which generally accompany a theophany. God is not here driving across the heavens on His storm-chariot, and calling on the mountains to bear evidence of earth’s sin. But
God is Judge

PSALMS, LXXXII. of the Earth.

(2) How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.
(3) I defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
(4) Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
(5) They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness:

The opposite expression see Ps. lviii. 1. Lev. xix. 15, (8) Arise.—The psalm would have been incomplete shown by the use of the which lays down the great principle of God striking, the Divine arbiter comes to take His place as

The early monarchy with a calm dignity, which is by contrast the more

Israel must do right. The custom of pros- pinity, and the perversion of judgment strikes him, as it could not fail to do, as an indication of total anarchy and a dissolution of society, a conviction like an earthquake.

They know not.—Comp. Ps. lviii. 4, "They have no knowledge;" there, too, of judges corrupted by the moral blindness which, as in the case of Lord Bacon, sometimes so strangely darkens those in whom intellectual light is most keen.

They walk on in darkness.—Or, better, They let themselves walk in darkness; the conjugation implying that inclination or will, and not circumstance, brings this dulness to the dictates of justice and right.

All the foundations . . .—The very existence of society is threatened when the source of justice is corrupt.

(6) I have said.— Again the Divine voice breaks the silence with an emphatic I. "From me comes your office and your honoured title, gods; now from me hear your doom. Princes though ye be, ye will die as other men: yea, altogether will ye princes perish." (For the rendering "altogether," literally, like one man, see Ezra ii. 64, iii. 9, &c.)

It is interesting to notice that verses 1 and 6 were quoted by Constantine at the opening of the council of Nicana, to remind the bishops that their high office should raise them above jealousy and party feeling. (For the interest gained by the passage from our Lord's use of it to rebut the charge of blasphemy brought against Him by the scribes, see Note, New Testament Commentary, John x. 34.)

(8) Arise.—The psalm would have been incomplete had not the poet here resumed in his own person, with an appeal to the Supreme Judge to carry His decrees into effect against the oppressors of Israel. Here, at least, if not all through it, the affliction of the community, and the perversion of justice by foreign rulers, are

with a calm dignity, which is by contrast the more striking, the Divine arbiter comes to take His place as presiding Judge among the magistrates themselves, and depose them. In a few incisive words He pronounces them indifferent to justice, neglectful of their duties, venal, and unscrupulous, and warns them of the ruin they are bringing on society, and of their own certain downfall, however secure and inviolable their position appears.

Then the poet himself, with a wider sweep of view, that takes in not only the administrators of law, but the political situation of his nation, makes appeal to the judge of all the earth, who in the conviction of Israel must do right.

The date of such a poem, if it could be recovered, would crown its interest; but it is in vain to discuss the conjectures, which range from the Davidic to the Maccabæan age. The histories do not reveal anything in the early monarchy to indicate such abuses in the judiciary as the psalm describes. The poetical form is irregular.

Title.—See title, Ps. l.

(1) Standeth.—In the Hebrew a participle, with an official ring about it. (See Isa. iii. 13.) It is used to designate departmental officers (1 Kings iv. 5, 7, 27, ix. 23. Comp. 1 Sam. xxii. 9; Ruth ii. 5, 6). Thus the psalm opens with the solemn statement that God had taken His official place as president of the bench of judges.

Congregation of the mighty.—Rather, assembly of God, or divine assembly; elsewhere, "the congregation of Jehovah" (Num. xxvii. 17, xxxi. 16; Josh. xxii. 16—18), i.e., "Israel in its religious character."

He judgeth among the gods.—I.e., He is among the judges as presiding judge. For "gods," applied to men delegated with office from God, see Exod. xxi. 6, and, possibly, xxii. 8, 9. (See also Note, Ps. viii. 5, and comp. Exod. iv. 16, vii. 1.) The custom of designating God's vicegerents by the Divine name was a very natural one. The whole point of verse 6 lies in the double meaning the word can bear. (See Note.)

(2—4) These verses contain the rebuke addressed by the supreme judge to those abusing the judicial office and function.

(2) How long?—What a terrible severity in this Divine Quousque tandem?

The gods
Grow angry with your patience; this their care,
And must be yours, that guilty men escape not;
As crimes do grow, justice should arise.

But JONSON.

Judge unjustly.—Literally, judge iniquity. For the opposite expression see Ps. lviii. 1. Lev. xix. 15, which lays down the great principle of strictly fair and unimpeachable justice is evidently in the poet's mind, as is shown by the use of the next clause.

Accept the persons.—Literally, lift up the faces. An expression arising from the Eastern custom of prostrating before a king or judge. The accepted suitor is commanded to "lift up his face," i.e., to arise. (Comp. Prov. xviii. 5, and Jehoshaphat's address to the judges, 2 Chron. xix. 7.) This fine sense of the majesty of incorruptible justice attended Israel throughout its history. (See Ezek. vii. 6.)

(3) Poor.—Rather, miserable. (See Ps. xli. 1.) This verse recalls the solemn curse in Deut. xxvii. 19.

(4) The poor and needy.—Better, The miserable (as in verse 8) and poor, a different word from "needy" in verse 3.

(5) Here we imagine a pause, that interval between warning and judgment which is God's pity and man's opportunity; but the expostulation falls dead without a response. The men are infatuated by their position and blinded by their pride, and the poet, the spectator of this drama of judgment, makes this common reflection. The perversion of judgment strikes him, as it could not fail to do, as an indication of total anarchy and a dissolution of society, a conviction like an earthquake.

They know not.—Comp. Ps. lviii. 4, "They have no knowledge;" there, too, of judges corrupted by the moral blindness which, as in the case of Lord Bacon, sometimes so strangely darkens those in whom intellectual light is most keen.

They walk on in darkness.—Or, better, They let themselves walk in darkness; the conjugation implying that inclination or will, and not circumstance, brings this dulness to the dictates of justice and right.

All the foundations . . .—The very existence of society is threatened when the source of justice is corrupt.

" Back flow the sacred rivers to their source,
And right and all things year round their course;
Crafty are men in counsel, and no more
God-pleased faith abides as once of yore."

Ecc. Med. 409.

(6) I have said.—Again the Divine voice breaks the silence with an emphatic I. "From me comes your office and your honoured title, gods; now from me hear your doom. Princes though ye be, ye will die as other men: yea, altogether will ye princes perish." (For the rendering "altogether," literally, like one man, see Ezra ii. 64, iii. 9, &c.)
The Enemies of God

PSALMS, LXXXIII.

A Song or Psalm 1 of Asaph.

Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

They have taken crafty counsel. Literally, They have made their plot crafty; or, as we say, "They have hid a deep plot."

Hidden ones—i.e., those under God's close protection, as in Pss. xviii. 7, xxvii. 5, xxxi. 20.

For this attack against, not only the independence, but even the continued existence of Israel as a nation, compare Esth. iii. 6, 9; Jer. xi. 19, xxxii. 30, xlvii. 2; Isa. vii. 8.

They are confederate. Literally, they have cut a covenant, from the custom described in Gen. xv. 17. (Comp. the Greek ἑπεκτείνειν.)

Against thee. God and "His hidden ones" are one, a truth preparing the way for that grander truth of the identification of the Son of man with all needing help or pity in Matt. xxv.

In the enumeration of the confederate powers, the psalmist seems to follow a geographical order. He first glances southwards and eastwards, then turns to the west, and, finally, to the north.

The tabernacles—i.e., the tents of the nomad tribes.

Hagarenes. A tribe mentioned in 1 Chron. v. 19 (Hagarites), see where Note.

Gebal. If this is a noun, as generally supposed, and as printed in the text, we must take it as a synonym of Edom (the Gebalene of Eusebius). The Gebal of Ezek. xxvii. 9 is not to be thought of; but it is most likely a verb: "Both Ammon and Amalek are joined together, The Philistines (are joined) with the men of Tyre."

Assur. For the more usual Ashur, Assyria. Some, however, think the Syria is here intended, that name being, in the view of the Greek writers, a corruption of Assyria. ("The Greeks call them Syrians, but the Barbarians Assyrians."—Herod. vii., 63.) And even if etymologically incorrect, the error of the Greeks may have been consciously or unconsciously shared by the Jews, and the kingdom of the Seleucids be honoured by the name of the grander and more ancient power.

They have holpen. See margin. And for the importance of the form of the statement see Introduction.

Children of Lot. Ammon and Moab, who thus appear as the leaders of the confederacy.

(1) Or, or Asaph.
(2) Heb., heart.
(3) Heb., they have made the children of Lot.
(4) Judg. 7. 22.
(5) Or, or Asaph.
(6) Heb., head.
(7) Heb., they have cut a covenant.
(9) Ps. xlviii. and 1.
(10) Or, or Asaph.
(11) Or, or Asaph.
(12) Or, or Asaph.
LXXXIV.

Prayer for the Confusion

Edward the Confessor. It has so many points of resemblance to Ps. xlii. and xliii. that it has been ascribed to the same author and referred to the same events. (See Notes to those psalms.) The singer, whether he speaks in his own name or that of Israel generally, is undoubtedly at present unable (see verse 2) to share in the Temple services which he so rapturously describes. The poetical structure is uncertain.

Title.—See titles Ps. iv., vii., xliii.

(1) How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! (2) My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. (3) Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may seek thy name, O Lord.

Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:

(10) En-dor.—This place, for which see 1 Sam. xxviii., is not mentioned in Judges iv., but is in the battle-field not far from the Taanach and Megiddo of Deborah’s song. (Robinson, iii., 224.)
(12) Houses.—Rather, pastures. (See Ps. lxxxix. 7.)
(13) A wheel.—Heb., galgal. (See Note, Ps. lxxvii. 18, and comp. Isa. xvi. 13, where the Authorised Version has literally “rolling thing,” the margin “thistle down,” and the Hebrew “a wheel.”) Sir G. Grove (Smith’s Bibl. Dict., art. Oreb) says, “like the spherical masses of dry weeds which course over the plains of Esdraelon and Philistia.” He possibly refers to the wild artichoke, which struck Mr. Thomson so forcibly as the origin of the psalmist’s figure. He describes them as vegetable globes, light as a feather, which, when the parent stem breaks, become the sport of the wind. “At the proper season thousands of them come suddenly over the plain, rolling, leaping, bounding with vast racket, to the dismay both of the horse and rider.” To this day the Arabs, who call it “akhūb, employ it in the same figurative way:

“May you be whirled like ‘akhūb before the wind!”

Thomson: Land and Book, 363.

(14, 15) These verses are rightly taken together. The figure occurs in Isa. x. 17, 18 (comp. Zech. xii. 6), but there as a metaphor; here as a simile. “Before the rains came the whole mountain side was in a blaze. Thorns and briars grow so luxuriantly here that they must be burned off always before the plough can operate. The peasants watch for a high wind, and then the fire catches easily, and spreads with great rapidity” (Thomson, Land and Book, p. 341). The mountains are pre-eminently the pastures. (Comp. Ps. 1. 10, cxlvii. 8.)

(16) Thy name, O Lord.—Rather, thy name (which is) Jehovah. The nations were to seek Him not only as God, but as Jehovah God of Israel. This is proved by verse 18. No doubt the thought uppermost in the verse is the submission of the heathen to Jehovah’s power. But we may, looking back, read in it a nobler wish and a grander hope—the prophetic hope of a union of nations in a belief in the common fatherhood of God.

LXXXIV.

By an almost complete agreement of commentators this psalm is descriptive of a caravan of Israelites either resting from the Taanach route to Jerusalem or on its way to one of the regular feasts. It has so many points of resemblance to Ps. xlii. and xliii. that it has been
may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. 

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. 

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. 

Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. 

They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. 

Blessed is the man, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. 

Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. 

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. 

The Lord will give grace and glory: "no meaning is the same. There is no real occasion for the great difficulty that has been made about this verse. It is absurd indeed to think of the birds actually nesting on the altars, but that they were found in and about the Temple is quite probable, just as in Herodotus (i. 159) we read of Aristodius making the circuit of the temple at Branchida, and taking the nests of young sparrows and other birds. (Comp. the story in Epian of the man who was slain for harming a sparrow that had sheltered in the temple of Esculapius.) Ewald gives many other references, and among them one to Burckhardt showing that birds nest in the Kaaba at Mecca.

The Hebrew poetic style is not favourable to simile, or the psalmist would have written (as a modern would), "As the birds delight to nest at thine altars, so do I love to dwell in thine house." 

In these verses, as in the analogous passage (Isa. xxxv. 6—8; comp. Hosea ii. 15, 16), there is a blending of the real and the figurative; the actual journey towards Sion is represented as accompanied with ideal blessings of peace and refreshment. It is improbable that the poet would turn abruptly from the description of the swallows in the Temple to what looks like a description of a real journey, with a locality, or at all events a district, which was well known, introduced by its proper name, and yet intend only a figurative reference. On the other hand, it is quite in the Hebrew manner to mix up the ideal with the actual, and to present the spiritual side by side with the literal. We have, then, here recorded the actual experience of a pilgrim's route. But quite naturally and correctly has it been understood as not a district, but something figurative, that the poet would have, then recorded the actual experience of a pilgrim's route. But quite naturally and correctly has it been understood as not a district, but something figurative, that the poet would

WAYS.—From a root meaning to cut up—and so highways marked by the heaps of stone piled up at the side (Isa. lxvi. 149). In Jer. xvii. 15 mere footways or bypaths are contrasted, and so the highway lends itself as a metaphor for the way of peace and righteousness (Prov. xii. 28), as it is taken here by the Chaldee and some modern expositors. But this moral intention is secondary to the actual desire to join the pilgrim band towards Sion, and this the verse describes in words which are echoed exactly in our own Chaucer: 

"So pricketh hem Nature in her corages (in their hearts)
Than longen folk to go on pilgrimages,"
The well-known and deeply loved route to the sacred shrine is in their minds, their hearts are set upon it.
good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

(22) O Lord of hosts, *blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

**PSALM LXXXV.**

To the chief Musician, A Psalm *for the sons of Korah.*

(1) Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. (2) Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

(3) Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: *thou hast turned* *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.

(4) Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. (5) Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? (6) Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? (7) Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.

(8) I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

(9) Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

(10) Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. (11) Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. (12) Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.

(13) Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.

which a Greek poet puts into the mouth of his hero, who sweeps within the temple of Apollo's temple:

"A pleasant task, O Phoebus, I discharge. Before thine house in reverence of thy seat Of prophecy, an honoured task to me."

*Euripides, Ion,* 128.

**LXXXV.**

There is more than the statement of its first verse (see Note) to connect this psalm with the post-exile period. Its whole tone belongs to that time. The attitude with regard to national sin explains itself only by this reference. The punishment had fallen, and in the glad return Israel had seen a proof that God had covered her guilt, and taken away her sin. But the bright prospect had quickly been overclouded. The troubles that succeeded the return perplexed those who had come back, as they felt purified and forgiven. Hence many such pathetic cries as those of this psalm.

In this particular instance, the cry, as we gather from verse 12, arose from the dread of famine, which was seen in the valley of Hinnom, and which the return of prosperity had brought back-as its symbol, the ark, once came back— and take up its abode there. He sees the covenant favour once more descend and meet the divine faithfulness of which, lately, perplexed minds were doubting, but which the return of prosperity has now proved sure. Righteousness and peace, or prosperity, these inseparable brothers, kiss each other, and fall lovingly into each other's arms.

**Title.—**See title, Ps. iv. and xlii.

(1) Thou hast brought back.—See Ps. xiv. 7, lxvi. 18. The expression might only imply generally a return to a state of former prosperity, as in Job xlii. 10, but the context directs us to refer especially to the return from exile. (See Introduction.)

(2) Forgiven.—Rather, taken away. (See Ps. xxxii. 1.)

(3) Turn us.—Here equivalent to restore us once more. If, the poet felt, the captivity had taught its lesson, why, on the restoration, did not complete freedom from misfortune ensue? It is this which supplies the motive of his song.

(4) Speak peace . . .—This word "peace" comprehends all that the nation sighed for:

"Peace: Dear nurse of arts, plenteous, and joyful truth."

To Christians the word has a higher meaning still, which directed the choice of this psalm for Christmas Day.

**Folly.—**See Ps. xiv. 1, xlix. 13. Here it most probably implies idolatry.

(9-11) The exquisite personification of these verses is, it has been truly remarked, exactly in Isaiah's manner. (See Isa. xxix. 16 seq., xlix. 8, lix. 14.) It is an allegory of completed national happiness, which, though presented in language peculiar to Hebrew thought, is none the less universal in its application. Nor does it stop at material blessings, but lends itself to the expression of the highest truths. The poet sees once more the glory which had so long deserted the land come back—as its symbol, the ark, once came back—and take up its abode there. He sees the covenant favour once more descend and meet the divine faithfulness of which, lately, perplexed minds were doubting, but which the return of prosperity has now proved sure. Righteousness and peace, or prosperity, these inseparable brothers, kiss each other, and fall lovingly into each other's arms.

(20) Met together.—The word is used of those who should be friends, but whom circumstances have separated (Prov. xxii. 2).

(11) Truth, or "faithfulness," is here depicted as springing out of the earth, because the renewal of fertility has re-established the conviction of the faithfulness of Jehovah towards His people, which had been shaken.

**Look down.—**Used of bending forward as from a window or battlement (Song of Sol. vi. 10, Note).

This "righteousness" (here in direct parallelism with faithfulness) had, as it were, been hidden like the sun behind a cloud, but now is seen showing its benign face once more in the skies.

(13) Righteousness shall . . .—Better, Righteousness shall walk in front of Him, and follow in His steps.

Nothing is more instructive than the blending in verses 12 and 13 of material and moral blessings. They do go together, as experience, especially national,
testifies. In the same spirit is Wordsworth's well-known Ode to Duty:

"Stern Law-giver! Yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace,
As is the smile upon thy face.
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
The Godhead's most benignant grace,
As is the smile upon thy face.
Thou art great, and doest wondrous things: 'thou art God alone.

Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.
I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.
For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.
O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.
But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plentiful in mercy and truth.
Turn unto me, and have mercy upon me: give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.
Shew me a token for good: that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

This psalm is mainly composed of a number of sentences and verses from older compositions, arranged not without art, and, where it suited the adapter, so altered as to present forms of words peculiar to himself. (See Notes on verses 5, 6.) There is also evidence of design in the employment of the Divine names, Adonai being repeatedly substituted for Jehovah.

Title.—See end of Psalm xliii. and Introduction above.

For I am holy.—Rather, in order to reproduce the feeling, for I am one of the chosen ones; one of Thy saints, &c. He pleads the covenant relation as a claim to the blessing. (See, on chasid, Note, Ps. i. 5.)

For thou.—Up to this time the psalmist has only put forward his needs in various aspects as a plea for God's compassion. Now, not without art, he clenches his petition by an appeal to the nature itself of the Divine Being. The originals of the expressions in this verse will be found in Exod. xx. 6, xxiv. 6—9; Num. xiv. 18, 19.

Ready to forgive.—The Hebrew word occurs nowhere else in the form found here. Etymologically it means remitting. The LXX. have ἀφαίρεσις, a word for which perhaps our considerate is the nearest equivalent, implying that legal right is overlooked and suspended in consideration of human weakness. Wisdom xii. 18 gives a good description of this Divine attribute.

Give ear.—Here the petition takes a new starting-point.

For the sources of this verse see marginal reference and Exod. xv. 11. After expressing his conviction of God's willingness to hear prayer, the psalmist goes on to his confidence in Divine power to save.

For this wide prospect of Divine dominion see Ps. xiii. 1; Isa. xliii. 7.

A reminiscence of older psalms. In addition to the marginal references, see Ps. xxvi. 3.

Unite my heart,—i.e., unite all my powers and concentrate them on Thy service. No doubt with recollection of Deut. vi. 5, x. 12. Comp. also Jer. xxxii. 39, on which apparently the expression is directly based. An undivided will is in morals and religion equally essential.

Lowest hell.—Literally, sheol, beneath, a fuller expression for the usual sheol, underworld. (See Note, Ps. vi. 5.) There is no comparison implied as in the Authorised Version. It is evident from the next verse that what is meant is danger of death from violence.

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PSALM LXXXVII.

A Psalm or Song 1 for the sons of Korah.

1 His foundation is in the holy mountains. 2 The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. 3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. 4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. 5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. 6 The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.

LXXXVII.

According to the common interpretation of this obscure psalm, it is unique not only in the Psalter but in Hebrew literature. Not even in Isaiah is Jewish exclusiveness so broken down. A nameless poet goes beyond the prophetic visions of the forceful submission of the Gentile world to anticipate the language of the Gospels and the spirit of St. Paul. Zion becomes in his song the “mother of us all”—Gentiles as well as Jews.

How far such a splendid hope really appears in the psalm may be gathered from the Notes. Here it is necessary to observe that a first glance at the song sees in it little more than a grand eulogy on the Holy City as a birthplace, which is declared dear to Jehovah not only above all heathen countries, but above any city of Jacob—a city in which to have been born is a privilege and a boast far above what the fondest patriotism of a Philistine, a Tyrian, nay, even an Egyptian or Babylonian can claim. Possibly, after all, exclusiveness even more rigid than usual appears here, and we must see in the poem the exultation of a native of Jerusalem over all other Israelites, or of a Palestinian Hebrew over those who share the same blood but have the misfortune to date their birth from some Jewish colony rather than Jerusalem.

As to the time of composition the suggestion ventured on above would of itself bring it down to a very late date, a supposition supported in some degree by the fact that not Assyria but Babylon is mentioned in verse 4. The parallelism is very lax, and the structure uncertain.

Title.—See Title, Ps. xlii.

1 His foundation.—This abrupt commencement with a clause without a verb has led to the conjecture that a line has dropped away. But this is unnecessary if we neglect the accents, and take gates of Zion in apposition with His foundation:

His foundation on the holy hill Loveth Jehovah, (even) Zion's gates, More than all Jacob's dwellings.

Here His foundation is equivalent to that which He hath founded, and the gates are put by metonymy for the city itself. (Comp. Jer. xiv. 2.)

With regard to the plural, mountains, it is probably only poetical, though geographically it is correct to speak of Jerusalem as situated on hills. Dean Stanley speaks of “the multiplicity of the eminences” which the city “shares, though in a smaller compass, with Rome and Constantinople” (Sinai and Palestine, p. 177).

3 The meaning of this verse is obvious in spite of its many grammatical difficulties. The praise of Zion had found many tongues, but the poet implies that he is going to swell the chorus.

4 This verse may be paraphrased—

I will mention to my intimates Rahab and Babylon; (I will say) look at Philistia and Tyre—yes, and even Ethiopia. So-and-so was born there.

The last clause is literally this was born there, and on its reference the whole meaning of the verse and the whole intention of the psalm turn. Now immediately after the mention of a place, there must surely refer to that place, and not to a place mentioned in the previous verse and there too addressed as in the second person.

The demonstrative this, is evidently used in a general way. (Comp. the fuller form, Judg. xviii. 4, &c.) The poet begins his special addition to the praises of Zion, by enumerating various renowned nations much in the same way as Horace’s “Laudabant alii clarum Rhodon, aut Mitylenem,” only instead of leaving them as a theme to others he tells us what he himself in ordinary conversation might say of these places, and of the estimation in which their natives were held. It is hardly possible to escape from the conclusion that the Palestinian Jew is here implying his superiority to those of his race who were born abroad, a spirit shown so strongly in the relations of the Hebrews to the Hellenistic Jews in the New Testament.

Rahab undoubtedly stands for Egypt, but the exact origin of the term and of its connection with Egypt is much disputed. Most probably it is a term (possibly Coptic) for some large sea or river monster symbolic of Egypt. (Comp. the word “dragons,” Ps. lxxiv. 13, and see Job ix. 13, xxvi. 12.)

Ethiopia.—Heb., Khisah (in Authorised Version Cush). (See Gen. x. 6; 2 Kings xix. 9.)

There is no need with our explanation to look for emblematic reasons for the choice of names in this verse—as Egypt for antiquity; Babylon, strength; Tyre, wealth, &c. There is no one of the districts where Jews of the Dispersion might not have been found, but no doubt in his enumeration the poet takes care to mention countries near and far, as Philistia and Ethiopia. There appears, however, to have been a district in Babylonia known to the Hebrews as Khisah (Lenormant, Origines de l'Histoire; and see a paper on the site of Eden, in the Nineteenth Century for October, 1882). The parallelism would be improved by this reference here.

5 And of Zion . . .—This verse must be taken as antithetical to the preceding. The poet claims a proud boast of natives of Jerusalem, because it was established by the Most High. Reader, But of Zion it is said, “This man and that (literally, man and man) was born in her, and her the Most High established.”

6 The proud boast of the preceding verse is repeated here with allusion to the census or birth-register of citizens. (See Ezek. xili. 9; Isa. iv. 3; Ps. lix. 28, Note.) No doubt these lists were often produced or appealed to in triumph to mark the superiority of a native of Jerusalem over those born at a distance.
A Prayer of PSALMS, LXXXVIII.

Grievous Complaint.

(7) As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

A Song or Psalm 1 for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, 2Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

1) O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: (2) let my prayer come up before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; (3) for my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. (4) I am counted

(7) The literal sense of this most obscure verse is—

"And singers as trumpeters All my springs in Thee,

which we may paraphrase, keeping in the same line with the rest of the psalm, For such an one (celebrating his birthday, Ps. xli. 20, Matt. xiv. 6) the singers and musicians will sing (to Zion), All my offspring is in Thee." Not only is it a boast to have been born in Zion, but in the genuine Hebrew spirit the boast is continued into the future generations, and the Hebrew of the Hebrews exults in addressing the sacred city as the cradle of his family.

For this figurative application of the word "springs" to posterity, comp. Ps. lxviii. 26; Isa. xlviii. 1; Prov. v. 16.

LXXXVIII.

"If you listen," says Lord Bacon, "to David's harp, you will hear as many hearse-like airs as carols." But even among these this psalm stands alone and peculiar for the sadness of its tragic tone. From beginning to end—with the one exception of the word "salvation" in the first line—there is nothing to relieve its monotony of grief. If this wall of sorrow is the expression of individual suffering there is no particular interest in ascertaining its date, unless we could also fix on its author, Uzziah when in "the separate house" of leprosy (see Note on verse 5), Hezekiah in his sick-room, Jeremiah in his pit, Job on his dunghill, have each in turn been suggested. But the very fact that the tone of the psalm suits any one of these as well, and no better, than another, warns us of the uselessness of such suggestions.

Indeed it is extremely doubtful whether the psalm is a picture of individual sorrow at all, and not rather a figurative description of national trouble. There is a want of distinctness in the cause of the mourning. The battle-field, sickness, flood, imprisonment, each in turn is employed to represent it; and while at one time speaking of himself as at the point of death (verse 3), the poet goes on now to picture himself as actually in the grave, in sheol itself. The expression in verse 15, "from my youth up," is not in any way against the reference of the psalm to the community. (See Ps. cxix. 1, where it is expressly said "Israel," may use the expression.) The poetical form is almost regular.

Title.—See titles, Ps. xlii., xlviii.

Upon Mahalath Leannoth.—See title, Ps. lii., where "Mahalath" occurs alone. Render, Upon the sickness of distress, i.e., upon a sickening distress, and understand it, as in other cases, as the name of a tune or first words of a hymn associated with music suitable to this melancholy effusion.

For "Maschil" see title, Ps. xxxii.

Heman the Ezrahite—i.e., of the family of Zerah, the letters having been transposed; not the Heman of 1 Chron. vi. 33, but of 1 Kings iv. 31; 1 Chron. ii. 6.

This long inscription is really made up of two: A song or psalm for the sons of Korah," and "To the chief musician," &c.

(3) Grave.—Sheol. Here, as in Ps. vi. 4, 5, xxxii. 19; Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11, there comes into prominence the thought that death severs the covenant relation with God, and so presents an irresistible reason why prayer should be heard now before it is too late.

(4) As a man . . . .—Rather, like a hero whose strength is gone.

(5) Free among the dead . . . .—So the old versions without exception, taking chaphshi as an adjectival, as in Job iii. 19 (where used of an emancipated slave); 1 Sam. xvii. 25 (free from public burdens). So of the separate house for lepers, who were cut off from society (2 Kings xv. 5). Hence some refer the psalm to Uzziah. The Targum explains, "freed from legal duties." But plainly the meaning is here exactly that of defunctus. The verse offers an instance of introverted parallelism, and this clause answers to "they are cut off from thy hand." Gesenius, however, makes the Hebrew word a noun (comp. Ezek. xxvii. 20), and renders, among the dead is my couch.

Whom thou.—The dead are "clean forgotten, out of mind" even to God.

From thy hand—i.e., from the guiding, helping hand which, though stretched out for living men, does not reach to the grave.

(6) Lowest pit.—See Note, Ps. lxxxvi. 13.

(7) And thou hast afflicted.— Literally, And thou hast pressed (me) from thy hand. Gesenius, however, makes the Hebrew word a noun (comp. Ezek. xxvii. 20), and renders, among the dead is my couch.

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From thy hand—i.e., from the guiding, helping hand which, though stretched out for living men, does not reach to the grave.
PSALMS, LXXXIX.

Grievous Complaint.

That this is meant, and not a coming forth again into a land of living interests, is shown in the next two verses. (See Notes.)

Dead.—Hcb., repha‘ım, a word applied also to the gigantic races of Palestine (Deut. ii. 11, 20, &c.), but here evidently (as also in Prov. ii. 18, ix. 18, xxi. 16; Isa. xiv. 9; xxvi. 19) meaning the dead.

All the passages cited confirm the impression got from this psalm of the Hebrew conception of the state of the dead. They were languid, sickly shapes, lying supine, cut off from all the hopes and interests of the upper air, and even oblivious of them all, but retaining so much of sensation as to render them conscious of the gloomy monotony of death. (Comp. Isa. xxxviii. 18; Eccles. xvii. 27, 28; Baruch i. 17.)

In these verses appear three prominent features of the Hebrew conception of the underworld. It is a place of "destruction" (comp. Job xxxvi. 6; xxxvii. 22), of "darkness" (comp. verse 6), and of "forgetfulness," which may imply not only that the dead are forgotten, both of God and men (comp. Ps. xxxi. 12 verse with 5), but that they themselves have, to borrow the heathen figure, drunk of the water of Lethe. (Comp. Pss. vi. 5, xxx. 9, and for both ideas combined Eccles. ix. 5—10.)

Lovingkindness.—Better here, covenant grace. The grave know nothing of this. Death severed the covenant relationship. So "faithfulness," "wonders," "righteousness" are all used in their limited sense as determined by the covenant.

But unto Thee. . . .—Better, But as for me, I. &c. The pronoun is emphatic. The speaker has not gone down to the land where all is silent and forgotten, and can therefore still cry to God, and send his prayer to meet (prevent, i.e., go to meet; see Ps. xvii. 13) the Divine Being who still has an interest in him. And this makes the exposition of the next verses still stronger. Why, since the sufferer is still alive, is he forsaken, or seemingly forsaken, by the God of that covenant in which he still abides?

Casteth thou off.—The idea is that of throwing away something with loathing. (Comp. Ps. xliii. 2.)

Terrors.—Another of the many expressions which connect this psalm with the book of Job. (See Job vi. 4, ix. 34, &c.)

Distracted.—The Hebrew word is peculiar to the place. The ancient versions all agree in taking it as a verb, and rendering it by some general term denoting "trouble." But the context evidently requires a stronger word, and possibly connecting with a cognate word meaning "wheel," we may get, "I turn giddy." A change of a stroke in one letter would give "I grow frigid." (Comp. Ps. xxxviii. 8.)

Have cut me off.—Or, extinguished me. The form of the verb is very peculiar, and is variously explained. All that is certain is that it is intensive, expressing the hopeless and continued state of prostration of the sufferer. The LXX., "have frightened." (13) They,—i.e., the terrors or horrors, now likened to a flood, a figure of frequent occurrence. (See Ps. xviii. 16, &c.)

And mine acquaintance into darkness.—This is an erroneous rendering. Rather, My acquaintance is darkness, or, darkness is my friend, having taken the place of those removed. The feeling resembles Job xvii. 14; or we may illustrate by Teunyon's lines:

"O sorrow, wilt thou live with me,
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom friend, and half my life?
As I confess it needs must be."

LXXXIX.

This long psalm comes evidently from a time of great national depression and trouble. The idolatries that led to the Captivity, and the Captivity itself, are already in the past, and the poet can think only of the splendid era of David and Solomon which has passed. The psalm is not so much a prayer as a complaint, the suffering and the sufferer being the leading ideas. The following sections are easily distinguished:

1. The sufferer is in a state of "destruction," and his suffering is a "mourneth by reason of affliction"—the "praise thee" (Selah) is, I think, only in the sense of "prevent thee," or "hasten thee." (10) Shall the dead arise? . . .—These words are not to be taken in the sense of a final resurrection, but are meant to bring in the idea of the "praise thee" (Selah) as in verse 10. The "servant" and "anointed" (verses 38 and 39) need not necessarily be David. -Better, But as for me, I. &c. The pronoun is emphatic. The speaker has not gone down to the land where all is silent and forgotten, and can therefore still cry to God, and send his prayer to meet (prevent, i.e., go to meet; see Ps. xvii. 13) the Divine Being who still has an interest in him. And this makes the exposition of the next verses still stronger. Why, since the sufferer is still alive, is he forsaken, or seemingly forsaken, by the God of that covenant in which he still abides? (10) Shall the dead arise? . . .—These words are not to be taken in the sense of a final resurrection, but are meant to bring in the idea of the "praise thee" (Selah) as in verse 10. The "servant" and "anointed" (verses 38 and 39) need not necessarily be David. (11) Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? (12) Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? (13) I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. (14) Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. (15) They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. (16) Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.

PSALM LXXXIX.

2 Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

(1) I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all genera-
tions. (3) For I have said, Merciful shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shall thou establish in the very heavens.

(3) I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, (4) Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah. (5) And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. (6) For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? (7) God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of all the earth. (8) O Lord God of hosts, who is a

The poetical form is nearly regular, and the parallelism well marked.

Title.—For "Maschil" see title, Ps. xxxii.

Ethan the Ezrahite.—Probably to be identified with the man mentioned (1 Kings iv. 31) as among the celebrated sages surpassed by Solomon, and called Ezrahites, as being of the family of Zerah (1 Chron. xi. 6; see Note to title to last psalm). Probably when the titles were prefixed this sage had become confused with Ethan (or Jeduthun), the singer.

(1) I will sing.—This lyric purpose soon loses itself in a dirge.

For ever.—The Hebrew (ךל)am has properly neither the abstract idea of negation of time, nor the concrete (Christian) idea of eternity, but implies indefiniteness, and looks either backwards or forwards.

With my mouth.—i.e., aloud, or loudly.

(2) Mercy . . . faithfulness.—These words, so often combined, express here, as commonly in the psalms, the attitude of the covenant God towards His people. The art of the poet is shown in this exordium. He strikes so strongly this note of the inviolability of the Divine promise only to make the depreciation of present neglect on God's part presently more striking.

Shall be built up for ever.—Better, is for ever being built up. Elsewhere figured as a "place of shelter," a "tower of refuge," God's faithfulness is here presented as an edifice for ever rising on foundations laid in the heavens. (Comp. Ps. cxix. 89.) The heavens are at once the type of unchangeableness and of splendour and height. Mant's paraphrase brings out the power of the verse—

"For I have said, Thy mercies rise, A deathless structure, to the skies: The heavens were planted by Thy hand, And as the heavens Thy truth shall stand,"

And Wordsworth has sung of Him—

"Who fixed immovably the frame Of the round world, and built by laws as strong The solid refuge for distress, The towers of righteousness."

(Comp. Ps. xxxvi. 6.)

(8) I have sworn.—The prophetic passage (2 Sam. vii. 12, seq.) is in the poet's mind.

(3) The heavens.—Having repeated the Divine promise, the poet appeals to nature and history to confirm his conviction of the enduring character of the truth and grace of God. The heavens are witnesses of it as in Ps. 1, 4, 6, xcvi. 6.

Shall praise.—The present tense would be better.

Wonders.—In the original the word is singular, perhaps as summing up all the covenant faithfulness as one great display of wonder.

Saints.—Here, apparently, not spoken of Israel, but of the hosts above. (See next verse; comp. Job iv. 18, xv. 15 for the same term, "holy ones," for angels.)

(9) Sons of the mighty. —Rather, sons of God—i.e., angels. (Comp. Ps. xxi. 1.)

(10) It is better to take this verse in apposition with the foregoing:

"God sublime in the council of the holy ones, And terrible among those surrounding him."

For a picture of the court of heaven see Job i. 6. (9-13) Not only is God incomparable in heaven, He is also the only mighty and lofty one in nature or history.

(8) O Lord.—The Hebrew marches more grandly than the Authorised Version:

"Jehovah, God of Hosts, Who as Thou is mighty, Jah! And Thy faithfulness surrounds Thee."

Or the last clause may be rendered, and what faithfulness is like that round about thee? We must either think of the attendant thrones of loyal angels, or of God clothed as it were with faithfulness.

(10) Rahab.—See Note, Ps. lxxxvii. 4. The mention of the sea has carried the poet's thoughts to the Red Sea and the deliverance from Egypt, which is represented as some huge monster conquered and crushed.

(12) Tabor and Hermon.—Introduced not only as standing roughly for west and east, but for their prominence and importance in the landscape. (Comp. Hos. v. 1.)

Shall rejoice.—Better, sing for joy.

(13) High is thy right hand.—The strong hand is supposed raised to strike. (Comp. verse 42)

(14) Habitation.—Rather, foundation, or pillar. Righteousness and judgment support God's throne, and mercy and truth ("those genii of sacred history") precede (present tense, not future) Him as forerunners precede a king.

PSALMS, LXXXIX. for His Great Mercies.

a 2 Sam. 7, 11, &c.
1 Heb., to generation and generation.
2 Or, Egypt.
3 Heb., with the arm of thy strength.
4 Gen. 1, 1; 4, 1, & 50, 12.
5 Or, establish.
6 Or, an arm with might.
7 Or, establishment.
God's favour to the House of David.

15. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. (10) In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. (17) For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. (20) For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.

19. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. (20) I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: (21) with whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. (22) The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. (23) And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. (24) But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

23. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. (26) He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. (27) Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

28. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. (29) His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

30. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; (31) if they 2 break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; (32) then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

33. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. (34) My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

35. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. (36) His
seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. (37) It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

(38) But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. (39) Thou hast made the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. (40) Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. (41) All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours. (42) Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. (43) Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. (44) Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. (45) The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.

(46) How long, Lord? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire? (47) Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? (48) What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

(49) Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses, which thou aswarest unto David in thy truth? (50) Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; (51) therewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.

(52) Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen.
Book IV.

PSALM XC.

1 A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

(1) Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. (2) Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

2 Heb., in generation and generation.

3 Or, when he hath passed them.

4 Or, is changed.

(3) Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

(4) a For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday 3 when it is past, and as a watch in the night. (5) Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which, 4 growth up, (6) In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

Book IV.

XC.

Notwithstanding the unanimous rejection of the Masoretic title of this psalm by the ancient and medieval Christian commentators, it has found supporters among modern critics. It is urged that the transitoriness of human life was a theme peculiarly suited to the leader of a race doomed to wander in the wilderness till the sinful generation had died out, and that the general train of thought and feeling is worthy of Moses standing on the threshold of hopes he was not to be allowed to realise. It is a slender thread to support what, if we must regard it as more than a rabbinical conjecture, was probably the vaguest of traditions. (See General Introduction on the titles.) The subject of the brevity and vanity of life has occupied reflective minds in all periods and countries. Only a Hebrew could have handled it as it is handled here; but the contrast drawn between human frailty and Divine immutability is more suited to a later age of Israel than an early one. The very first verse seems to take a far more extended retrospect than was possible to Moses, while the pathetic cry, “How long?” in verse 13, suggests, as we have seen in the case of other psalms, even the Maccabean age (but see title).

In one view it would be a misfortune to be able to fix on the precise moment when this poem was composed, and the voice that first spoke it. “For it is what it has been well called “the funeral hymn of the world,” and it belongs not to one race or age, but to the sorrow and the hopes of all the successive generations, who at the open grave have derived, or shall derive, consolation and faith from its Divine words. There is no definite verse structure. The rhythm is subordinated to the feeling.

Title.—Moses is called “the man of God,” as in Deut. xxxiii. 1; Josh. xiv. 6; 1 Chron. xxiii. 14; 2 Chron. xxx. 16; Ezra iii. 2.

The Mosaic authorship is a question depending in a great measure on the view held as to the date of the later part of Deuteronomy, to which there are resemblances in many points of style and some points of detail. Those who bring the composition of that work down to the eighth century before Christ will unhesitatingly refer this psalm to a date as late, if not later, as the short supports this rendering. For the “night watches,” see Note, Ps. liii. 6.

(5) Thou turnest . . . .—Probably we must render, Thou turnest man to dust; and sayest, Turn, sons of Adam—i.e., one generation dies and another succeeds (see Ps. civ. 29, 30), the continuance of the race being regarded as distinctly due to Divine power as the Creation, to which there is probably allusion.

The LXX. suggest as the true reading, “Turn not man to dust, but say rather,” &c. (4) A thousand years.—This verse, which, when Peter II. was written (see New Testament Commentary), had already begun to receive an arithmetical treatment, and to be made the basis for Millennium computations, merely contrasts the unchangeableness and eternity of the Divine existence and purpose with the vicissitudes incident to the brief life of man. To one who is from the infinite past to the infinite future, and Whose purpose runs through the ages, a thousand years are no more than a yesterday to man: “And all our yesterdays have lighted fools The way to dusty death;” or even as a part of the night passed in sleep:

“The thousand years, with Thee they are no more Than yesterday, which, ere it is, is spent. Or, as a watch by night, that course doth keep. And goes and comes, unawares to them that sleep.”

Francis Bacon.

The exact rendering of the words translated in the Authorised Version, “when it passed,” is doubtful. The LXX. have, “which has passed;” and the Syriac supports this rendering. For the “night watches,” see Note, Ps. liii. 6.

(6) The following is suggested as the most satisfactory rendering of these verses: Time (literally, a
For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. 

Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years, and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. 

Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Return, O Lord, how long? and longation of life beyond its ordinary limit brings trouble and sorrow, and we are compelled to see if the words can convey a different meaning. Literally the clause is, (or thus) paseeth haste, and we fly away (like a bird), which may be rendered, therefore there comes a haste that we may fly away; i.e., even though we may have prayed for an extension of life, it brings with it such weariness that we long at last to escape—a fact sufficiently true to experience. 

"Yet are these feet, whose strengthless stay is numb, 
Soft winged with desire to get a grave."—Shakspeare.

Who regardeth Thine anger
And—in a measure due to reference—Thy wrath!

Who (no doubt with thought of Israel’s enemies) has that just terror of Thy wrath which a truly reverential regard could produce? It is only the persons who have that fearful and bowed apprehension of His Majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to Him, which is called the "fear of God." And this is not inconsistent with a child-like trust and love, and a peaceful security ("Of whom, then, shall I be afraid?"). On the other hand, those who scoff against religion often become the victims of wild and base terror.

Number our days.—This verse as it stands literally gives to allot, or in allotting (see Isa. lxv. 12), our days, so teach, and we will cause to come the heart wisdom. The last clause, if intelligible at all, must mean "that we may offer a wise heart," and the natural way to understand the verse is to make God, not man, as in the Authorized Version, the recker of the days. "In allotting our days thus make us know (i.e., make us know the power of Thine anger), in order that we may present a wise heart."

The verse must evidently be taken in close connection with the preceding, or the point of the petition is lost, and though the ordinary rendering, "Teach us to number our days," has given birth to a number of sayings which might be quoted in illustration, it is neither in itself very intelligible, nor, except by one instance in later Hebrew, can it be supported as a rendering of the original.

Return.—Better, turn, either from anger (Exod. xxxii. 12), or merely as in Ps. vi. 4, "turn to thy servant."

Plainly we have here the experience of some particular epoch, and a prayer for Israel. From his meditation on the shortness of human existence the poet does not pass to a prayer for a prolonged life for himself, like Hezekiah, but for some intervention in relief of the suffering community of which he forms part.

How long?—See Note, Ps. lxxiv. 9. 

Let it repent thee.—Better, have pity on. (See Dent. xxxii. 36.)

The Frailty and Brevity

of Human Life.

PSALMS, XC.

PSALMS, XC.

of Human Life.

PSALMS, XC.

of Human Life.
let it repent thee concerning thy servants. 
(14) O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. 
(15) Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. 
(16) Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. 
(17) And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

PSALM XCI.

(1) He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 
(2) I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

There are no data for ascertaining either the author or the date of this psalm. The variety of the figures employed seems to indicate a general view of life and its possible perils. It may have been a time when both war and pestilence were raging, but we cannot recover it. Whoever first breathed these words of trust, whoever first breathed these words of trust, that some years ago an eminent physician in St. Peters-burg recommended this psalm as the best preservative against the cholera. It will also occur to every one that the psalm is the Hebrew, or, perhaps, rather the religious, expression of Horace's ode.

"Integer vitae sederosis purus."

The parallelism is fine and sustained.

(1, 2) Ho ... I.—The especial difficulty of this psalm, its abrupt changes of person, meets us at the outset. The text literally rendered, runs: "He sitting in the hiding place of the Most High; In the shadow of the Almighty he lodgeth, I say to Jehovah, My refuge and my fortress, My God, I trust in Him. The change in the last clause presents no particular difficulty, as many similar instances occur; but that from the third person, in the first verse, to the first, in the second, is very awkward, and many shifts have been adopted to get out of it. The best is to supply the word blessed: "Blessed is he that," &c.* The different names for God employed here should be noticed. By their accumulation the poet makes the sum of assurance doubly sure.

(3) Snare of the fowler.—The image of the net has occurred frequently before. (See Ps. x. 15, &c.)

Here, as in Eccles. ix. 12, it is used generally of any unexpected peril to life.

Noisome pestilence.—Literally, pestilence of calamities, i.e., fatal. (See Ps. lvi. 1, where the same word "calamities" occurs.

Feathers ... wings.—For this beautiful figure, here elaborated, see Ps. xvii. 8, Note.

Terror by night.—Possibly a night attack by an enemy. (Comp. Song of Sol. iii. 8; Prov. iii. 23—26.) Comp. Milton:

"To bless the doors from nightly harm."

In this case the arrow flying by day would refer to dangers of actual battle. But it is quite possible that the latter may be merely the Oriental expression for the pestilence, since it is still so called by Arabsians. "I desired to remove to a less contagious air. I received from Solyman the emperor this message: that the emperor wondered what I meant in desiring to remove my habitation. Is not the pestilence God's arrow, which will always hit his mark?"—Quoted in Spurgeon's Treasury of David, from Busbequin's Travels.

Darkness ... noonday.—Night and noon are, in Oriental climates, the most unwholesome, the former from exhalations, the latter from the fierce heat. 

Destruction.—From a root meaning "to cut off," here, from parallelism, "deadly sickness."

It shall not come nigh thee.—B, i.e., no one of the dangers enumerated. The pious Israelite bears a charmed life. Safe under Divine protection, he only sees the effect of perils that pass by him harmless.

Thou ... my.—The difficulty of the change of person is avoided by the Authorised Version, but only with violence to the text, which runs: "For thou, Jehovah, my refuge; thou hast made the Most High thy habitation."

It is best to take the first line as a kind of under-soliloquy. The poet is assuring himself of the protection which will be afforded one who trusts in God; and he interrupts his soliloquy, as it were, with a comment upon it: "Yes, this is true of myself; for Thou Jehovah art indeed my refuge." (For the Most High as a dwelling place, see Ps. xc. 1.)

Dwelling.—Literally, text: an instance in which the patriarchal life became stereotyped, so to speak, in
untroth the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: (2) to shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, (3) upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; (4) upon the harp with a solemn sound. (For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. (5) O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. (6) A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. (7) When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever: (8) but thou, Lord, art most high for evermore. (9) For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, thine enemies from the Greek version of verse 7. The versification is regular. 

Title.—A psalm or song; more properly, a lyric psalm, i.e., one specially intended for singing.

For the sabbath day.—The Talmud confirms this, saying that this psalm was sung on the morning of the Sabbath at the drink offering which followed the sacrifice of the first lamb (Num. xxviii. 9).

(2) Lovingkindness ... faithfulness.—The two most prominent features in the display of the covenant relation of God towards His people. The connection of lovingkindness or grace with the morning, and faithfulness or truth with the evening, is only a result of the Hebrew poetic style; and yet there is a fitness in the association. Love breaks through the clouds of doubt as the morning light rises on the night; and thoughts of God’s unerring and impartial justice best suit the evening—the trial time of the day.

(3) Ten strings.—See Note, Ps. xxviii. 2.

Upon the harp with a solemn sound.—Rather, with music of the harp. For the Hebrew word, see Note, Ps. ix. 16.

(4) The Vulgate rendering of this verse is quoted by Dante in a beautiful passage descriptive of the happiness which flows from delight in the beauty of the works of God in nature. But the reference is to the works in history, not in nature. The psalmist is really expressing his gladness at God’s wonders wrought for Israel. (Comp. Ps. xc. 15, 16, “Make us glad ... let thy work appear unto thy servants.”)

(5) Thoughts.—Better, plans, or purposes. (Comp. in addition to references in margin, Ps. xxxvi. 6.)

(6) A brutish man.—The Hebrew is apparently from a root meaning “to eat,” and so refers to the man of mere animal nature, who lives for his appetites.

Fool.—From root meaning “fat,” hence “gross,” “stupid.”

In the one case the moral sense has not come into play at all, in the other it is overgrown by sensuality, so that spiritual discernment, insight into the glories of the Divine mind, is impossible.

(7) This verse apparently introduces the statement of the truth which the sensualist does not understand, viz., that the prosperity of the wicked is only moment-

The Faithfulness and 

PSALMS, XCII.

Majesty of God.

PSALM XCII.

A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.

(1) It is a good thing to give thanks the language. (See Note, Ps. civ. 3.) Even we speak of “pitching our tent.”

Angels.—The idea of a special guardian angel for each individual has possibly been favoured by this verse, though it had its origin in heathen belief:

“By every man, as he is born, there stands A spirit good, a holy guide of life.” MENANDER.

Here, however, it is not one particular individual, but all who have fulfilled the conditions of verses 9 and 10 who are the objects of angelic charge. (Comp. Ps. xxxiv. 7.) (For the well-known quotation of this and verse 12 in the Temptation, see Matt. iv. 6; Luke iv. 10, 11; with Notes in New Testament Commentary.)

In their hands.—Literally, on, as a nurse a child. There is a Spanish proverb, expressive of great love and solicitude: “They carry on the palms of their hands.”

Lion ... adder ... young lion.—These are used no doubt, emblematically for the various obstacles, difficulties, and danger which threatens life. (For “adder,” see Note, Ps. lviii. 4; “dragon,” Ps. lxxiv. 13.)

(14-16) Another abrupt change of person. The conclusion of the psalm comes as a Divine confirmation of the psalmist’s expression of confidence. (Comp. Ps. 1. 15, 23, with these verses.)

Set his love upon me.—Or, cling to me.

Long Life.—The promise of a long life, while in accordance with the general feeling of the Old Testament, is peculiarly appropriate at the close of this psalm, which all through speaks of protection from danger that threatened life.

In this psalm we seem to have the Sabbath musings (see Note to Title) of one who had met the doubt born Fool.—From root meaning “to eat,” and so refers to the man of mere animal nature, who lives for his appetites.

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shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. (10) But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil. (11) Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me. (12) The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. (13) Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

(14) They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; (13) to show that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

(t) The Lord reigneth. —Comp. Pss. xcvi. 1, xcix. 1. Better, Jehovah has become king: the usual term for ascending the throne (2 Sam. xv. 10; 1 Kings i. 11, 13; 2 Kings ix. 13); used in Isaiah of the re-establishment of the State after the Captivity (Isa. xxiv. 23, lii. 7); and by the latest of Israel's poets, in that prophetic strain which looks beyond time and this world (Rev. xix. 6). The robing and girding with the sword were part of the ceremony of inauguration of a monarch's reign. (See Note, Ps. xlv. 3.)

(2) The Lord is clothed. — These clauses run better: majesty he has put on: Jehovah has put on: with strength has girded himself. For the same representation of Jehovah as a warrior arranging himself for battle, compare Isa. lxv. 17, xlii. 1; or as a monarch robed in splendour, Psalm civ. 1.

The world also is established. — This would better begin verse 3. That the earth should be solidly seated in its hidden foundation, is itself a marvel; but this wonder is mentioned only to bring into greater relief the thought of the next verse, that the throne of God, to which the earth is only as a footstool (Isa. lxvi. 1), has its foundation firm and everlasting, free from the vicissitudes which beset earthly monarchies.

(3) Waves. — Better, for the parallelism, roaring: but literally, breaking of the waves on the shore.

Floods, here poetically for the sea, as in Ps. xxiv. 2. Lift up. — The repetition of the verb the third time in a different tense adds to the force. In LXX. and Vulgate this clause is "from the voices of many waters." (4) Sea. — Whether this description of a raging sea is to be taken literally, or as emblematic of war and its horrors, is doubtful.

(5) Thy testimonies. — This statement must be taken in close connection with that of the preceding verse. The permanence of the covenant, and of the outward signs that attest it, is to the Israelite proof of the superiority of the Divine power over the forces of nature. We may extend the thought, and say that the moral law is a truer evidence of the existence of God than the uniformity of natural laws.

NESS OF HIS RIGHTEOUS WILL AS THE WAVES AGAINST THE SHORE. THE TEMPEST OF HISTORY SUBSIDE AND PASS AS THE TEMPEST OF THE SEA, BUT HIS LAWS REMAIN FOR EVER FIXED AND SURE. THE POETICAL FORM IS REGULAR.

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The Blindness and

PSALMS, XCIV. Presumptuousness of the Wicked.

PSALM XCIV.

(1) O Lord, God to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, 
(2) Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.
(3) Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?
(4) How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?
(5) They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflicthine heritage.
(6) They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.
(7) Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

XCIV.

Verses 5 and 14, and, by implication, verse 10, show that this psalm was the expression, not of individual, 
but of national, sense of wrong and injustice. Yet the poet must, in his own person, have experienced the 
bitterness of the trouble, from the reference he makes, towards the close, to his own experiences. Apostle 
Jews may have been joined with the heathen oppressors. (See Note, verse 6.) There is no indication on which 
to found a conjecture as to date or authorship. The poetical form is regular.

(1) The original is far more striking in its conciseness.
God of retributions, Jehovah, God of retributions shine forth.
The emphatic repetition of a phrase is a feature of this psalm. (See verses 3, 23.)

(2) Lift up thyself—i.e., either be exalted, or rise to give sentence.

(4) How long . . . and.—It is better to omit the italics, and render: They speak out of utter impudence: all evil-doers boast.
The word rendered "boast" is by modern scholars connected with the Arabian title Emir, a "commander." They make themselves out to be personnes of Sennacherib, or, perhaps, lord it over God's people.

(5) Break in pieces.—Or, crush. (See Isa. iii. 15, where the word is in parallelism with "grind the faces of the poor.")

(6) Stranger.—The mention of the stranger as one friendless and helpless (Exod. xxii. 21), under the tyranny of the great, seems to imply that domestic, and not foreign oppression, is the grievance.

(7) The Lord.—In original, "Jah." This carelessness of heaven to injustice and crime, which, in the mouth of the heathen (or, perhaps, of apostate Jews), appeared so monstrous to the Hebrews, was a doctrine of the philosophy of ancient times. It appears in the saying of Seneca: "Stoicus deus nee eor nee caput habet." And in the Homeric hymn to Demeter men are represented as only enduring the gifts of the gods because they are stronger, and give only grudgingly. (Comp. Lucretius, i. 45.) The feeling has been well caught in Tennyson's Lotus Eaters:

"Let us swear an oath and keep it with an equal mind, In the hollow Lotus-land to live and lie reclined, On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind."

(8-10) The reality of a Divine Providence is proved both from nature and history—from the physical con-
stitution of man and the moral government of the world. The psalmist’s question is as powerful against modern atheism, under whatever philosophy it shelters itself, as against that of his day. Whatever the source of physical life or moral sense, their existence proves the prior existence of an original mind and will.

(10) He that chastiseth.—Or, He who instructeth.
The thought to some extent anticipates St. Paul’s teaching about the divine education of the heathen, in Romans i.

(11) That they are vanity.—The literal rendering, “for they are breath,” referring not to thoughts, but to man collectively, gives equally good sense, and would, notwithstanding the order of the words, be natural, since the masculine pronoun is used. But the LXX. stands as the Authorised Version, and is so quoted by St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 20), with the substitution of wise men for men.

(12, 13) Blessed.—A far higher note than one of mere complaint, or even of trust in God, is struck here. The beatitude of suffering could not be made altogether plain in the Old Testament, though in Job the spirit of it is nearly reached. Here the poet sees thus far, that he who is the victim of misfortunes may stand aside and calmly watch the course of Divine Providence involving evil men in punishment. What he has himself endured has chastened him, and caused him to be quiet from the evil days—i.e., has calmed him in viewing evil circumstances. It would, however, but for the next clause, be more natural to understand, “shall deliver him from evil days.”

Pit.—Comp. Ps. ix. 15.

(15) But.—Better, For; literally, for to righteousness judgment shall turn, and after it all upright in heart—i.e., there shall no longer be the seeming contradiction in things. God’s righteousness will triumph over the injustice under which Israel groans; His ways will be vindicated, so that all the upright in heart will acknowledge that “there is a reward for the righteous, a God who judges in the earth” (Ps. lix. 11). Luther’s fine paraphrase, “For Right must, whatever happens, remain Right,” expresses the feeling; but, better still, the question, “Shall not the Lord of all the earth do right?” The phrase, “shall after it,” is a common one for expressing attachment and adherence to a party or cause (Exod. xxii. 2; 2 Sam. ii. 10; Ps. xlix. 13), and
unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.

(16) Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?

(17) Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.

(18) When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

(19) In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.

(20) Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? (21) They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.

specially of adherence to Jehovah (1 Sam. xii. 14; 1 Kings xiv. 8).

(16) Rise up.—Stand up—i.e., as champion. (Comp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 11, of the exploit of Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite; comp. Ps. ii. 2.)

(17) In silence—i.e., of the grave, as in Ps. xxxi. 17.

(18) Thoughts.—Properly, dividing—i.e., “perplexing” or “anxious” thoughts. (See Job iv. 15, xx. 2.) LXX. and Vulg., “griefs.”

We may compare the Virgilian “animus nunc nunc celerem, nunc dividit illuc,” imitated by Tennyson:

This way and that dividing his swift mind,
In act to throw.

Delight.—Literally, stroke, and so soothe. The Hebrew word is used in Isa. lxvi. 11 of a mother quieting her child with the breast, and in Jer. xvi. 7 of the cup of consolation given to mourners at funerals.

(20) Throne of iniquity.—This is an apt expression for an oppressive and unjust government. The word rendered “iniquity” might mean “calamity” or “destruction” (as see Ps. lii. 1, and comp. Ps. xci. 3; “noisome”), but in Prov. x. 3 it seems to mean “lawless desire,” which best suits this passage.

Have fellowship—i.e., be associated in the government. Could the theocracy admit to a share in it, not merely imperfect instruments of justice, but even those who perverted justice to evil ends?

Which frameth mischief by a law?—i.e., making legislation a means of wrong. Others, however, render, “against the law.” But the former explanation best suits the next verse.

(21) They gather—i.e., possibly, They crowd into the courts of law to take part in the unjust condemnation of the just, or more generally, “They attack the life of the righteous.” LXX., “they hunt.” (Comp. Ps. xxxv. 15.)

XCV.

The LXX. prefix a title ascribing this psalm to David, and in quoting it the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. iv. 7) uses the expression “in David.” This, however, is only a mode of saying “in the Psalms.” We may conjecture, from the contents, that some danger to religion was observed by the author, since the disobedience and apostasy of the early history of the race are recalled. Beyond this we only perceive that the

Use the pronouns in the context to complete the fragment and provide the missing information.

 oficial adherence to Jehovah, the author, since the disobedience and apostasy of the early history of the race.
An Exhortation to

Obedience and Praise.

1 the strength of the hills is his also.
(6) The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.
(6) O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.
(7) For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.
*To day if ye will hear his voice,
(8) harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
(9) when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.
(10) Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: (11) unto

principle. Keeping the usual derivation, we may, with many critics, give the word the sense of "mines" or "treasures," because of the labours of extracting metal from the earth. This suits Job xxii. 25, and makes a good parallelism. But the LXX. and Vulg. have "heights," and by another derivation the Hebrew may mean shining, and so "sunny summit." With this agrees the rendering of the LXX. in Num. xxxiii. 22, xxiv. 8, and the rhythm is preserved by an aetiologic parallelism, as in next verse.

Worship.—Properly, prostrate ourselves.

Kneel. —The practice of kneeling low in the East, only used in moments of deep humiliation, is first mentioned in 2 Chron. vi. 13. It was also Daniel's practice (Dan. vi. 10).

To-day if . . . —In joining this clause with verses 8 and 9 the Authorised Version follows the LXX. The Masoretic text connects it with the preceding part of the verse, and there seems no good reason for departing from that arrangement. Indeed, the change from the third person, "his voice," to the first, "tempted me," in the same sentence is intolerable even in Hebrew poetry. Nor is there any necessity to suppose the loss of a line. Render: "For He is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the sheep of his hand. To-day would that ye would hearken to his voice." The Oriental custom of leading flocks by the voice is doubtless alluded to, as in John x. 4. Notice the resemblance in verses 6, 7 to Ps. c. 3. 4.

The mention of the guiding voice suggests to the poet to make God Himself address His people, and with this verse the Divine warning begins.

Provocation . . . temptation.—It is better to keep here the proper names Meribah and Massah (Exod. xvii. 1-7; Num. xx. 13; comp. Deut. xxxii. 8).

Proved me.—Properly, of trying metals. This term is used of man's attitude towards Providence, both in a good and bad sense (Mal. iii. 10, 15).

And saw my work.—Better (as in Isa. xlix. 15), Yet, they saw my works, watched, that is, God's dealings with over the same readiness to murmur and repine, and try the Divine patience.

So Notes, Heb. iil. 17, New Testament Commentary.

I grieved.—Better, I loathed.

whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

PSALM XCVI.

(1) O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.
(2) Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.
(3) Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.
(4) For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.
(5) For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.
(6) Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

A people that do err.—Literally, a people of wanderers in heart. They are morally astray through ignorance of God's paths.

I swear.—Num. xiv. 21-27.

Rest.—This is, of course, the Promised Land, as the context unmistakably shows. The freedom taken with the passage by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in order to make the psalm point us to a "future" rest, was such as Jewish doctors ordinarily used, and of which other instances occur in the New Testament—notably St. Paul's argument in Gal. iii. 16.

XCVI.

This "new song," breathing indeed aspirations and hopes which were not wholly new to Israel, but ideal, and still waiting for their complete fulfilment, most probably dates, according to the conjecture of the LXX., from the rebuilding of the Temple after the Captivity. No one can miss the points of resemblance with the literature of that period, especially the evidence of deeper sympathy with nature, and extended interest in mankind. The outward world has become instinct with emotion, while the barrier of faith and feeling between Israel and other races is gradually breaking down.*

(1) A new song.—See Note, Ps. xxxiii. 3. It appears to have been a kind of national and religious "lyric cry" after the Restoration. (Comp. Isa. xiii. 19.)
(6) Idols.—Literally, nothings; Heb., elilim, with a play on the word el, God. This plainly shows that by Gods, in verse 4, the heathen deities, and not angels, are meant. (See Note, Ps. xcv. 3.) The LXX. sometimes renders the Hebrew word "idols," sometimes "vanities," but here "demons." Symmachus "non-existences."

But the Lord made the heavens.—Nothings could not do that, but only Jehovah.

Honour . . . The whole universe displays Jehovah's majesty, but chiefly his sanctuary in Israel, where it is typified by the costly splendour of the building and its rites. So the version of Apollinaris, "Purposes and stately glory lift his shrine." The chronicler having

* The LXX. inconsistently go on to ascribe the Psalm to David, probably because of its insertion in 1 Chron. xvi.
adopted this psalm as suitable for the occasion when the ark was brought to Zion by David, has substituted "strength and gladness are in his place," possibly because the Temple was not built at that time.

(7-9) These verses are a relic of Ps. xxix. 1, 2, where see Notes, but instead of being addressed to the angels it is, in accordance with the world of new ideas and feelings in which Israel lived after the Captivity, addressed to all the people of the world. A truly Messianic character is thus impressed on the psalm.

(8) Offering.—The minchah, or sacrifice of fine flour.

(9) O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.—Better, Bow before Jehovah in holy attire. But the LXX. and Vulgate have as in margin.

(10) Say among the heathen.—The watchword of the Restoration, "Jehovah has become King" (see Ps. xcvii. 1, note, and comp. Isa. lii. 7), is an Evangel not only for Jerusalem but for the world at large. But to it is added (see the difference of arrangement in 1 Chron. xxix. 29-31) the further statement of the stability of the world, emblem of the stability and justice of the Divine Government.

(11-13) Magnificent progress of the Divine Judge through His realm. There is only one thought, that of the inauguration of a righteous sway for all nations; at its advent, as in Isaiah's glorious visions (see Isa. xxxv. 1, 2, xlii. 10, xliv. 23, lv. 12), all nature seems to join the chorus of gladness.

(12) Then shall all the trees . . .—Comp.—"His praise, ye winds that from four quarters blow, Breathe soft or loud, and wave your tops ye pines, With every plant in sign of worship wave."—Milton.

(13) For he cometh, for he cometh.—Notice the striking repetition, the natural expression of gladness.

XCVII.

Though in a very great measure a compilation from earlier writings (see Notes passim), this psalm, by more than one fine touch, proves itself the product not only of a thoughtful, but of a truly poetic mind. (Notice especially verses 2, 10, 11, and see Notes.) The rhythm is regular.

(1) The Lord reigneth.—For the thought and imagery comp. Ps. xvi. 10, 11. Multitude of the isles.—Literally, isles many. This wide glance to the westward embracing the isles and coasts of the Mediterranean (Ps. lixxi. 10), possibly even more distant ones still, is characteristic of the literature of post-exile times. (Comp. Isa. xiii. 10, 11, B. 15.)

(2) Clouds and darkness.—Comp. Ps. xvii. 10-12. The imagery in the first instance is borrowed from the Theophany at Sinai. (Exod. xiv. 9, 16, xx. 21; Deut. iv. 11, v. 22, 23.)

Are the habitation.—Better, are the foundation, or pillars. (See margin.) This reappears from Ps. lxix. 14, but the connection with "clouds and darkness" is peculiar to this post, and is striking. The immediate effect on the Hebrew mind, of the awful manifestation of the Divine power in nature, is not fear, but a sublime sense of safety in the established right and truth of God. They knew that it is one and the same power . . .

"Which makes the darkness and the light, And dwells not in the light alone, But in the darkness and the cloud, As over Sinai's peaks of old, While Israel made them gods of gold, Although the trumpet blew so loud."

Tennyson: In Memoriam.

(3) This is an echo of Ps. 1. 3. (Comp. also Ps. xviii. 8; Hab. iii. 4, 5. (4) See Ps. lxxvii. 17, 18, from which this is taken. (5) The hills melted.—Comp. Ps. lxvii. 8, Note; Mich. i. 4.

The Lord of the whole earth.—An expression first met with exactly in Josh. iii. 11-13, though Abra­ham speaks of God as judge of the whole earth (Gen. xvii. 25). (Comp. Misch. iv. 13; Zech. iv. 10, vi. 5.) Though Jehovah was the tribal God, yet in marked distinction to surrounding tribes Israel regarded Him as having universal dominion.

(6) All the people.—Rather, all the peoples. At length the world at large is convinced, by visible manifesta­tions, of what Israel had recognised through the veil.
of darkness and cloud,—the eternal righteousness of which all the splendours of the storm have been a witness. (See Note, Ps. lxxxix. 6.)

(7) Confounded,—i.e., ashamed (Isa. xiii. 17; Jer. x. 14). The same idea is conveyed by the very word "idols," in Hebrew—empty, worthless things, shaming those who worship them. It is doubtful whether the verbs here are to be taken as imperatives. So LXX., Vulgate, and Authorized Version. Probably a fact is stated.

All ye gods.—Not "angels," as in LXX. (See Note, Ps. viii. 5.) Here, however, the term is directly intended to include among superhuman beings the agencies worshipped by heathen nations as deities. The quotation Heb. i. 6 (see Note, New Testament Commentary) is made from the LXX. of Deut. xxxii. 43.

(8) Zion heard.—See Ps. xlviii. 11, Note.

(9) For the first clause see Ps. lxxxiii. 18; for the second Ps. xlviii. 2—10.

(10) Ye that love the Lord.—Notwithstanding certain points of similarity between this verse and Ps. xxxix. 10—20, xxxvii. 28, and between verse 12 and Ps. xxxii. 11, the psalmist shows himself at the close more than a compiler—a true poet.

Hate evil.—It is better to point for the indicative, They who love Jehovah, hate evil, in order to avoid the awkward transition in the next clause. This practical test of true religion can never be obsolete. Love of God implies the hatred of all He hates. A heathen writer has expressed this in a striking way. Philosophy, holding a dialogue with Lucian, is made to say, "To love and to hate, they say, spring from the same source." To which he replies, "That, O Philosophy, should be best known to you. My business is to hate the bad, and to love and commend the good, and that I stick to."

(11) Light is sown.—i.e., scattered. The metaphor must not be pressed so as to think of a harvest to come. The image is an obvious and common one.

Sol etiam summo de vertice dissipat omnes
Arderem in partibus, et lumine consumitur ara.

LAUBRITUS.

And Milton, while enriching its metaphor, doubtless had the psalm in his mind:

"Now morn, her rosy steps in the Eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl."

XCVIII.

This psalm plainly belongs to that cycle of literature produced by the joy of the Restoration, and is in fact little more than a compilation from Isa. xi., xxvi., and from other psalms, especially Ps. xcvii. The psalm is irregular in form.

Title.—This is the only hymn of the whole collection with the bare inscription "a psalm."

(1) Victory.—The word more commonly rendered "salvation," as, indeed, in next verse.

(2) Make a joyful noise.—Better, Break out into songs and music.

(3) Sing . . . —Rather, Play to Jehovah on a harp, on a harp, and with melodious sound of music.

(4) Trumpets . . cornet.—(See Num. x. 2; Exod. xix. 16; and Bible Educator, ii. 231, 232.) This is the only place in the psalm where the chasidim, or "straight trumpet," is mentioned.

(5) Clap their hands.—This expression, descriptive of the lapping sound of waves, occurs also in Isa. lv. 12.

Let the hills be joyful together.

"Far along.
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one long cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps who call to her aloud."

BYRON: Childe Harold, canto iii.

(6) See Ps. xcvii. 13.
with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

PSALM XCIX.

(1) The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. (2) The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people. (3) Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.

(4) The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob. (5) Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.

(6) Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them. (7) He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.

(8) Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: thou w wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. (9) Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.

PSALM C.

A Psalm of praise.

(1) Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. (2) Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing.

(3) Know ye that the Lord he is God:

XCV.

This psalm plainly belongs to a group (see Ps. xcvi., Introduction) to be referred to the post-exile times, when the renewed worship and nationality made it possible for the poet to compare his age with that of the greatest saints and heroes of old. The short refrain marks the poetical form.

(1) The Lord reigneth.—See Note, Ps. xcvi. 1.

Tremble.—LXX. and Vulg., “be angry.” The optative in this and the following clause is after the LXX.; but the Hebrew is in the ordinary present, the peoples tremble, the earth staggers.

He sitteth.—In original a participle.

Between the cherubims . . .—See Notes on Ps. lxxi. 1.

Great and terrible name.—The rabbins see here the mystic tetragrammaton, whose pronunciation was kept so secret.

For it is holy.—This is grammatically possible, but as verses 5 and 9 repeat the expression, evidently as a refrain, and there it needs the masculine, it is better to read here, “Holy is He.”

In this way, too, we avoid an awkward construction in the next verse, which should be joined closely with this: Let them praise Thy great and terrible name (saying), “Holy is He, and mighty, a king that loveth justice.”

(5) Worship at his footstool.—Prostrate yourselves of His footstool. The earth is called the “footstool” of God (Isa. lvi. 1; comp. Matt. x. 35); in other places the expression is used of the sanctuary (Ps. cxxi. 7; comp. Isa. lx. 13; Lam. ii. 1). In 1 Chron. xxviii. 2 it seems to refer to the ark. No doubt here, after mentioning the throne above the cherubims, we must think of the ground on which the ark stood, or of the ark itself.

(6) Moses.—Better, a Moses and an Aaron among his friends, and a Samuel among them that call upon his name; calling upon the Lord, and he answers them; in the pillar of cloud he speaks unto them. The poet is enhancing the sacred character of the services of his own day by likening the priests and ministers to the sacred heroes of the past, as we might distinguish a period of great scientific achievement 

by saying, “We have a Newton or a Bacon among us.” To make it a mere historical reference, “Moses and Aaron were,” &c., would be altogether too abrupt and inaccurate, since Moses was not a kohen, nor did God speak to Samuel in the cloudy pillar. It is true that the present tense is changed in verse 7 to the preterite, but it is quite natural that the psalmist should glide into the narrative style after the mention of the historical name. The Son of Sirach also makes special reference to the prayer of Samuel (Ecclus. xlv. 16). Possibly, too, there is an allusion to the meaning of his name, “asked,” or “heard of God.”

(8) Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions (or, works).—This does not refer to the personsages just mentioned but to the people at large. The train of thought is as follows:—“There are great saints among us, as in olden time, but, as then, their prayers, while often procuring forgiveness, could not altogether avert punishment for sin; so the present community must expect retribution when sinful, in spite of the mediation of the better part of the nation.” The Hebrew style did not favour similes, and hence the poet omits the signs of comparison, and leaves his inference to be drawn by his readers.

C.

This liturgic psalm, which as a hymn is so universally known and loved, is composed of four verses of triplets. Even when performed in the Temple, amid the exclusive notes of Judaism, its opening words must have inspired something of that catholic sentiment which pervades a congregation when singing what we know as the “Old Hundredth.”

Title.—Of praise.—Better, for thanks, or, possibly for the thanksgiving, i.e., especially adapted for that particular ceremony. At all events it is a liturgical direction. LXX., “for (Vulg., in) confession.”

(1) Make a joyful noise.—See Ps. xcvii. 4.

All ye lands.—Or, all the earth.

(2) And not we ourselves.—Most commentators now prefer the reading “His we are,” as keeping the parallelism better, besides having great MS. support. The concluding part of the verse is an echo of Ps. xcv. 7.
PSALMS, CL. 

Vow of Godliness.

I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.

(2) I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. (3) I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. (4) A fordward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person. (5) Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

Will I sing.—Better, will I play.

On the question of the connection of this verse with the rest of the psalm, see Introduction.

(6) Behave myself wisely.—Literally, I will look to a guileless way. The root “to look” is that from which masakil (Ps. xxiii, title) comes; hence some have seen a reference to music or song. But the Authorized Version is probably right, since the analogy of such words as “provident,” “circumspect,” shows how the idea of caution and then wisdom arises from that of looking. The English idiom, “look to your ways,” illustrates the Hebrew here.

O when wilt thou come unto me?—This clause is so awkward, however translated, that some critics go the length of pronouncing it spurious. In the Old Testament, with the exception of Exod. xx. 24, the coming of God to a person is associated with the idea of punishment or inquisition (Ps. xviii. 3); and to see a reminiscence of 2 Sam. vi. 9 (“How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?”) seems far-fetched. It is better, therefore, to take the verb as the third person feminine instead of second masculine, with “perfect way” as its subject. The only difficulty in the way of this rendering is the interrogative; but, as in Prov. xxiii. 22, it becomes a simple adverb of time, we may treat it so here: “I will give heed to a guileless way when it comes to me,” i.e., whenever a course of action arises, presenting an alternative of a right and wrong, or a better and worse, I will choose the better.

I will walk within my house.—This vow of an Eastern monarch should be read with the thought of the palace of a caliph at Bagdad, or a sultan at Constantinople, before the mind. But it is a reflection of universal application, that piety should begin at home, and religion show itself in the household as much as at church.

(7) I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. —Mark the wisdom of the resolve in a despotinc monarch, who has only to speak to effect whatever he has looked on with desire.

Wicked thing.—Thing (or, word) of Belial. (See Note on Ps. xli. 8.)

I hate the work of them that turn aside.—Or, I hate the doing of false things, according as we take the word in the concrete or abstract.

It shall not cleave to me.—Such conduct shall not be mine.

(8) Froward.—See Note, Ps. xviii. 26.

(9) Whoso. . . . —The “informer” and the “haughty favourite” are no unknown characters in an Oriental court.
A Prayer for Comfort in Affliction.

(6) Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me : he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. (7) He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. (8) I will early destroy all the wicked of the land ; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

PSALM CII.

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.

(3) Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee. (2) Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble ; incline thine ear unto me : in the day when I call answer me speedily.

(3) For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. (4) My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. (5) By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. (6) I am like a pelican of the wilderness : I am like an owl of the desert. (7) I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.

PSALMS, CII.

Proud heart.—Literally, broad, that is, extended with pride. (Comp. Prov. xxi. 4.) But LXX. and Vulg., "insatiable." Will not I suffer.—In Hebrew a simple and expressive "I cannot," to which we can supply "bear," from Jer. xliv. 22. (Comp. Isa. i. 13: "I cannot away with.""

(7) Tarry in my sight—i.e., stand as a courtier in the royal presence. Comp. Homer: "Hateful to me as gates of hell is he Who hides one thing within his mind and speaks another." Early.—Literally, in the morning: referring, as Perowne observes, to the Oriental custom of holding courts of law in the early morning (Jer. xlii. 12; 2 Sam. xv. 2; Luke xxii. 66; John xvii. 32).

City of the Lord.—For similar expressions, see Pss. xlii. 4, lvii. 8. The city must bear out its name in its character.

CII.

This psalm is peculiar for its title, which stands quite alone among the inscriptions. It is neither historical nor musical in its reference; but describes the character of the psalm, and the circumstances and which it would be found useful. That it was, therefore, affixed at a late time, when the collection had come to be employed, not merely for liturgical purposes and in public worship, but in private devotion, there can be little doubt. But the composition of the psalm must be referred to national rather than individual feeling. It is true the supplicant speaks from personal experience of distress actually pressing upon him; but this distress has not an individual character, but is of that general kind which is felt under national calamity and misfortunes. It is natural, from verses 14 and 15, to refer the composition to the exile period. With this also agrees the many points of coincidence with the prophecies of the second part of Isaiah. But it must be remarked that the causes which the prophet of the exile assigns to the national captivity or catastrophe do not appear here. There is no expression of repentance or contrition; nor yet of the deeper insight which, towards the end of the exile, brought into prominence the doctrine of vicarious suffering. Those in whose name the psalmist writes are the servants of Jehovah, and have never had anything else. He does not distinguish them as an exception to the mass of the people, who are guilty and deserve the destruction in which the whole universe is to be involved. For this reason many critics bring the psalm down to the Antiochean period, when Jerusalem suffered so much, and at one time presented a desolation like that mourned in the psalm (1 Macc. i. 38, 39). The verse-structure is irregular.

Title.—See Introduction.

(1) Prayer.—Like love and all emotion, prayer has its own language, and this assumes here the forms of expression that meet us in other psalms. (See, e.g., in addition to the reference in margin, Ps. xxxii. 2, xxxix. 12, lvi. 9, lxx. 16, xxiii. 7.) (2) This verse may be better arranged, Hide not . . . in the day of my trouble. Incline . . . in the day when I call. Answer me speedily. (3) Like smoke.—Or, in smoke. (See margin. Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 20.) Hearth.—Better, a brand or fuel; so LXX. and Vulgate, Aquila, and this meaning suits Isa. xxxii. 14. (For the image see Ps. xxii. 15, xxxii. 10, xxxii. 3.) (4) Smitten.—As by the sun. Exactly as in Hos. ix. 16.

So that I forget.—Better, for I have forgotten, &c. For this mark of deep sorrow comp. 1 Sam. i. 7, xx. 34, &c. (Comp. Homer, Iliad, xxiv. 129.)

(5) Skin.—See margin. In Lam. iv. 8, more correctly, "my skin cleaveth to my bones;" a picture of emaciation, the result of fasting.

(6) Pelican.—See Lev. xi. 18. "It has been objected that the pelican is a water-bird, and cannot, therefore, be the kôshî of the Scriptures—"the pelican of the wilderness"—as it must of necessity starve in the desert; but a midbar (wilderness) is often used to denote a wide open space, cultivated or uncultivated, and is not to be restricted to barren spots destitute of water; moreover, as a matter of fact, the pelican after filling its capacious pouch with fish, molluscs, &c., often does retire to places far inland, where it consumes what it has captured. Thus, too, it breeds on the great sandy wastes near the mouths of the Danube. The expression 'pelican in the wilderness,' in the psalmist's pathetic complaint, is a true picture of the bird as it sits in apparently melancholy mood with its bill resting on its breast" (Bible Educator, iv. 8).

Owl.—Heb., kôshî. (See Lev. xi. 17.) The bird is identified with the "owl" by the Hebrew in this passage, which should be rendered "owl of the ruins." Some, however, would identify this bird with the pelican, since kôshî means "cup," rendering "the pelican, even the pouch-bird." (See Bible Educator, ii. 346.) LXX., Aquila, Theodotion, all have "screech-owl;" Symmachus, the "hoopoe."

(7) I watch—i.e., am sleepless.
The Unchangeableness and Faithfulness of God.

(8) Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me. (9) For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, (10) because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

(11) "My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. (12) But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.

(13) Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, the set time, is come. (14) For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. (15) So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. (16) When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

Sparrow.—See Note, Ps. lxxiv. 3. Hero render, like a lonely bird. Some MSS. read, "a wandering bird."

Sworn against me.—Rather, swear by me, i.e., make his name a byword of execration, to be explained by Isa. lxv. 15; Jer. xxxix. 22. LXX. and Vulg., were swearing against me.

Ashes like bread.—Lam. iii. 16. A figurative expression, like "dust shall be the serpent's meat" (Isa. lxv. 25; comp. Gen. iii. 14). With the last clause comp. Ps. xlii. 3, "tears have been my meat day and night. So too, as an emblem of disappointment, a modern poet:—"

"But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone."

Tennyson: Holy Grail.

Indignation and thy wrath.—Comp. Ps. xc. 7. The last part of the clause is a figure taken from the action of a whirlwind. (Comp. Job xxvii. 20, 21, xxx. 22.)

A shadow that declineth.—Rather, a lengthening shadow, growing longer as the day declines, and therefore soon to vanish altogether. (Comp. Ps. cix. 23."

"And now the sun had stretched out all the hills."

Milton: Lydidas.

See also Note, Song of Sol. ii. 17.

For ever.—The eternity of God, which must survive the world itself, is a pledge of the truth of the national hopes, in spite of the vicissitudes of individuals, and the swift succession of generations. For the word "remembrance," see Ps. xxx. 4. It is explained by Exod. iii. 15, "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial through all generations." The generations come and go, and the memory of man perishes, but the name "Jehovah" endures still, the object of adoration and praise.

(13—16) The prospect (Isa. xi. 1—5) that the restoration of Jerusalem will take place simultaneously with the coming of Jehovah in glory, is here echoed from the prophet in a lyric form. "The set time" must not be rigidly explained by the "seventy years" of Jer. xxv. 11. The expression is general: "The hour is come." (Comp. Isa. xl. 2.)

(14) Stones . . . dust.—This touching description of the devotion of the Jews to their ruined city is best illustrated by the actual history in Neh. iii., iv., and by the scenes so often described by travellers at the "wailing place" in modern Jerusalem.

(15) Heathen.—The same result of the restoration of the Holy City, viz., the recognition of Jehovah's power and glory by the heathen, occupies the great prophecy, Isa. xl.—xlvii.

(16) The destitute.—Literally, the naked one. Here the exiled people, stripped of home and religious rites. The word is only found once more, in Jer. xvii. 6 (comp. Jer. xviii. 6 for a kindred form), where it is translated "heath," and in Arabic it is to this day the name of a stunted bush that grows in Palestine.

Written.—This is interesting as being the only place in the Psalms where the memory of great events is said to be preserved in writing. Oral tradition is mentioned in Pes. xxii. 30, xlv. I, lxvii. 2.

Shall be created.—See Ps. xxii. 31, "a people that shall be born"—the coming generation (as the parallelism shows) for whom the world will be regenerated. (20, 21) Comp. Isa. lxi. 1, 2, and generally the whole magnificent cycle of prophetic songs at the close of Isaiah.

Appointed to death.—See margin. LXX. and Vulg., "the sons of the slain."

In the way.—i.e., in the course of life. Others render, "by reason of the way," but the meaning is the same. The clause is exactly parallel to "shortened my days."

Take me not away.—The fear of not living to see the restoration of his race prompts the psalmist to this prayer to the God whose years are not, like man's, for one generation, but endure from age to age. (Comp. Isa. xlv. 24, xlvii. 13.)
the work of thy hands. (26) They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: (27) but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

(28) The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

PSALM CIII.
A Psalm of David.

(1) Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

(2) Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: (3) who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; (4) who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; (5) who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

(6) The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. (7) He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. (8) *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

(9) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

(10) He hath not dealt with us after his benefits. (11) For the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (12) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

(13) He hath not dealt with us after his benefits. (14) For the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (15) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

(16) He hath not dealt with us after his benefits. (17) For the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (18) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

(19) He hath not dealt with us after his benefits. (20) For the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (21) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

(22) He hath not dealt with us after his benefits. (23) For the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (24) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

(25) He hath not dealt with us after his benefits. (26) For the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (27) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

(28) He hath not dealt with us after his benefits. (29) For the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (30) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.
God's Fatherly Tenderness.

PSALMS, CIV.  

A Universal Summons to Praise.

our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. (11) For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. (12) As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. (13) Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. (14) For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. (15) As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. (16) For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. (17) But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

(18) All his works.—Not only the heavens and their hosts, but "Earth with her thousand voices praises God."

Nor can the psalmist himself remain silent, but must repeat the self-dedication with which he began his song.

CIV.

This psalm touches the highest point of religious poetry. It is the most perfect hymn the world has ever produced. Even as a lyric it has scarcely been surpassed; while as a lyric inspired by religion, not only was all ancient literature, except that of the Hebrews, powerless to create anything like it, but even Christian poetry has never succeeded in approaching it.

Milton has told the story of Creation, taking, as the psalmist does, the account in Genesis for his model; but the seventh book of the Paradise Lost, even when we make allowance for the difference between the narrative and lyric styles, is tame and prolix—seems to want animation and fire—by the side of this hymn.

At the very opening of the poem we feel the magic of a master inspiration. The world is not, as in Genesis, created by a Divine decree. It springs into life and motion, into order and use, at the touch of the Divine presence. Indeed, the pervading feeling of the hymn is the sense of God's close and abiding relation to all that He made; the conviction that He not only originated the universe, but dwells in it and sustains it; and this feeling fastens upon us at the outset, as we see the light enfolding the Creator as His robe, and the canopy of heaven rising over Him as His tent. It is not a lifeless world that springs into being. There is no void, no chaos; even the winds and clouds are not for this poet without denizens, or they themselves start into life and people the universe for his satisfaction. He cannot conceive of a world at any time without life and order.

Nor has any poet, even of our modern age, displayed a finer feeling for nature, and that not in her tempestuous and wrathful moods—usually the source of Hebrew inspiration—but in her calm, everyday temper. He is the Wordsworth of the ancients, penetrated with a love for nature, and gifted with the insight that springs from love. This majestic hymn is anonymous in the Hebrew. The LXX. have ascribed it to David. Its
For the same metaphor see Ps. xviii. 11; Amos ix. 6, 7. Southey's description of the Palace of Indra may perhaps help the imagination:—

"Built on the lake, the waters were its floor.
And here its walls were water arched with fire,
And here were fire with water vaulted o'er;
And spires and pinnacles of fire
Round watery cupolas aspire,
And domes of rainbow rest on fiery towers."

_Curse of Kehama._

Who maketh the clouds His chariot.—See Ps. xviii. 10, probably the original of this verse; chariot (rakhûb) here taking the place of cherûb.

Walketh upon the wings of the wind.—Doubtless the metaphor is taken from the clouds, which, in a wind-swept sky, float along like "the drifted wings of many companies of angels." The clause is thus in direct parallelism with the description of the cloud chariot. The figure has passed into modern song:

"Every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory,"

_Milton: L'Allegro._

"No wing of wind the region swept."

_Tennyson: In Memoriam._

(4) Who maketh . . .—Rather,

Who maketh winds His messengers
A flaming fire His ministers.

Or, keeping the order of the Hebrew,

Who maketh His messengers of winds,
And His ministers of flaming fire.

This is plainly the meaning required by the context, which deals with the use made by the Divine King of the various forms and forces of Nature. Just as He makes the clouds serve as a chariot and the sky as a tent, so he employs the winds as messengers and the lightnings as servants.

Taken quite alone, the construction and arrangement of the verse favours the interpretation of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. i. 7, Note, New Testament Commentary). This was the traditional Jewish interpretation, and on it were founded various theories of angelic agency.

But not only do the exigencies of the context set aside this interpretation, but Hebrew literature offers enough instances to show that the order in which a poet arranged his words was comparatively immaterial. Indeed, Dean Perowne has adduced two instances (Isa. xxxvii. 20, ix. 18) of precisely similar inversion of the natural order of immediate object and predicate. (See Expositor, December, 1878.) And no difficulty need be made about the change of number in flame of fire and ministers, since even if the former were not synonymous with lightnings, its predicate might be plural. (See Prov. xvi. 14, "The wrath of a king is messengers of death.")

(5-19) The work of the third day of Creation in its two great divisions. (1) The separation of the land and water (verses 5—9); (2) the clothing of the earth with grass, herbs, and trees (verses 10—18). The poet, however, ranges beyond the Mosaic account, and already
The Wonderful

PSALMS, CIV.

Providence of God.

(6) Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. (7) At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hastened away. (8) They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast set for them. (9) Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

(10) He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

(11) They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

(12) By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. (13) He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. (14) He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; (15) and a wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.

(16) The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath

peoples the earth with the living creatures of the fifth day. "It is not a picture of still life like that of Genesis, but a living, moving, animated scene” (Perowne).

(5) Who laid . . . Better, He fixed the earth on its foundations. (Comp. Job xxxviii. 4—6; Prov. viii. 29.)

The inconsistency of this with Job xxvi. 7, "He laid the earth on nothing," need not cause difficulty. Both treatments are poetical, not scientific. The word foundations implies stability and endurance (comp. Ps. lxxxii. 5), as in Shakespeare's

"The frame and huge foundation of the earth."

The verse has a historical interest from having supplied the Inquisition with an argument against Galileo.

(6) The deep.—The water-world is first considered as a vast garment wrapped round the earth, so that the mountain-tops are covered. But here it is beyond its right, and the Divine rebuke forces it to retire within narrower limits. It is noticeable that the idea of a chaos finds no place in the poetic conception of the world's genesis. The primitive world is not formless, but has its mountains and valleys already existing, though merged beneath the sea.

(7) They go up . . . Better, they flow between the hills. The LXX. supply the subject "waters."

(8) Wild asses.—See Job xxxix. 5—8.

(9) By them . . . Better, above them, i.e., in the trees and bushes growing on the bank of the stream. Translate by the present, have their homes.

(10) Chambers.—i.e., of cloud, as in verse 3.

Thy works.—If we go by the parallelism, this means the "rain," here called God's works, as in Ps. lxxv. 9 (see Note), his "river." Others prefer to see a general reference to the operations of nature which produce fruit.

(11) For the service of man—i.e., for his use (so Gesenius). But some deny this meaning to the Hebrew, which properly means "labour" or "office." (In 1 Chron. xxvi. 16; Neh. x. 37, it means "agriculture," "tillage.") Hence they render, "And herbs for man's labour in bringing them forth from the earth," alluding to his task of cultivating the soil. Standing by itself the clause would indeed naturally require this sense, but the parallelism is against it, and in 1 Chron. xxvi. 30, "service of a king," we have a near approach to the meaning "use."

That he may.—Better, bringing food out of the earth, taking the verb as gerund instead of infinitive absolute.

(12) And wine that . . . Better, and wine gladens man's heart, making his face shine more than oil (see margin. The alternative follows the LXX. and Vulg., and suggests the anointing with oil at a banquet), and bread man's heart sustains.

Oil.—For oil and its uses see Ps. xxxiii. 2, exii. 5.

Strengtheneth.—Properly, props or supports. (Comp. "the staff of bread," Ps. cv. 16, and our "staff of life," and for the same phrase Gen. xviii. 5; Judg. xix. 5.)

(13) The trees . . . Better, Jehovah's trees are satisfied. The parallelism shows what are Jehovah's trees. The cedar of Lebanon (see 1 Kings iv. 33) was the grandest and fairest tree known to the Hebrew; and like lightning and the tropical rain, is honoured by the epithet most expressive of grandeur. (See Bible Educator, IV., 359.) Such trees the poet feels must have been planted by the Divine hand itself—man
planted; (17) where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. (18) The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

(19) He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. (20) Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. (21) The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. (22) The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

The sun knoweth his going down. The sun is no mere mechanical timepiece to the commanding on the one hand the range of Lebanon, on the other the Mediterranean—the words recur to him, and the morning" as making the day. count of creation. But suddenly, as his eye catches the dawn. The sun is no mere mechanical timepiece to the commanding on the one hand the range of Lebanon, on the other the Mediterranean—the words recur to him, and the morning" as making the day. count of creation. But suddenly, as his eye catches the dawn. The sun is no mere mechanical timepiece to the commanding on the one hand the range of Lebanon, on the other the Mediterranean—the words recur to him, and the morning" as making the day. count of creation. But suddenly, as his eye catches the dawn.

His Creatures.

God's Care for

(20) Creep forth.—The word "forth" is better omitted. The Hebrew verb is that especially used of crawling animals and reptiles, and here, no doubt, is chosen to express the stealthy motion of the beasts when on the track of their prey. (See verse 25; comp. Job xxxvii. 8, xxxviii. 40.)

(22) Lay them down.—With sunrise all is changed. The wild animals, with their savage instincts, give way to man with his orderly habits and arranged duties. The curse of labour, on which the account in Genesis dwells, is here entirely out of sight, and instead there appears the "poetry of labour." And if all sense of the primal curse has disappeared, the later curse, which lies so heavy on the modern generations of overworked men, has not appeared. The day brings only healthy toil, and the evening happy rest.

(24) Riches.—LXX., "creation;" Aquila, Symmachus, and the Vulg., "possession." The MSS. vary between singular and plural. Creatures will perhaps best express the sense here. There is something as fine in art as true in religion in this sudden burst of praise—the "evening voluntary" of grateful adoration—into which the poet bursts at the mention of the day's close. Weariness leaves the soul, as it is lifted from contemplation of man's toil to that of God. Athanasius remarked on the sense of rest and refreshment produced by this change of strain.

(25) So is . . .—Better, Yonder is the sea great and broad. For a moment the poet, "lost in wonder, love and praise," has forgotten his model, the Mosaic account of creation. But suddenly, as his eye catches sight of the sea—we imagine him on some hill-top,commanding on the one hand the range of Lebanon, on the other the Mediterranean—the words recur to him, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly," &c.

(26) Creatures.—See verse 20. Perhaps here, "swarming;" ships.—The poet writes like one who had been accustomed to see the navies of Phoenicia, one of the indications which leads to the hypothesis that he belonged to the northern part of Palestine. And here for once we seem to catch a breath of enthusiasm for the sea—so rare a feeling in a Jew.

(27) Leviathan.—See Ps. lxxiv. 14. In Job (xli.) it is the crocodile, but here evidently an animal of the sea, and probably the whale. Several species of cetacea are still found in the Mediterranean, and that they were known to the Hebrews is clear from Lam. iv. 3. Various passages from classic authors support this view.

Whom Thou . . .—This clause is rendered by some "whom Thou hast made to play with him" (so LXX. and Vulg.), referring to Job xli. 5. It is a rabbinical tradition that Leviathan is God's plaything.
Thou hidest thy face. Elsewhere an image of displeasure, here only of withdrawal of providential care. (See Ps. xxxi. 7, where the expression "troubled" also occurs.)

Thou takest away their breath. Not only is the food which sustains animal life dependent on the ceaseless providence of God, but even the very breath of life in His, to be new forth or withdrawn at His will. But to this thought, derived of course from Genesis (comp. Ps. xc. 3, Note), the poet adds another. The existence of death is not a sorrow to him any more than it is a mystery. To the psalmist it is only the individual that dies; the race lives. One generation fades as God's breath is withdrawn, but another succeeds as it is sent forth.

Spirit. Rather, breath, as in verse 29. We must not here think of the later theological doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The psalmist evidently regards the breath of God only as the vivifying power that gives matter a distinct and individual, but transient, existence. Even in the speculative book of Ecclesiastes, the idea of a human soul having a permanent separate existence does not make its appearance. At death the dust, no longer animate, returns to the earth as it was, and the breath, which had given it life, returns to God who gave it—gave it as an emanation, to be resumed unto Himself when its work was done. Still less, then, must we look in poetry for any more developed doctrine.

The Lord shall rejoice. The poet still follows Genesis in representing God as looking on the creation. But it is possible that the thought of the sabbath hymns of praise led him to join man with the Divine Being in celebrating the glory and perfection of creation.

Trembleth. With the praise is united something of awe and fear, since the majesty and power of Him who made the world is so great. Its very existence is dependent on His will, and a glance from Him would be enough to shake it to its foundations and consume it. For "the smoky mountain tops," comp. Ps. cxlvi. 5, and see Note, Ps. cxliii. 8.

My meditation. Rather, my singing or my poetry.

Sinners be consumed. This imprecation, which comes in at the close of this otherwise uniformly glad hymn, has been variously excised. The truth seems to be that from a religious hymn of Israel, since religion and patriotism were one, the expression of the national feeling against heathen oppressors and apostates who sided with them could not well be absent, whatever its immediate subject and tone. But the poet touches even a profounder truth. The harmony of creation was soon broken by sin and the harmony of the song of creation would hardly be complete, or rather, would be false and unreal, did not a discord make itself heard. The form such a suggestion would take was conditioned by the nationality of the poet; the spirit of it brings this ancient hymn at its close into accord with the feeling of modern literature, as reflected in Wordsworth's well-known "Verses Written in Early Spring":—

"I heard a thousand blended notes, While in a grove I lay reclined, In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts bring sad thoughts to the mind, To her fair works did Nature link. The human soul that through me ran, And much it grieved my heart to think What Man has made of Man.

Bless thou the Lord. This is the first hallelujah in the psalter. Outside the psalter it is never found, and was therefore a liturgical expression coined in a comparatively late age. It is variously written as one or two words.

CV.

The motive of this historical psalm is plainly declared in verses 44 and 45, and the scope which the author allowed himself in the survey of the past appears in verse 11. He wishes this generation to remember that the continued possession of the Promised Land is contingent on obedience to the covenant God. In fact, the psalm is an elaboration of the charge so often repeated in the Book of Deuteronomy: "For the Lord thy God shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day" (Deut. xiv. 5, 4).

The psalm dates from a time prior to the composition of the first Book of Chronicles, for it forms part of the compilation of song in chapter xvi.; but there is no other indication by which to assign date or authorship. The conjecture is probable that it was compiled for litur- gic use soon after the re-settlement in the country after the Captivity. The parallel structure, which is of the synthetic kind, alone gives it a claim to rank with poetry.

Call upon his name. Literally, on (or, with) his name (comp. verse 3, "glory in "), with idea of

*In reality the power of sin to interfere with God's pleasure in his universe is present as an element of thought in Ps. xlii., as well as xiv. In the former it is implied that forgiveness and restoration are requisite before the harmony of the universe (verses 20–22) can become audible. The two psalms are also closely related in form.*
deeds among the people. (3) Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. (4) Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore. (5) Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; (6) O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

He is the Lord our God: his judgments are in all the earth. (7) He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.

Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: an everlasting covenant: (8) my servants shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell therein. (9) He is Israel's King; he is Israel's Lord; (10) the protector of his people, and let him go free. (11) He made him lord of his house, and ruler over his senators wisdom.

As referring to the patriarchs, the expression is not technical, since they were never, like priests, prophets, and kings in later times, actually anointed. But the terms being sometimes applied to the covenant people as a whole (see Ps. lxxix. 38, 51), its application to the founders of the race, especially those to whom the "promises came," is very just.

Proclamation as well as invocation. Symmachus has "proclaim his name." This verse, which is found word for word in Isaiah xii. 4, is apparently one of the recognised doxologies of the Hebrew Church.

Sing psalms.—Rather, play, sing unto Him, play unto Him; the usual choral direction.

Seek the Lord.—Better, Enquire after Jehovah and his power. The congregation is directed to the historical survey which follows. This sense seems settled by Ps. cxii. 2: "The works of Jehovah are great, envied into by all those who take delight in them." And hence the word "strength" must be understood as used generally of the manifestation of Divine power in the wondrous deeds now to be mentioned.

Called for a famine.—Comp. 2 Kings viii. 1; and in Ezek. xiv, we see how famine, with war and pestilence and noisome beasts, were regarded as Divine emissaries to be summoned and sent on His missions.

Staff of bread.—Lev. xxvi. 26. (See, too, Note on Ps. civ. 15.)

Repeats Joseph's own explanation, twice given, of the ways of Providence in his life (Gen. xlv. 5, 20). He was laid in iron.—The Prayer-Book Version, "the iron entered into his soul," has established itself so firmly among expressive proverbal sayings, that the mind almost resents the Authorised Version. The grammar of the clause does not decide its sense with certainty; for its syntax is rather in favour of the Prayer Book Version, though the feminine form of the verb makes in favour of the marginal rendering. Symmachus has, "his soul came into iron;" the LXX., "his soul passed through iron." The Vulg., however, has the other Version, "the iron passed through his soul."—first found in the Targum. The parallelism is in favour of the Authorised Version.

Until the time that his word came—i.e., until his (Joseph's) interpretation of the dreams was fulfilled (Gen. xli. 12). (For the expression "his word came," equal to "came to pass," comp. Judges xiii. 12.)

Word of the Lord.—As a different Hebrew word from that in the previous clause is used, better render, saying (or, oracle) of Jehovah.

Tried him.—Better, purified him; i.e., proved him innocent of the charge for which he was imprisoned. (For this sense of the verb, see Ps. xviii. 3, xviii. 30; Prov. xxx. 5, margin.) The psalmist means that by enabling him to foretell the dreams of Pharaoh's servants, God brought about the proof of his innocence.

Turned their heart.—So the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is throughout the historical narrative as to the term "prophet," the poet found it expressly conferred on Abraham in Gen. xx. 7.

As referring to the patriarchs, the expression is not technical, since they were never, like priests, prophets, and kings in later times, actually anointed. But the terms being sometimes applied to the covenant people as a whole (see Ps. lxxxix. 38, 51), its application to the founders of the race, especially those to whom the "promises came," is very just.
to hate his people, to deal subfilly with his servants. (20) a He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen. (27) They shewed 1 his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

(28) He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word. (29) He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. (30) Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. (31) He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and their ground brought forth lice in all their coasts. (32) He gave them hail for rain, and dark; and they rebelled not against his word.

(33) He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts. (34) He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and the locusts came, and devoured the fruit of their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. (35) He smote also the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.

(36) They shewed. (Comp. Ex. 16. 12.)

His signs.—Literally (as in margin), the words of his tokens; but it may also be rendered, "the details of his signs." (Comp. Ps. lxv. 3: "matters of iniquity," or, "details of sin.") So here, "details of signs," i.e., signs in detail or sequence, sign after sign.

Darkness.—The enumeration of the plagues omits the fifth and sixth, and begins with the ninth, and appends a close which, from the first, has troubled translators. Of whom is it said, "They rebelled not against his words"? Of the Egyptians it is not true; and to refer the words to Moses and Aaron, in contrast with their resistance to the Divine command at Massah and Meribah, is feeble. The LXX. and the Syriac solved the difficulty by rejecting the negative. (Comp. the Prayer Book Version.)

The simplest explanation is to take the verb as imperfect subjunctive: "He sent darkness, and made it dark, that they might not rebel against his word." But this fails to supply a reason for the position in the list of the ninth plague, and the suggested emendation of Mr. Burgess is so satisfactory in this respect, that it almost by itself carries conviction with it. By a very slight change, he obtains: "He sent darkness, and darkened them, that they might not discern his tokens;" taking deber in the same sense that it bears in verse 27. Thus the plague of darkness is, by a slight device of the poet, made to symbolise the moral blindness displayed by the Egyptians throughout.

(29) For the various terms used in describing the plagues, see Notes to the historical account in Exodus.

(37) He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

(38) Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

(39) He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.

(40) a The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. (41) a He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.

(42) For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. (43) And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with 5 gladness; (44) and gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people; (45) that they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CVI.

(1) a Praise ye the Lord. O give
A General Confession

PSALMS, CVI.

of Disobedience.

might make his mighty power to be known.

He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. (11) And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. (12) Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.

(12) a They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsels: (14) but they lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. (15) And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

(16) They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. (17) The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. (18) And a fire was kindled in

(5) The tone of this verse indicates a prospect of a speedy advent of God; and serves itself to give a probable date to the psalm.

We.—Regard must be paid to the fact that the confession includes the speaker and his generation, as well as the ancestors of the race. The psalm proceeds from the period of the Captivity, when the national conscience, or at all events that of the nobler part of the nation, was thoroughly alive to the sinfulness of idolatry.

(7) At the sea.—LXX., "going up to the sea."

(12) An epitome of Exod. xiv. 31 and xv.

(13-33) These twenty verses cover the desert wanderings, beginning with the discontented spirit mentioned in Exod. xv. 23.

(13) They waited not . . . They could not wait for the natural and orderly outcome of the counsel of God.

(14) Lusted.—See margin.

(15) Leanness.—The LXX., Vulg., and Syriac read "satiety." As Mr. Burgess points out, by accepting this reading, and giving nephesh its very usual signification of "lust" (comp. Ps. lixxviii. 18, where also the word rendered "request" occurs) we get two exact syntactical clauses:—

"And he gave them their request, And sent satiety for their lust."

(16-18) The poet has Num. xvii. 7-15, in his mind.

(16) Saint.—The holy one. The complaint of the disaffected party was that Moses and Aaron usurped this title, which belonged to all the congregation (Num. xvi. 3-6).

(17) The omission of Korah is in keeping with the historical accounts, which indicate a difference both in the attitude of Korah and his family from that of Dathan and Abiram, and also a difference of fate. (Comp. Num. xvi. 23, seqq.; Deut. xi. 6; Num. xxvi. 10.)

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chanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

(2) Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?

(3) Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.

(4) Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; (5) that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

(6) We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. (7) Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they stood not thy wonders in Egypt; they knew not, neither remembered they the multitude of thy mercies; (8) but provoked him at the sea, and at the Red sea.

(9) Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

(10) He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. (11) And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. (12) Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.

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their company; the flame burned up the wicked.

(19) a They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. (20) Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass; (21) They forgot God their salvation, which had done great things in Egypt; (22) wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.

(23) b Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.

(24) c Yea, they despaired the pleasant land, they believed not his word: (25) c but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lorn. (26) Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: (27) c to overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

(28) d They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. (29) Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them. (30) Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. (31) And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.

(32) f They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: (33) because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. (34) They did not destroy the nations, (35) concerning whom the Lorn commanded them: (36) but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. (37) And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. (38) Yea, they they

(19) In Horeb.—This expression, which is Deuteronimic (see Deut. iv. 15, v. 2, &c.), shows that Deut. ix. 8—12, as well as Exod. xxxii., was before the poet.

(20) Their glory.—i.e., Jehovah, as shown by Jer. ii. 11.

Similitude.—This is also a Deuteronimic word (Deut. iv. 16, 18), meaning originally "structure," from a root meaning "to build," and so "form," "model."

(21) Forgat God their salvation.—With evident allusion to Deut. vi. 12.

(22) Land of Ham.—A synonym for Egypt, peculiar to the historic psalms (Psis. cxvii. 51, cv. 23, 27).

(23) Stood before him in the breach...—This is generally explained after Ezek. xxiii. 30, where undoubtedly it is an image taken from the defence of a besieged town. (Comp. Ezek. xiii. 5.) But it is possible that we should render, "Had not Moses stood before him (i.e., submissively; see Gen. xlii. 46; Deut. i. 35) in the breaking forth (of his anger)," since the verse from which the substantive here used comes is the one employed (Exod. xix. 23), "lest the Lord break forth upon them." So the LXX. seem to have understood the passage, since they render here by the same word, which in verse 30 does duty for "plague." (Comp. Vulg., refractio.)

(24—27) The rebellion that followed the report of the spies.

(25) Lifted up his hand.—Not to strike, but to give emphasis to the oath pronounced against the sinners. (See Exod. vi. 8, margin; Deut. xxxii. 40; comp. Ps. exlv. 8.) The substance of the oath here referred to is given in Num. xiv. 28—35.

(26) Ovtherow.—This verse is evidently copied from Ezek. xx. 23, but the psalmist has either intentionally or accidentally changed the prophet's word "scatter" into "overthrow," just used in verse 26. The error, if an error, is as old as the LXX. version.

(27—31) The licentious character of the cult of Baalpeor in Num. xxv. is expressed in the word "joined," better, yoked. LXX. and Vulg., "were initiated," i.e., by prostitution.

(28) Ate the sacrifices of the dead.—i.e., the sacrifices of a dead divinity. Num. xxv. 2, "and they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods," shows that here we must not see any allusion to necromantic rites, such as are referred to in Deut. xviii. 11; Isa. viii. 19, and the parallelism shows that the "god" in question is Baal-peor.

(29) Executed judgment.—The Prayer Book has "prayed," following the Chaldec and Syriac. The LXX. and Vulg. have "appeased."

(30) The insurrection against Moses and Aaron at Meribah Kadesh, entailing on the Lawgiver the forfeiture for himself of entering into Canaan. (See references in the margin.)

(31) The insurrection against Moses and Aaron at Meribah Kadesh, entailing on the Lawgiver the forfeiture for himself of entering into Canaan. (See references in the margin.)

(32) They provoked his spirit.—The natural interpretation is to take this of Moses' spirit. So LXX. and Vulg., "they embittered his spirit." The usage of the phrase is, however, in favour of referring the words to the temper of the people towards God, "they rebelled against His spirit."

(33) Spake unadvisedly.—Compare the same verb with the same addition, "with the lips," in Lev. v. 4. This interpretation of the fault of Moses is partial. A comparison of all the historical narratives shows that it was rather for a momentary lapse into the despairing spirit of the people, than for addressing them as rebels, that Moses was excluded from the Promised Land.

(34—36) The national sin after the settlement in Canaan.

(37) Devils.—Literally, lords, meaning, of course, the false deities. The word is, no doubt, chosen to represent the meaning of the heathen gods' names,
sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

The true explanation probably lies intermediate between ought, according to the multitude of his mercies. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.

Book V.

PSALM CVII.

(1) Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

(2) Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west.

(3) For this doxology see Note, Ps. cxi.

The sea-piece (verses 23-32).

The true explanation probably lies intermediate between ought, according to the multitude of his mercies. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

The piece beginning at verse 23 is not only in form very different from the first, but bears marks of greatly inferior poetical power. (See Note to verse 33.)

(1) For this doxology see Note, Ps. cxi.

(2) Redeemed of the Lord.—See for this grand expression, for which so high a destiny was prepared, Isa. xlii. 13; and comp. chaps. lxiii. 4, xxxv. 9.

(3) Gathered them.—The usual prophetical word for the Restoration. (See references in margin, and with the verse comp. Isa. xlix. 12.)
from the west, from the north, and from the south. (4) They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. (5) Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. (6) Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. (7) And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

(9) Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (8) For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

(10) Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; (11) because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: (12) therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. (13) Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. (14) He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

(15) Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (16) For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

(17) Fools because of their transgressions,
and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. (18) Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. (19) Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. (20) He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

(22) Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (22) and let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

(23) They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; (24) these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. (25) For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. (26) They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. (27) They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. (28) Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

Are at their wit's end.—An admirable paraphrase of the Hebrew, "all their wisdom swallowed itself up." The poet, from the expressions employed, is possibly writing under the influence of Ps. xxxii. 14; but he has evidently himself been to sea and experienced the dangers and discomforts he so graphically describes. Ovid (Trist. i. 2) has been quoted in illustration:—

"Me miserum, quanti montes volcuntur aquarium Jamjam tactiuros sidera summa putes Quantae dictus sub limo equire valorum Jamjam tacturas Tarturus micro putes Rector in incerto est, nec quid fugiatve petatve Invenit: ambigua et stipit ipsa mala." See on this passage Addison in Spectator, No. 489.

(29) Then they cry.—There is a saying, "Qui nescit orare, discat navigare."

(30) Storm-tossed mariners.

(31) They that go down to the sea.—An expression so exactly opposite to the ancient equivalent for "embarking" that we feel we have the very Hebrew feeling. From the high lands of Judaea it was a literal descent to the shores of the Mediterranean. So Jonah went down to Joppa (Jonah i. 3). (Comp. Isa. xlii. 10.)

(32) Do business.—Probably with allusion to commercial enterprise.

(33) He commandeth.—Literally, He speaks. The Almighty flat, as in Genesis i.

(34) They mount up.—

"Tollum in ocelum curvato gurgite, et idem Subducta ad Manes inos descedimus unda." Virgil: En. iii. 564.

Their soul is melted.—The recollection of seasickness is the best comment on this and the next verse.

(35) Reel to and fro.—Or more exactly, spin round and round.

(36) He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. (37) Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

(38) Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (39) Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

(40) He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground; (41) a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. (42) He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. (43) And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; (44) and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. (45) He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

(46) Again, they are ministered and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. (47) He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to be a pool of water in the midst of the earth; to confusion and destruction among princes; to famine and destruction to the land.
The Psalmist's Confidence  

PSALMS, CVIII.—CIX.  

In God's Help.

1 Or, void place.
2 Or, after.
3 Or, else.

PSALM CVIII.

A Song or Psalm of David.

(1) O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. (2) Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. (3) I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

(4) For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. (5) Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth. (6) That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.

(7) God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. (8) Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; (9) Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.

(10) Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? (11) Will not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts? (12) Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. (13) Through God we shall do valiantly: for he is that shall tread down our enemies.

PSALM CIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

(1) Hold not thy peace, O God of my joy of returning Israel (verses 30—41). But here the thought is that in the reverses of fortune, which even the chosen nation must be prepared for, God will intervene to protect and save. But the construction is very awkward, owing to the mode in which, in verse 40, two clauses from Job xlii. 21 and 24 are introduced.

(42) Again the dependence on the book of Job is seen. (See marginal reference.)

(43) The psalm ends in the style, and almost in the very words, of the prophecy of Hosea. (Comp. Hos. xiv. 9.)

CVIII.

This psalm is taken with some variations from Ps. lvi. and lx. verses 1—5 being from Ps. lvi. 7—11; verses 6—13 being from Ps. lx. 7—14, where see Notes.

The principal variations are in verse 3, Jehovah for Adonai.

In verse 6 the construction is changed to suit the new arrangement and the variation in verse 10, on which see Note, Ps. lx. 8. For the authorship of the parts of which the psalm is composed, see their Introductions.

The ascription of the composite production to David furnishes a strong presumption against the historical value of the inscriptions.

CIX.

The peculiar horror of the imprecations in this extraordinary psalm does not lie in the dreadful consequences they invoke. Shakespeare puts curses equally fierce and terrible into Timon's mouth:


Nor is this horror due to the fact, assuming it to be a fact, that these imprecations are not general in their direction, like the misanthrope's curses, but are levelled at a single individual, for the passions of revenge and hatred intensify by contraction of their range. The whole difficulty of the psalm lies in the fact that it was, as the inscription shows, actually, if not primarily, intended for use in the public service of the sanctuary. But this very use at once divests the psalm of one of the greatest sources of difficulty, its personal character. Whatever its origin, whoever the original object of the imprecations, it is certain that they became public, ecclesiastical, national.

It is quite possible that from the first the writer spoke in the name of the persecuted nation against some oppressor heathen prince, such as Antiochus Epiphanes. Certainly, when sung by the congregation it expressed not an individual longing for revenge, but all the pent-up feeling—religious abhorrence, patriotic hatred, moral detestation—of the suffering community.

The continuance of its recitation in Christian churches opens up another question, and has, in a great measure, been the motive for the various apologetic explanations that have been started for the psalm. It is strange that even yet the old theory, which justifies the language of the imprecations as prophetically the language of Christ, should find advocates. The "quotations" theory is noticed in the Notes. On the quotation of the imprecations by St. Peter, see Notes, New Testament Commentary, Acts i. 20, 21. The parallelism is synthetic.

Title.—"To the chief musician." (See Note to title of Ps. iv.)

(1) God of my praise.—That is, God to whom as covenant God it was a privilege to make tehillah. (See Deut. x. 20, 21, where Jehovah is said to be "the praise" of those who "swear by His name." Comp. also Ps. cvi. 2, 3, and Note, and Ps. xxxiii. 1. Perhaps "God of my glory or boast" would more nearly give
praise; (3) for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. (4) They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. (5) For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. (6) And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. (7) When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. (8) Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

Praise; (9) let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. (10) Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. (11) Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. (12) Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. (13) Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. (14) Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of the force of the original. The psalmist prays that Jehovah may not make his confident glorifying in his heart into a stumbling block for him.

Of the deceitful.—Properly, as in margin, of deceit, consequently, to make the two expressions alike, it is proposed to read, instead of “mouth of the wicked” (properly, of a wicked man), “mouth of wickedness.” In any case the best English equivalent will be, “a wicked mouth and a deceitful mouth.” “A blow with a word strikes deeper than a blow with a sword” (Whiston).

Spoken against me.—Rather (comp. Ps. xii. 3), talked with me.

For my love...—i.e., in return for my love I give myself unto prayer. For a concise expression of the same kind as “I pray,” see Exx. 7, “I peace.” Of course the psalmist means, that in the face of all the taunts and reproaches of his maligners, he simply and naturally has recourse to prayer, and, as the context seems to indicate, prayer for them.

Set thou a wicked man over him.—This reading is abundantly confirmed by Lev. xxvi. 16; Num. iv. 27, xxvii. 16; Jer. xv. 3, li. 27, against Hitzig’s proposed “Pronounce against him—guilty,” which also would only anticipate verse 7. (Comp., too, the noun “office” in verse 8, from the same verb.) The wish expressed is that the persons indicated may fall into the hands of an unscrupulous judge. If, however, we are to think of the divine judgment, then this clause must be taken as exactly parallel to the next: “Appoint a wicked man against him.” Here the imprecatory part of the psalm begins, and it has been ingeniously argued that the whole of it (verses 6—20) is a quotation, giving, not the psalmist’s curse on the man himself, but as forwards, and the root as well as forwards, and the root as well. Satan.—By no means here a proper name, though the LXX. and Vulg. have diabolus. The use of the same word in verses 4, 20, 29 is decisive on giving it the general meaning, “accuser” (as in margin) here; even though without the article. Satan is used for the tempting angel in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, and in Zech. iii. 1. We find the same post, “at the right hand,” assigned to the accuser. An unscrupulous judge and an adversary as accuser, these are the substance of this imprecation.

When he shall be judged.—Literally, in his being judged. (See margin.) The meaning is, “may he go out of court a condemned man.”

Let his prayer become sin.—If this clause stood by itself, the most natural way would be to give “prayer” and “sin” the usual sense, and begin with the horrible hope that the man’s prayer to God for mercy would be reckoned as “sin.” That such was the result of the performance of religious rites by a wicked man was, it is true, a thought familiar to the Hebrew. (See, in addition to the marginal reference, Prov. xv. 8, xxii. 27.) But the judgment just spoken of is that of an earthly tribunal. Hence we must reader here, let his prayer be an offence, that is, instead of procuring him a mitigation of his sentence, let it rather provoke the unscrupulous judge to make it heavier. For sin in this sense of offence, see Eccles. x. 4, and comp. 1 Kings i. 21.

Office.—See Note, verse 6. Evidently some post of power and influence.

Children...—wife.—It is one of the sadly peculiar features of this series of curses that the resentment of the imprecator cannot satisfy itself on the person of his foe, but fastens also on his innocent descendants. To invoke a speedy death does not content him; he must feast his anger with the thought of the fatherless children and desolate widow.

Be continually vagabonds.—“Wander and wander about” would better reproduce the original.

Desolate places.—Rather, ruins. They are imagined creeping out of the ruins of their homes to beg. But there was a different reading, followed by the LXX. and Vulg., “let them be driven out of their homes.” This reading involves but a slight literal change. Comp.

“Worse evil yet I pray for on my spouse: Let him still live, through strange towns roam in want, flailed, suspected, cowering, with no home.”

Let the extortioner.—Better, let the usurer lay traps to catch all that he hath. So Timon: “Let prisons swallow them, debts wither them to nothing."

Posternity.—The Hebrew theory of the Divine government was, that if ruin did not overtake the sinner himself, it would fall on his posterity; his name would be forgotten, and his race extinct.

Fathers.—The sweet of vengeance lies in its completeness. The curse must strike backwards as well as forwards, and their name and race be destroyed. Undoubtedly the Mosaic Law, which proclaimed that the “iniquity of the fathers should be visited on the children,” suggested the form of the imprecation.
Sin of his mother.—Is the necessity of the parallelism sufficient to account for this mention of the mother, or is some definite circumstance in the poet's thought? The theory which makes this portion of the psalm (verses 6—20), a quotation of curses really uttered by Shimei against David, finds an allusion to the Moabitish descent on the mother's side. (Comp. the Rabbinical explanation of Ps. li. 5.)

Poor.—The Hebrew word thus rendered, viz., 'eni, has suggested a reference to the murder of the high priest Onias (2 Macc. iv. 34—36).

Let.—The optatives in the English are wrong. These verses express facts, and the imprecation follows in verse 19. Render—

He loved cursing; and it comes:
He delighted not in blessing; and it departs;
Yea, he clothed himself in cursing as with his cloak,
And it came like water into his bowels,
And like oil into his bones;
May it be, &c.

Comp. the proverb, "Curses, like chickens, always come home to roost."

The fabled shirt of Nessus, which ate into the mighty form of Heracles, has suggested itself to commentators in illustration of this image. In a good sense perhaps it is a favourite one with the Hebrews. (See Isa. xi. 5.)

Verse 19 has struck most commentators as an anti-climax, and the quotation theory is supported by this fact; but imprecations show their impotence in this way; the angry soul can never be quite "unpacked with curses;" the language of passion exhausts itself too soon, and a violent speech often dies away in unintelligible mutterings or even gestures of rage.

Reward.—Either "work" or "wages." The LXX. and Vulg. take it in the former sense, "This is their work who, &c."

Do thou for me.—It is almost impossible in English to retain the emphasis of this appeal, made still more emphatic by the sudden change from imprecation on an enemy to prayer for mercy towards self.

Shadow when it declineth.—Literally, a lengthened shade. (Comp. Ps. cii. 11, and see Note, Song of Sol. ii. 17.) When the day declines the shadow lengthens, it becomes longer and longer, till it vanishes in the universal darkness. Thus does the life of the suffering generation pass away.

Tossed up and down.—Better, tossed or shaken out, as from the lap. So LXX. and Vulg. (See Neh. v. 13, where the same verb is three times used.) The grasshopper was an emblem of timidity (Job xxxix. 20).

Falleth of fatness.—Literally, has failed me from fat, i.e., has dwindled away.

(26—31) It is impossible not to notice the anti-climax in these verses, if they are spoken by the same person as verses 16—20, and directed against the same enemies, of whom the one there singled out is the prominent figure. It is not only that the effect is weakened by the change back to the plural number, but the same imprecations are repeated in a diluted and modified form. But perhaps in verse 28 we should drop the optative, and read, "they will curse, but thou dost bless."

Mantle.—Heb., meil, which was also a garment worn over the tunic.

For he . . .—Jehovah is the poor man's advocate, just as an adversary was the wicked man's accuser.

PSALM CX.

A Psalm of David.

(1) The a Lord said unto my Lord, Sit...
The Divine Triumph

PSALMS, CX.

out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

(2) The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength

David (Matt. xxii. 41-45; Mark xii. 35-37; Luke xx. 41-44). But it is now, even among the most orthodox, an admitted fact that, in matters of literature and criticism, our Lord did not withdraw Himself from the conditions of His time, and that the application He made of current opinions and beliefs does not necessarily stamp them with the seal of Divine authorisation.

The prominent thought in the psalm is the formal union in one person of the royal dignity and the priesthood. Now all the kings of Israel and Judah at times assumed priestly functions, but only twice in the history can the offices be said to have been formally combined—in the person of Joshua son of Josedeck (Zech. xi. 12, 13), and in that of the Asmonean Jonathan and his successors (1 Macc. xi. 57). The latter reference is preferable. The impression left by the psalm is exactly in accordance with the history of the Asmoneans. One whom Jehovah has declared by solemn oath a priest: one, i.e. in whom the priesthood was indubitably and firmly fixed, is exalted at Jehovah’s right hand as a king, and, as a warrior, rides on with Jehovah to triumph. And the choice of Melchizedek, as type (see Note, verse 4), does not arise from any idea of contrasting his order with that of Aaron, but from the necessity of going back to him for an instance of actual and formal priesthood combined in the same person, with kingly rank. In 1 Macc. xiv. 41 the very expression of the psalm, “high priest for ever,” is used of Simon.

The abrupt ending of this short psalm has led many critics to regard it as a fragment. The parallelism is very lax.

(1) The Lord said...

The poet here speaks in his own person, addressing the King, to whom the oracle has just been announced.

Rod of thy strength—i.e., the sceptre, which is the emblem of royal power and sway. (See Jer. xlviii. 31.) The word “staff” is different from that rendered “rod,” in Ps. ii. 9; and the image is not, as there, necessarily of a weapon of destruction, but only of kingly rule, as in Ps. xiv. 6.

Rule thou...—It is better to take these words as a quotation, and understand them as spoken of Jehovah. In the picture before us the Divine King seats the earthly monarch by His side, and takes His sceptre from his hand, stretches it in token of the wide empire he is to administer from Zion, where they sit enthroned, over the surrounding nations, and bids him assume the offered sway, in spite of the foes that surround him at present. The expression “in the midst,” instead of “over,” implies the condition under which the sovereignty was to be assumed, as also does the rest of the psalm, proceeding to describe the wars by which ultimate triumph over the hostile tribes would be secured.

(3) Thy people shall be willing in the

This difficult verse runs, literally, Thy people willingmesses (or, willing offerings) in the day of thy force in holy attire, from the womb of morning dew of thy youth.

The first clause is tolerably clear. The word rendered force means either “strength” or “an army;” and the noun willingnesses appears as a verb in Judges v. 9, to express the alacrity with which the northern clans mustered for battle. We may therefore translate: Thy people will be willing on thy muster-day.

As to the next two words there is a variation in the text. Many MSS. read, by the slightest change of a Hebrew letter, “on the holy mountains” (this was also, according to one version, the reading of Symmachus and Jerome), and, adopting the reading, we have a
The Judgment to come

PSALMS, CXI.

upon the Heathen.

day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

(4) The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (5) The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. (6) He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. (7) He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head.

PSALM CXI.

(1) "Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the picture of the people muster ing for battle with alacrity on the mountains round Zion, under the eye of Jehovah Himself, and in obedience to the outstretched sceptre.

The second clause is not so clear. By themselves the words "from the womb of morning" "dew of thy youth," would naturally be taken as a description of the vigour and freshness of the person addressed: "thine is the morning dew of youth." With the image compare—

"The meek-eyed morn appears; mother of the dews." THOMSON.

(Comp. Job xxxviii. 28.)

But the parallelism directs us still to the gathering of the array, and the image of the dew was familiar to the language as an emblem at once of multitude (2 Sam. xvii. 11, 12); of freshness and vigour (Ps. cxiii. 3; Hosea xiv. 5), and was especially applied to Israel as a nation in immediate relation to Jehovah, coming and going among the nations at His command (Micah v. 7). Here there is the additional idea of brightness—the array of young warriors, in their bright attire, recalling the multitudinous glancing array of the formal army, and in the pontificate of the king whom the first verse placed in immediate relation to Jehovah, coming and going among the nations at His command (Micah v. 7).

The previous history of Israel itself offered no example of the formal union of kingly and priestly offices in one person. It first appears in idea in Zech. vi. 12, 13; in actual fact in the pontificate of Jonathan (1 Macc. x. 21). It is true that the royal and priestly functions were sometimes united, especially in the case of David, and in 2 Sam. viii. 18, David's sons are called "priests" (in English version, "chief rulers;" margin, or princes). It was therefore necessary to go back to Melchizedek, in whom history recognised this sanctioned and permanent union (Gen. xiv. 18). For the various points brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews vii. vi., see New Testament Commentary.

(5) The Lord at thy right hand. — We are naturally tempted to understand this as still of the king whom the first verse placed at Jehovah's right hand. But the word for Lord here is Adonai, which is nowhere else used except of God. Moreover, God throughout has as yet appeared as the active agent. It is He who stretched out the sceptre and conferred the office of priest; and hitherto the king has been the person addressed. It is therefore necessary still to consider him as addressed, and suppose that the change of position of Jehovah from the king's right hand to his left is simply due to the usage of the language. To sit at the right hand was an emblem of honour, to stand at the right hand was a figure of protecting might (Pss. vi. 8, cix. 31); and the imagery of a battle into which the song now plunges caused the change of expression.

(6) He shall judge.—Comp. Ps. ix. 8, &c.

He shall fill.—The construction is peculiar, and in the Hebrew for heathen and corpses there is a play on words. A slight change in the vowel pointing gives a better construction than is obtained by understanding any word as the Authorised Version does, and critics generally: He judges among the heathen fulness of corpses. At first the poet meant to write, "He judges among the heathen fulness of judgment" (comp. Job xxxvi. 17), but, for the sake of the play on the sound, changed his words to "fulness of corpses."

He shall wound the heads.—Literally, crushes a head over a vast land, where "head" means, as in Judges vii. 16; 20, a band or host of men. The picture is of a vast battle-field with heaps of slain. Others understand, "the chief or master of a wide land." (Comp. Hab. iii. 14, "head of his villages."

(7) Drink ... lift up. —The victorious leader, "faint yet pursuing" (Judges viii. 4), pauses at the stream that crosses his path, and thus refreshed, with head once more erect, continues his pursuit of the foe. Such is undoubtedly the meaning of this verse, and we need not suppose a sudden change of subject, as some critics do, as if the picture representing a thirsty warrior were unworthy of Jehovah. Poetry knows nothing of such timidity, and with the grand scene of Isa. liii. 1—6, of the hero stained with blood, we need not hesitate to admit this further detail so true to life, even if we had not in Pss. ix. and cxi. images of a still more homely type.

CXI.

Psalms cxii. and cxiii. should be read closely together, the one being a pendant of the other. They are both acrostics of at once the simplest and most perfect construction, each clause (not, as usual, each verse of two or more clauses) exhibiting the alphabetical arrangement. There are therefore exactly twenty-two clauses, nearly of three words each. In order to limit the number of verses to ten—a perfect number—the last two verses in each psalm are arranged as triplets.

The close relation of the two psalms is also exhibited in their subject. The first exhibits Jehovah in covenant with man; the second, man in covenant with Jehovah. The one sings the Divine praise in view of the kindness God has shown to Israel; in the second, the feeling of the just man—i.e., the Israelite faithful to the covenant, is
PSALMS, CXII. and Gracious Works.

(1) Praise ye the Lord.—This short doxology does not strictly form part of the psalm. The alphabetical arrangement begins with “I will praise,” &c.

Assembly.—See Note on Ps. xxi. 14.

(2) Sought out,—i.e., they are the object of meditation and enquiry. (See Note, Ps. iv. 4.) The psalmist was no doubt thinking of historical proofs of Jehovah’s goodness to the chosen race, but his words are capable of a wide range. The best illustration of them may be found in the writings in which Mr. Ruskin warns us of the danger of insensibility to natural beauty.

(4) He hath made .—Literally, He hath made a memorial for His wonderful works, as in Josh. iv. 7, &c.

(5) He hath given.—Better, He gave.

Meat.—The word often means “proaj,” from its being torn as by a wild beast, but it is used in Prov. xxxi. 15. Mal. iii. 10, in the simple sense of food. (Comp. also the verb, Prov. xxx. 8.) There need not therefore be any allusion to the spoils taken in the Canaanitish wars, though the next verse makes this exceedingly probable. (See Sir G. Grove’s remarks; article “Meat” in Smith’s Bible Dictionary.)

(10) A good understanding .—Better, a good estimation have all they that do them. The parallelism here, as the context of Prov. iii. 4, decides for this rendering against that of the margin, “a good success.” Not only is it the beginning of wisdom, but righteouness wins good esteem. For by his praise we must certainly understand the praise of the good man.

CXII.

(3) Mighty,—In the sense of wealthy, as in Ruth ii. 1.

(5) His righteousness endureth for ever.—The parallelism in verse 9, where the same clause is repeated, seems to require for righteousness the limited sense which the Talmud gives the word—viz., liberality or beneficence. See also Dan. iv. 27, in the LXX. Still the saying is true in its widest sense. “There is nothing, no, nothing; innocent or good, that dies or is forgotten; let us hold to that faith, or none” (Dickens).

(4) Ariseth .—The Hebrew verb is commonly used of the sunrise. (Comp. Ps. cxviii. 11; Isa. lxviii. 8.) For the good man the darkest night of trouble and sorrow will have a dawn of hope.

He is gracious .—The Authorised Version is right in making this a description of the upright man’s character. The construction certainly at first appears strange, since “the upright” is in the plural, while the epithets in this clause resume the singular of verse 3. This may be best explained by treating the first clause of this verse as a familiar proverbial saying, which the poet introduces, as a quotation, without changing the number to suit his own construction.

(5) A good man.—Rather, happy is the man who gives and lends, good being here not used in a moral sense, but meaning prosperous.

He will guide .—Rather, he will gain his cause in (the) judgment. So apparently the LXX, and Vulg. Others, “he will sustain his affairs by justice.” The verb primarily means “to measure,” but in the construction here used has the sense of “sustains.” (See Gen. xlv. 11, xlvii. 12, l. 21, where the Authorised Version has “nourish.”) The meaning is confirmed by the parallelism of the next verse.

(6) See Ps. xv. 5; Prov. x. 7.

The story of Job, when the messengers of ill succeeded one another so fast, is an illustration of the
God to be Praised for

PSALMS, CXIII.—CXIV. His Glory and Condescension.

afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. (9) His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. (10) He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

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

PSALM CXIII.

(1) Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. (2) Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. (3) From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised.

(4) The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

(5) Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!

(6) He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; (7) that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. (8) He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CXIV.

(1) When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of

truth of this verse. “A good conscience before God” is the best “armour against fate.”

“Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful.”—Shakespeare: Measure for Measure.

(9) Until he see.—See Note, Ps. lix. 10, and comp. Ps. exili. 8.

(10) Who hath dispersed.—The conjugation of the verb indicates a frequent and customary action. For St. Paul’s use of this verse, see New Test. Com. 2 Cor. ix. 9.

His horn.—For the image of the exalted horn see Note, Ps. lxv. 5.

Gnash.—See Ps. xxxv. 16.

Melt away.—As we say, “Consume with vexation.”

CXIII.

This psalm begins the Hallel, or as sometimes called, the great Hallel—though that name more properly is confined to Ps. cxxxvi.—recited at the great Jewish feasts. It is partly modelled on Hannah’s song. Its form is regular.

(1) Ye servants of the Lord—i.e., Israel. (See Ps. lix. 36.)

(2) Comp. Ps. viii. 1, &c.

(3) Humbleth himself.—Contrast this condescension with the indifference to human joys and sorrows which heathen deities were said to show.

(7–9) See 1 Sam. ii. 8, from which the verses are taken; and comp. Luke i. 52.

So the heathen poet sang of Jove (Hor.: Odes i., xxxiv., xxxv.)(7) Dunghill.—Literally, a heap of rubbish. “Before each village in Haera there is a place where the household heap up the sweepings of their stalls, and it gradually reaches a great circumference and a height which rises far above the highest buildings of the village.” “The mezebea serves the inhabitants of the district as a watch-tower, and on close oppressive evenings as a place of assembly, because there is a current of air on the height. There the children play about the whole day long; there the forsaken one lies who, having been seized with some horrible malady, is not

allowed to enter the dwellings of men, by day asking alms of the passers by, and at night hiding himself among the ashes which the sun has warmed.”—Delitzsch’s Commentary on the Book of Job, ii. 152, with Note by Wetzstein. It was on the mezebea that, according to tradition, Job sat.

(8) He maketh.—See margin. Motherhood alone assured the wife of a fixed and dignified position in her husband’s house. The quotation from Hannah’s song suggested the allusion to her story. We are no doubt right in taking this joyful mother as emblematic of the nation itself restored to prosperity and joy.

CXIV.

This psalm is among the most artistic in the whole collection. Though ending so abruptly as to suggest that it may be a fragment (the LXX., Syriac, Arabic versions, and some MSS. capriciously join it to the following psalm) it is in form perfect. The versification is regular, and the stanzas as complete and finished as in a modern hymn, consisting each of four lines, and presenting each a perfect example of synthetic parallelism. (See Introduction, § 5.) But a higher art displays itself here. The reserve with which the Divine name is withheld, till everything is prepared for its utterance, and the vivid manner in which each feature of the rapid scene is flashed upon us by a single word, so that a whole history is accurately presented in a few graphic touches, achieve a dramatic and a lyric triumph of the most remarkable kind. Besides the historic interest of the psalm as part of the Hallel, and of the hymn sung with Christ before His passion, it has a new interest from Dante, who makes it the passage song of the spirits into Purgatory:

“Upon the storm stood the celestial pilot;
Beatitude seemed written in his face,
And more than a hundred spirits sat within.
In Exit Israel de Egypto: They chanted all together in one voice,
With whatso in that psalm is after written.”—Purg. 43 (Longfellow).

(1) When Israel went out.—LXX., in “the Exodus of Israel.”

A people of strange language.—LXX., rightly, a barbarous people. Since the Hebrew word, like the
strange language; (2) Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.  
(3) a The sea saw it, and fled: b Jordan was driven back. (4) The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. 
(5) What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? (6) Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs? 
(7) Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; (8) c which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

PSALM CXV. 
(1) Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. 
(2) Wherefore should the heathen say, d Where is now their God? (3) But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. 
(4) d Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. (5) They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; (6) they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; (7) they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. 
(6) They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. 
(9) O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. (10) O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he is the sanctuary of Israel.

Greek, implies a certain scorn or ridicule, which ancient races generally had for those speaking another language. To this day the Russians call the Germans "dumb." 
(2) Judah was.—Better, became. The feminine verb shows that the country is intended, and not the tribe, and the parallelism directs us to think not of the territory of the tribe of Judah alone, but of the whole country. Notice the art with which the name of God is reserved, and the simple pronoun, His, used. (Comp. Exod. xix. 6.) 
(3) Fleed.—The Authorized Version weakens the effect by rendering "it was driven back." (See Josh. iii. 16.) The scene presented is of the "descending stream" (the words employed seem to have a special reference to that peculiar and most significant name of the "Jordan") not parted asunder, as we generally fancy, but, as the psalm expresses it, "turned backwards" (Stanley, Jewish Church, i. 229). 
(4) Skipped.—The Hebrew word thus rendered is translated "dance" in Eccles. iii. 4. (See Ps. xviii. 7.) Exodus xix. 18 was no doubt in the poet's thought, but the leaping of the hills formed part of every theophany. 
(7) Tremble.—Literally, be in travail. This answer to his question is introduced with consummate art. Well may the mountains tremble, when it is the Lord of all the earth, the God of Jacob, who is present. Notice that till now the mention of the Divine power which wrought the deliverance was kept in suspense.

CXV. 
That this is a late liturgical psalm all commentators agree, but the precise period of its composition cannot be ascertained. The belief that death cut the Hebrew off from all the privileges of the covenant seems to forbid so late a date as the Maccahabæan age, though a psalm so priestly in its character, and which apparently celebrates some martial success, would else be appropriately ascribed to the Asmonean period. The psalm has a historic interest for Englishmen, having been chanted by order of Henry V. after the battle of Agincourt. The choric arrangement is indicated by the change of address.

(1) Not unto us ... This rejection of all self-praise is implied in all Hebrew poetry. 
Mercy ... truth ...—Both a distinct reference to the covenant. Both these covenanted blessings were assailed by the heathen taunt, "Where is now their God?" It is difficult for us to reproduce in imagination the apparent triumph, which the idolater, who could point to his deity, felt he had over the worshipper of the invisible God, when outward events seemed to be going against the latter. But we may estimate the strength of the conviction, which even under the apparent withdrawal of Divine favour, could point to the heavens as the abode of the Invisible, and to misfortune itself as a proof of the existence and power of One who could in everything do what pleased him. 
(4—8) This passage cannot compare with the magnificent irony of Isa. xliv. 9—20, but there is still a noticeable vein of sarcasm running through it, visible even in the original than in the English. (Comp. Ps. cxxxi. 15—18.) 
(7) Neither speak they.—The Hebrew implies not only the want of articulate speech, but of utterance at all. 
(9) Every one that trusteth ...—"Who would in gold or stone a sacred face Makes not the god; but he who asks his grace." 
(9) O Israel.—There is consummate art in this sudden change of address. It is like the pointed application of some general truth in a sermon. It is possible that in the liturgie use a change in the music was made here, the Levites and choir turning to the people with a loud burst of song.

He is their help and their shield.—The original form of this motto of trust appears in Ps. xxxiii. 20. Here the change of person suggests some musical arrangement. Apparently one part of the choir, or, it may be, one officiating priest, addressed successively the whole congregation with the charge, "trust in Jehovah," and each time the full choir took up the refrain, "He is their helper and shield," repeating to the priest the ground on which he urged confidence and loyalty. Then in verses 12 and 13 congregation and choir join, changing to the first person.
is their help and their shield. (11) Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.

(12) The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron. (13) He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. (14) The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children. (15) Ye are blessed of the Lord which made heaven and earth.

(16) The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s; but the earth hath he given to the children of men. (17) The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence. (18) But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the Lord.

PSALM CXVI.

(1) I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

(2) Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

(3) The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell grats hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

(4) Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

(5) Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. (6) The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. (7) Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. (8) For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

(9) I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. (10) I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: (11) I said in my haste, "All men are liars.

(13) Them that fear the Lord—i.e., all Israel.

(14) The Lord shall increase.—More literally, "Jehovah shall heap blessings on you, on you and on your children."

(17, 18) The connection of these verses with the rest of the psalm is far from plain. Why the psalmist should suddenly be struck with the dreadful thought that death broke the covenant relationship, and silenced prayer and praise, is not easy to see. Was the psalm first chanted after some victory? and was this suggested by the sight of the slain, who, though they had helped to win the triumph, could yet have no share in the prayers that were ascending to Jehovah?

(17) Silence.—The land of silence is, of course, Sheol, the under-world. (So the LXX., "Hades.")

CXVI.

The late date of composition of this psalm is shown both by the presence of Aramaic forms and the use made of earlier portions of the psalter. It was plainly a song of thanksgiving, composed to accompany the offerings made after some victory. The most important question arising from it is whether it is personal or the voice of the community. As we have seen in other cases a strong individual feeling does not exclude the adoption of a psalm to express the feelings of the people of Israel as a whole. The rhythm is unequal.

(1) I love the Lord.—Besides this rendering, where Jehovah is supplied as an object, this poet being given to use verbs without an object (see verses 2, 10), there are two other possible translations.

1. I have longed that Jehovah should hear, &c.—For this meaning of the verb to love see Jer. v. 31, Amos iv. 5; and for the construction see Ps. xxvii. 4, 5, 6. So the Syriac and Arabic versions.

2. I am well pleased that Jehovah hears (or will hear).—So LXX. and Vulg.

(2) If we take translation (1) of verse 1 this verse will state the ground of the longing to pray. "I have longed for Jehovah to hear me now, for He, as in past times, inclines His ear to me." The latter clause of the verse offers some difficulty. The literal rendering of the text, given by the LXX. and Vulg., is, "and in my days I will call (for help). But there is none." 2 Kings xx. 19 does not, as suggested, confirm the explanation "all the days of my life." It would seem more natural to take the text as an equivalent of the common phrase "in the day when I call" (Psa. lvi. 10, cit. 3, &c.), and render the verse:

For He inclines His ear to me, and that in the day when I call.

(3) The pains of hell.—Or, oppressions of Sheol, if we retain the text. But a very slight change in a single letter brings the clause into closer correspondence with Ps. xviii. 5, 6, whence it is plainly borrowed, the words of Sheol. We may reproduce the original more exactly by using, as it does, the same verb in the last two clauses of the verse:

Note of Sheol caught me, Trouble and sorrow I catch.

(6) The simple.—Inexperienced, in a good sense, as often in Proverbs. LXX. and Vulg., "babes." Brought low.—See Note, Ps. xxx. 2.

(7) Return . . .—In a very different spirit from the fool's address to his soul in the parable. The psalmist's repose is not the worldling's serenity nor the sensualist's security, but the repose of the quiet conscience and the trusting heart.

(8) Falling.—Or, stumbling. (See Ps. lvi. 13, the original of this passage.)

(10, 11) I believed, therefore have I spoken.—This is the rendering of LXX. and Vulg., and it has become almost proverbial from St. Paul's adaptation of it (2 Cor. iv. 13; see New Testament Commentary). And no doubt this is the sense of the words, though the particle khi has been taken in a wrong connection. Mr. Burgess has certainly given the true explanation of the use of this particle. It sometimes follows instead
Gratitude to God.

PSALMS, CXVII.—CXVIII. The Eternity of His Mercy.

(12) What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? (13) I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. (14) I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

(15) Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. (16) O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

(17) I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. (18) I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.

of preceding the verb affected by it. We must render, It is because I believed that I spoke (of God’s gracious- ness, &c.). What follows then comes in as an anti- thesis. I was in great trouble; I said in my pain, “All men are untrustworthy or deceitful.” (LXX.), In an ecstasy of despair I said, “The whole race of mankind is a delusion.” The meaning of the whole passage may be thus put: It is through trust in God that I thus speak (as above—viz., of God being glorious and righteous, and of His preserving the souls of the simple). It was not always so. Once in distrust I thought that God did not care for man, and that the whole of humanity was a failure. The word châpêz, rendered in Authorised Version haste, more properly alarm, is in Job xl. 23 contrasted with trust, as it is here with faith. For the sense failure or vanity for the word rendered in Authorised Version liars, see Isa. lviii. 11 (“fail;” margin, “lies or deceiving”).

(19) I will take.—Or, lift up.

Cup of salvation.—The drink offering or ob­ lation which accompanied festival celebrations (Num. xxix. 19, &c.). Others think of the Passover cup mentioned Matt. xxvi. 27, when this psalm as part of the Hallel was sung. Others, again, take the figurative sense of cup—i.e., portion, lot, as in Ps. xvi. 5.

(20) Precious . . .—This is only another form of the statement in Ps. lxxii. 14. But again we have to ask why the thought of death should intrude upon the psalmist at this moment. (See Note, Ps. cxv. 17.) The answer is that, as in verse 8, a recent deliverance from death is spoken of. It is natural to take this psalm as a thanksgiving song for the safety, perhaps victory, of the survivors in some battle, but then the grateful community naturally and dutifully remember the dead.

(21) Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid.—Comp. Ps. lxxvi. 16. Not only himself but his family were in the covenant, and, as very commonly in the East, the mother is selected for mention instead of the father.

CXVII.

This, shortest of all the psalms, might well be called judulium in parvo, for in its few words it contains, as St. Paul felt (Rom. xv. 11), the germ of the great doctrine of the universality of the Messianic kingdom. That it was intended for liturgical use there can be no doubt, and possibly it is only one of the many varieties of the Hebrew Doxology. What is also very noticeable, is the ground on which all the world is summoned to join in the praise of Jehovah—His covenant kindness and the fulfilment of His promises to Israel. The idea latent under this is shown in the second word rendered praise; properly, to soothe. The nations are imagined coming to make their peace with Israel’s God after seeing His display of power for their sakes; but a wider and nobler truth emerged out of this.

CXVIII.

The character of this psalm as a Temple song of thanksgiving is stamped on every line of it. The marked divisions with the refrains (verses 1—4, 8—9) have induced commentators to arrange it in parts, sup­ posed to have been sung in turn by the full choir, the congregation, and the priests. It is not, however, by any means certain to what particular event or time the psalm is to be assigned. Many incidents in connection with the rebuilding of the second Temple have been fixed upon in connection with verses 22, 23. Others have gone to the Maccabean period for the occasion of the thanksgiving. Several expressions seem to allude to a particular feast, with its peculiar prayers and sacri­ ficies (verses 24—27), and there can be little doubt that this was the Feast of Tabernacles. The words of verse 25 were, we know, sung on one of the days—called the Great Hosanna (Save now)—of the feast; a name given also to the boughs carried and waved in the sacred proc­ession. If verses 19—23 imply the completion of the Temple, it is natural to fix on the first complete celebra­tion of the Feast of Tabernacles after the Return (Neh. viii. 14 seq.).

(1—4) Comp. Ps. cxv. 9—13, where a similar choral arrangement is found.

(5) I called.—Better, out of the straitness I cried to Jah; answered me, with freedom, Jah. The meaning of the last clause (literally, with room. Comp.: “Ay, marry, now my soul has elbow-room”—King John) is determined by the parallelism of Ps. xvii. 19. The versions read “freedom of Jah,” i.e., boundless freedom.”

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The Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. (9) "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? (7) The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. (8) It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

Whether we are to see an allusion here to an actual or more generally the day of triumph won by the Israelite found in his relation to Jehovah. The (19) The gates of righteousness.—This is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

A reminiscence of Ps. 18. 1-11.

The fire of thorns.—See Ps. lvi. 9. Note. The rapidity with which a fire made of thorns burns gives the point of the comparison. The LXX. and Vulg. gave this more plainly by rendering, “they burn out like a fire in thorns.” Shakespeare may have had this verse in his thought when he wrote:

“A shallow jesters and rash havin (i.e., brushwood) wit, Soon kindled and soon burnt.”—King Henry IV.

Thou hast.—Better, Thou didst thrust and thrust at me. This sudden change of person and point of time (‘Thou’ vs. ‘me’) is very dramatic.

In the tabernacles of the righteous.—Whether we are to see an allusion here to an actual encampment, as the context seems to indicate, or whether tents are put poetically for dwellings, depends on the view taken of the date and occasion of the psalm.

Is exalted.—Here evidently the attitude of a warrior. The hand is expressive image, for they read, “The Lord’s hand is lifted up.”

I shall not die, but live.—It is Israel, and not an individual, who thus claims a continuance of life for the display of God’s glory. But as so often

we find, the hope is so expressed as to suit not only the community for whom the psalm was composed and sung, but each member of it individually.

The gates of righteousness.—This is explained by the next verse as the gate of the Temple, where the righteous, i.e., Israel alone, entered. There does not seem the least reason for taking the words here in any but this literal sense, though doubtless they are capable of endless spiritual applications. We must imagine a procession chanting the triumphal song as in Ps. xxiv., and summoning the gates to open on its approach.

The stone.—Better, a stone. There is no article. Israel is, of course, this stone, rejected as of no account in the political plans of those who were trying to shape the destinies of the Eastern nations at their own pleasure, but in the purpose of God destined to a chief place in the building up of history. The image is developed by Isa. xxviii. 16, 17, and prepared, by the Messianic hope poured into it, for the use of Christ Himself and the repeated applications of it to Him by the apostles (Matt. xxv. 31—44; Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 6; Eph. ii. 20; see New Testament Commentary).

The Lord’s doing.—This change of destiny, which made Israel of sudden political importance, is to be ascribed to none but Jehovah Himself.

This is the day.—Either the festival for which the psalm was composed (Feast of Tabernacles?) or more generally the day of triumph won by Jehovah, as in preceding verse.

Save now.—This is not the adverb of time. Render, Sicut, we pray. (See Matt. xxv. 9.)

Blessed be he that cometh in the
name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord. (27) God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. (29) Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee. (29) O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

PSALM CXIX.

ALPH.

(1) Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. (2) Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. (3) They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. (4) Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. (5) O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! (6) Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. (7) I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. (8) I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

BETH.

(9) Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

(27) Shewed us light . . .—Whether this is literal or figurative is difficult to decide. If literal, it may be a repetition of verse 24; or if there is a particular reference in this psalm to the Feast of Tabernacles, Mr. Burgess’s suggestion, which connects the light with the pillar of cloud and fire, of which that feast was very probably specially commemorative, is most worthy of notice. Figuratively the words would, of course, mean “the light of salvation and hope,” as so frequently in the Psalms. It is also possible there may be allusion to the priestly benediction (Num. vi. 25), where the verb is the same.

Bind the sacrifice . . .—This cannot well be, “tie the victim to the horns of the altar,” for the Hebrew is “as far as to,” and no satisfactory explanation is possible of binding animals as far as the altar, unless we are to translate “bind and lead.” But the Hebrew word rendered victim might by derivation (“to go round”) easily mean a circle or crown, and by supplying the verb go we get bind on a crown, go with garlands even to the horns of the altar. The ancient versions, LXX., Vulg., Aquila, Symmachus, all point to this rendering.

 CXIX.

An acrostic must wear an artificial form, and one carried out on the elaborate plan set himself by this author could not fail to sacrifice logical sequence to the prescribed form. Why the number eight was selected for each group of verses, or why, when the author succeeded, in all but two of the 176 verses, in introducing some one synonym for the law, he failed in two, verses 122 and 132, we must leave to unguided conjecture. The repetition of the name Jehovah, occurring exactly twenty-two times, could hardly have been without intention, but in the change rung on the terms that denote the Law there is no evidence of design. That the aphorisms in which the praise of the Law is thus unstring set forth were not collected and arranged as a mere mnemonic book of devotion appears from the under-current of feeling which runs through the psalm, binding the whole together. At the same time, it is quite inconsistent with the ordinary history of literary work to suppose that such a mechanical composition could owe its origin to the excitement of any one prominent occurrence; rather it is the after reflection of one, or more likely of many, minds on a long course of events belonging to the past, but preserved in memory, reflections arranged in such a way as not only to recall experiences of past days, but to supply religious support under similar trials. The same mode of viewing the psalm finds room for the apparent inconsistency which makes one author assign it to a young man (verses 9, 99, 100); another to a man of mature if not advanced age (verses 33, 52, 96, &c.). And if there is a monotony and sameness in the ever-recurring phrases, which under slightly different expressions state the same fact, the importance of that fact, not only to a Jew, but to a Christian also, cannot be exaggerated. “It is strange,” writes Mr. Ruskin, “that all of the pieces of the Bible which my mother taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was to my child’s mind chiefly repulsive, the sixieth psalm, has now become of all most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the law of God.”

ALPH.

(1) Undeiled.—Better, blameless or perfect.

Way.—See the same use without a qualifying epithet in Ps. ii. 12. There was only one way of safety and peace for an Israelite, here by the parallelism defined as “the law of Jehovah.” But even heathen ethics bore witness to the same truth: “Declinandum de viâ sit modo ne summa turpitudo sequatur” (Cic., De Amicitia, xvii.).

(9) Directed . . .—So LXX. and Vulg. The Hebrew is perhaps slightly different, established, or settled. (See Prov. iv. 26.)

(6) Have respect unto.—Literally, look upon, or into, as in a mirror. (Comp. James i. 23.) The Divine Law is as a mirror, which shows man his defects; the faithful, in looking in it, have no cause to blush.

Judgments.—Not here in common sense of visitations for sin, but only one of the change of synonyms for law. (See this use in Exod. xxi. 1, xxiv. 3, &c.)

BETH.

(9) Wherewithal.—There can be little question that the right rendering of this verse is, By what means can a young man purify his way, so as to keep it according to Thy word? but from Josh. vi. 18 we might render keep himself. The English rendering, which follows the LXX. and Vulg, is, of course, possible, but the other is more natural and more in accordance with the general drift of the psalm. The answer is supposed, or rather left to be inferred, from the whole
tenor of the psalm, which is that men, and especially young men, whose passions and temptations are strong in proportion to their inexperience, can do nothing of themselves, but are dependent on the grace of God. The omission of a direct answer rather strengthens than impairs the impression on the reader.

We must not, from the mention of youth, conclude that this psalm was written in that period of life. Perhaps, on the contrary, it is one who, like Browning's Rabbi ben Ezra, while seeking how best to spend old age, looks back on youth, not with remonstrance at its follies, but with the satisfaction that even then he aimed at the best he knew.

With my whole heart . . .—The self-mistrust of the second clause is a proof of the reality of the first. "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief," is another form of this.

Thy word.—A different term to that in verse 5. The two are interchanged throughout the psalm.

Meditate . . .—As the Oriental hid treasures. (Comp. Matt. xiii. 44.)

In mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.—The best comment on this is contained in our Lord's words (Matt. xv. 10).

With my lips.—He has not kept his hidden treasure to himself, but, like the good householder of the Gospels, has brought out things new and old.

Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. (18) 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. (10) Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (12) Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes. (13) With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. (14) I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. (15) I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. (16) I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.

Time and strength are wanting to attain to knowledge which only Divine wisdom can teach.

Breaketh.—The Hebrew is peculiar to this place and Lam. iii. 16. The LXX., Vulg., and Aquila have "greatly desired;" Symmachus, "was perfect;" Theodotion, "had confidence;" Jerome, "longed," all which point either to a different reading or to a different sense from that which is given in the lexicons to the word.

LXX. and Vulg. divide the verse: "Thou hast rebuked the proud; cursed are they," &c. This is preferable.

Remove.—Some render "roll," with allusion to Josh. v. 9. But it is more probably the same word as that rendered "open" in verse 18 (see Note) which may have for object the covering taken off (Isa. xxii. 8; Nahum iii. 5), or of the thing from which the covering is taken, as in verse 18.

Speak.—Comp. Ps. l. 20 for the same implied sense in this verb. This verse reads as if Israel, and not a mere individual, were the subject of the psalms.

Counsellors.—See margin. Instead of taking the princes of verse 23 into counsel, he takes God's testimonies.

It was this verse which the Emperor Theodosius recited when doing penance at the door of Milan Cathedral for the massacre of Thessalonica (Theodoret, v. 18).

Quicken thou me according to thy word. —See verses 88, 107, 145, 154, 156. This reiterated prayer, with its varied appeal to the Divine truth, loving-kindness, constancy, must certainly be regarded as the petition of Israel for revived covenant glory,
(26) I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: so teach me thy statutes. 
(27) Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works. 
(28) My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word. 
(29) Remove from me the way of lying; and grant me thy law graciously. 
(30) I have chosen unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame. 
(31) I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

He.

(32) Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. 
(33) Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. 
(34) Make me to go in the path of thy commandments: for therein do I delight. 
(35) Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

though, at the same time, it offers a wide and rich field of application to individual needs. 
(36) I have declared.—Or, recounted.
My ways.—Or, as we should say, my course, my past life, including, as the context allows, confession of sins and prayer for pardon. 
(37) Make me to understand.—Only the Israelite truly loyal to the covenant was considered worthy to enquire into the marvels of the dealings of God. (See Ps. cvi. 2, Note.) Perhaps we might extend the thought so far as to say that a true historical insight is possible only to one whose moral sense is rightly trained and directed.

Melteth.—The Hebrew word is used in Eccles. x. 33 of a stinging cockroach; in Job xvi. 20 of weeping. The LXX. and Vulg. have “slumbered,” which suits far better with the next clause, which is literally, make me rise up. Symmachus has “distills.”

Way of lying.—Not of falsehood to men so much as insincerity and unfaithfulness towards God, the opposite of the truth and faithfulness of verse 30.

Grant me.—Rather, be gracious to me according to thy law. This is the persistent cry of the psalm.

Run the way.—Plainly the psalmist means that he will not only be able to walk in the Divine way, but even to run in it when certain restraints are removed which now confine and check him. Hence we may understand, by the enlargement of the heart, not so much the expansion of the faculties as deliverance from oppressing fears, &c., as Pss. iv. 1, xviii. 36, and render “when thou hast set my heart at large.” So the Prayer Book Version, “set my heart at liberty.”

He.

(38) To the end.—See verse 112. This word, used adverbially, is peculiar to this psalm.

Path.—From root to tread, the trodden way, plain with the track of all the pious pilgrims’ feet of past times.

(39) Covetousness.—Literally, rapine, prey. In Ps. xxx. 9 simply, “gain.”
(40) From beholding vanity.—Perhaps from looking on idols.

(41) Who is devoted to thy fear.—This is an improbable explanation of this elliptical expression. There are two renderings, each in accordance with the general drift of the psalm: (1) Stablish to Thy servant Thy word, which leads to fear of Thee; or, more likely, (2) Stablish to Thy servant Thy promise which is to those who fear Thee, as apparently the LXX.

(42) My reproach which I fear.—The word for fear is an unusual one, used in Deut. ix. 19, xxviii. 60, for very strong dread. The reproach may be either the disgrace in God’s sight of violating His commands, or, as the context (verse 43) suggests, a reproach from men for keeping God’s law.

(43) Quicken me in thy righteousness—i.e., Let the sense of thy eternal justice give me vigour and life. Or the thought may be of the invigorating influence of a complete surrender to a righteous law, as in Wordsworth’s Ode to Duty:—

“I myself command
Unto thy guidance from this hour.
On let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice.
The confidence of reason give,
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live.”

V.A.U.

(44) So shall I have.—Better literally, as the J.X.X. and Vulg., and I shall answer my reviler a word, for I trust in Thy word, i.e., when reproached it will be enough to pronounce God’s promise. The repetition of do to here and in verse 43 makes for this explanation in preference to that of the margin.

(45) At liberty.—See margin. Literally, in a large place. (See verse 32; comp. Prov. iv. 12.)

(46) The Vulgate (which in the tenses follows the LXX.) of this verse was the motto of the Augsburg
loved. My hands also will lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

But, to the good man "calm thoughts regular as infant's breath." This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. The proud have had me greatly in derision; yet have I not declined from thy law. I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself. Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law. This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

ZAIN.

Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. The proud have had me greatly in derision; yet have I not declined from thy law. I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself. Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law. This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

CHETH.

Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words, and I will meditate in thy statutes. When I declined from thy law, me greatly in derision: for thy word hath comforted me, even with these passages in view, a better rendering would be-

"This is my portion, O Lord, I said it, To keep Thy words."

Confession, Et loguebar in testimoniis tuais in conspectu regum, et non confundens.

My hands.—See Ps. xxviii. 2. The expression here is elliptical: "I will lift my hands in prayer for power to observe Thy commandments."

Comfort.—As in Job vi. 10, where the same noun occurs, its only other use. We might render, "This is my comfort, that thy word quickeneth me."

Horror.—Rather, violent indignation, a storm of rage, hot and fierce as the simoon. For the word, see Ps. xi. 6. Note.

Songs.—Or, Thy statutes were my music in the house of my sojournings. Possibly with reference to the exile (comp. Ps. cxxxvii. 4), but with comparison with verse 9 (see Note), more probably the reference is to the transitoriness of human life. In connection with the next verse comp. Job xxxv. 10.

This I had, because . . . — Literally, This was to me, &c., i.e., this consoling recollection of the mercies of God, of His covenant grace, was to him, happened, or came to him, in consequence of his habitual obedience. Virtue is indeed then most its own reward, in times of quiet reflection, like the night, when to the guilty come remorse and apprehension, but to the good man "calm thoughts regular as infant's breath."

CHETH.

Thou art my portion, O Lord.—This rendering is in accordance with Pss. xvi. 5, lxiii. 26. But, even with these passages in view, a better rendering would be—

"This is my portion, O Lord, I said it, To keep Thy words."

My ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy; teach me thy statutes.

TETH.

Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes. The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart. Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law.

It is good for me that I have been

I intreated.—See Ps. xiv. 12.

I thought on.—The Hebrew implies repeated and frequent meditation.

The bands . . . —Rather, cords of the wicked surrounded me. (See Ps. xviii. 5, 6.) So all ancient versions except the Targum.

Midnight.—See verse 55.

Good judgment.—More exactly, good taste. Here, however, in a moral, not aesthetic sense. Perhaps tact or delicate moral perception represents it. We may compare St. Paul's use of the Greek words, ἓλπιδος and κάρως in Phil. i. 9. That there is allusion here to the Babylonian exile, and its moral and religious effect on the nation, there can be little doubt.

It is characteristic of this psalm that the higher the conception of the Divine nature, the more earnest becomes the prayer for knowledge of His will in relation to conduct.

Have forged.—Rather, patched. The verb occurs twice besides (Job xiii. 4, xiv. 17). Gesenius compares the Greek, ἐκλόγαρ κάρως, and the Latin, suave dolos. Comp. also "You praise yourself by laying defects of judgment to me; but you patched up your excuses." Antioch and Cleopatra : Act ii., Scene 2.

As fat as grease.—For this emblem of pride and insensibility, see Pss. xvii. 10, lxiii. 7; Isa. vi. 10.

It is good . . . —See verse 67. Probably the result of discipline on the nation is intended, though the "sweet uses of adversity" were long ago a truism of moralists. See Esch., Agam., 172:

"Who guideth mortals to wisdom, maketh them grasp love Firmly through their pain."
afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

(72) a The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

JOD.

(73) Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

(74) They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.

(75) I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.

(76) Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts.

(77) Let that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

CAPH.

(80) My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.

(81) Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

(82) For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes. How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.

Vows of Obedience.

LAMED.

(88) For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.

(89) Thy faithfulness is unto all generations; thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.

(90) Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.

(91) The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy in the smoke, nothing more is implied than its being set aside; but this is too weak.

We find in the ancient poets allusion to the custom of mellowing wine by heat:

"Prodiit famoso condita vina cado."—Ovid: Fast. v. 57.

(Comp. Hor. Ode iii. 8, 9, 10). And so some understand the image here of the good results of the discipline of suffering. The LXX. and Vulg., instead of smoke, have "hoar-frost." The Hebrew word has this meaning in Ps. cxlviii. 8, but in the only other place where it occurs (Gen. xix. 28) it is smoke. The possibility of rendering hoar-frost here suggests another explanation. The word nōd (bottle) may be used of a cloud, and as the psalmist has just spoken of his eyes failing, we may have here only another expression for weeping.

(92) As in Ps. lxxxix. 47, 48, the psalmist here utters what was the dread of each generation of Israel, a dread lest it should have passed away before the day of deliverance should arrive.

(93) Which.—Better, who. Its antecedent, of course, the proud, not the pits.

(94) Upon earth.—Rather, on the land. (Comp. Ps. livii. 2.)

LAMED.

(89, 90) See Ps. lxxxix. 2.

(91) They (the heavens and the earth) continue to this day according to Thine ordinances: for all (i.e., all creation) are Thy servants. In Hebrew the all, i.e., the universe. The parallelism is in this way preserved, while in the alternative, "as for Thy judgments, Thy," &c., it is lost.
testimonies. (96) I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

MEM.

(97) O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. (98) Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for 1 they are ever with me. (99) I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. (100) I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. (101) I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. (102) I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. (103) How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (104) Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

NUN.

(105) Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (106) I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. (107) I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word. (108) Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments. (109) My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law. (110) The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts. (111) Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. (112) I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.

SAMECH.

(113) I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love. (114) Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word. (115) Depart from me, ye evil-doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God. (116) Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope. (117) Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually. (118) Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their

(100) Ancients.—Or, more probably, as the LXX. and Vulg., and the old versions generally took it, old men.

NUN.

(105) See Prov. vi. 23. So Wordsworth calls Duty:

“A light to guide.”

(106) Perform.—The same verb as in verse 28—strengthen; often used in Esther for confirm.

(108) Freewill offerings of my mouth — i.e., thanks and praise.

(109) My soul. — For this figure of peril see Judges xii. 3; 1 Sam. xix. 5, &c.

SAMECH.

(113) I hate vain thoughts.—Rather, I hate men who halt between two opinions, following 1 Kings xviii. 21, where the cognate noun from the same root, to divide, appears. Probably we are to think of those among the Jews who were for political reasons favourably inclined towards foreign customs and ideas, and who would not throw in their lot frankly and courageously with the national party.

(114) My shield. — For this expression see Ps. iii. 3, vii. 10.

(115) For. — Better, and. The presence of the wicked was a hindrance to religion. It is Israel trying to purify itself from the leaven of evil influence that speaks. The first clause is from Ps. vi. 8.

(118) Trodden down. — Better, thou despisest. So LXX. and Vulg. Aquila, “Thou hast impaled.” Symmachus, “Thou hast convicted.” Literally the word seems to mean to weigh or value, but, from the habit of the buyer beating down the price by depre-
A Plea for Mercy

PSALMS, CXIX.

and Deliverance.

decit is falsehood. (119) Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like
dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.
(120) My flesh trembleth for fear of thee;
and I am afraid of thy judgments.

Thou puttest away. - For this common Scriptu-
ral figure comp. Jer. vi. 28-30; Ezek. xxvii. 18-20.
This is indeed a process which is continually going on,
and it is one test of the true religious character that it
can discern it at work under the seeming contradictions of
the world. Where apparently vice succeeds and
prospers it is really marked out for expulsion,

Therefore all precepts shall be void

irreligion of the wicked makes the Law even more dear
to the psalmist? What they reject is to him priceless,

Therefore I esteem all thy precepts

Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I
hate every false way.

Be surety. - Just as Judah became surety for the
safety of Benjamin (Gen. xliii. 9), so the psalmist
asks God to be answerable for the servant who had
been faithful to the covenant, and stand between
him and the attacks of the proud. So Hezekiah
(1 Sa. xxxviii. 14) asks God to "undertake" for him
against the threat of death. There is also, no doubt,
the further thought that the Divine protection would
vindicate the profession which the loyal servant makes
of his obedience, as in Job xvii. 3, where God is sum-
momed as the only possible guarantee of the sufferer's
innocence. This and verse 132 are the only verses not
actually mentioning, under one of its terms, the Law.

Tzaddi.

Entrance. - Literally, opening, which the
LXX. and Vulg. better represent by "manifestation,"
"declaration." (Comp. "opening and alleging," Acts
xxvii. 3.)

Comp. Job xxix. 23.

As . . . name. - See margin. But the ab-

Ain.

I have done judgment and jus-
tice: leave me not to mine oppressors.
(122) Be surety for thy servant for good;
let not the proud oppress me. (123) Mine
eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the
word of thy righteousness. (124) Deal
with thy servant according unto thy
mercy, and teach me thy statutes.
(125) I am thy servant; give me under-
standing, that I may know thy testi-
monies. (126) It is time for thee, LORD, to
work: for they have made void thy
law. (127) "Therefore I love thy command-
ments above gold; yea, above fine gold.
(128) Therefore I esteem all thy precepts

Trembleth. - The original is far stronger.
Better, as in Job iv. 15, the hair of my flesh stands up.
So Symmachus.

With the original text of the Hebrew.

Ain.

See verse 82.

They have made void thy law. - Some
treat the verse as parenthetical, but is it not that the

and upright. - For an interesting historical
association with this verse see Gibbon's account of the
death of the Emperor Maurice (chap. xiv.).

Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.
(130) The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the
simple. (131) I opened my mouth, and
panted: for I longed for thy command-
ments. (132) Look thou upon me, and be
merciful unto me, as thou usest to do
unto those that love thy name. (133) Order
my steps in thy word: and let not any in-
iquity have dominion over me. (134) Deliver
me from the oppression of man: so will I
keep thy precepts. (135) Make thy face to
shone upon thy servant; and teach me
thy statutes. (136) Rivers of waters run
down mine eyes, because they keep not
thy law.

Among the faithless, faithful only he.

Therefore I esteem. - As the text stands,
this verse literally runs, Therefore all precepts of all I
make straight. Every path of falsehood I hate. The
LXX. and Vulg. have, "Therefore all Thy com-
mendments I was being directed. Therefore all precepts
I hate," which only necessitates a slight change in
the reading of one word. It is true that the expres-
sion, all precepts of all, may be explained as a
strengthened form of all precepts—as we say, "all
and every"—though the passages (Ezek. xlv. 30; Num.
viil. 16) generally adduced are not strictly
analogous. But the Lexicon supply no authority for
taking the verb yashar in the sense of "esteem right,"
and the figure of the path in the next clause seems here
plainly to fix its meaning. Translate, therefore, There-
fore after all Thy precepts I direct (my way). Every
false way I detest.
The Truth and Righteousness

PSALMS, CXIX.

of God's Testimonies.

upright are thy judgments. (139) Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful. (139) My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words. (140) Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it. (140) I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts. (142) Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth. (142) Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights. (144) The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

KOPH.

(145) I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord: I will keep thy statutes. (146) I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies. (147) I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word. (148) Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word. (149) Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O Lord, quicken me according to thy judgment. (150) They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law. (151) Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth. (152) Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

RESH.

(153) Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law. (154) Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word. (155) Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes. (156) Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to thy judgments. (157) Many are my persecutors and mine enemies: yet do I not decline from thy testimonies. (158) I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy precepts: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy lovingkindness. (159) Consider how I love thy precepts: quicke my heart standeth in awe of thy word. (160) Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word. (162) I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

KOPH.

(161) Princes.—Better, the faithless (or, traitors). Was grieved.—The Hebrew is a far stronger word, and the sense is intensified by the rare conjugation: was filled with loathing at; sickened with disgust.

"The recreants I survey,
And loathing turn away."—KEBLE.

(160) Beginning.—Heb., head; but here, as in Ps. civ. 17, it might be rendered sum. (Comp. Prov. 1. 7.) The translation "from the beginning," of the Authorised Version must at all events be abandoned.

SCHIN.

(161) Princes.—Here again we have an indication of the national character of the psalm. It was the whole community which suffered from the intrigues and violence of princes.

(162) Comp. Isa. ix. 3.
A Prayer for Understanding and Wisdom

I hate and abhor lying; but thy law do I love. (164) Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments. (165) Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments. (167) My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. (168) I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.

My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

Seven times. — Some commentators think the number is used here only in a general way for “often,” “repeatedly,” but the number seven evidently had some sacred association for the Hebrews. (Comp. Lev. xxvi. 18; Prov. xxiv. 16; Matt. xviii. 21, &c.) No doubt the seven canonical hours were partly derived from this verse. Elsewhere we find three times as the stated occasions of prayer (Ps. lv. 17).

Nothing shall offend them. — See margin. Perhaps the verse should take the form of a wish: great peace to the lovers of Thine law; no stumbling-block to them. Or, it may be, great peace have they who love Thy word and who find no hindrance. It was not the fact that the faithful did not stumble.

Shall utter. — Better, preserving the metaphor of the Hebrew, pour forth a stream of praise.

My tongue shall speak of Thy word. — Rather, ‘My tongue shall make response to Thy word, that all Thy commandments are true.

I have gone astray like a lost sheep. — It would be in accordance with a true religious character that even at the end of a long protestation of obedience to the Divine law the psalmist should confess his weakness and sin. But while this may be a legitimate application of the close of this remarkable composition, and while the LXX. suggest a comparison with our Lord’s parable by their rendering (comp. Matt. xviii. 11; Luke xix. 10), this could hardly have been the intention of the words of this verse. More likely there is a reference to the condition of the community, for the word rendered “lost” (literally, perishing) is used in Isa. xxvii. 13 of the exiled Hebrews, and is rendered “outcasts;” the emphatic “I do not forget Thy commandments,” which is the real close of the psalm, seems to make this view imperative.

This is the first of the fifteen “songs of degrees,” as the title appears in our version (“of steps”) in the LXX. and Vulg.; literally, of goings up. The probable meaning of this strange inscription is discussed in the General Introduction. That the Psalms so entitled formed a collection made with some definite intention can hardly be questioned. But whatever that intention, the position of this psalm in the collection is unaccountable. Even if the title denotes a rhythmical peculiarity—a kind of climactic progress in the verse—it is only just observable here, while there is not the slightest touch in the poem, which can be brought into peculiar connection or association with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or with the return from the captivity. One thing is clear; we are again, after the long gnomic cxixth Psalm, in the region and air of lyric song, this fragment, for it is nothing more, being bright and intense with passion and fire. If the poem is personal, it records an experience which every phase of life in all ages presents, the mischief arising from slander.

The probable conjecture—it is national, then we must look for its motive in the complications which would naturally arise when Israel had to struggle amid foreign powers and influences to maintain its religious and national existence. The “enemy to peace” (verse 6; comp. Ps. xxxix. 5; Ezra iv. 1) has been most plausibly identified with the Samaritans. (See 2 Kings xvii. 24 seq., and Josephus, Ant. xi. ii. 1.)

Title.—“Song of degrees.” Rather, lyric song of goings up, or ascents.

Deliver. — This is the cry for help of which mention has just been made. The thought is one we have met frequently. Of all the elements of bitterness which made up the lot of Israel under foreign dominion, taunts and calumnies seem to have made the deepest wound, and left the most lasting scar. This was the torture prolonged from age to age,” under which we hear psalmist after psalmist raising his cry for deliverance.

What shall? — Literally, What will he give to thee, and what will he add to thee, deceitful tongue? where it is better, as in the Authorised Version, to take the subject as indefinite, and so render by the passive. Thus we get in substance the following question: “What more can be added to thee (i.e., in the way of epithet), besides lying and false, thou deceitful tongue?” The answer is given by suggesting the usual metaphors of malicious speech, “the warrior’s sharpened arrows” (Jer. ix. 8; Ps. lxxvii. 4); “fire” (James iii. 6). Only
false tongue? (1) Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.'

(5) Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! (6) My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. (7) I am

here both images are elaborated. For the Hebrew word give with the sense of comparison, see 1 Sam. i. 18, "Count (Heb., give) not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial." Gesenius compares the use of the Greek ραβαν, instead of ρουλκειν. So, too, the word "add" has a similar sense (1 Kings x. 7; see margin).

(4) Sharp.—Better, sharpened, whetted, as if for a purpose.

Juniper.—Properly, broom. Hebrew, rothem, a plant identical with the Arabian retem and Armenian retama. (See 1 Kings xix. 4, 5.) Doctor Tristram mentions the employment of this bush for fuel. "It is ruthlessly uprooted by the Arabs, wherever it is tolerably abundant, for the manufacture of charcoal, which is considered of the finest quality, and fetches a higher price at Cairo than any other kind. Several travellers have mentioned their meeting with Bedouins employed in conveying retem charcoal to the Egyptian markets" (Nat. Hist. of the Bible, p. 360; see also Bible Educator iv. 194). Burrekhard and Robinson also both noticed this trade.

Wonderful stories are told both by Jerome and the rabbis, how travellers, having cooked their food by fires made of the juniper wood, which they suppose to be the wood here meant, and returning a year after to the same spot, still found the embers alive.

(3) Mesech.—This name is generally identified with Moschi, mentioned by Herodotus (iii. 94), a tribe on the borders of Colchis and Armenia. It appears again in the prophet Ezekiel xxxvii. 13, xxxviii. 3; xxxix. 1. The only reason for suspecting the accuracy of this identification is the remoteness from Kedar, who were a nomad tribe of Arabia. (See Gen. xxxvii. 13; Song of Sol. i. 5.) But in the absence of any other indication of the motive for the mention of these tribes here, this remoteness affords a sufficiently plausible one; or they may be types of savage life, selected the one from the north, and the other from the south, as poetry dictated. It is quite possible that the circumstances amid which the poet wrote made it necessary for him to veil in this way his allusion to powerful tribes, from whose violence the nation was suffering. At all events, the two concluding verses leave no doubt that some troubled state of affairs, in which the choice of courses was not easy, and affecting the whole nation, not an individual, is here presented.

(6) I am for peace.—For the pregnant, "I peace," see Note, Ps. cxx. 3. Both pronouns, I and they, are emphatic. No doubt these verses are intended to indicate the nature of the malignant speeches mentioned in verses 2 and 3. We imagine Israel in peculiarly difficult political relations under the Persians, possibly very soon after the Return, trying to keep in favour and peace with the ruling powers, but continually drawn into trouble by the jealousy and bitterness of other subject tribes. (See Introduction.)

CXXI.

This simple but exquisite little hymn of four four-line verses, dwells almost exclusively on the sleepless guardianship of His people by the God who made the world. An implied contrast with the idols of the heathen, "peradventure sleeping," while their votaries pray (1 Kings xviii. 27), is felt in every verse. (See Note verse 1.) But it is only implied. The poet seems to want nothing to heighten his truthful confidence, neither vivid colouring nor elaborate imagery, nothing save the repetition again and again of the one word keep. (See Notes.) What a history were that, if it could be written, of the countless thousands of Christians who have been consoled in trouble or sickness by this psalm! Among others, it was read at the deathbed of Julius Hare. It is in this psalm that the step-like progression of the rhythm is most plainly marked.

Title.—The Hebrew, in many editions, presents a variation from the usual "song of degrees." Here, "a song for the degrees"—a variation which has been claimed in support of two rival theories, since it favours equally the view which makes these hymns pilgrim songs, and that which sees in them a reference to the actual steps leading up to the Temple.

(1) Wherefore.—Our version is certainly incorrect in following the LXX. and Vulg. in making wherefore a relative. The Hebrew word is always interrogative: even in Josh. ii. 4 it is indirectly interrogative. But the margin is hardly right in making the whole verse interrogative. Render, I will lift up mine eyes to the hills. Wherefore comest thou? The hills are those on which Jerusalem is built, the plural being understood, as in Ps. lxxxvii. 1. (See Note.) This gaze of hope does not absolutely decide the standpoint of the poet. He might have been like Ezekiel (vi. 2) when bidden to turn "towards the mountains of Israel" in the distant plain of Mesopotamia; or he may have been close on the end of the pilgrim journey, and actually under the sacred hills. But wherever he stands, this question is not one of doubt: he knows, as in Ps. iii. 4, xiv. 7, that help will come from God's holy hill "out of Zion." He puts the question for the sake of the emphatic answer in the next verse. Possibly, as suggested by the marginal rendering and reference, the poet may in his mind have been contrasting the confidence with which a worshipper of Jehovah might look up to the sacred city on the crest of the holy hill with that superstition and idolatry which was associated with so many hills and high places in Canaan. If this is so, the best commentary, both on the poetry and the religion of the psalm, is to be found in Mr. Ruskin's fascinating discourses on mountains in "Modern Painters," their influence on the ancient, mediaval, and modern mind, and the part they have played alike in the mythology of the pagan times and the religion of the Christian world. There must also be added, in connection with the feeling of the Jew, the part his mountains played as a barrier of defence (Ps. xlii. 2), and as heights of observation from which to watch for the messengers of peace (Isa. iii. 7; Nah. i. 15).

"In the mountains did he feel his faith . . . and there his spirit shaped her prospects."—Wodrow's Writ.
conclude.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. (4) Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. (6) The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. (7) The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. (8) The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

A Song of degrees of David.

(1) I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.
(2) Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.
(3) Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact; it is a compact city after being accustomed to straggling vil.

The Lord's Sheltering

hills, from whence cometh my help. (2) My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. (4) Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. (6) The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. (7) The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. (8) The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

PSALM CXXII.

A Song of degrees of David.

(1) I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.
(2) Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.
(3) Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact; it is a compact city after being accustomed to straggling vil.

Shade.—An image of protection, and one peculiarly attractive to the Oriental. (See Num. xiv. 9, marg.; Ps. xc. 1; Isa. xxxv. 4, xxvii. 2.)

Upon thy right hand.—Some commentators combine this expression with the figure of the shadow, supposing the psalmist, in the phrase “right hand,” to allude to the south or sunny side. But this is prosaic. No doubt there is here, as so often, a confused combination of metaphors. We have several times met with the figure of the right-hand comrade in war, a protection to the unshielded side (Pss. xvi. 8, cxl. 31, &c.).

Smite thee.—The mention of shade leads to the amplification of the figure. The evil effects of sunstroke are too well known to need comment. They are often mentioned in the Bible (2 Kings iv. 18, 20; Jonah iv.; Judith viii. 3).

Nor the moon by night.—Possibly there is allusion to the belief, so common in old times, of the harmful influence of the moon’s light—a belief still recalled in the word lunacy. It is a fact that temporary blindness is often caused by moonlight. (See authorities referred to by Ewald and Deltzesh.) Others, again, think that the injurious cold of the night is here placed in antithesis to the heat of the noonday sun (comp. Gen. xxxi. 40; Jer. xxxii. 30), the impression that intense cold burns being common in the East, as indeed everywhere. Tennyson speaks of the moon being “keen with frost.” But it is also possible that the generally harmful effects of night air are intended.

Instead of preserve, read keep, the persistent dwelling on this one word making one of the chief beauties of this hymn.

Thy going out and thy coming in.—A common Hebrew expression to denote the whole of life. (See Deut. xxxvii. 6, &c.; comp. St. Paul’s prayer, 1 Thess. v. 23.)

CXXII.

It is on this psalm chiefly that the theory of the pilgrim odes is based. It tells its design in almost so many words, and actually refers to the ordinance which directed every male Israelite to visit the holy city three times a year. The poet stands in imagination or memory at the gates of Jerusalem. The journey is done, and at this moment the excitement and joy with which it was commenced are lovingly recalled. Then follow the impressions produced in the caravan of country strangers by the aspect of the city, the thongs of pilgrims pouring in at the several gates, the royal residences and courts of justice. At this moment the feelings of patriotic admiration and reverence get the better of mere wonder. The thought of the capital—capital political and religious—excites other emotions; and, as in so many instances of other pilgrims in connection with Jerusalem and of Rome, the prayer for the city’s welfare rises to the poet’s lips—a prayer which is none the less real because it reproduces literally the formal Oriental greetings at which such a time would be passing to and fro among the excited groups. The psalm, which shows only very slightly the step-like rhythm, is best arranged in couplets.

Title.—The addition of David is plainly a gratuitous conjecture. The LXX. knew nothing of it.

Let us go.—Or, we will go. This verse is inscribed over the portico of St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Our feet shall stand.—Rather, Our feet have been, and are now, standing. “Here we stand at last at thy gates, O Jerusalem.” We must imagine the pilgrims arresting their steps to gaze about them as they reach the gates.

This verse is somewhat perplexing. It is explained to refer either to the rebuilding of the city and reuniting of the parts which had been disconnected in the destruction, or which is far better (see Introduction), is taken as a rustic’s impression on first seeing a compact city after being accustomed to straggling villages. The astonishment of Virgil’s shepherd is aptly compared: “Urbem quam dixit Romanum, Melibeae
PSALMS, CXXIII.—CXXIV. An Expectation of Deliverance.

Isaiah under foreign oppression there is no doubt, but there is no indication of precise time, unless we are to adopt the Hebrew margin, and see in the concluding word a reference to the Ionians, which would bring the psalm within the Macedonian period. The step-like rhythm is not very marked; but the psalm so abounds in assurance that it has been called the "Rhyming Psalm."

(1) O thou that dwellest.—O thou throne one.
(2) Eyes.—As the eyes of the slave are fixed on the hand of the master or mistress, waiting for a sign or direction, so Israel waits, expectant of the hint of Divine interference to deliver from the tyrant. The picture will be so familiar to readers of Oriental stories as hardly to need actual illustration; but Savary's (Letters on Egypt, p. 135, quoted by Perowne) description exactly reproduces the intention of the poet: "The slaves stand silent at the bottom of the rooms, with their hands crossed over their breasts. With their eyes fixed upon their master, they seek to anticipate every one of his wishes." Comp. "Cave oculos a meis oculis quoquam demoveas" (Ter. Aen., v. 16).
(3) Exceedingly filled.—Or, satd more than enough.
(4) The scorning.—The Hebrew offers a rare use of the article—probably it should be reproduced by our demonstrative, this scorning. The LXX., however, have, "The scorn for those at ease, and the contempt for the proud," which requires only the substitution of a letter, removes an anomaly in construction, and gives a better sense: "Let our desire be satisfied to the full with the scorn for those at ease, and the same contempt for the proud." Notice how the figure is retained. The oppressors are the masters and mistresses, living in luxury, while the slaves wait. Genenius quotes Sallust (secundis rebus ferece) in illustration of the wantonness of secure and luxurious power. As we read the verse, we seem to feel:
"The whips and scorns of time.
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely."

PSALM CXXIV.
A Song of degrees of David.
(1) If it had not been the Lord who

eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, 0 Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

The Peace of Jerusalem.

PSALM CXXIII.
A Song of degrees.
(1) Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, 

unto the Lord who had not dwelt in the heavens.

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

(3) Have mercy upon us, 0 Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

(4) Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

Received a congregation, that which greets every

alliterations and a play on the name of Jerusalem.

The full form appears in 1 Sam. xxv. 6.

New for the first time the religious motive of the pilgrimage appears, rendered all the more emphatic by being kept for the concluding verse.

This psalm has been beautifully called Oculus Sperans (the Eye of Hope). That it reflects the feelings of
The Lord’s Deliverance.

was on our side, now may Israel say;
(2) If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: (3) then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: (4) then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: (5) then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

(6) Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. (7) Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

(8) "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

vicissitudes of Israel appear insufficient. Nothing but the total ruin of the city and Temple, and the captivity of the nation, could have left an impression so deep and lasting. It is the restored remnant that thus ascribe to Jehovah their escape—so marvellous, so miraculous, that the elder deliverance from Egypt colours the language in which it is described. The Aramaisms of the poem leave no room for upholding the ascription to David. The rhythm is finely varied.

Title.—"Of David." The LXX. know nothing of this addition. The imagery recalls Davidic poems, and possibly suggested the inscription. (See Introduction.)

(2) If it had not been.—For this motto of the covenant, see Ps. xcvii. 17.

Mon.—Better, man. In this use of the general term, we must, as Reuss points out, see an indication of the time of composition of the psalm. One who could so speak of the whole world as separated into two parts (Jews and heathen), discloses a sense of isolation and exclusiveness which brings us far down from the time of the prophets. They, indeed, spoke of it as the ideal of the future. This psalmist regards it as an accomplished fact.

(3) Then.—Critics are at issue both as to the form and meaning of the word—whether it is an archaism or an aramaism, expressing time or logical sequence.

Swallowed . . . quick (alive).—No doubt an allusion to the fall of Korah (Num. xvi. 32, 33), where the same verb and adjective occur together. (See also Ps. iv. 15.)

(4) Waters.—The sudden transition in the imagery from the earthquake to the flood is characteristic of Hebrew poetry. (For the flood, see Ps. xvii. 4, 10, lxix. 14, cxlv. 7.)

Stream.—The torrent swollen with the winter rain. (Comp. Isa. viii. 7, 8.)

(5) Proud.—The Hebrew presents a rare form, which is considered indicative of later composition. For the epithet, comp. Æschylus, Prom. Vinct. 717:

"And you will reach the scornful river—well it deserves the name."

(7) Snare.—Another rapid transition to a favourite figure, that of the hunter’s net. (Comp. Ps. x. 9, &c.)

(8) Who made.—See Note on Ps. cxxii. 2.

PSALMS, CXXV. The Blessedness of Trust in God.

PSALM CXXV.

A Song of degrees.

(1) They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.

(2) As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

(3) For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

(4) Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.

(5) As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.

CXXV.

This psalm brings prominently out the danger to which Israel was subjected from heathen rule—a danger of being forced or seduced away from the political and religious principles of the restored nation. From this danger the poet believes those who keep faithful to the religion of Jehovah are secured, as Jerusalem itself is secured by the strength of its geographical situation. Neither the parallelism nor the step-like rhythm is marked.

(2) As the mountains.—In the first verse, the stability of the faithful is compared to that of Mount Zion; here their security to that of the city gilt by its hills. (On the geographical reference, see Dean Stanley, S. and P., pp. 174, 175.) Robinson’s description is—"The sacred city lies upon the broad and high mountain range, which is shut in by the two valleys, Jehoshaphat and Hinnom. All the surrounding hills are higher; in the east, the Mount of Olives; on the south, the so-called Hill of Evil Counsel, which ascends from the valley of Hinnom; on the west, the ground rises gently to the border of the great wadi, as described above; while on the north the bend of a ridge which adjoins the Mount of Olives limits the view to the distance of about a mile and a half." In Zech. ii. 4, 5, the protecting care of Jehovah is likened to a wall round the city, instead of to the rampart of mountains, as here.

(3) Rod.—The imagery of this unusually long verse is peculiar. The "rod of the wicked," or "of wickedness," is the heathen sceptre, and the righteous are the Israelites who hold fast to the religion of their fathers. This sceptre new rests—a word expressing the presence of tyranny—upon the Holy Land; but this is not for a continuance. God will not suffer the tyranny to last, lest the righteous should be seduced or forced into connivance with practices which religion unites with patriotism to condemn.

(5) Turn aside unto their crooked ways.—Or, bend their crooked ways, i.e., pursue evil courses.

But peace.—Better, as an innovation on the customary form, peace be in Israel. (See Note on Ps. cxxxii. 6, and comp. Ps. cxxiii. 8.)
PSALM CXXVI. A Song of degrees.

(1) When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.
(2) Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.
(3) The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.
they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. (2) It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Title.—For Solomon." The rendering is wrong even if the inscription be admitted. Rather, of Solomon, which is the usual form of ascribing authorship. It is not difficult to account for this addition to the usual title, "Song of degrees," an addition wanting in the LXX. Not only was it natural to think of Solomon, the great builder, in connection with the opening of the psalm, but in the words "his beloved" there was to Jewish ears a suggestion of the name "Jehudiah," and the resemblance to the Book of Proverbs, both in form and sentiment, is marked. See, for example, Prov. x. 22, which sums up the prevailing thought of the psalm.

(1) House.—A house, any house, not the Temple. The thought is a general one. Even in the common labours of men, it is the Divine blessing which contributes the success. An Gottes Segen ist alles gelegen.

Waketh.—Perhaps better, watcheth. The house that has been built with such toil, the city which has been planned with such skill, may suddenly fall before the midnight attack of the robber or the enemy, in spite of the strictest police, unless God's vigilant providence preserve it.

(2) It...sleep.—This verse, of the literal rendering of which there is no question, has met with many different interpretations. About the first clause there is no difference. Early rising, to pursue the business of the day, is vain without the Divine blessing on the labour. The next two clauses admit two different interpretations. Some connect the sitting down with the meal: "delaying to sit down and eat the bread of cares" (or sorrow), i.e., so immersed in business as to allow hardly time for meals. But it seems far more natural to explain, nearly as the Authorised Version:

"It is in vain to rise early, To delay the hour of rest, To eat the bread that has been won by toil; At His pleasure He giveth to His beloved (in) sleep."

As to the last clause, it seems right, from its use in Gen. i., "it was so," to give so the sense "at His pleasure," this being also indicated by the general drift of the psalm. The word "sleep" may be either the direct object, as in the LXX. and Vulg., or the accusative used adverbially, "in sleep," "while they sleep." That the latter suits the context best there can be no question. The whole intention of the psalm is to assert the truth which the Book of Proverbs sums up in one sentence (chap. x. 22): "The blessing of Jehovah maketh rich, and toil can add nothing thereto," the truth which was so impressively taught in the Sermon on the Mount, by the contrast of man's restless ambition with the unconscious dependence on the Divine bounty of birds and flowers. To say that what others toil for from morning till night in vain, God gives to His beloved without all this anxiety and exertion, while they sleep, puts this truth forcibly, and with that disregard of apparent paradox which was natural to a Hebrew, and which appears so prominently in our Saviour's treatment of the subject. Labour is decried as unnecessary neither here nor in the Sermon on the Mount, but "carking care" is dismissed as unworthy those who, from past experience, ought to trust the goodness of the great Provider. The Greek proverb, "The net catches while the fisher sleeps," and the German, "God bestows His gifts during the night," bring common expressions to confirm this voice of inspiration, which was, in almost so many words, recalled in our Lord's parable (Mark iv. 27). But old association pleads for the equally true and equally beautiful rendering which makes sleep the gift of God. If there is one thing which seems to come more direct from Heaven's bounty than another, that in its character is more benign, in its effects more akin to the nature of God, it is the blessing of sleep. In all times men have rendered thanks to Heaven for this boon. The ancients not only spoke of sleep as "most grateful of known gifts," but made itself a god. The psalmist unconscious, but most truly, teaches us the further lesson that it is not only a Divine blessing, but a proof of Divine love:

"Of all the thoughts of God that are Born in heart into the air, Across the psalmist's music deep, Now tell me if that any is For gift or grace surpassing this— He giveth His beloved sleep."

Miss. BROWNING.

(3) Children.—With the true patriarchal feeling of the blessing of a numerous offspring, the poet here directly alludes to Gen. xxx. 2. "Heritage of Jehovah" is, of course, "heritage from Jehovah," i.e., a promise granted by Him, just as Israel itself was a possession He made for Himself.

Children of the youth.—i.e., the offspring of an early marriage. Aquila, "sons of young and vigorous parents." The young man, with his numerous family around him, is like the vigorous warrior with his quiver full of arrows.

(5) They.—Not the same. There is here one of the sudden changes of number in which Hebrew poetry abounds. (See especially Ps. xvii. 43.) Parents who have large families of sons are evidently intended. From the figure of the warrior and the arrows we should expect here, too, a martial image. They shall not be discomfited, but they shall challenge their enemies in the gates. In illustration may be quoted:

"Therefore men pray to have around their hearth, Obedient offspring, to requite their foes With harm, and honour whom their father loves; But he whose issue is unprofitable, Begs what else but sorrow to himself, And store of laughter to his enemies?"

SUPPL: Antig. 641

On the other hand, it is the habit of Hebrew poetry to accumulate metaphors, and the gate is so commonly spoken of as the place of public resort, where legal
be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

PSALM CXXVIII.
A Song of degrees.
(1) Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.
(2) For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
(3) Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

CXXVIII.
The last psalm taught in a homely way the great lesson of cheerful content, and this, while announcing the promises attached to fidelity to Jehovah, still confines itself to the domestic circle—with the implied truth that national prosperity is bound closely up with domestic happiness, and depends on the cultivation of domestic virtues. And what an idyllic picture is here of peace and happiness!—the natural effects of that spirit of simple piety which often preserves itself through many generations under a humble roof. We see the father of the family, working hard no doubt, but compensated for all his pains by an honourable competence, and the mother, instead of seeking distraction outside her home, finding all her pleasures in the happiness of her numerous children, who, fresh and healthy as young saplings, gather daily round the simple but ample board. Happy the family, poor or rich, whose annals tell such a tale! But the happiness could not be real or sincere which did not look beyond the home circle, to the prosperity of the larger circle of the nation of which it forms part; and so, like Burns' famous poem, which, in telling the story of the Scottish peasant's home-life, has caught the very spirit of the old Hebrew song, the psalmist ends with a patriotic prayer. The parallelism is here and there perfect.

(2) For thou.—The Hebrew by the position of the particle is more emphatic:
"For it is the labour of thine hands thou shalt eat." (See Note, Ps. cxvi. 10.) This picture of a successful and peaceful husbandry, which itself throws a whole flood of light on the condition of Palestine and of the people, now not nomadic but agricultural, is rendered still more emphatic by references to the numerous passages where it is foretold that enemies would devour the harvests (Deut. xxviii. 30—33; Lev. xxvi. 16).

Happy.—The same word translated blessed in verse 1.
(5) By the sides.—No doubt the inner part of the house is meant (see Ps. lxxvii. 2)—the gynaeceum or woman's quarter—or perhaps the sides of the inner court or quadrangle. This is no more out of keeping with the figure of the vine than the table is with that of olive plants. Though the Hebrews had not yet developed the fatal habit of excluding their women, as later Orientals have done, still there was a strict custom which allotted a more private tent (Gen. xviii. 9) or part of a house to them. And doubtless we are here also to think of the good housewife who is engaged within at the household duties, and is not like the idle gossip, sitting "at the door of her house on a seat in the high places of the city" (Prov. ix. 14). The vine and olive are in Hebrew poetry frequent symbols of fruitfulness and of a happy, flourishing state. (See Ps. lii. 8; Jer. xi. 16.) The comparison of children to the healthy young shoots of a tree is, of course, common to all poetry, being indeed latent in such expressions as "scion of a noble house." (Comp. Euripides, Medea, 1.089: "a sweet young shoot of children.")

(4) Behold, that.—Better, Look! for thus, &c. The poet calls attention to the charming picture he has drawn of domestic bliss and then points his moral.
(5) Shall . . . shalt.—Here and in the next verse the optative is plainly required: "May Jehovah," &c.; "mayst thou see," &c. The patriotic sentiment could not wait long for expression in such a psalm. No people ever perceived more strongly than the Jews the connection between the welfare of the state and that of the family.

Children's children.—Dr. Perowne illustrates from Virgil: "adspicies . . . natos natorum et qui nascuntur ab ills." (Comp. Zech. viii. 4, 5.)

And peace . . . The conjunction spoils the passage. The psalm concludes with the prayer, "Peace upon Israel." (Comp. Ps. cxxv. 5.)

CXXIX.
Out of some deadly peril Israel looks for deliverance to the righteousness of Jehovah, which from the childhood of the race has repeatedly manifested itself in help and deliverance. As the cord of bondage was cut in Egypt so will it be cut again, and the same shame and confusion overtake the present oppressors which fell upon the Pharaohs. But of the precise time and occasion there is no indication. The two stanzas into which the poem falls would be perfectly similar but for the last line, which looks suspiciously like an after addition of some copyist to bring the harvest scene into exact correspondence with the picture in Ruth. (See Note to verse 8.)

(1) Many a time.—Or more literally, much. (See margin.)
from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me. (5) The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows. (6) The Lord is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

(3) Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion. (6) Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:

(7) wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom. (8) Neither do they which go by

From my youth.—Here, of course, not the youth of a person, but of the nation. The poet glances back even to the Egyptian bondage. (See Hosea ii. 15, “as in the days of her youth, and as in the days when she came up out of the land of Egypt;” comp. Ezek. xxii. 3; Jer. ii. 2, xxii. 21, recalling all the long series of oppressions suffered by the race.)

May Israel now say.—There is in the original no adverb of time: “let Israel say.”

(5) Furrows.—The Hebrew word only occurs once besides, in 1 Sam. xiv. 14, where the margin renders as here, furrow—a rendering which plainly there is not intelligible. “Half a furrow of an acre of land,” as a space in which twenty men were killed, gives no clear idea to the mind. But Dr. J. G. Wetstein, in his excursus at the end of Delitzsch’s Commentary, explains the ma’an to be the strip of ground which the ploughman takes in hand at one time, and round which consequently at the end of each furrow the plough turns. Delitzsch’s “furrow—strip,” therefore, more exactly reproduces the word, though here doubtless it is used with a poetical freedom and may be translated furrow. The double image, suggesting the lash given to a slave, and at the same time the actual and terrible imprints of oppression left on the country as well as the race, is as striking as poetry ever produced. It, in fact, combines two separate prophetic figures, Isa. 1. 6 and lii. 23.

(4) The Lord is righteous.—This expression of faith, introduced without any conjunction, is itself a revelation of the deeply-rooted religion of Israel.

Cords.—Literally, cord. As in Ps. xxiv. 7, the net was broken and the bird escaped, so here the cord binding the slave (comp. Ps. ii. 3) is severed and he goes free.

(6) Which withereth afore it groweth up.—This clause, with its Aramaic colouring, probably contains a textual error. The context seems certainly to require the meaning “before it is plucked up,” and many scholars get this meaning out of the Hebrew verb used elsewhere of “plucking off a shoe” and “drawing a sword.” They give, which is no doubt legitimate, an impersonal sense to the active verb, “which withereth before one pulls it up.” The LXX. (received text), the Vulg., Theodotion, and the Quinta favour this rendering. On the other hand, the image of grass withering before it comes to maturity is exactly what we should expect here, growing as it does without soil (comp. “seed on the rock” in the parable of the sower), and suggests a more complete and sudden destruction of the enemies, who perish before the abortive plans of evil can be say, the blessing of the Lord be upon you: we bless you in the name of the Lord.

PSALM CXXX.

A Song of degrees.

(1) Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.

(2) Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

(3) If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

(4) But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

It is the soul of the people which here throws itself on the Divine forgiveness, waiting for deliverance as one waiteth for the dawn. Verses 7 and 8, which are evidently taken up by the full choir, leave no doubt of the national character of the psalm. But the strong personal feeling breathed into it has made it even more the de profundis of individuals than of churches or nations. Luther’s fondness for this psalm is well known. The progressive or step-like parallelism is well marked.

(1) Out of the depths.—A recurrent image for overwhelming distress (Ps. xvii. 16, lxxviii. 7; also xii. 2, where the same Hebrew word occurs). It is used literally in Isa. lii. 10 for the sea.

(2) If thou.—The word rendered “mark” is “watch” in verse 6. If “Jah” were to watch for men’s lapses, as one watches for the dawn, nothing but signal punishment could follow. So Job (Job x. 14, xiv. 16) actually believed God did watch; while the prophets Jeremiah (Jer. iii. 5) and Amos (Amos i. 11) use the word of the strictest usage taken that consequences should follow the sin. It is a fact worthy of attention, that misfortune provokes at this crisis, in this people so profoundly religious, not murmurings against the Divine dealings, but a sense of deep contrition.

(4) But.—Rather, for, marking an ellipse easily supplied. Israel’s sense of Jehovah’s readiness to forgive was too deep to need expression, it was understood; “Thou wilt not mark, &c., for . . .

Forgiveness.—The article in the original may be more than that common with abstract nouns. “The forgiveness we need.”

That thou mayest be feared.—Either that the forgiven ones may become more profoundly reli-
I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

PSALM CXXXI.
A Song of degrees of David.

I wait for the Lord, my soul is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

Surely have I behaved myself and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.

PSALM CXXXII.
A Song of degrees.

I have behaved...—The figure here is plain. It is taken from a baby's first real sorrow when he not merely feels pain, but is allowed no access to that which was his solace hitherto. He moans, and frets, and sobes, but at last is quieted by the love which is powerful to soothe, even when it must deny. So, as George Herbert says of man, "If goodness lead him not, then weariness may toss him to God's breast." But the exact rendering is matter of difference and difficulty. The verb rendered "behave" means to make equal or like. This is its meaning, even in Isa. xxxviii. 13, which is the only place referred to by Gesenius in support of his translation here "calmed." We cannot, therefore, render, as many critics, "I calmed and quieted my soul." But, as in Hebrew, it is common to express one idea by the combination of two verbs, so "I made like, and I quieted my soul," is really an idiomatic way of saying "I made as quiet as." The redundancy of the sign of comparison as after verbs of likeness may be illustrated by Ps. xl xii. 12, as well as by the passage in Isaiah referred to above. We thus get: "Surely I made my soul as quiet as a weaned child upon my soul." Instead of fretting after what is too great for him, he quiet his ambition, and his spirit lies calm and gentle, like a child in its mother's arms, that after the first trouble of weaning is over is soothed and lulled by the maternal caress. Perhaps the opposite idea, expressed by the common phrase, "to nurse ambitious thoughts," may serve to illustrate this somewhat unwonted image. For Israel as a "weaned child," comp. Isa. xxxvii. 9.

CXXXII.

This psalm, at first sight, seems from comparison with 2 Chron. vi. to be a hymn of Solomon's, or of his age, in commemoration of the completion and dedication of the Temple. What, however, makes such an obvious conjecture at once suspicious is that David, and not Solomon himself, should figure as the founder and builder of the Temple. Beyond question the psalm is ideal in its treatment of the history, and it is just conceivable that Solomon, who in 2 Chron. vi. is so careful to draw a contrast between his father's project and his own accomplishment of that project, might in a poem have been entirely silent as to his share in the work. A poet of his court would hardly have been so reticent. It is, however, hardly credible that Solomon would have blindered incidents belonging only to the history of the ark with those relating to the building of his own Temple. Altogether verse 6 clears up only as we take a more and more distant standpoint from the incidents it notes. A very late poet might easily refer the Temple...
Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.

(i) Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.

(6) Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.

For this proverbial expression see Prov. vii. 4.

(4) Lo, we heard.—This verse has been pronounced inexplicable, and yet the general intention is clear. The vow in which David declared his purpose has just been quoted, and that which is now said to have been heard and found can hardly be anything else than this purpose.

(3) Tabernacle.—We have in the mention of tent either a reminiscence of the old nomadic times of the race, or an allusion to David's own wandering and warlike habits.

(3) I will not.—For this proverbial expression see Prov. vi. 4.

(6) Ark of thy strength.—See the reference in Chronicles. The expression occurs nowhere else but in Ps. lxxviii. 61, where the word strength by itself denotes the ark. The technical word ark nowhere else occurs in the psalms.

For strength the LXX. and Vulg. have “sanctification.”
For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed. (10)

The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; "Of the fruit of 
thy body will I set upon thy throne." (11)

If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. (12)

For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. (13)

This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it. (14)

I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. (15)

Possibly the priestly garments are mentioned, not only as symbolic of righteousness, but also as investing whoever possessed them, with supremacy political as well as religious. This is rendered more probable by the express mention of the diadem below (verse 18, see Note). "Whoever had these, the priestly paraphernalia in his possession, had virtually the appointment to the office (high priest)." (Stanley, J. C. iii. 353.)

But if so, the V ulgate of the verse, in the form it has passed from the Breivarii into Anglican worship, has amply recovered for the verse its larger and deeper spiritual intention: "Endue Thy ministers with righteousness, and make Thy chosen people joyful." (16)

Saints—chasidim. Here very possibly technical of the party so called in the Maccabean period. (See Note, Ps. xvi. 10.)

(10) The most obvious construction of this verse is that which makes it an intercession, on the ground of the Divine partiality for David, in behalf of another prince—one of his successors—by the people at large. In the original (2 Chron. vi. 42) it is of course Solomon who prays for himself; here (see Introduction) we must naturally think of one of the Asmonean princes. The expression "to turn away the face," of a suppliant, instead of "turning from him," is borrowed from court etiquette. (Comp. 1 Kings ii. 16, margin.)

(11) In truth. This is a possible rendering, but it is more preferable to render Jehovah hath sworn unto David. It is a true oath; He will not depart from it. (Comp. Ps. cx. 4.) The substance of the oath which follows is taken from 2 Sam. vii. 16.

(12) Zion. The dynasty of David and the location of the sanctuary at Zion are intimately associated, as in Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68. (Comp. Ps. cxiii. 4, 5.)

(13) Horn of David. The sprouting or growing horn is an image of young, vigorous life. (See Note, Ps. lxv. 5.) The Messianic application of this prediction comes out in Zechariah's song (Luke i. 69).

I have ordained a lamp. Or, I have trimmed a lamp; the word used in connection with the sacred lights, under the express charge of Aaron and his sons (Exod. xxviii. 21; Lev. xxiv. 2, 3). But with this distinctly sacerdotal allusion we must also combine the special allusion to the Davidic dynasty, according to the promise (1 Kings xi. 36) : "That David my servant may have a light (or, lamp, as here) always before me in Jerusalem." (14)

(15) Crown (mezer). As the distinctive use of this word in Israel—by its derivation meaning mark of separation—for the golden plate, inscribed "Holiness to the Lord," worn on the high priest's mitre (see Exod. xxix. 6, xxxix. 30), we cannot be wrong in seeing here a special allusion to the same. This allusion is rendered more probable by the use of the word rendered "flourish" (properly, shine), a cognate to which was the technical name given to this golden plate. (See the reference in Exod. xxxix. 39, the only other place in the psalms where the word occurs, though as the word is used of the royal crown in 2 Sam. i. 10, &c., the allusion is certain. But if the Maccabean hypothesis be correct, the use of the word, instead of the more usual word for crown, is interesting. "One relic of the ancient insignia has been preserved, which was probably prized as the most precious of all. It was the golden plate affixed to the turban, inscribed ' Holiness to Jehovah,' which was believed to have come down from the time of Aaron, and which, treasured through all the vicissitudes of the Jewish state, was carried to Rome by Titus, and seen there by the great Jewish Rabbi, in the time of Hadrian." (Stanley, J. C. iii. 353.)

CXXXIII.

The unity, which is in a manner so truly Oriental, eulogised in this poem, is not mere brotherhood, not personal or even religious union generally, but unity of Zion, as the last clause of the beautiful little poem convincingly proves. Nor is it, as most commentators assume, the gathering of the pilgrims at the yearly feast, appropriate though the song would be for such a gathering, and adapted, or at all events arranged, as it doubtless was, for it. The "blessing" (see verse 5), the covenant blessing which rested on Zion, where was the centre both of the political and religious life of the nation, is the subject of this psalm. For determining the date of the poem, there is not the slightest indication. The inscription may be dismissed as a Rabbinical conjecture. Perhaps we may conjecture that if the psalm had been composed before the exile, when the sacred oil was still in existence, the consecration of the reigning high priest, instead of that of Aaron, might have been selected. The step-like rhythm is just audible.

(1) In unity. Better, altogether. The Hebrew particle gam, here used with the word "together," is in our version sometimes rendered "yea." When it plainly should be taken with the adjective to intensify it exactly like our "all." (See, for instance, Ps. xxv. 3; 2 Sam. xix. 30.) The common idiom, gam shenayfni, "all two" (i.e., both), exactly like the French tous deux, and the German alle beide, decides this. Many commentators, rendering also together, see an emphasis on the gathering for the yearly feasts: "How good and
it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (3) It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

PSALM CXXXIV.
A Song of degrees.

(1) Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye

The Excellence of PSALMS, CXXXIV.

and Pleasantness of Unity.
servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. (2) Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. (3) The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

PSALM CXXXV.

(1) Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. (2) Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, (3) praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.

(4) For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.

(5) For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is Above all gods.

(6) WHATSOEVER the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and all deep places.

(7) He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.

(8) Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. (9) Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants. (10) Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; (11) Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan: (12) and gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.

(13) Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations. (14) For the Lord will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.

(15) The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. (16) They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; (17) they have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. (18) They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.

(19) Bless the Lord, O house of Israel:

(1) All ye servants.—We learn from 1 Chron. ix. 33 that there were Levites whose duties brought them to the Temple by night. Moreover, the word ʻāmād, “stand,” is the customary word for sacerdotal service (Deut. x. 8, xviii. 7; 1 Chron. xxiii. 30, &c.).

(2) Lift up your hands (see Note, Ps. xxviii. 2) in the sanctuary. The usual meaning would be to the sanctuary (see reference above), but since the servants of Jehovah are here addressed as standing in the sanctuary, this direction seems unreasonable. Render, therefore, in holiness, and comp. “lifting up holy hands” (1 Tim. ii. 8).

(3) Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. (4) Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, (5) praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.

(6) For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is Above all gods.

(7) whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and all deep places.

(8) He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.

(9) Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. (10) Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants. (11) Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; (12) Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan: (13) and gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.

(14) Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations. (15) For the Lord will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.

(16) The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. (17) They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; (18) they have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. (19) They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.

(20) Bless the Lord, O house of Israel.

The Lord's Mighty Deliverances.
bless the Lord, O house of Aaron: (20) bless the Lord, O house of Levi: ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord.
(21) Blessed be the Lord, out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CXXXVI.

(1) O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(2) O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(3) O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(4) To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(5) To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(6) To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(7) To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(8) the sun 1 to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(9) the moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(10) To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(11) and brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(12) with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.

(13) 9 To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(14) and made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(15) but 2 overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(16) 1 To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(17) To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(18) 2 Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(19) and gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(20) every heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(21) Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:
(22) and hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(23) Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.
(24) O give thanks unto the God of hosts: ye bless the Lord, whose name is Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.

(20) Out of Zion.—As in Ps. cxxvii. 6, Jehovah blesses the covenant people out of Zion, so here they bless him out of Zion—that is the place where the reciprocal relation is best and chiefly realised. This localisation is made more emphatic by the addition of the name Jerusalem to Zion. (Comp. Ps. lxxvi. 2, cxxv. 1, 2.)

CXXXVI.

The recurrence in this psalm of the ancient liturgical refrain (see Notes, Psvs. civ. 1, cxxvii. 1), not after every verse, but after every clause, marks clearly the peculiarity of its choral use, and shows that it was composed expressly for the Temple service. It is invariably allowed to be one of the latest hymns in the collection. It has generally been known among the Jews as the Great Hallel, a designation, however, at other times given to the series Psvs. cxx.—cxxxvi. (according to others Psvs. cxxxv. 4—cxxxvi.).

(23) God of gods ... Lord of Lords.—From Deut. x. 17.
(24) By wisdom.—From Ps. civ. 24, Prov. iii. 19, or Jer. x. 12.
(25) While this section in many points recalls the account of creation in Genesis, it employs terms from other parts of Scripture.

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The Hebrew can think only of one kind of song, that to which the genius of the race was dedicated.

(4) Strange land.—The feeling expressed in this question is too natural to need any such explanation as that it was contrary to the Law to sing a sacred song in a strange land. Nehemiah’s answer (Neh. ii. 2, 3) offers a direct illustration. Of Jerusalem’s choir in Babylon it might truly be said: “Like strangers’ voices here they sound, in lands where not a memory strays, Nor landmark breathes of other days, But all is new unshallowed ground.”

Tennyson: In Memoriam.

(5) Her cunning—i.e., the skill of playing on the harp. If at such a moment the poet can so far forget the miserable bondage of Jerusalem as to strike the strings in joy, may his hand for ever lose the skill to touch them.

(6) Remember.—Remember Jehovah, for the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem. The prophecy of Obadiah gives the best comment on this verse: “For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress” (Obadiah, verses 10—12.) (See Excursus on the date and authorship of that book.)

The LXX. prefix a curious title “To David of Jeremiah;” Vulg., “Psalms David Jeremiais,” which has been explained “a David-like song by Jeremiah.”

(1) By the rivers.—Mentioned as the characteristic feature of the country, as we say “among the mountains of Wales.” The canals which irrigated Babylonia made it what an ancient writer called it, the greatest of “cities of river places.”

(2) Willows.—It is perhaps not necessary to attempt to identify the trees mentioned in this verse, since the touching picture may only be a poetical way of expressing the silence during the exclude of all the religious and festive songs. The ‘erab’ is certainly not the willow, a tree not found in Babylonia, but the poplar (Populus Euphratische).

(6) A song.—See margin. The expression is generally regarded as pleonastic, but may be explained as in Ps. cv. 27, where see Note. Perhaps “some lyric thing” would express the original. No doubt it is a Levite who is requested to sing.

They that wasted us.—A peculiar Hebrew word which the LXX. and Vulg. take as synonymous with the verb in the first clause. The modern explanation, “they that make us howl,” is far preferable. Those whose oppression had raised the wild Oriental scream of lamentation, now asked for mirth.

Songs of Zion—or, as in the next verse, songs of Jehovah, were of course the liturgical hymns. Nothing is more characteristic than this of the Hebrew feeling. The captors asked for a national song; as the Philistines asked for sport from Samson, to amuse them.
A Song of Praise.

PSALMS, CXXXVIII.

The Divine Condescension.

served us. (9) Happy shall he be, that
taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

(1) I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. (2) I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

(3) In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

in turn tried to disguise and justify the expression of passion. Happily the Bible allows us to see men as they were without taking their rules of feeling and conduct as ours. "The psalm is beautiful as a poem—the Christian must seek his inspiration elsewhere."

(9) Little ones.—Literally, sucklings.

Stones.—Better, cliff or rock.

For this feature of barbarous cruelty with which ancient war was cursed see 2 Kings viii. 12; Isa. xiii. 16; Hosea x. 14, &c.; and comp. Homer, Iliad, xxii. 63:

"My bleeding infants dashed against the floor."

CXXXVIII.

The suggestion contained in the last addition made to the Hebrew inscription by the LXX., "Of Haggai and Zechariah," brings this psalm within the post-exile period, the most likely time of its composition. The tone and tenor are what we should look for if Zerubbabel or Nehemiah were its author. Some great success had evidently just been gained (verses 1-5); but trouble still pressed on the community for whom the poet speaks—some work of pressing need was impeded, and Jehovah's strong hand could alone bring it to completion. This would suit the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.

On the other hand, the achievement already performed may have been of a military kind, and the psalm may breathe the hopes of the Maccabean period. The poetical form is nearly regular and the rhythm stately, as suits the subject.

(1) Before the gods.—Undoubtedly, as in Ps. lxxii. 1: "before the great" or "mighty." (Comp. Ps. cxix. 46, "before kings.")

Sing praise.—Rather, play.

(2) Notice that "loving-kindness" and "truth" are joined as inseparable attributes of Jehovah in His relation to the chosen race.

For thou hast magnified—i.e., the promise made for help and deliverance has been fulfilled, and more than fulfilled. The psalmist often speaks of Jehovah's name, or reputation, or honour being at stake. Here the poet can say that the promise was even beyond what might have been expected. It is true this would have been expressed more in accordance with our expectation by "Thou hast magnified Thy Name above Thy promise;" but comp. Ps. xlviii. 10 for a similar thought, and for the language comp. Tennyson's:

"I am become a name."

(4) All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth. (5) Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.

(6) Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off. (7) Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

(8) The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

The LXX. and Vulg. felt the difficulty too great, and render "Thy holy one," instead of "Thy word."

(9) Strengthenedst me with strength.—Or, encouraged me strongly. (See Note to Song of Sol. vi. 5, where the same Hebrew form occurs.)

In my soul.—Or, at my desire.

(4, 5) The general sense of these verses is plain, though there are slightly different ways of understanding the expressions. The psalmist imagines that the word or promise, which has been so abundantly fulfilled, will, by its performance, convince all the kings of the earth, and bring them in confession and praise to Jehovah. For a Hebrew the expression "hear the words of Thy mouth," referring in this instance immediately back to verse 2, was synonymous with "see Thy wonders," since for them "God spoke and it was done."

(5) In the ways.—Rather, of the ways, this preposition being so used frequently after verbs of speaking praising (comp. Ps. xx. 7, xliv. 8, Cxxxvii. 3, cv. 2), though there is no parallel instance of such a use with this particular verb singing.

For ways used of God's mighty works in creation see Job xxvi. 14, xl. 19; of His action in history, Ps. xviii. 30; Deut. xxxii. 4. It seems against the parallelism to understand literally that the heathen kings would come to walk in God's ways—i.e., in righteousness, and so praise Him, as in Micah iv. 2. The meaning is that heathen monarchs will be compelled to acknowledge the glory of Jehovah.

Knoweth afar off.—Or, recognizeth from afar. From His exaltation Jehovah looks down alike on the lowly and on the proud, but it is to show a gracious interest in the former, while the latter are merely marked as persons to be kept at a distance. "Lowliness and humility are the court dress of God; he who wears them will please Him well."

(7) This verse echoes Ps. cxxii. 4, xxx. 3, lxxi. 20.

Against the wrath.—Or, perhaps, upon the wrath.

(8) Perfect that which concerneth me.—Or, as in the analogous phrase (Ps. lvii. 2), will complete for me—i.e., either "all my undertakings," or, as in Phil. i. 6, "what he has begun in and for me."

Forsake not.—Better, the works of Thine hands; do not leave them unfinished. (See for the same verb Neh. vi. 3; Prov. iv. 13: "let her not go."
PSALM CXXXIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

(1) O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. (2) Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. (3) Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. (4) For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. (5) Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. (6) Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. (7) Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? (8) If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. (9) If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell

The special intention of the prayer depends on the origin of the psalm. If it arose out of the troubles of rebuilding Jerusalem and reconstituting the state, it is intelligible and expressive. Or the reference may be to all Jehovah’s gracious intentions for Israel.

CXXXIX.

This psalm falls into four strophes unequal in length, but clearly marked. Had it ended at the third it could have been easily described as a poem on the omniscience and omnipresence of God; and though many of the expressions that have been used about this psalm would seem extravagant if repeated, yet it would be acknowledged by all as one of the sublimest in the whole collection. In its tone it is personal and reflective rather than speculative, and yet some of the profoundest metaphysical questions are touched, or at least suggested, and as we read we feel at every moment that we stand on the verge of the discovery of weighty truths concerning God’s nature and his relation to man. But suddenly, as only a Hebrew poet could do, the writer breaks away from the subject, to denounced ungodly men with a storm of indignation nowhere surpassed. For the explanation of this see Note to verse 19.

The superscription ascribing the psalm to David must be abandoned in the face not only of the strong Aramaic colouring of the psalm, but also of the development of its eschatology, which marks a late epoch. It is certainly as late as the latest in the collection. Though not sustained throughout, the parallelism is exceptionally fine.

Title.—See Title, Ps. iv.

The Codex Alex. of the LXX. adds, “of Zechariah,” and a later hand, “on the dispersion.”

(1) Searched — Comp. Ps. xlv. 21, “shall not God search this out.” The word is used of mining operations, Job xxviii. 3; of exploring a country, Judges xviii. 2.

(2) Downsitting and uprising — as in Deut. vi. 7, to denote the whole daily life—business and rest.

Thought.—An Aramaic form found nowhere else, but, from one possible derivation (“companion”), meaning the thoughts which are inescapable companions, most intimate thoughts.

Comp. Macbeth ii. 2:

“How now, my lord! Why do you keep alone,
Of sorrow’s fancies your companions making?”

Afar off.—Exactly as in Ps. cxxxviii. 6. Jehovah notes and recognises the proud from afar off, so here though He has His home in heaven He knows what are the thoughts and feelings amid which a man habitually lives. (Comp. Job xiii. 12, 13.) The Hebrew expression literally means, thou hadst intelligence as to my thought from afar, an Aramaic expression.

(3) Compassest.—There is some obscurity about this word. The Hebrew verb means first to scatter, and is used of throwing corn about to winnow it (Isa. xxx. 24; Jer. iv. 11; Ruth iii. 2). Hence by an easy metaphor it may mean to sift or search out. The LXX. and Theodotion, followed by the Vulg., have traced, investigated. Jerome has unanswered. The Authorized Version rendering appears to come from a mistaken etymology.

A most plausible suggestion connects the verb with zir, to lodge, which makes a perfect parallelism with the verb to dwell, in the next clause. Literally, about my path and bed thou art a guest, in all my ways thou dwellest; i.e., art as familiar with all my life as one inhabiting the same house could be.

My path.—Literally, my going.

(4) For there is not . . . — This has been understood in two ways:— My tongue cannot utter a word which thou dost not altogether know.

or, Before my tongue can utter a word thou knowest it altogether.

(5) Beset—as a beleaguered city from which there is no escape.

(6) Such . . . — God’s omniscience is for man at once transcendent, unattainable, impossible. Possibly the article has dropped away, and we should read this knowledge. LXX. and Vulg. have “thy knowledge.”

For the thought comp. verses 17, 18, and Romans xi. 33.

(7) Spirit.—If this clause stood alone we should naturally understand by God’s Spirit His creative and providential power, from which nothing can escape (comp. Ps. civ. 30). But taken in parallelism with presence in the next clause the expression leads on to a thought towards which the theology of the Old Testament was dimly feeling, which it nearly reached in the Book of Wisdom. “The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world,” but which found its perfect expression in our Saviour’s announcement to the woman of Samaria.

(8) If I make my bed in hell.—Literally, If I make Sheol my bed. (For the thought see Amos ix. 2, and comp. Prov. xv. 11; Job xxvi. 6.) This conviction that the underworld was not exempt from the vigilance and even from the visitation of Jehovah makes an advance in thought from Ps. vi. 5 (where see Note), &c., where death is viewed as cutting off the Hebrew altogether from his relation to the Theocracy.

(9) If . . . — Literally, I lift wings of dawn I dwell in the end of the sea.
in the uttermost parts of the sea; (10) even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. (11) If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. (12) Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. (13) For thou hast possessed my reins:

The wings of the morning.—This exquisite image suggesting not only the pinions of cloud that seem often to lift the dawn into the sky, but also the swift sailing of the light across the world, may be compared to the “wings of the sun” in Mal. iv. 2, and the “wings of the wind” in Ps. xviii. 10. The uttermost parts of the sea—i.e., to a Hebrew the extreme west. The poet imagines himself darting from east to farthest west, with the rapidity of light.

(10) Even there . . .—The expressions “lead me,” “hold me,” are elsewhere used of the protecting and guiding providence of God (Pss. v. 8, xxiii. 3, xxvii. 11, lxxxiii. 24). And yet the psalmist speaks here as if he were a guilty being trying to escape from the Divine notice. The truth is a profound one. Even when God discovers and overtakes those who guiltily try to hide from Him, it is to take them under His loving care.

(11) If I say . . .—Rather,

I say only let darkness crush me,
And light become night around me.

Commentators have mostly been frightened by the metaphor in the first line, though it has been preserved both by the LXX. and Vulg., and can only be avoided either by forcing the meaning of the word from what it bears in Gen. iii. 15, Job ix. 17, or altering the text. Yet the Latins could speak even in prose of a region “oppressed by darkness” (Sen. Ep. 82); and when night was used as figurative of death, nocte premit was a common poetical figure. Indeed, the word rendered “wings” here is actually, in Ps. lxxxviii. 6, used of death, and if we understood this figure here we might render the word trample, illustrating by Horace

“Jam te premet nox fabulæque Manes.”

Such a view would suit the thought to which the poet immediately passes—to God the darkness of death and the nothingness before birth are alike. On the other hand, as the main thought is that nowhere is there escape from God’s sight in height, or depth, or distance so as to exhaust the possibilities we seem to need, darkness.

The second clause does not begin the apodosis: it is in synthetic parallelism with the first.

(13) For . . .—The mystery of birth regarded as one of the greatest mysteries (see Eccl. xi. 5), is a proof of God’s omniscience.

Possessed.—The context seems to require formal, fashioned, as, according to Gesenius, in Deut. xxxii. 6, (Authorised Version “bought”). (Comp. Gen. xiv. 19, where maker should be read for possessor.)

For “reins” see Ps. xvi. 7.

Covered me.—Most critics render here diste vene me. (Comp. Job x. 11.) But the usual sense of the word cover or protect, suits equally well. The prime thought is that every birth is a divine creation.

For I am . . .—Literally, because I am fearfully separated or distinguished (see Note on Pss. xxxvi. 7, xl. 5), which might mean separated from the womb, i.e., born. (Comp. Gal. i. 15; Ps. xxii. 10.) Or if the reference is national rather than individual, it would imply, as so frequently, the choice of Israel by Jehovah in distinction to other races.

Substance.—Aquila “bones,” LXX. and Vulg. “bone,” Symmachus “strength.” Perhaps, generally, body. But the common Hebrew word for bone differs only in the pointing.

In secret.—Comp. Exch. Eum. 665.

Curiously wrought.—From the use of the verb in Exod. xxvi. 36, xxvii. 16, it plainly refers to some kind of tapestry work, but whether of the nature of weaving or embroidery is matter of controversy. The English sufficiently suggests the figure.

In the lowest parts of the earth.—This figurative allusion to the womb is intended no doubt to heighten the feeling of mystery attaching to birth. There may also be a covert allusion to the creation of dust as Eccl. xi. 1. “From the day that they go out of their mother’s womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things.” This allusion falls in with the view which meets us in other parts of the Old Testament, that the creation of Adam is repeated at every birth (Job xxxii. 6, and see above, verse 13). Others, since the expression “lowest places of the earth” is used of the unseen world (Ps. xiii. 9; comp. Ixxxvi. 13), see here a confirmation of the view that the state before birth and after death are in this poem regarded as the dark void of night, with all the recesses of which, however, God is acquainted. (Comp. the expressions “Womb of Sheol,” “Belly of hell,” Josiah ii. 2; Eccles. i. 5.)

(16) This difficult verse, rendered word for word, gives—

“My fonts (literally, ralled) saw thine eyes,
And on thine book all of them were written;
Days were formed, and got (or, as the Hebrew margin, to him) one in them.”

The reading “substance yet being imperfect” of the Authorised Version follows the LXX. and Vulg., and (Symmachus, “shapeless thing”) periphrastically do—
God's Thoughts Precious.

PSALMS, CXXXIX.

Demnunciation of the Wicked.

they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. (21) Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? (22) I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. (23) Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: (24) And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

But a much more satisfactory sense is obtained by adopting one slight change and following Symmachus in the last line—

"Thine eyes beheld my embryo, And in thy book were written All the days, the days Which were being formed, When as yet there was none of them." (Authorised Version, "in continuance").

But a much more satisfactory sense is obtained by adopting one slight change and following Symmachus in the last line—

"The days which are all reckoned, and not one of them is wanting." All the ancient versions make that which is written in God's book either the days of life, or men born in the course of these days, each coming into being according to the Divine will.

Precious.—Rather, weighty, the first meaning of the word. The parallelism requires this, as also the peculiar word for "thoughts," for which see verse 2. We have here the antithesis to that verse: while the Divine penetration discovers the most intimate thoughts of man, man finds God's secrets incomprehensible.

If I should...—The original is more expressive:—

"Let me count them—more than the sand they are many: I have awakened—still with thee."

With the countless mysteries of creation and providence the poet is so occupied, that they are his first waking thought; or, perhaps, as the Hebrew suggests, his dreams are continued into his early thoughts.

"Is not the vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems? Dreams are true while they last; and do we not live in dreams?"

TENNYSON: Higher Pantheism.

(19) Slay the wicked.—This abrupt transition from a theme so profound and fascinating to fierce indigination against the enemies of God, would certainly be strange anywhere but in the Psalms. And yet, perhaps, philosophically regarded, the subject of God's omniscience must conduct the mind to the thought of the existence of evil, and speculation on its origin and development.

Notes the embryo, which the Hebrew word—literally, rolled, or wrapped, used in 2 Kings ii. 8, "of a mantle," in Ezekiel xxvii, 24, "bales" (Authorised Version, "clothes," "rags," "foldings")—almost scientifically describes. (Comp. Job x. 8—12; 2 Mac. vii. 22.) Others take it of the ball of the threads of destiny; but this is not a Hebrew conception. By inserting the word members, the Authorised Version suggests a possible, but not a probable, interpretation. The Hebrew language likes to use a pronoun before the word of which it refers has occurred (see Note, Ps. lxxvii. 14); and, in spite of the accents, we must refer all of them to "days" (Authorised Version, "in continuance").

"Thine eyes beheld my embryo, And in thy book were written All the days, the days Which were being formed, When as yet there were none of them." (18) If I were fashioned, when I was rolled, and in thy book were written. All the days, the days Which were being formed, When as yet there was none of them."

We get the last clause, which is better than an abrupt change to the imprecations, by a slight change of reading.

(20) For they speak.—Better. Who rebel against thee. This is actually the reading of the fifth of the Greek translations preserved by Origen, and entails only a change of the vowel pointing.

And thine enemies.—The state of the text is unsatisfactory. The subject to the verb must be that of the last clause, and the rendering "enemies" of a word properly meaning cities is very doubtful, in spite of 1 Sam. xxviii. 16 (but Aquila has "rivals," and Symmachus "adversaries"), where there is also a textual correction required.

Of the various proposed emendations, the simplest produces "And rise up against them in vain." (21) Do not I...—Better—"Must I not hate thy haters, Jehovah, And feel loathing for thy assailants?"

(22) With perfect hatred.—Literally, with perfection of hatred. Comp. Tennyson's "Dowered with the hate of hate."

(23) Search.—The same word with which the psalm opens. The inevitable scrutiny of the Divine Being is invited.

Thoughts.—As in Ps. xciv. 19; a word meaning (Ezek. xxxi. 5) branches, and so expressing the ramifications of thought.

Wicked way.—The Hebrew may mean (after 1 Chron. iv. 9; Isa. xiv. 3) way of sorrow, or (after Isa. xlviii. 5) way of an idol, i.e., idolatry, which is preferable.

Way everlasting.—Rather, here as in Jer. vi. 16, xviii. 15, of the old, i.e., the true, religion, in the ancient way. The word rendered "everlasting" merely expresses indefinite time, whether past or future.
PSALM CXL.

The date of its composition is in no way indicated in this psalm. Its resemblance to Psalms lvi., and lixiv. hardly needs to be pointed out. The close of all three psalms sounds much alike; they agree in the use of rare forms of expression, and their language becomes fearfully obscure in style and sound, when they are directed against the enemies.” Besides the conjecture of Davideic authorship by the Rabbins, further developed by the addition in the Syriac, “when Saul threw the spear,” Manasseh’s reign, the immediate post-exile times, and the Macabean age, have all been selected for the situations out of which the psalm sprang. It is most in harmony with its feeling to suppose Israel speaking as a community, or an individual who identifies his own fortunes entirely with that of the better part of the nation. Heathen oppressors and foreign influences are undoubtedly attacked in the poem, and the blessings attending a loyal adherence to the religious and national traditions supply the cheerful and confident tone in which it ends. The rhythm is fine and varied.

Title.—See Ps. iv.

(1) **Evil man.**—The singular of the object in this verse must not lead us to think the psalm is an expression of personal feeling against one enemy, for it is immediately changed to the plural.

(2) **Violent man.**—See Margin.

(3) **Imagineth.**—Or, contrive, plot.

(4) **Gathered together.**—This translation follows the analogy of Ps. lvi. 6. Others render, “dwell with wars.” It is preferable to derive from a root meaning to incite: “They are continually stirring up wars.” It is the situation described in Ps. cxx. 7 and frequently; Israel would be at peace, but within and without are those ever trying to involve her in troubles.

(5) **Adders.**—The Hebrew word is peculiar to this place, and is explained by Gesenius to be a compound of two words, to represent “that which rolls itself up and lies in ambush.” Besides the cobra and the cerastes, several other species of venomous snakes are common in Syria, and we may apply the name, either generally or specifically, to the vipers. Two species, Vipera ammodytes and Vipera eurypa, were found to be very common. The former of these was known to Linnaeus as inhabiting Palestine. They are plainly-colored serpents, with broad flat heads and suddenly-contracting tails” (Tristram, Nat. Hist. of the Bible, p. 276). The LXX. and Vulg. read “asp.” (Comp. Rom. iii. 19.)

(6) **Overthrow my goings.**—Literally, thrust aside my steps. The verse is a repetition, with variation, of verse 1.

(7) **Not.**—An elaboration of the favourite image of the net. (Ps. ix. 15.) The frequent occurrence of this figure well indicates the dangers to which Israel was subjected through the leaning of many of the nation itself to foreign influences.

(8) **Day of battle.**—Literally, in the day of arms, i.e., when he was arming for flight, God covered the warrior’s head, i.e., provided the “helmet of salvation” (Isa. liv. 17). (Comp. also Ps. lx. 9: “Strength of my head.”) Others, however, follow the LXX. and Authorised Version in understanding by “day of arms” the “day of battle.”

(9) **Desires.**—The form of the Hebrew word is anomalous, but the meaning certain. The LXX. and Vulg. give the first clause thus: “Give me not over to the enemy, by reason of their own desire:” which may possibly have been in St. Paul’s mind in Rom. i. 24.

Further not.—The text of this clause has undoubtedly suffered. The Authorised Version follows the LXX. and Vulg. in inserting a negative before the last word. These versions also take the word rendered “wicked devices” as a verb, not finding a noun of the form anywhere else: “They have plotted against me: desert me not, lest they exalt themselves.” So also Symmachus, and another Greek version quoted by Origen.

As the text at present stands, we must render: his plot do not further—they lift up. Looking on to the next verse, “the head of those surrounding me,” the suggestion at once arises that the verb lift up properly belongs to this clause:

“His plot do not further. They lift up the head, these surrounding me.”

This arrangement disregards the “selah,” and also obliges us to suspect that a clause has dropped out after the first clause of verse 9—a suspicion confirmed by the rhythm.*

(10) **Head.—**Ewald, who keeps to the text, takes rash in the sense of poison (see Ps. lix. 22, Note):—

“The poison of those encircling me.

Let them be covered with the perdition of their lips.”

This brings verses 8, 9 into harmony with verse 4. But the emendation given above is better.

In this verse too there is a grammatical difficulty, which the margin, “Let there fall on them,” instead of

* Mr. Burgess amends to “Further not his plot to his exaltation.”
Psalm 121

A Psalm of David.

(1) Lorn, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

(2) Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

(3) Set a watch, O Lorn, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

Psalm 118

A Prayer in Temptation.

(1) Or, an evil speaker, a wicked man of language, he enticed me with words; let not him be established in his overwrought.

(2) Or, a man of tongue.

Heavenly would have chased from the land find in it a favour of Jehovah.

Or, a wicked man of language, he enticed me with words; let him be established in his overwrought.

Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

Let them bring upon them, does not remove, since the subject of the next verb is third person singular. The first verb is usually taken impersonally, as by the LXX., which version is actually to be followed in rendering coals of fire (literally, coals accompanied with fire, or, coals as fire), and we get the somewhat awkward, but intelligible—

“Let them bring upon them coals of fire; let him cast them into pits that they rise not again.”

But a very slight change gives a plain grammatical sentence with the subject carried on from the last verse:

“Let them bring upon them coals of fire; let him cast them into pits, so that they rise no more.”

(Burgess.)

The word “pits” is peculiar to the passage. Gesenius, deriving from a root meaning “to thrust,” and literally means either idolatrous feasts (comp. Ps. xvi. 4) or banquets connected with the games and other foreign innovations against which, when introduced under Greek influence, the stricter Jews so bitterly protested. Can the allusion in verse 3 be to the musical gifts and accomplishments of the Levites, which the apostate part of the nation wished to enlist on the side of these Greek customs, but which the poet declines to exhibit, praying for support in his pious resolution? Or does verse 6 rather indicate a judicial position for the author; and is he afraid of being himself led into the perversion of justice, which he so strongly denounces, by the promise of popular favour?

The Davidic inscription cannot be for a moment maintained. There is no period of David’s life which the psalm could represent. The overthrow of some oppressive and persecuting court party, such as existed at Jerusalem either in the Persian or Grecian period, is surely indicated in verse 6. The rhythm is fine, and fairly sustained.

(2) Set forth . . . —See margin; but more literally, be erected, suggesting the pillar of smoke (comp. Tennyson’s “Azure pillars of the hearth”) continually rising to heaven. Some think the incense refers to the morning sacrifice, so that the verse will mean, “let my prayer rise regularly as morning and evening sacrifice.” But this is hardly necessary.

Sacrifice —i.e., the offering of flour and oil, which followed the burnt offering both at morning and evening (Lev. ii.1—11; in Authorised Version, “meat offering”), both by the morning and evening sacrifice. And here probably associated specially with evening, because the prayer was uttered at the close of the day. (See Note, verse 3.)

For the “lifted hands,” here, from the parallelism, evidently only a symbol of prayer, and not a term for obligation, see Ps. xxviii. 2, Note.

121

Prayer in Temptation.

(1) Or, a man of tongue.

Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

(2) Or, a wicked man of language, he enticed me with words; let him be established in his overwrought.

(3) Set forth ... —See margin; but more literally, be erected, suggesting the pillar of smoke (comp. Tennyson’s “Azure pillars of the hearth”) continually rising to heaven. Some think the incense refers to the morning sacrifice, so that the verse will mean, “let my prayer rise regularly as morning and evening sacrifice.” But this is hardly necessary.

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For the “lifted hands,” here, from the parallelism, evidently only a symbol of prayer, and not a term for obligation, see Ps. xxviii. 2, Note.

For what are men better than sheep or goats, That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,

Both for themselves, and those that call them friend.

TENNYSON: Mort d’Arthur.

(3) Watch.—The image drawn from the guard set at city gates at night seems to indicate the evening as the time of composition of the psalm.

Door of my lips.—Comp. “doors of thy mouth” (Micah vii. 5), and so in Lambs., &c. for the probable motive of the prayer, see Introduction. The poet’s feeling is that of Xenocrates: “I have often repented of having spoken, but never of having been silent.”
(6) Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

(7) Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

(8) When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

(9) Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth. But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord; in thee is my trust; I leave not my soul destitute. Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

(4) To practise wicked works . . .—The Vulg., ad excusandas excusationes, following the LXX., not only preserves the expressive assonance of the original, but probably conveys its meaning better than the somewhat tame English version. Evidently the damage to the righteous was not so much a sin act as a sinful utterance, and the expression "to make pretexes or excuses" may possibly refer to the casualities by which some of the laxer Jews excused their participation in heathen rites or licentious banquets.

(5) The difficulties of the psalm thicken here. Render, Let a righteous man smite me, it is a kindness; and let him reprove me, it is oil for the head: my head shall not refuse it though it continue; yet my prayer is against their wickednesses. The LXX. and Vulg. refer it to persons instead of things. But comp. Hosea x. 14; Ps. cxxxvii. 9, where, however, the expression is "against the cliff.

They shall . . .—Better, then shall they hear my words; how dainty they are, &c. The expression is ironical. The ungodly party, when their power is broken, instead of being entertained by the poet at a licentious banquet, will listen indeed to his words—shall hear a "dainty song" from him—viz., "a song of triumph.

(6) This verse again is full of obscurities. The first clause probably should be rendered, Let their judges be broken to pieces by the force (literally, hands) of the rock; or, let their judges be cast down by the sides of the cliff—i.e., hurled down the precipitous face of the rock; for the LXX. we find the much easier and more satisfactory "cleave"—a reading confirmed by the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions; as also by the fact that the word here rendered "cleave" is that employed in 2 Chron. xxv. 12 (see reference above, verse 6) of the Edomites thrown from the cliff. But the abrupt transition is not unlikely in Hebrew poetry, and the more difficult reading is according to rule to be preserved.

(7) Our bones.—The literal rendering of this verse is: As when one cutteth and cleaveth, in the earth our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

The reading "our bones" necessarily makes this an abrupt transition from the fate of the unjust judges in the last verse to that of the afflicted people, but in a correction by a second hand in the Codex Alex. of the LXX., we find the much easier and more satisfactory "their bones"—a reading confirmed by the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions; as also by the fact that the word here rendered "cleave" is that employed in 2 Chron. xxv. 12 (see reference above, verse 6) of the Edomites thrown from the cliff. But the abrupt transition is not unlikely in Hebrew poetry, and the more difficult reading is according to rule to be preserved.

The figure is mistaken in the Authorised Version. The reference is not to the ground strewn with the logs left by a woodcutter, but to the cedars of earth left by the plough. Keeping the present text, and making the figure refer to the redemption of the people, and give an excellent parallelism: "A righteous man may smite me in mercy and reprove me, but let not a wicked man's oil anoint my head;" i.e., I would welcome reproof from the righteous, but reject even the festive oil offered by the wicked. For the rendering "wickednesses" instead of "calamities," comp. Job xx. 12; Ps. xcv. 23. For the sense of "although" given to the conjunction, see Exod. xiii. 17. The suffix "their" refers back, of course, to the ungodly in verse 4. The "oil for the head" (comp. Ps. xiv. 7) is a natural emblem of festivity, and the whole sentiment of the passage is tolerably clear. Rather than join in the wicked mirth of a profane banquet, the poet would be the object of continued rebuke and chas- tisement from one of the godly—his prayer meanwhile still rising for protection against the allurements held out to tempt him. We probably have sketched here the actual condition of many a Levite between the anathema and the loyal part of the people when the ungodly party, when their power is broken, instead of being entertained by the poet at a licentious banquet, will listen indeed to his words—shall hear a "dainty song" from him—viz., "a song of triumph.

(8) Our bones.—The original idiom is far more forcible: "from the hands (or, 'clutches') of the grave." (See above, verse 6, "in the hands of the cliff.")
A Prayer of David

PSALMS, CXLII.—CXLIII. in Extremity.

(10) Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

PSALM CXLII.

Maschil of David: A Prayer when he was in the cave.

I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. (2) I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. (4) I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. (5) Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. (6) Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

PSALM CXLIII.

A Psalm of David.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.

(2) And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

(10) Comp. Ps. vii. 15.

Withal.—Probably, altogether (“whilst I altogether escape”), which some join with the previous clause, “Let the wicked fall into their own nets together, whilst I escape.”

CXLIII.

This is one of the eight psalms assigned by their inscriptions to the time of David’s persecution by Saul. There is nothing in the contents either to support or controvert the title, unless the recurrence of expressions found in Ps. xlii. 4, lxii. 8; and with the second clause comp. Ps. viii. 6.

When my spirit was so wrapped in trouble and gloom, so “muffled round with woe” that I could not see the path before me, was distracted and unable to see a line of conduct, Thou (emphatic) knewest my path. (Comp. for the same verb Ps. lxi. 2, lxvii. 3.)

I looked.—The Authorised Version follows the ancient versions in turning the Hebrew imperatives into historic tenses. But they are easily intelligible if taken rhetorically, and indeed the psalm loses in liveliness by missing them:

"On the path by which I must walk they have laid a trap for me; Look to the right and see, Not a friend is in sight. Failed has refuge from me, There is none who careth for my soul."

To the “right,” because according to the regular Hebrew metaphor it was on the “right hand” that the protector would stand. (See Note Ps. xvi. 8, &c; and comp. Ps. cix. 6, 31, cx. 5, cxxi. 5.)
David Prays for Deliverance and Quickening.

**PSALMS, CXLIV.**

Deliverance and Quickening.

David Prays for Deliverance and Quickening.

3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate. (I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. (I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.)

5 Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. (Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in darkness, as those that have been long dead, I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands; I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.)

6 And let thy good spirit lead me. (Thy spirit is good; lead me.-Or, rather, let thy good spirit lead me.)

7 Thou hast made...—See Lam. iii. 6; and comp. Ps. lxviii. 5, 6.

Long dead.—Literally, either dead of old, or dead for ever, according as we take 'olam of past or future time. LXX., ἐκφαντάσθη αἰώνιος; Vulg., mortuos secuunt.

8 See Ps. cxxiii. 3, and Notes.

Thirsty land.—See Ps. cxxiii. 1, which explains this elliptical sentence. As our Lord taught, God is even more ready to send the refreshing spiritual shower than the greater number of expressions and figures, and must from this circumstance be regarded as one of the latest in the collection, whereas verses 12-15 are composed of a fragment of some ancient song, whose beginning is lost, and which has neither grammatical nor logical connection with the medley of quotations that precedes it. (See Note to verse 12). This interesting fragment gives, unfortunately, no indication of its date or authorship. We can imagine it, however, chanted at harvest, at festivals, or as "the help tune" of the psalter than the union of the two entirely dissimilar pieces which compose this psalm. Verses 1-11 are a mere cento from former psalms, the xviiith furnishing the greater number of expressions and figures, and must from this circumstance be regarded as one of the latest in the collection, whereas verses 12-15 are composed of a fragment of some ancient song, whose beginning is lost, and which has neither grammatical nor logical connection with the medley of quotations that precedes it. (See Note to verse 12). This interesting fragment gives, unfortunately, no indication of its date or authorship. We can imagine it, however, chanted at harvest, at festivals, or as "the help tune" of the psalms.

9 For merit lives from man to man, and not from man, O Lord, to Thee.

10 Thy spirit is good; lead me.—Or, rather, let thy good spirit lead me. (For the omission of the article with the adjective after the determinative noun, comp. Gen. xxxviii. 2.)

Land of uprightness.—Better, level land (Deut. iv. 45, "plain country;" comp. Jer. xliv. 21), here metaphorically of tranquillity and happiness. (Comp. Isa. xxvi. 10; Ps. xxvii. 11.)

11 The last two verses are made of reminiscences of former psalm experiences. The verbs should be in the future, not the imperative. For thy name's sake.—Comp. Ps. xxii. 3, &c.

12 Quicken me, O Lord.—Comp. Ps. cxxviii. 7 and cxxix. frequently.

13 Out of trouble.—Comp. Ps. cxxiv. 17, cxxv. 7.

14 Comp. Ps. xviii. 40, 46, &c.

CXLIV.

There is nothing more curious in the composition of the psalter than the union of the two entirely dissimilar pieces which compose this psalm. Verses 1-11 are a mere cento from former psalms, the xviiith furnishing the greater number of expressions and figures, and must from this circumstance be regarded as one of the latest in the collection, whereas verses 12-15 are composed of a fragment of some ancient song, whose beginning is lost, and which has neither grammatical nor logical connection with the medley of quotations that precedes it. (See Note to verse 12). This interesting fragment gives, unfortunately, no indication of its date or authorship. We can imagine it, however, chanted at harvest, at festivals, or as "the help tune" of the reapers:

"their wine song, when hand

Grasps at hand, eye lights eye to good friendship
And great hearts expand,

And grow one in the sense of this world's life."—R. Browning: Saul.

The progressive rhythm of the latter part is very fine.

1 Strength.—Rather, rock. Comp. Ps. xvi. 2, 46. LXX, and Vulg., "my God."
Which teacheth.—See Ps. xvi. 34. More literally, "Who traineth my hands for war, My fingers for fight,"

(2) **My goodness.**—Or, *my lovingkindness, or my grace,* a shortened form of "God of my grace" (Ps. lix. 17). The expression is exactly analogous to the term "grace," applied to kings as the source of grace or mercy. For the other epithets, see Ps. xviii. 2.

Who subdued.—Ps. xviii. 47; but the verb is different (cognate with 2 Sam. xxii. 48), and here the singular, "my people," instead of "my peoples." Some MSS. indeed have the plural here, and the Syriac and Chaldee followed them, or changed to suit Ps. xvi. If we had the historical incidents out of which the psalm sprung we might account for the change.

(3) See Ps. viii. 4.

(4) **Vanity . . . shadow.**—See Ps. xxxix. 5, 6, cii. 11. The occasion of the introduction of these sentiments here is not quite clear. It may be the humility of the warrior who ascribes all success to God instead of to human prowess, or it may be a reflection uttered over the corpses of comrades, or, perhaps, a blending of the two.

(5) **Come down.**—The theology for which the psalmist prays is described in the classical language for such manifestations taken from Ps. xviii. 9, 13, 16, 17, 43, 45, with reminiscences of Ps. cix. 22; Exod. xix. 18. But there are touches of originality, as in the next clause.

(6) **Cast forth lightning.**—Literally, *lighten lighting,* the verb being quite peculiar to this place.

(7) **Rid.**—The Hebrew verb means "to tear asunder," and is used of the engulfing of the mouth (Ps. xxii. 13). The meaning here is got from the cognate Arabic, and Syriac.

Strange children.—Literally, *sons of the stranger.*

(8) **Right hand of falsehood.**—Most probably with allusion to the custom (see Ps. cxi. 26) of raising the right hand in taking an oath.

(9) See Ps. xxxii. 2, 3.

(10) **God.**—The only instance of *Elohim* in the last two books of the psalter with the exception of Ps. cxix., which is a compilation from two older songs.

(11) **David his servant.**—See Ps. xvi. 50.

(12) That our sons.**—This rendering of the relative, which so strangely begins this fragment, would be possible after Gen. xi. 7, xii. 16, &c., if a finite verb instead of participles followed; or it might mean "because," as in Gen. xxx. 18, &c., but for the same anomalous construction; or it might, as by the LXX., be rendered *whose,* if any antecedent for it could be discovered. But all these devices are plainly impossible, and there is nothing for it but to treat the passage which it introduces as a fragment of another poem quite unconnected with the previous part of the psalm. Render, *we whose.*

**As plants.**—The Hebrew word seems always to denote a young, vigorous tree lately planted. (See especially Job xiv. 9, aptly translated by the LXX. *zavvopot.* (For the comparison, comp. Isa. v. 7; Ps. i. 3, Note, cxxvii. 3.)

**Grown up in their youth.**—The form here used is peculiar, but in another conjugation the verb is frequently used of bringing up children (see 2 Kings x. 6; Isa. i. 2, xxiii. 4, &c.), as it is of the rain nourishing young plants (Isa. xlv. 14). Here the poet must mean *grown tall beyond their age,* or the figure is somewhat tame. A suggestion to read, "reproductive in their youth," i.e., though young themselves, bringing up families, improves the poetry, and suits well the intention of this fragment of song and the general feeling of the Hebrew race. Comp. especially Ps. cxxvi. 4, "sons of youth" (Burgess).

**Corner stones.**—The word only occurs once besides, in Zech. ix. 15, where it is used of the corners of the altar. The derivation is from a root meaning to conceal, as is also the word rendered *garner,* in the next verse. Aquila and Symmachus, "angles."

**Polished.**—The Hebrew word means *heav, used,* with one exception, of wood for fuel, but is cognate with a word used of stones, and in Isa. li. 1 in the passive participle of a cave hewn in a rock. The exception is Prov. vii. 16, where the word is applied to tapestry.

After the similitude of a palace.—i.e., like a large and stately building. There seems no reason to confine the reference to the Temple, as the LXX. and Vulg. do, though the absence of the article is not insuperably against this (Isa. xlv. 28). The explanations usually given of this passage make the resemblance to be either to carryatides carved at the angles of a palace, or to carved or variegated wood pillars in the corners of a spacious room. For the former there seems to be no authority in Scripture or known Hebrew usage. The latter has the support of Dr. J. G. Wetzstein, but seems far-fetched. It is far...
after the similitude of a palace: (13) that our garners may be full, affording 1 all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets: (14) that our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.

(15) Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.

PSALM CXLV.
David's Psalms of praise.

(1) I will extol thee, my God, O king:

and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. (2) Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.

(3) Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. (4) One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

(5) I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. (6) And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. (7) They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy
great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

(8) *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.* (9) *The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

(10) All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.

(11) They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; (12) to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. (13) Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

(14) The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. (15) The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. (16) Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

(17) *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

(18) *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.* (19) He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

(20) *The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*

(21) My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

**PSALM CXLVI.**

(1) *Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul.* (2) While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

(8) Comp. Pss. lxxvi. 15, ciii. 8, exi. 4.

(9, 10) All.—This wide outlook over the world as the object, with all that it contains, of the Divine pity and love, is a noble anticipation of our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and is introduced in a similar manner. Just as the subjects of the kingdom of heaven should exceed the heathen in kindness and goodness, because they know the universal and impartial grace of the Father, so here the saints, the members of the covenant, are to bless Jehovah, who shows them peculiar favour, but also lets His tender mercies flow in an uncheck'd stream over all His works. All Jehovah's works confess Him, but His saints bless Him.

(11, 12) It is the privilege of the saints to impress the less favoured natures with the glory of the Divine kingdom, which the theocratic relation has displayed in and to them.

(12) To make.—Or, by making known.

(13) See margin, and comp. Dan. iv. 3, 34. But it is not necessary to see any dependence between the passages because of the recurrence of phrases which must have been of daily use in the theocracy.

The six stanza, which should come after verse 13, has most probably dropped away. The LXX. and Vulg. Syriac, and Ethiopic have here a variation of verse 17, which would, in Hebrew, give a verse beginning with the required letter; but it is unknown to the other ancient versions, is rejected by the Jewish writers, and, though found in one Hebrew MS., is apparently suspicious there. But these arguments can hardly weigh against the improbability that, in an artificial composition, one letter (and that an easy one for the purpose) should have been either purposely or accidentally omitted in the original draft, especially when we reflect how extremely unlikely it was that the LXX. should trouble themselves to supply a verse in order to keep up an arrangement of which they took no other notice, perhaps even hardly observed it.

(14) The Lord.—Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 24. It marks a grand step in theology when the first instance of majesty of the Divine Being is sought in His con
descension to human weakness and pity for frailty and want. The heathen had seen that this was king-like—

"Rega (crede mith) res est succurrere lapis."

OVID: Ep. de Ponto II., 9, 11.

But they had hardly seen that it was also god-like.

For "raiseth" and "bowed down," see Ps. cxlvi. 8.

(15, 16) These verses are adapted from Ps. civ. 27, 28.

(17) The Lord is nigh... Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.*

TENNYSON: Higher Pantheism.

(18) *Preserveth... destroy.*—Notice this recurrent thought, that the guardianship of the good implies the destruction of the wicked.

(21) Holy name.—As in Pss. xxxiii. 21, ciii. 1, ev. 3.

CXLVI.

This liturgical hymn, beginning and ending with the familiar "Hallelujah," is the first of the series of five which are sometimes called the "Greek"—in distinction to the "Egyptian"—"Hallel." It was evidently composed for a time of great national depression, when the community, sick of dependence on the favour of foreign princes, turned more and more to the thought of the eternal righteousness and faithfulness of Jehovah.

The recurrence in a slightly changed form of verse 4 in 1 Macc. ii. 63 shows that the psalm was in existence when that book was written, and also serves to confirm the impression that it belongs to the Maccabean age. The rhythm is varied.

(1, 2) Praise.—Following Pss. ciii. 1, 22, cir. 38, "praise" being substituted for "bless."

(3, 4) Princes.—The thought of Ps. cxviii. 8, 9 is here elaborated, with distinct allusion to Gen. ii. 7 and iii. 19 (Comp. 1 Macc. ii. 63.) The verse, no doubt, was in Shakespeare's mind when he made Wolsey say:

"Oh, how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!"

as it was quoted by Strafford when the news reached him that Charles I. had given the royal assent to the bill of attainder against him. But in the psalm it is
Here, and through the verse, the verb relieveth, by taking up their cause and seeing justice done. Certain forms of the verb are used of bearing witness, and possibly here there is allusion to a court of justice, in which God appears as witnessing on the side of the weak and defenceless.

(5) "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. (6) His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

(7) Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry.

The Lord looseth the prisoners:

(8) The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous:

not the caprice of princes, as in these notable instances, but their frailty as men that is declared untrustworthy.

(4) In that very day . . . —Comp. Antony's words: "But yesterday the word of Caesar might have stood against the world; now lies he there, and none so poor to do him reverence." SHAKESPEARE, Julius Caesar.

Thoughts.—The Hebrew word is peculiar to this passage. "Fabrications" would reproduce its etymological meaning.

(3) For the different aspects of the Divine nature and character inspiring trust see Introduction. With this verse comp. Pss. xxxiii. 12, cxlv. 13.

Hope.—The Hebrew word is rare in the psalter, expressing earnest "looking for," or "waiting for." (See Pss. cxv. 27, cxvi. 166.)

(6) Truth.—Or, faithfulness. The connection of this feature of the Divine character with the creative act is worthy of notice. That act alone was for the universe a promise and pledge, just as the covenant was a promise and pledge, just as the covenant was.

The evident allusion to a rebuilding of Jerusalem has been referred both to the great restoration under Nehemiah and to the repairs and fortifications of Hyrcanus (1 Macc. xvi. 23).

(1) Ps. xxxiv. 3 is plainly before the poet in this verse; and yet, since Ps. xxxiii. is in other respects his model, it is extremely doubtful whether we ought to change the reading, so as to make a complete correspondence between the verses, or suppose that the alteration was intentional, in accordance with "praise is comely for the upright." In Ps. xxxiii. 1. (See Notes on both the passages; comp. also Ps. xciii. 1.)

(2) Build up—i.e., of course, "rebuild." The word "outcasts," which is that used in Isa. xli. 12 and lvii. 8, shows that the rebuilding after the captivity is intended. The LXX. and Vulg. have "dispersion;" Symmachus, "those thrust out."

(3) Broken in heart.—As in Ps. xxxiv. 18. (Comp. Isa. lix. 1.)

Wounds.—See margin, and comp. Job ix. 28; Prov. xv. 13.

(4) Stars.—This proof of God's power to help, by reference to the stars of heaven, which are beyond man's
telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. (9) Great is our Lord, and of great power: 2 his understanding is infinite. (10) The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

(7) Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: (8) who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. (9) a He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. (10) He delighteth not in the strength of the horse; he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. (11) The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

(12) Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. (13) For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee. (14) 2 He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of wheat. (15) He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly. (16) He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. (17) He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? (18) He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow. (19) He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. (20) He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.

PSALMS CXLVIII.

(1) 5 Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the

Infinite.—Literally, without number. (See Note, Ps. cxxxv. 3, and Isa. xlii. 28; that prophetic passage being still in the poet's mind, though the expression is changed).

(6) The meek.—Or, the afflicted. (See Note Ps. xxii. 26.)

(7) Sing.—Literally, answer, which some think suggests an antithetical arrangement. Though the strophic arrangement is only loosely marked, the psalm takes a new departure here, with a fresh invocation to praise, going on to fresh proofs from nature of the Almighty Power.

(8) Both in whiteness and fleecy texture. “The snow falls in large flakes, equal in size to a walnut, and has more resemblance to locks of wool than it has in our country” (Niven, Biblical Antiq., p. 21).

(9) Comp. Ps. cxxxv. 4, cxxxvi. 15; Job xxxviii. 41.; Luke xii. 24.

The proper attitude towards one who is thus “great to grant as mighty to make,” is not conceit of wisdom and strength, but humble dependence and trust.

(10) Strength of the horse... legs of a man. —This somewhat strange antithesis has been explained to refer to cavalry and infantry, but the much more expressive passage, Ps. xxxiii. 16, 17, which was plainly before this poet, would hardly have been altered so strangely. The horse as a type of strength and endurance was of course common. (Comp. especially Job xxxix. 19–25.) And we have before seen that Eastern nations naturally select fleetness of foot as the typical quality in a vigorous warrior. (See Ps. xviii. 33.) The constant epithet “swift-footed Achilles,” suggests the best explanation of the second clause of the verse. (Comp. 2 Sam. ii. 18.)

(12) Praise.—For this verb, properly stroke, or soothe, see Ps. lxxxiii. 5.

(13) For he hath strengthened.—An allusion to the new fortifications of the restored city is probable, though the expression is plainly figurative of security and peace.

With the second clause comp. Isa. lx. 17, 18.

(14) Maketh peace.—Or, placing as thy border peace.

Finest of the wheat.—Literally, fat of wheat. (See Ps. lxxxiii. 16.)

(15) Ps. xxxiii. is still in the poet's thought, and verses 6, 7 especially; but some extraordinary season of frost seems to have kindled his inspiration, so that he not only elaborates but improves on his model. The word of God is personified as a messenger who runs swiftly forth to do his bidding, at first in binding the earth and sheaves up with frost, and then (verse 18) in suddenly thawing and releasing them.

(16) Like wool.—Both in whiteness and fleecy texture. “The snow falls in large flakes, equal in size to a walnut, and has more resemblance to locks of wool than it has in our country” (Niven, Biblical Antiq., p. 21).

(17) Morsels.—Or, crumbs. (Gen. xviii. 5; Judges xix. 5.) Doubtless the allusion is to hail.

(18) Jacob... Israel.—As in the other two pieces into which the psalm divides (verses 6–11), the thought passes from the grandeur of God revealed in nature to the divine protection and favour accorded to Israel.

(19) Any nation.—This boast in Israel's peculiar and exclusive privilege may be compared with Deut. iv. 7, xxxii. 32–41.

Judgments.—Here plainly not manifestations of wrath; but, as so frequently in Ps. cxix., the display of righteousness towards Israel.

CXLVIII.

This glorious anthem, as it has been the model of countless hymns of praise, is best appreciated and understood by comparison with some of these. The
Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. (2) Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. (3) Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. (4) Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. (5) Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created. (6) He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. (7) Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: (8) fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word: (9) mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:

"song of the three children," found in the LXX. version of Daniel, is no doubt an imitation, but in its elaboration and its artificial style loses much of the lyric fire of the original. And of the rest, Isaac Taylor truly says: "It is but feebly and as afar off, that the ancient liturgies—except so far as they merely copied their originals—came up to the majesty and wide compass of the Hebrew worship, such as it is indicated in the exilvith Psalm. Neither Andrews, nor Gregory, nor the Greeks, have reached or approached this level. And in tempering the boldness of their originals by admixtures of what is more Christian and spiritual, the elaboration and its artificial style loses much of the tone of these anthems of the ancient church; sophisticated or artificial is their style."

The motive of the psalm, too, is quite different from that sympathetic feeling for nature which enters so largely and powerfully into modern poetry. Not that this feeling was entirely unknown to the Hebrew mind. It makes itself felt elsewhere; but here it is not because the poet wants nature to join him in praise that he summons the universe to his choir, but that he may, in the last verse, enhance the glory and privilege of Israel. All nature has reason to praise the Creator who called it into being, and gave it its order so fair and so established, and poetically the universe may be imagined full of adoring creatures, but in reality, praise as a privilege belongs only to Israel. It is not here a contrast between inanimate and animate, rational and irrational creation. Still less does there show itself the feeling that motives Keble's: "All true, all faultless, all in tune."

On the contrary, it is the covenant people that alone possess the privilege. Expression is piled on expression to establish this fact. "His people," "His saints," "a people near unto Him."
The immediate occasion of the psalm may very probably have been some victory, but conjecture cannot recover it.

(1) From the heavens... in the heights.—Some would render ye of the heavens, but the parallelism is in favour of the Authorised Version. "Heavens" and "heights" in this verse, and "angels" and "hosts" in the next, are analogously parallel. The heights contain the heavens (comp. Job xvi. 19, xxv. 2), as the hosts embrace the angels or messengers of God (Josh. v. 14); the larger term being in such case passed over synthetically to the position that thus keep their full meaning. From the heavens, or from a choir in the heights, comes the burst of anglican praise.

(4) Heavens of heavens.—See Note Ps. lxviii. 33, and references. Before passing downwards to the earth the invocation passes to combine all the heights, which have been before addressed in the expression which denotes their position relatively to the earth; the highest heaven of all, and then the world of water which, in the Hebrew conception of the Cosmos, was supposed to be the foundation, while itself rests on the firmament or heavenly vault. (See Ps. civ. 3.)

(5) Stable.—Literally, made to stand, i.e., set them up.

He hath made...—Rather, he hath made an ordinance, and will not transgress it. This is more obvious and natural than to supply a new subject to the second verb, "and none of them transgress it." This anticipates, but only in form, the modern scientific doctrine of the inviolability of natural order. It is the imperishable faithfulness of God that renders the law invariable. See the remarkable passages, Jer. xxxi. 36, xxxii. 20, from which we conclude that a covenant was supposed to have been made between God and nature as between Jehovah and Israel, the one being as imperishable as the other. A comparison of the two passages referred to shows that the Hebrew words ordinance and covenant might be used synonymously. The Authorised Version, which, following the LXX. and Vulg., makes the ordinance itself imperishable, violates the usage of the Hebrew verb.

(7) Earth—The invocation now passes downwards, and the first sound of terrestrial praise is to come, according to the order of Creation in Gen. i., from the sea-monsters (for which see Note, Ps. lxxiv. 13, xci. 13), the "deeps" being added to include all great waters in which such creatures are found.

(8) Fire.—Lightning, as in Pss. xviii. 25, is plain that the driving wind answering to the fire, as the snow to the hail. On the other hand, from Pss. xvi. 8, xlv. 5, it is plain that the driving mists of a storm were regarded as smoke. (Comp. "The smoky mountain tops."—Tennyson.)

This invocation of the powers of the air is a fine poetic touch, and shows the freedom of lyric treatment of the story of Creation, which in Genesis passes at once from the monsters of the deep to the land and its creatures. To the poet there is another region of life and power; other voices, which, though wild and fierce, may yet join in the grand anthem of praise.

Stormy wind.—As in Ps. ev. 35. This, to us, free and uncontrollable agent is yet but a messenger of Jehovah, fulfilling his word (Ps. civ. 4).

(9) Mountains, and all hills.—The invocation now allights on the crests of the highest mountains, and passes downward to the lower hills where vegetable life begins.
PSALMS, CXLIX.  

A New Song.

(i) beasts, and all cattie; creeping things, and flying fowl: (12) kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: (13) both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: (14) he also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CXLIX.

(1) Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

(2) Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. (3) Let them praise his name in the dance; let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

(4) For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. (5) Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

(6) Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in

So the fanaticism and cruelty of times that should have been more enlightened have been fed by the record of the Jews have left of their blended religious and patriotic zeal. The age when such a psalm was most likely to be produced was undoubtedly that of the Maccabees, and the coincidence between verse 6 of the psalm and 2 Macc. xv. 27 may indicate the very series of events amid which, with hymns of praise in their throats, and a two-edged sword in their hand, the chastidim in battle after battle claimed and won the honour of executing vengeance on Jehovah's foes. The synthetic parallelism is finely marked.

(i) A new song.—See Ps. xxxiii. 3.

The congregation.—Apparently the psalm puts us in the Maccabean age, when the chastidim was become a regular title for the patriotic party.

(ii) In the dance.—Rather, as margin, with the pipe. The use of the word machol in what was evidently a list of all the orchestral instruments used in the Temple in the next psalm, would alone be almost decisive of the meaning. But one possible derivation is certainly in favour of this rendering, as also the translation in the Syriac version by the name of a flute still found in Syria. Its connection, too, with the timbrel or drum (comp. our pipe and tabor), just as a cognate, chatis, is connected in 1 Sam. x. 5; Isa. v. 12, points the same way. (See Bible Educator, i. p. 70, and Note to Song of Sol. vi. 13.)

Timbrel.—See Exod. xv. 20; Bible Educator, i. 314.

Harp.—See Ps. xxxiii. 2.

(4) He will beautify the meek . . .—Rather, He adorns the oppressed with salvation. Not only is the victory which achieves the deliverance of the afflicted people a relief to them, but the honour won in the sight of the world is like a beautiful robe, a figure no doubt suggested by the actual triumphal dresses of the victors, or the spoils in which they appeared after the battle. (Comp. Isa. iv. 5, lx. 7; Isi. 5; Judges v. 30.)

(5) The two clauses are directly parallel:

"Let the chastidim raise a cry in glory: Let them sing aloud upon their couches."

Either the rejoicing is carried far into the night, and when retired to rest the happy people burst out anew into singing; or (see Hosea vii. 14), the couches may rather be the divans where feasts were held.

(c) High praises.—Literally, exaltations of celebration, i.e., hymns of praise.
their hand; (7) to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; (8) to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; (9) to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CL.

(1) Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

Mouth.—Rather, throat.

(5) Heav'n ... people.—Rather, nations ... peoples.

(6) The judgment written.—If we knew the exact circumstance which produced the psalm, and had the names of the nobles and princes taken prisoners, we should easily guess at the contents of the “judgment written,” which was, perhaps, some special order, the carrying out of which is celebrated here; or we may think of the judgments against the nation registered here and there in the sacred books, and by prescription made legitimate, such as that of the Canaanites, Amalekites, and putting forward as the object of praise both the earthly sanctuary first, and the sublime things done on earth (verse 2), then heaven and the exalted greatness there.

This honour.—Israel is here regarded as the instrument of God’s righteous judgments on the heathen.

CL.

In the place of the short doxology, such as concludes each of the former books of the psalter, this psalm was fitly composed or selected to close the whole collection. It has been well called “the finale of the spiritual concert,” and no doubt afforded a good musical display, music performed with full orchestra and choir, every kind of instrument known to the Hebrews, wind, string, and percussion, being mentioned, and in the last verse all who had breath and voice being invited to join. The form of the invocation embracing heaven and earth, and putting forward as the object of praise both Jehovah’s majesty and His great works wrought for Israel, is also exactly suited for a conclusion to the great collection of Israelite song. The parallelism is perfect.

(1) Sanctuary.—That is, the temple. Some take it in direct parallelism with firmament, and understand the “heavenly palace,” or “Temple” (comp. Ps. xi. 4); but, as in Ps. cxlviii., the invocation to praise includes heaven and earth; so here, but in the reverse order, the earthly sanctuary first, and the sublime things done on earth (verse 2), then heaven and the exalted greatness there.

(2) Mighty acts ... excellent greatness.—The one displayed on earth, the other manifested in heaven. (See preceding Note.)

(3) Trumpet.—Heb., ṣāḥaph. (See Ps. lxxxi. 3, xviii. 6. LXX., ἄργατ.) It was the crooked horn, sometimes also called heren. (Bible Educator, ii. 291.)

Psaltery and harp.—See Note, Ps. xxxiii. 2.

(4) Timbrel and dance.—See Ps. cxlix. 3.

Stringed instruments.—Minnim. Literally, parts, so threads, so here, as in LXX. and Vulg., “with” or “on strings.” (See Note, Ps. xlv. 9.)

Organs.—Heb., ‘uγāb, which has been variously identified with the syrinx, or Pan’s pipes, of the Greeks, with the “harp-pipe,” and even with a rude instrument embodying the principle of the modern organ. (See Bible Educator, ii. 70, 183, 229.)

(5) Cymbals.—Heb., tseltelīm (2 Sam. vi. 5), a word evidently formed to express the sound of the instrument. Two kinds are evidently indicated in this verse, the “loud” cymbals (literally, cymbala of hear- tumult), and “high-sounding” (literally, of tunnūl). As the Arabs use at present a larger and smaller instrument (see Bible Educator, ii. 211, 311), it is possible that the same distinction is made here, but which would be the larger instrument it is impossible from the Hebrew to determine.

(6) Everything that hath breath. —LXX., “every breath;” Vulg., “every spirit;” literally, all breath. We naturally wish to give these words their largest intent, and to hear the psalter close with an invocation to “the earth with her thousand voices” to praise God. But the psalm so distinctly and positively brings us into the Temple, and places us among the covenant people engaged at their devotions, that we are compelled to see here a hymn specially suited to close the collection of hymns of the covenant, as the first and second were to begin it. It is, therefore, not all breathing beings, but only all assembled in the sanctuary, that are here addressed; and the loud hallelujah with which the collection of psalms actually closes rises from Hebrew voices alone.
THE PROVERBS.
INTRODUCTION TO
THE PROVERBS.

The contents of this book cover a wider space of ground than its English title would lead anyone to expect; for the Hebrew word ṁashāl, translated "Proverbs" in our version, while, indeed, it bears this sense, includes also several other meanings. Originally, it would seem, it signified a "figure" or "comparison," and we find it used in Holy Scripture for (1) "a parable," such as those in the Gospels, elucidating moral or religious truth, in which the figure and the thing signified by it are kept distinct from each other. Examples of this are to be found in the parables of the two eagles and vine, in Ezek. xvii., and of the boiling pot, in Ezek. xxiv. It is also used (2) for "a short pointed saying," in which, however, a comparison is still involved; for instance, Prov. xxv. 25, "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." Hence it passed into the sense of (3) "a proverb," in which a comparison may still be implied, though it is no longer expressed, such as Ezek. xviii. 2, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Lastly, the sense of comparison or figure being lost, it became equivalent to (4) an "instructive saying," such as Prov. xi. 4, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death." The form of this might be lengthened till it became equivalent to (5) "a didactic poem," such as Ps. xliii. 4, "I will incline mine ear to a parable," &c. Of this kind were the prophecies of Balaam, in Num. xxiii. and xxiv., in which he is said to have "taken up his parable." In certain cases this form of parable might become equivalent to "satiere," as in the prophet's song of triumph over fallen Babylon, in Isa. xiv. Of these various forms of the ṁāshāl, it would seem that (1) and (3) do not occur in the Proverbs, (5) is largely employed in chaps. i.-ix., while (2) and (4) are frequent in the later chapters of the book.

As to the poetical form which the ṁāshāl of Solomon assumes, the thought of the writer is most generally represented in the distich, or verse of two lines. But the relation of the two lines to each other may vary in different cases. Sometimes (1) the idea contained in the first is repeated in the second with slightly altered form, so as to be brought out more fully and distinctly, as in chap. xi. 25, "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Or (2) the second line may illustrate the first by presenting the contrast to it, as in chap. x. 1, "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." Or, again, (3) a distinct truth may be presented to the reader in each line, with little apparent connection between them, as in chap. x. 18, "A cloak of hatred are lying lips, and he that spreadeth slander is a fool." Many distichs contain entire parables in themselves, a resemblance to the lesson inculcated being drawn from every-day life, as chap. x. 26, "As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him." In all these cases it will be noticed that the distich is complete in itself, without any further explanation being required. But sometimes the subject extends to four (chap. xxv. 4, 5), six (chap. xxiii. 1--3), and eight (chap. xxiii. 22--25) lines, or, it may be, to three (chap. xxii. 29), five (chap. xxii. 4, 5), or seven (chap. xxiii. 6--8). It may even be prolonged beyond these limits to an indefinite number of verses, as in the acrostic (chap. xxxi. 10, sqq.) in praise of a virtuous wife.

As to the general contents of the Book of Proverbs, it will be noticed on examination that they do not form one harmonious whole, but that they naturally fall into several clearly marked divisions, each of them distinguished by peculiarities of style. They are as follows:

(1) Chap. i. 1--6, an introduction, describing the purpose of the book.

(2) Chaps. i. 7--ix. 18, comprising fifteen didactic poems—not single unconnected verses, like most of the book—exhorting to the fear of God and the avoidance of sin. Many of these are addressed to "my son"; in others Wisdom is introduced as pleading to be heard, and setting forth the blessings she brings with her.

(3) Chaps. x. 1--xxii. 16, the second great division of the book; these are headed by a new title, "The proverbs of Solomon." They consist of 375 separate distichs, quite unconnected with each other, the sense being completed in each verse of the English Version; in the first six chapters of this collection the antithetic form of proverb chiefly prevails, but the other forms mentioned above as employed in this book are also represented.

(4) To this course of distichs follows an introduction (chap. xxii. 17--21), containing an exhortation to "hear the words of the wise"; the style of this is not unlike section (2). This serves as a heading to the (5) appendix of chaps. xxii. 22--xxiv. 22, in which every form of the ṁashāl may be found, from the distich up to the lengthened didactic poem, such as was frequent earlier in the book.

(6) Next comes a second appendix (chap. xxiv. 23--34), beginning, "These also belong to the wise" (i.e., as their authors), containing proverbs of various lengths, which resemble chaps. i. 7--ix. 18, and the Book of Ecclesiastes.

(7) This is followed by the third great division of the book (chap. xxv. --xxix.), with the title, "These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezkiiah king of Judah copied out." It differs from the previous collection (chaps. x. --xxii. 16) in this respect: that the verses are chiefly parabolic, not antithetic, in their character, and the sense, instead of being completed in a distich, extends to five lines, or even further.

(8) At this point the proverbs of Solomon are ended, for the rest of the book does not profess to have been composed by him. It consists of three appendices:
PROVERBS.

(a) chap. xxx. “The words of Agur the son of Jakeh,” an unknown author, supposed by Rabbinical writers, against all probability, to be Solomon himself; (b) “The words of King Lemuel,” also unknown (chap. xxxi. 1—9); and (c) the acrostic in praise of a good wife (chap. xxxi. 10, sqq.).

There is another noticeable feature in the Book of Proverbs: that it contains many repetitions, the same thought being often expressed for a second time in similar or identical terms. Thus the Hezekiah collection (7) contains many repetitions of proverbs which have already appeared in part (3); and in some cases it even repeats itself, as does part (5) also; and this is very frequently the case in part (3) as well.

These various features which distinguish the book—viz., the difference in the style of the several parts, the separate headings which occur, and the frequent repetitions—would seem to render it certain that the whole book cannot have originally made its appearance in its present shape at any one time. It rather bears the mark of having been, like the Psalms, collected at various times, and by various persons. Thus, each editor of the five books which compose the Psalter appears to have brought together as many psalms of David or the sons of Korah or Asaph, or other writers, as he could find. Many which had escaped the notice of an earlier editor were afterwards incorporated by a successor into a later book. Thus the first book (Pss. i.—xii.) consists almost entirely of psalms of David, yet others also ascribed to him are found in the second (Pss. xiii.—lxiii.), fourth (Pss. xc.—cvi.), and fifth (Pss. cvi.—cl.) books; the second similarly contains many by the sons of Korah, but there is a further collection of theirs to be found in the third; one psalm by Asaph appears in the second book, and several more in the third, and so on. It seems probable that in the same way each of the three great collections of proverbs which are attributed to Solomon may be due to the care of different collectors, each of whom incorporated into his own book such materials as he met with. In so doing, he was not always careful to omit what had been set down before, and even occasionally admitted a proverb twice into his own collection. But we find parallels to this in the Psalter. Psalm lxix., for instance, is a repetition of the latter end of Ps. xl., Ps. lii. of Ps. xiv., Ps. cviii. of Ps. lvi. and ix.

As to the authorship of the book, there seems on the whole to be no good reason for casting doubt on the tradition which ascribes chaps. i.—xxix. to King Solomon. How eminently unsatisfactory the attempts are which have been made to settle the date and circumstances under which each portion of the book was composed, may be seen by the very opposite conclusions arrived at by critics who have attempted to solve the problem. When we find authors of eminence differing by, it may be, two centuries in their estimate of the age of a passage, and unable to agree as to which part of the book was written first, it is clear that little importance can be attached to the internal evidence upon which such theories are based.

It should also be noticed that, in spite of the reasons alleged above, which might have led us to ascribe the various sections of the book to different authors, yet there is still so strong a likeness between Prov. i.—xxix., Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, as to render it highly probable that all three had only one author, and if so, that he was Solomon. For it would be difficult to find anyone else to whom they might with any show of probability be ascribed.

Although some objections have been at times taken to the book, on the score of the supposed contradictions contained in it, yet it has always held its place in the Hebrew Canon of Scripture. How great its influence upon the Jewish mind has been, may be seen from the initiations of it which are still extant, the Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiastics. Among Christians it has always been held in the highest esteem. It is frequently quoted in the New Testament. By the Fathers it was named the “All-excellent Wisdom.” The description of wisdom which it contains was universally interpreted by them as declaratory of the work of Christ, as Creator of the world and Redeemer of mankind: an interpretation borne out by our Lord’s own words and the teaching of St. Paul.*

Lists of the principal commentaries which have been written upon Proverbs may be found in Keil’s Introduction to the Old Testament (translated in Clark’s For. Theol. Library, 1871), and in the article on Proverbs in Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible. Of all those which have come in my way, I must chiefly express my obligations to the works of Rosenmüller and Delitzsch. The commentary of Bishop Wordsworth is noticeable as containing many references to the works of the Fathers bearing upon the interpretation of the book.

* See Note on chap. i. 20.
The Proverbs.

CHAPTER I.

1. Introduction describing the purpose of the book (verses 1-6).

(1) Proverbs.—For the various senses of the Hebrew masāḥel thus translated, see Introduction.

Solomon.—The absolute quiet and prosperity of the reign of Solomon (the man of peace), as described in 1 Kings iv. 20, sqq., would naturally be conducive to the growth of a sententious philosophy; whereas the constant wars and dangerous life of David had called forth the impassioned eloquence of the Psalms.

(2) To know.—That is, they are written that one may know. The writer in this and the following needs interpretation, so corresponding to "dark sayings." (3) To receive the instruction of wisdom. —Or rather, discipline, the knowledge how to keep oneself under control. (Comp. 2 Pet. i. 6: "Add to your knowledge temperance," or self-control.)

To perceive the words of understanding.—Comp. Heb. v. 14: "To have the senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Comp. also Phil. i. 10.) The opposite condition to this is having the heart made "fat" (Isa. vi. 10) by continuance in evil, so that it can no longer understand.

(3) To receive the instruction of wisdom.—To take in, or appropriate, the "discipline" which results in "prudence" (haskel) or practical wisdom; so David "behaved himself wisely" (1 Sam. xviii. 5).

Equity.—Literally, what is straight, so true, honest. (4) Subtlety (Ornakh).—Used in a bad sense (Exod. xxi. 14) for "guile." For the meaning here, comp. Matt. x. 16: "Be ye wise as serpents;" comp. also the reproof of Luke xvi. 8, that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light;" and St. Paul's advice to "redeem the time" (Eph. v. 16), i.e., seize opportunities for good.

Simple.—Literally, those who are open to good impressions and influences, but who also can be easily led astray. (Comp. chap. vii. 5 and xiv. 15.)

Young man.—The Hebrew term is used of any age from birth to about the twentieth year.

(5) A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels; (6) to understand a proverb, and (7) the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

(8) "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Discretion.—Or rather, thoughtfulness; a word also used in a bad sense in chap. xli. 2, and there translated "wicked devices."

(9) Wiser counselors.—Literally, arts of seamanship: i.e., guiding himself and others afloat through the "waves of this troublesome world."

(9) Interpretation.—Or an obscure thing which needs interpretation, so corresponding to "dark sayings."

Dark sayings.—Literally 'knots, intricate sayings, like Samson's riddle (Judges xiv. 12).

2. Fifteen Didactic Poems, or Discourses on Various Subjects (chaps. i. 7—xv. 19).

(a) First Discourse:—Against Companionship in Robbery (chap. i. 7—19).

(7) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. —The first discourse is prefaced by a ditich, which serves as a key-note to all the teaching of the book. This expression, "the fear of the Lord," occurs thirteen times in the Proverbs, and plays a prominent part throughout the Old Testament.

"When God of old came down from heaven, In power and wrath He came."

That law which was given amid "blackness, and darkness, and tempest" was enforced by the threat, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). Men had to be taught how hateful sin was to God, and the lesson was for the most part instilled into them by the fear of immediate punishment. (Comp. Deut. xxviii.) But when the lesson had been learnt, and when mankind had found by experience that they were unable to keep the law of God by their own strength, then the new covenant of mercy was revealed from Calvary, even free justification "by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). And with this new message a new motive to obedience was preached. The "fear of the Lord" was now superseded by the higher duty of the "love of God," and of man, for His sake. "The love
hearken the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: (9) for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

(10) My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. (11) If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: (12) let us swallow them up as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: (13) we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: (14) cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: (15) my son, walk not thou in the way of Christ constraineth us," says St. Paul, "We love Him because He first loved us," writes St. John. Now, it was seen that, although the " fear of the Lord" may be the " beginning of wisdom," yet something better still may be aimed at: that " he that feareth is not made perfect in love; " and so the teaching of St. John, the last New Testament writer, is summed up in the words, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (1 John iv. 11.)

Fools (entílim).—Self-willed, headstrong persons, who will listen to no advice.

My son.—The address as of a master to his pupil. This phrase only occurs twice again in Proverbs, excepting in sections (2) and (4).

Law.—Rather, teaching. (Comp. chap. iii. 1.)

Ornament of grace.—Given by Wisdom. (Comp. chap. iv. 9.)

Chains about thy neck.—The reward of Joseph (Gen. xli. 42) and of Daniel (Dan. v. 29).

If sinners entice thee.—A warning against taking part in brigandage, a crime to which Palestine was at all times peculiarly exposed, from the wild character of its formation, and from its neighbourhood to predatory tribes, who would invade the country whenever the weakness of the government gave them an opening. The insecurity to life and property thus occasioned would provide a tempting opportunity for the wilder spirits of the community to seek a livelihood by plunder.

Without cause.—To be taken with "lurk." Though he has done us no harm.

Alive.—Comp. the death of Dathan and Abiram (Numb. xvi. 30).

For their foot . . .—The first reason against taking part with them: the horrible nature of the crime they are committing.

Surely in vain . . .—The second reason: their folly in so doing, for God will bring punishment upon them; in the "same net which they hid privily will their foot be taken" (Ps. ix. 15). Even birds are wiser than they. It is useless to spread a net in the sight of any bird.

And they lay wait.—Yet they cannot see that in truth they are laying wait, not for the innocent, but for themselves, as God will deliver him, and bring the mischief designed for him upon their own heads.

So are the ways . . .—The conclusion of the discourse. The same phrase occurs in Job viii. 13.
The Faire of those who Despised Wisdom.

If thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou seekest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

God will fulfil His threatenings. (Comp. Ps. lxiii. throughout.)

Shall dwell safely . . .—Comp. Ps. xxxvii. throughout for similar promises.

Shall be quiet from fear of evil.—Comp. Ps. exii. 7: “He shall not be afraid of any evil tidings,” &c.

II.

(c) Third Discourse:—An Exhortation to follow after Wisdom (chap. ii.).

(1) Hide—i.e., store up. (Comp. verse 4.)

(4) If thou seekest her as silver.—That the process of mining was understood long before the time of Solomon, is proved by the remains of copper mines discovered in the peninsula of Sinai, and the gold mines in the Bisharee desert of Egypt. Rock inscriptions have been found near the former, dating from a great age, in the opinion of Lepsius from 4000 B.C. (See the article "Mines," in Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible; comp. also the description in Job xxviii. 1—11.) Silver was brought to Solomon from Arabia (2 Chron. ix. 14) and Tarshish (2 Chron. ix. 21), probably Tartessus, in Spain.

Searchest for her as for hid treasures.—From the great insecurity of life and property in Eastern countries, the hiding of treasures in the earth has always been of frequent occurrence. It would often, no doubt, happen that the owner would die without disclosing the place of concealment to any one else, and the treasure thus be lost. Hunting after such hoards has in consequence been always of the keenest interest to Orientals, and as such furnishes the groundwork for one of our Lord’s parables (Matt. xiii. 44).

(5) Find the knowledge of God.—It is the highest of all gifts, even eternal life itself, to know God, the Giver of all good things. It was to bestow this knowledge upon men that Christ came into the world (John xvii. 3). He promises (chap. xiv. 21) the manifestation of Himself as the reward of obedience and love. And yet our highest knowledge of God in this life must be so imperfect, in comparison with the knowledge of Him hereafter, when we shall see Him "face to face." (1 Cor. xiii. 12), that St. Paul (Gal. iv. 9) proclaims the turning away of the simple . . .—(i.e., from God. (Comp. Jer. ii. 19.)

Prosperity of fools—i.e., the security, apathy of dull, stupid people (khesilim), who cannot believe that
The Happy Results of the Lord giving wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. (7) He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. (8) he keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. (9) Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. (10) When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; (11) discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: (12) to deliver thee from the way of evil men, from the man that speaketh froward things; (13) who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; (14) who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; (15) whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths: (16) to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; (17) which forsaketh the guides of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. (18) For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. (19) None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. (20) That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. (21) For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. (22) But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

CHAPTER III.—(1) My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: (2) for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall vailed among heathen nations at this time, they would not consider themselves bound by the high standard of purity which was enjoined upon Hebrew women by the law. (17) The guide of her youth.—Or rather, friend with whom she has lived in intimacy: that is, the husband of her youth; in other words, her first love. Jeremiah uses the same phrase (chap. iii. 4). (Comp. “wife of thy youth,” Prov. v. 18; Mal. ii. 14.) Forgettest the covenant of her God—i.e., the marriage covenant, made in the presence of God. (Comp. “wife of thy covenant,” Mal. i. c.) (18) For her house inclineth . . .—Rather, she sinks down with her house: house and all, like Dathan and Abiram. Unto the dead.—In Hebrew the Resphaim. The word may signify those “at rest” (comp. Job iii. 17: “There the weary are at rest”); or the “weak.” (Comp. Isa. xiv. 10: “Art thou also become weak, as we?”) (19) Besides the literal sense of this passage, as given above, commentators have very generally found in it a spiritual meaning, a warning against idolatry and apostasy. The union of Israel to God is so frequently spoken of in the prophets under the figure of a marriage, and their rejection of Him for idols as adultery, that the passage may well bear this further sense, especially as Jeremiah (chap. iii. 4) has borrowed this very phrase, “guide of her youth,” for a passage in which he is reproving the Jews for their faithlessness. The figure is also very common in the New Testament, as descriptive of the union of Christ and the Church. (20) The upright shall dwell in the land—i.e., of Canaan, according to the old promise made to Abra- ham, renewed in the fifth commandment, and constantly repeated in the prophets.

III. (d) Fourth Discourse—Exhortation to Various Virtues (chap. iii. 1—18). (2) Long life.—That is, a life worth living, fit to be called “life”; whereas “length of days” only implies
Exhortation to Trust.

PROVERBS, III.

The Preciousness of Wisdom.

they add to thee. (3) Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: *bind* them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: (4) so shalt thou find favour and 1good understanding in the sight of God and man.

(5) Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. (6) In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (7) Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. (8) It shall be 2health to thy navel, and 3marrow to thy bones.

(9) Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: (10) so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

(11) My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: (12) for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

extension of life, the reward promised for obedience to parents.

(3) Mercy.—Or, rather, love, shown by God to man (Exod. xxiii. 7), by man to God (Jer. ii. 2), and to his fellow man (Gen. xxii. 23): “truth,” or rather, faithfulness, especially in keeping promises, is similarly used both of God (Ps. xxxvii. 10) and man (Isa. lxi. 14). The two are often joined, as in this place. They are the two special attributes by which God is known in His dealings with men (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7), and as such must be imitated by man (Matt. v. 48).

*Bind* them about thy neck . . .—These directions resemble the figurative orders with regard to the keeping of the Law in Exod. xiii. 9 and Deut. vi. 8—the literal interpretation of which led to the use of prayer-plates and phylacteries among the Jews. Certain texts of Scripture were copied out, enclosed in a leather case, and tied at the time of prayer on the left arm and forehead.

Table.—Rather, tablet (Luke i. 63; comp. Jer. xxxiii. 9).

(4) Favour and good understanding.—Particularly noted as distinguishing the childhood of our Lord (Luke ii. 52).

(5) Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.—The same result is reached by Job also (chap. xxviii. 28) in his inquiry after wisdom.

(6) Navel.—As being the centre, and so the most important part of the body. (Comp. the epithet applied to Delphi, “navel of the earth.”)

Marrow.—Literally, watering; i.e., refreshing. (Comp. Job xxi. 24.) For the opposite condition, “dryness” of the bones, comp. chap. xii. 22.

(10) Presses.—Or sats, into which the newly pressed juice flowed: the “winefat” of Mark xii. 1. (Comp. the promise to follow upon payment of tithes, Mal. iii. 8—12.)

(11) Despise not the chastening of the Lord . . .—Comp. Job v. 17. A wonderful advance beyond the teaching of the Pentateuch: e.g., Deut. xxviii., in which the Jews had to be treated as children, and punishment or reward follow as the immediate consequence of bad or good behaviour. Under such a discipline misfortune could only be regarded as a punishment, a sign of God’s displeasure; but now a further manifestation of His dealings with man is made. When He sends trouble upon His children, He is no longer to be regarded as an offended father punishing their faults, but as one in love is correcting them. Even the New Testament quotes these words with approval, and without adding anything to their teaching (Heb. xii. 5—13). There it is shown how all God’s children must, without exception, submit to this discipline: without exception, submit to this discipline: without exception, submit to this discipline.

(15) Rubies.—The meaning of the Hebrew peninim is doubtful. Lam. iv. 7 shows the colour to have been red; “coral” is a probable rendering; that of “pearls” is unlikely. For the thought, comp. Job xxviii. 15—19.

(16) Peace.—The highest reward of the New Testament for the life of thankful dependence upon God (Phil. iv. 6, 7).

(18) A tree of life.—Evidently an allusion to Gen. ii. and iii. No mention is made of it except in Proverbs (chaps. xi. 30, xiii. 12, xv. 4) and Revelation (chaps. ii. 7, xxii. 2).

(19) The Lord by wisdom . . .—A passage anticipatory of the doctrine of John i. 3. (Comp. Pss. civ. 24, and xxxvi. 5.) A further advance towards the personality of the Creator is made in chap. viii. 27, sqq.

(20) Are broken up.—Or, burst forth: the word used in Gen. vii. 11 of the breaking forth of the waters from the interior of the earth at the flood. (Comp. Job xxxviii. 8.)

Drop down the dew.—Of great importance in countries where for months together there is no rain.
shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. (24) When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. (25) Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. (26) For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. (27) Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. (28) Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again; and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. (29) Deceive not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee. (30) Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm. (31) Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways. (32) For the froward is abomination to the Lord: * but his secret is with the righteous. (33) The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just. (34) Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly. (35) The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

CHAPTER IV.—(1) Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. (2) For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. (3) For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. (4) He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. (5) Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. (6) Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. (7) Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wis-

(35) Desolation of the wicked.—That is, the storm which overwhemals them.

(6) Sixth Discourse:—Exhortation to Charity, Peace, Contentment (chap. iii. 27—35).

(37) Them to whom it is due.—i.e., the poor and needy. An exhortation to us to make to ourselves "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" (uncertain riches, Luke xvi. 9), remembering that we are not absolute owners, but "stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. iv. 10), so that when we "fail," i.e., die, "they," the friends we have made by our liberality, may witness to heaven.

(38) His secret is with the righteous.—i.e., He holds confidential intercourse with them. (Comp. Ps. xvi. 14, and the reward of love and obedience to Christ, that both Father and Son will "come" unto the believer, and "make their abode with him," through the indwelling Spirit (John xiv. 23.).

(39) He blesseth the habitation of the just.—The word rendered "habitation" often signifies "pasture," "sheepfold," and this is a relic of the time when the Israelites led a nomad life and had no fixed habitations; so the cry, "To your tents, O Israel!" (1 Kings xii. 16) was still in use long after the settlement in Canaan. By some there is thought to be a distinction intended between the well-buil house of the wicked and the slightly constructed cottage of the humble just man, no better than a shepherd's hut.

(40) Surely he scorneth the scorners.—Rather, If, or. Although he scorneth the scorners, yet to the lowly he giveth grace. Another form of the teaching of chap. i. 24—33. If man rejects God's offers of mercy, they will in time be withdrawn from him. And so, as man deals with God, will God at last deal with him. (Comp. Lev. xxvi. 23, 24; Ps. xviii. 25, 26, lxxxi. 11, 12; Rom. i. 24—26.) The verse is quoted in Jas. iv. 6 and 1 Pet. v. 5.

(41) Shame shall be the promotion of fools.—That is, dull, stupid people, who despise God's threaten-

ings (chap. i. 32), are distinguished from others by what is a disgrace to them (Phil. iii. 19), and so are noticeable only as examples to be shunned by others. (See Note on chap. xiv. 29.)

IV.

(5) Seventh Discourse:—Recollections of his Father's Instructions (chaps. iv. 1—v. 6).

(1) A father.—That is, of me, your teacher.

(2) For I was . . . son.—It is not only his own advice that he has to offer; he can tell his disciples of the excellent discipline and teaching he received from his parents in his old home. It may be remarked that the notices of Solomon's early years which occur in this and the following verses harmonise well with what we know of him from the historical books of the Bible.

Tender.—The epithet applied to Solomon by his father (1 Chron. xxi. 1).

Only beloved.—The word yiqdah originally signified an "only" (son), as in Zech. xii. 10. Then it came to mean "beloved as an only son," and that appears to be the sense of it in Gen. xxii. 2, as applied to Isaac (for Ishmael was then living), and to Solomon here (for Bath-sheba had other children by David, 1 Chron. iii. 5). In Greek translations it is rendered "only-begotten" and "well-beloved," epithets applied in their highest sense to Christ (John i. 14; Matt. iii. 17).

In the sight of my mother.—Implying her affection, as Gen. xvii. 18.

(3) He taught me also.—Comp. David's advice to Solomon (1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 10).

(4) Get wisdom, get understanding.—Like the pearl of great price (Matt. xiii. 46).

(7) Wisdom is the principal thing . . .—This may also be translated, The beginning of wisdom is Get (or, to get, comp. chap. xvi. 16) wisdom: and with (i.e., at the price of) all thou hast gotten (thy possessions) get understanding.
The Path of the Wicked

PROVERBS, V.

to be Avoided.

The wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

(8) Exalt her, and she shall promote thee.—Comp. 1 Sam. ii. 30, “Them that honour me I will honour.”

(9) For she is thy life.—Comp. 1 John v. 12, “He that hath the Son hath life.”

(10) For they sleep not ... —The practice of evil has become as it were a second nature to them, they cannot live without it.

(11) The bread of wickedness.—i.e., acquired by wickedness, as (chap. x. 2) “treasures of wickedness.”

(12) Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. —Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

(13) For they sleep not ... —For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

(14) For they sleep not ... —They are going (John xii. 35), and stumble (chap. xi. 10) over difficulties which in the light they might have avoided.

(15) The way of the wicked is as darkness.—By refusing to “walk in the light” of God’s Word, and conscience (1 John i. 7), the light that was in them has become darkness (Matt. vi. 23); they know not whether they are going (John xii. 35), and stumble (chap. xi. 10) over difficulties which in the light they might have avoided.

(16) For they are life ... —Comp. 1 Tim. iv. 8, “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, (the highest happiness that man can attain to now, peace of mind,) and of that which is to come,” the assurance of a joyful re-creation.

(17) Keep thy heart with all diligence.—Rather, above all things that are to be guarded.

For out of it are the issues of life.—That is, from it comes life (and also death). From it proceed “all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works,” signs of the life with God within the soul; or, “evil thoughts, murders,” &c. (Matt. xv. 19), “the end of which things is death” (Rom. vi. 21).

(18) A froward mouth.—Heb. ‘iqqeshuth, literally, distortion, or twisting of the truth, not the same word as in chap. i. 12, 14.

(19) Perverse lips—i.e., that “turn aside” from the truth.

(20) Let thine eyes look right on.—Comp. the advice of Ecclus. vii. 36, “Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end,” and of Heb. xii. 2, to look “unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”

(21) Let all thy ways be established.—Or, directed aright; see that they lead straight to the end (Ps. cxix. 5).

(22) Turn not aside ... —Comp. the direction of Josh. i. 7, and the praise accorded to David (1 Kings xv. 5).

V.

(1) My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: —that thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.

(2) The lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: —but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp

(8) Exalt her, and she shall promote thee.—Comp. 1 Sam. ii. 30, “Them that honour me I will honour.”

(9) For she is thy life.—Comp. 1 John v. 12, “He that hath the Son hath life.”

(10) For they sleep not ... —The practice of evil has become as it were a second nature to them, when thou dost embrace her.

(11) I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. —When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

(12) Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go ... —For out of it are the issues of life.

(13) Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. —Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

(14) For they sleep not ... —For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

(15) The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.
In these verses Solomon urges his disciples for all.

(7) Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.

(8) Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:

(9) lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel;

(10) lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger;

(11) and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,

(12) almost in all evil.

(13) I was almost in all evil, for avoiding sin is the certainty of detection by the Judge, whose eyes run to and fro through the whole earth (2 Chron. xvi. 9), comp. Ps. xi. 4.

(15-20) Drink waters out of thine own cistern...

Out of thine own cistern.—The "strange woman," on the other hand, says, "Stolen waters are sweet" (chap. ix. 17). The same figure is employed in Cant. iv. 15, where a wife is compared to a "fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." In Jer. ii. 13 God compares Himself to a "fountain of living waters," and complains that Israel had deserted Him, and hewed out waters for itself. This passage in Proverbs has in like manner often been interpreted as an exhortation to drink deeply from the living waters of the Holy Spirit given in the Word and Sacraments (John vii. 37).—For ref. see Bishop Wordsworth.

(21) For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities were in his mouth sweet as honey (comp. Ps. xix. 10), but made his belly bitter; that is, he met with much sorrow and trouble in making it known to men, but through this "much tribulation" (Acts xiv. 22) he entered into the kingdom of heaven.

(3) Take hold on hell.—They lead straight to it.

(4) Lest thou shouldst ponder...—The meaning of the English version appears to be, "To prevent thy choosing the path of life, she leads thee by devious paths that thou knowest not where thou art." It may also be rendered, "Far from smoothing for herself the path of life, her steps wander without her observing it." By these words is described the reckless care of a vicious woman, who at last dares not think whither her steps are leading her, but as it were with eyes shut, totters on till she falls to rise no more.

(5) Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

(6) Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.

(11) I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

(16) Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

(17) Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.

(18) Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

(19) Let her he as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

(20) And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

(21) For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities were in his mouth sweet as honey (comp. Ps. xix. 10), but made his belly bitter; that is, he met with much sorrow and trouble in making it known to men, but through this "much tribulation" (Acts xiv. 22) he entered into the kingdom of heaven.

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Caution against Suretyship.

CHAPTER VI.—(1) My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, (2) thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. (3) Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend. (4) Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. (5) Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler. (6) Go to the ant, thou sluggard;

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<td>1 Heb. xi. 44.</td>
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<td>2 Or, so shall thou prevail with thy friend.</td>
<td>3 Or, so shall thou prevail with thy friend.</td>
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<td>3 ch. 21. 33.</td>
<td>4 ch. 13. 4 &amp; 20. 4.</td>
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<td>5 Heb. cæseth forth.</td>
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sinned so long that he is "tied and bound," hand and foot, with the "chain of his sins," and cannot get free even had he the wish to do so.

He shall die without instruction.—Rather, for want of discipline, because he would not control himself, "he shall die," and "for the greatness of his folly (self-will) he shall go astray," and "wander where there is no way" (Job xii. 24).

VI.
(i). Ninth Discourse :—Against Suretyship (chap. vi. 1—5).

(1) If thou be surety for thy friend.—When the Mosaic Law was instituted, commerce had not been taken up by the Israelites, and the lending of money on interest for its employment in trade was a thing unknown. The only occasion for loans would be to supply the immediate necessities of the borrower, and the exaction of interest under such circumstances would be productive of great hardship, involving the loss of land and even personal freedom, as the insolvent debtor and his family became the slaves of the creditor (Neh. v. 8). To prevent these evils, the lending of money on interest to any poor Israelite was strictly forbidden (Lev. xxv. 35—7); the people were enjoined to be liberal, and lend for nothing in such cases. But at the time of Solomon, when the commerce of the Israelites had enormously developed, and communications were opened with Spain and Egypt and (possibly) with India and Ceylon, while caravans penetrated beyond the Euphrates, then the lending of money on interest for employment in trade most probably became frequent, and suretyship also, the pledging of a man's own credit to enable his friend to procure a loan. And when the wealth that accompanied this development of the national resources had brought luxury in its train, borrowing and suretyship would be employed for less worthy purposes, to supply the young nobles of Jerusalem with money for their extravagance. Hence possibly the emphatic language of the text and chap. xx. 16, and xxv. 13.

Stricken thy hand.—That is, as we should say, "shaken hands on the bargain."

| With a stranger.—Or rather, for another, i.e., thy friend. |
|——Rather, for thou hast come under the power of thy friend; thou hast made thy freedom and property dependent on him for whom thou hast become surety. |

Humble thyself.—Literally, let thyself be trampled on, humbly sue.

Make sure.—Rather, assail impetuously, importune.

(2) Of the hunter.—This, or some such phrase (perhaps, the hand "that held him"), must be supplied here.

(j). Tenth Discourse :—Against Sloth (chap. vi. 6—11).

(7) Guide.—Properly, judge (the Arabic cadi), then leader, prince.

(11) As one that travelleth.—The form of the Hebrew is intensive, “one who moves swiftly,” as in Ps. civ. 3, it is applied to God’s “moving upon the wings of the wind.” While the sluggard sleeps, poverty is coming on apace.

As an armed man.—Against whom the sleeper will be defenceless. Verses 10 and 11 are repeated in chap. xxiv. 33, 34.

(k). Eleventh Discourse :—Against Deceit and Malice (chap. vi. 12—19).

(12) A naughty person.—According to its original meaning, a "worthless" person, Heb. a man of Belial. Froward mouth.—Comp. chap. iv. 24.

(13) He winketh with his eyes . . . —A picture, taken from the life, of a malicious tattler and scandalmonger, who fills out his lying tale with winks and signs, whereby even more is suggested than he says, to the blasting of his neighbour’s character.

(15) Suddenly shall he be broken.—Shattered as a potter’s vessel ( Isa. xxx. 14), without hope of recovery. This character of a malicious mischief-maker would seem to be especially hateful to God; it is described in like terms in Ps. lxiv. and a similar

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(16) These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: (17) a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, (18) an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, a feet that be swift in running to mischief, (19) a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren. (20) My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: (21) bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thee neck. (22) When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. (23) For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproves of instruction are the way of life: (24) to keep thee from the evil woman, from the whorish woman, and from a whorish woman. (25) Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. (26) For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. (27) Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? (28) Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? (29) So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. (30) Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; (31) but if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. (32) But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding; he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. (33) A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. (34) For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. (35) He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

CHAPTER VII.—(1) My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. (2) Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as
The Adulteress's Solicitations

PROVERBS, VII.

...the apple of thine eye. (3) Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. (4) Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: (5) that they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.

(6) For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, (7) and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, (8) passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, (9) in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night; (10) and, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (11) (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: (12) Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner,) (13) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, (14) I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows. (15) Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and have found thee. (16) I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. (17) I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. (18) Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. (19) For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: (20) He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.

(21) With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. (22) He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; (23) till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

(24) Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. (25) Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. (26) Forskewast cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. (27) Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

VII.

(m). Thirteenth Discourse:—Also Against Adultery
(chap. vii.).

(3) Bind them upon thy fingers.—See above on chap. iii. 3. The thong of the phylacter or fillet for the left arm was wound seven times round it, and as many times round the middle finger.

(7) Among the simple ones.—He was not yet vicious, only empty-headed.

(8) And he went the way.—The word is used of the slow step of a religious procession (2 Sam. vi. 13), here of the sauntering of the idle youth up and down the street within view of the temptress's house.

(9) In the twilight.—He has no excuse of a description of the twilight, 2 in the evening, in the black and dark night: (10) but, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (11) (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: (12) now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner,) (13) so she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, (14) I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows. (15) Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and have found thee. (16) I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. (17) I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. (18) Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. (19) For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: (20) He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.

(21) With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. (22) He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; (23) till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

(24) Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. (25) Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. (26) Forskewast cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. (27) Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

offering were accordingly offered on occasions of national rejoicing, as at the inauguration of the covenant (Exod. xxiv. 6), at the accession of Saul (1 Sam. xi. 15), and at the bringing up of the ark to Zion (2 Sam. vi. 17), &c. This turning of what should have been a religious festival for the family into an occasion for license, is paralleled by the desecration of the Agean at Corinth (1 Cor. xi. 20 sqq.) and the history of Church-feasts among ourselves. (For the spiritual interpretation of this passage as symbolising false doctrine, see Bishop Wordsworth; and also Notes on chap. ii. 16—19 above.)

(15) Carved works.—Rather, with coloured or striped coverlets. For another notice of the extravagance of the women of Jerusalem, see Isa. iii., and for a description of the trade of Tyre, the great supplier of foreign luxuries, see Ezek. xxvi. Myrrh is said to be a natural product of Arabia, aloes and cinnamon of the east coast of Africa and Ceylon.

(19) The goodman.—Literally, the man; she does not even call him "my husband."

At the day appointed.—Rather, at the full moon, a fortnight later, as now it would seem to have been new moon, when the nights are dark.

(20) Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.—This sense is only gained by a transposition of the original. It has been attempted to translate it literally " and as if in fetters to where one corrects fools," i.e., to prison.

(29) Till a dart strike through his liver.—These words must be taken in a parenthesis.

That it is for his life.—i.e., at the cost of it, when "his flesh and body are consumed," and remorse has seized upon him (chap. v. 11).
CHAPTER VIII.—(3) Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? (2) She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. (9) She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. (4) Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. (5) O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. (6) Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. (7) For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. (8) All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. (9) They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. (10) Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

VIII. (n). Fourteenth Discourse:—The Praise of Wisdom (chap. viii.)

(1) Doth not wisdom cry?—See above on chap. i. 29. In contrast with the secret allurements of Vice under the cover of night, is here represented the open invitation of Wisdom. (Comp. John xviii. 20: “I spake openly to the world . . . and in secret have I said nothing.”)

(2) She standeth in the top of high places. —i.e., in the higher parts of the city, where her voice will best be heard.

By the way . . .—She goes everywhere where she may find the greatest concourse of people, “God not being willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. iii. 9). So the apostles made large centres of population such as Antioch, Ephesus, or Corinth, the headquarters of their missionary enterprise.

(4) O men —i.e., “great ones;” “sons of man” are those of inferior rank; comp. the Hebrew of Isa. ii. 9, where the same words are translated “great man,” and “mean man.” Comp. the generality of the invitation of Ps. xlii. 2.

(5) O ye simple.—See above on chap. i. 4 for an explanation of “simple,” as also of “wisdom” (‘ormah) there translated “subtlety.”

Ye fools.—(bhesilim), see above on chap. i. 22.

(6) The opening of my lips shall be right things. —That is, I will open my mouth to speak them.

(8) Froward.—That is, twisted, or crooked.

(9) They are all plain . . .—Because “the secret of the Lord is (only) with them that fear Him” (Ps. xxv. 14), and God reveals such things unto them by His Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 10), while the “natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him” (ibid., verse 14).

(11) For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. (12) I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. (13) The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. (14) Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. (15) By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. (16) By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. (17) I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. (18) Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. (19) My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. (20) I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: (21) that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance. —The work which each one by
to inherit substance; and I will fill from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:

while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

When he prepared the heavens, I was there:

when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

when he established the clouds above:

when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment:

when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

then I was by him, as one brought up with him:

and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him:

and rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

my help shall do will be stored up for him in heaven (Matt. vi. 20), it will be as "gold tried in the fire" (Rev. iii. 18), which will abide the trial of "the day" (1 Cor. iii. 13).

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way.—The Hebrew word translated "possessed" in this passage (gānah) seems originally to have signified to "set up" or "establish," and is applied (1) to the "forming" of the heavens (Gen. xiv. 19) and the "begetter" (Deut. xxxii. 6); next it signifies (2) to "acquire" (Gen. iv. 1), (3) to "purchase" (Gen. xxix. 10), and (4) to "own," as in Isa. i. 3. From the fact that "set up" and "brought forth" are used just after as synonyms to it, it is most likely that (1) is the proper meaning of the word here, and that the sense of the passage is that Wisdom was "formed" or "begotten" before the Creation, comp. Ps. civ. 24; cxviii. 5. This agrees with the rendering of the most important Greek translation, the Septuagint (foros). When in Christian times it was observed how well the description of Wisdom in Job and Proverbs harmonised with that of God the Son in the New Testament, such passages as this were universally applied to Him, and the present one was rightly interpreted as describing His eternal generation from the Father. Such was the view, for instance, of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian. But when the Arian controversy arose, this phrase was seized upon by the opponents of our Lord's Divinity, and claimed as teaching that He was, though the highest of created beings, still only a creature. The Catholics then changed their ground, to Christ's Incarnation (comp. "first-begotten among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29), or to His being appointed to be the first principle or efficient cause of His creatures, the "beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14). For references to the Fathers see Bishop Wordsworth's note, and, for a like variation in the rendering of "first-begotten of every creature," comp. Bishop Lightfoot's note on Col. i. 15.

In the beginning of his way.—That is, His way of acting. His activity in the Creation. But the preposition "in" does not occur in this passage, and from a comparison of Job xi. 19, where behemoth (the hippopotamus) is termed the "beginning of the ways of God," i.e. chief of His works, it is probable that this verse should be translated, "He brought me forth as the beginning of His way, as the earliest of His works from of old," i.e., before the depths, and mountains, and hills, &c.
The Invitations

FIFTEENTH DISCOURSE: THE INVITATIONS OF WISDOM AND FOOLY (CHAP. IX.)

(32) Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for "blessed are they that keep my ways." (33) Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. (34) Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. (35) For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. (36) But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

CHAPTER IX. — (3) Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars; (2) she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. (3) She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, (4) whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, (5) Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. (6) Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding. (7) He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. (8) Reprove not a scorner, lest he...
hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. (9) Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiuer: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. (10) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. (11) For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. (12) If thou wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it. (13) A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. (14) For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways: (15) whose is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, (16) stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. (15) But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

CHAPTER X.—(1) The proverbs of Solomon. 4 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother. (2) 3 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death. (3) The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away 2 the substance of the wicked. (4) He becometh poor that dealeth with

Getteth to himself shame.—Or, insult. (9) Give instruction to a wise man.—Comp. Matt. xiii. 12 and xxv. 29. (10) The fear of the Lord . . . Comp. Isa. xi. 2, where the 'spirit of knowledge' and of the 'fear of the Lord' is counted as the gift of God. (For the general sense of the passage, see above, on chap. i. 7.) Knowledge of the holy—i.e., "the Holy One," as in chap. xxx. 3. (11) For by me thy days shall be multiplied . . . Comp. Gal. vi. 5. (12) Thou shalt be wise for thyself—i.e., to thine own benefit. (Comp. I Cor. iii. 8.) Thou alone shalt bear it—i.e., its penalty. (Comp. Gal. vi. 5.) (13) A foolish woman.—Rather, the Foolish woman; Folly personified, in opposition to Wisdom described above. Clamorous.—Not of dignified mien, as her rival. Simplic.—Heb., simplicity, i.e., she is simplicity itself. And knoweth nothing.—And so leaves room for all evil to enter in and dwell with her (Matt. xxii. 45); thus she perishes, like Israel, for "lack of knowledge" (Hosea iv. 6). (14) She sitteth at the door of her house.—She does not care, like Wisdom, to send forth her Mount (Ps. lxxx. 3). She contents herself with sitting at ease, just outside her own door, and calling to the passers-by. (15) Whoso is simple . . . She imitates Wisdom closely in her address: Satan, too, transforms himself into an "angel of light" (2 Cor. xii. 14). Folly attracts those undecided characters who are in the right track, but have not the constancy to persevere in it; who, in time of temptation, fall away." (16) Stolen waters are sweet.—See above, on chap. v. 15. Bread eaten in secret.—The same figure is used in chap. xxx. 20. (17) The dead are there.—Comp. on chap. ii. 18.
a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. (5) He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepest in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

(6) Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. (7) The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot. (8) The wise in heart will receive commandments: but he that refuseth reproof shall fall. (9) He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known. (10) He that waketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall. (11) The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. (12) Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

In the lips of him that hath under-
The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. (22) It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom. (24) The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted. (25) As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation. (26) As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him. (27) The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. (28) The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. (29) The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. (30) The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth. (31) The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. (32) The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

CHAPTER XI.—(1) A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight. (2) When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom. (3) The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them. (4) Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness often have to become vagabonds, like Cain, for their crimes. This, too, was the great punishment threatened by Moses and all the prophets, which at last fell upon the Jews, and is still in force.

Bringeth forth wisdom.—As the fields their "increase" (Deut. xxxii. 13); hence words are termed the "fruit of the lips" (Isa. lii. 19).

The froward tongue.—See above on chap. ii. 12. Shall be cut out.—Comp. Christ's warning (Matt. xii. 36). Sins of the tongue will be severely judged, because, besides doing mischief to others, they are signs of an evil mind within (1 Th. v. 24).

What is acceptable.—To God and man. (Comp. the gracious words which proceeded out of Christ's lips, Luke iv. 22.)

Speaketh frowardness.—Rather, is mere falsehood, misrepresentation. (See above on chap. viii. 30.)

XI.

(1) A false balance is abomination to the Lord.—A similar proverb is found in chap. xx. 23, and praise of just weights, chap. xvi. 11, xx. 10. The repetition suggests that this form of cheating had become common in the time of Solomon, when the commerce of Israel began to develop. If so, there would be good reason for these frequent warnings, for it would have been useless to raise the superstructure of a religious life, as is the intention of this book, without first laying the foundation of common honesty between man and man.

A just weight.—Literally, stone, stones having been used for weights from early times. (Comp. Lev. xix. 36.) A standard weight, "the king's stone," seems to have been kept by David (2 Sam. xiv. 26).

Then cometh shame.—For they have not the grace of God to keep them from falling. (See above on chap. vi. 17.)

The perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.—Fraudulent persons (literally, those who "cover" a matter up) pervert the truth, thereby ruining their own characters (inasmuch as in time they can hardly distinguish right from wrong), and losing the favour of Almighty God.

In the day of wrath.—Riches profit in no day of wrath when God "visits" His people to take
delivereth from death. (5) The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. (6) The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but a transgressor shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

(7) When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth. (8) The hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered. (9) When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting. (10) By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

(11) He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace. (12) A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he account of their evil doings; much less will they avail in “the day” (1 Cor. iii. 13).

Righteousness delivereth from death.—See above on chap. x. 2.

(5) Shall direct his way.—Or, make smooth, as chap. iii. 6. The just man by his exact performance of all duty both towards God and man receives more and more light, and therefore continually sees more clearly how to avoid the difficulties that beset his path. The wicked darkens his conscience more and more by the commission of evil, till he stumbles as in the night (John xi. 9), and at last falls, and rises not again.

(6) In their own naughtiness.—Rather, passionate desire, as at chap. x. 3. Their own strong passions are their ruin.

His expectation.—What he hoped for, worldly prosperity. (Comp. Wisd. x. 14.)

(8) The righteous is delivered out of trouble . . .—That is, misfortunes pass by the righteous and fall upon the wicked. (Comp. chap. xxi. 18.) Or, it may mean that the righteous “is taken away from the evil to come” by death (Isa. xlv. 1), the wicked lives on to suffer in his place.

(9) An hypocrite.—Rather, the impure, profane.

Through knowledge.—The just, by the knowledge given by God, shall see through the fraud.

(11) By the blessing of the upright.—Especially by their prayers, which, like Abraham (Gen. xviii. 23, sqq.), and the Jews of the captivity (Jer. xxix. 7; Ezra vi. 10) they offer for those with whom they live.

By the mouth of the wicked—i.e., by the “cursing, deceit, and fraud” with which his mouth is filled (Ps. x. 7).

He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour.—A warning against rash judgments (Matt. vii. 1, 2). It displays a want of intelligence, very noticeable in uneducated people, not to be able to understand other people’s difficulties; but “a man of understanding holdeth his peace,” not being rash to condemn, as well knowing that he may be mistaken in his estimate of another, and of the wisest course to be pursued.

(14) In the multitude of counsellors there is safety—i.e., where there are plenty to guide the state.

(15) He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth sureship is sure. (16) A gracious woman retaineth honour; and strong men retain riches. (17) The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh. (18) The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. (19) As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.

(21) They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight. (22) Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

(22) As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman which 6 is
The desire of the righteous is only good, and therefore it, being in accordance with the will of God, is granted to them. The expectation of the wicked is wrath. Rather, presumption; they do not ask in the way or for the things which God wills they should (Jam. iv. 3), and therefore it is mere presumption on their part to expect the fulfilment of their desires.

There is that scattereth—i.e., with bounteous hand (comp. Ps. xiii. 9), “and yet increaseth” in wealth and blessings (comp. chap. xix. 17, and the old epithet, “What we spent, we had; what we saved, we lost; what we gave, we have.”)

He that withholdeth corn till it has reached an exorbitant price, “the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.” He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth. That is, even he shall be punished for his misdeeds, as were Jacob, Moses, David; how much more shall “the wicked and the sinner.” The LXX. translates freely, “If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” a rendering adopted in 1 Peter iv. 18.

Who so loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish. A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn. A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit. The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them. The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but
he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised. (9) He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread. (10) A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. (11) He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding. (12) The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit. (13) 14 The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble. (14) A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him. (15) A way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. (16) A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. (17) He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit. (18) There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. (19) The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment. (20) Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy. (21) There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief. (22) Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight. (23) A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness. (24) The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute. (25) Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a
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good word maketh it glad. (26) The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them. (27) The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious. (28) In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

CHAPTER XIII.—(1) A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke. (2) A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence. (3) He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. (4) The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. (5) A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame. (6) Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthrowneth the sinner. (7) There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. (8) The ransom of a man's life is his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke. (9) The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out. (10) Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. (11) Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase. (12) Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. (13) Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. (14) The law of the wise is a

vi. 34), and exhortations to cast all our care upon God (1 Pet. v. 7.; Ps. xxxvii. 5) as a religious duty, that trusting in Him, and so having from Him the "peace which the world cannot give," our hearts may be "set to obey" His commandments. (20) The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.—Though, perhaps, inferior to him in worldly advantages. Or, it may signify, the just man is a guide to his neighbour, showing him "the way wherein he should walk;" the wicked, on the other hand, so far from guiding others, himself helplessly wanders. (21) The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting.—Or, does not net, (i.e., secure) his prey; but a valuable possession to a man is diligence. (22) In the way of righteousness is life.—Comp. above on chap. x. 2, "Righteousness delivereth from death."

XIII.

(1) A wise son heareth his father's instruction.—Or, is his father's instruction, i.e., the result and embodiment of it.

A scorner.—See above on chap. i. 22.

(2) A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth.—See above on chap. xii. 14.

Shall eat violence.—Comp. chaps. i. 31, xxvi. 6.

(3) He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life.—Comp. above, on chaps. iv. 23 and xii. 13.

(4) A wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.—Or, it may signify, "disgraceth and putteth to shame." (by his calumnies), or "acts basely and shamefully;"

(5) Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way.—See above on chap. xi. 5.

(7) There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing.—Comp. Luke xii. 21, and the advice given in Rev. iii. 17.

There is that maketh himself poor.—Comp. Luke xii. 33.
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(15) Good understanding giveth favour.—Comp. the union of “wisdom” and “favour with God and man” (Luke ii. 52).

The way of transgressors is hard.—Rough and barren as the valley described in Deut. xxii. 4, in contrast to the green “pastures” and “waters of comfort” of Ps. xxiii. 2.

(17) Falileth into mischief.—And brings those also who sent him into trouble; but “a faithful messenger is health” both to himself and his employers.

But it is abomination to fools.—That is, though their clinging to evil prevents the attainment of such objects as are worth desiring. If the verse be interpreted “therefore it is abomination,” &c., the sense will be, “because the satisfaction of desire is pleasant, therefore fools will not give up anything, though evil, on which they have set their minds.”

Shall be destroyed.—i.e., morally ruined.

(21) Evil pursueth sinners.—The “snares, fire, and brimstone,” of Ps. xi. 6; while the “good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over” (Luke vi. 38), awaits the righteous.

A good man.—As this corresponds to the “just” man in the next line, who is one who “rendeth to all their due” (see above on chap. x. 2), it probably has the meaning here of “liberal,” “unselfish,”” such as one gains the promise given in chap. xi. 25.

Tillage.—Properly, the newly-made field, on which much labour has been expended. The poor hard-working man, by God’s blessing, gains an abundant living, while many (rich persons) are ruined for their neglect of what is right.

(23) Betimes.—While he may yet be influenced rightly, and before faults are rooted in him.

The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul—i.e., has enough for his wants. (See above on chap. x. 3.)

(16) Good understanding giveth favour, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

This is a proverb which may be taken in various senses, as a kind of attribute to the virtuous or an attribute to the foolish. It has been rendered “The wisdom of women buildeth her house; but the foolish buildeth her crib, and it shall be destroyed.”

(18) A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou for want of judgment. (24) He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.

CHAPTER XIV.—(1) Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

(2) He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou for want of judgment.

(1) Every wise woman buildeth her house.—This should be rendered, “The wisdom (literally, wisdoms; see above on chap. i. 20; chokhmoth should probably be read here, as there, not chokhmoth) of women buildeth (for each) her house, but (their) folly plucketh it down,” &c.

Buildeth her house.—Each person and each good work throughout the household grows, as it were, under her fostering hand. (Comp. Eph. ii. 21.)

He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord.—Rather, He who fears the Lord walketh in his uprightness. (Comp. John xiv. 21.) And likewise, “he that despiseth Him is perverse in his ways.” The fear of God and its absence are clearly seen in the outward conduct.

In the mouth of the foolish (self-willed) is a rod of pride.—He has to smart for his ill-judged sayings; or, he punishes others with them.

But the lips of the wise shall preserve them (the wise) from the difficulties into which the foolish come by their rash talk.

(4) Where no oxen are, the crib is clean.—A proverb which may be taken in various ways. Some have seen in it an exhortation to kindness towards animals in consideration of their great usefulness. Others, that labour has its disagreeable aspect, but also brings its reward, whether material prosperity (“much increase”) or a more enduring reward. (Comp. Gal. vi. 9.)

A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not.—Because “God resistenteth the proud” (1 Peter v. 5), and none can give wisdom but He who alone has it (1 Cor. ii. 11); but He teaches him that “feareth the Lord” (Ps. xxv. 11).

(7) Go from the presence of a foolish man—(khe-vil)—i.e., a dull, stupid one, when the time
perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. (9) The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way; but the folly of fools is deceit. (9) Fools make a mock at sin; but among the righteous there is favour. (10) The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not meddle with his joy. (11) The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

(12) There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (13) Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. (14) The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself. (15) The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. (16) He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated. (17) The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

(18) The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. (19) The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends. (20) He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. (21) Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good. (22) In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury. (23) The crown of the
wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly. (23) A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies. (24) In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. (25) The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. (26) In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince. (27) He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. (28) A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones. (29) He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy upon the poor. (30) The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death. (31) Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known. (32) Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. (33) The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

CHAPTER XV.—(1) A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. (2) The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. (3) The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. (4) A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. (5) A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent. (6) In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble. (7) The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish doeth not so. (8) The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the sacrifice of the righteous is an acceptable offering.

But the righteous hath hope in his death. —Comp. Job's confidence (Job xiii. 15 and Ps. xxiii. 4). The gravest troubles do not terrify him. (20) But that which is in the midst of fools is made known. —“Wisdom” is the subject of this as of the former half of the verse. “Wisdom rests in the heart of him that hath understanding;” he does not care to drag it out and exhibit it, but the fool cannot keep to himself anything which he thinks he knows.

Righteousness. —See above, on chap. x. 2.

XV.

(2) Useth knowledge aright. —Brings it forth at the proper time and place.

Beholding the evil and the good. —Waiting till the iniquity of the one is full (Gen. xv. 16), watching to aid the other (Ps. xxxiv. 15, 17).

A wholesome tongue. —One which heals and soothes by its gentleness and judicious words. (Comp. chap. xii. 18.)

A tree of life. —Comp. chaps. iii. 18, xi. 30.

Perverseness. —Distortion of the truth. (Comp. chap. xi. 3.)

A breach in the spirit. —I.e., deeply wounds another's spirit.

A fool (evil). —See above, on chap. i. 7.

In the house of the righteous is much treasure. —For God's blessing (chap. iii. 33) is upon it: while the wicked, from his recklessness in the pursuit of gain, brings trouble (verse 27) upon himself and his family.

But the heart of the foolish doeth not so. —Or, disperseth that which is not right.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. —And their prayers also (Isa. i. 11). The worthlessness of sacrifice without obedience (comp. 1 Sam. xx. 22) may be here especially men-
prayer of the upright is his delight. (9) The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

(10) A Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die. (11) Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

(12) A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise. (13) A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

(14) The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

(15) All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

(16) Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith.

(17) Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. (18) A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. (19) The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

(20) A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

(21) Folly is joy to him that is a destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

(22) Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established. (23) A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

(24) The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. (25) A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: but he will establish the border of the widow. (26) The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

(27) He that is greedy of gain trou-
bleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. (28) The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things. (29) The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. (30) The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart; and a good report maketh the bones fat. (31) The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. (32) He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. (33) The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

CHAPTER XVI.—The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord. (3) All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits. (3) Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established. (4) The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. (5) Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. (6) By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. (7) When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. (8) Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right. (9) A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps. (10) A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.
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judgment. (11) A just weight and balance are the Lord's: all the weights of the bag are his work. (12) It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness. (13) Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right. (14) The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it. (15) In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

(16) How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver! (17) The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul. (18) Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. (19) Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

(20) He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he. (21) The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning. (22) Understanding is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly. (23) The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. (24) Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

(25) There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (26) He that laboureth laboureth for himself: and to get wisdom is better than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than gold. (27) Approval of the wise is as a cloud of the latter rain.-This fell at he is supplying his own needs gives him strength for work. (28) A froward man is as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

(29) He that attendeth the word of God. (30) He that is slow to anger . . . .—For old age being promised as a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. (31) He that is slow to anger . . . .—For old age being promised as a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. (32) The instruction of fools is folly.—While understanding is “a fountain of life” (chap. x. 11) giving health and refreshment and vigour both to the possessors and his friends, the discipline given by fools is worse than useless, being folly itself. Or it may mean, “the discipline which fools have to endure is folly.” If they will not be taught by wisdom, their own folly will serve as a rod to correct them.

(33) Addeth learning to his lips.—His wisdom and learning do not remain hidden in his heart, but continually rise to his lips, like the waters of an overflowing fountain, for the instruction of others. (34) Pleasant words.—Comp. chap. xv. 26. (35) He that is slow to anger . . . .—For old age being promised as a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. (36) He that is slow to anger . . . .—For old age being promised as a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. (37) The instruction of fools is folly.—While understanding is “a fountain of life” (chap. x. 11) giving health and refreshment and vigour both to the possessors and his friends, the discipline given by fools is worse than useless, being folly itself. Or it may mean, “the discipline which fools have to endure is folly.” If they will not be taught by wisdom, their own folly will serve as a rod to correct them.
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to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. (33) The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

CHAPTER XVII.—(1) Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife. (2) A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren. (3) The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts. (4) A wicked do­giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. (5) Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. (6) Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

(7) Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince. (8) A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth. (9) He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. (10) A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool. (11) An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him. (12) Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly. (13) Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

(14) The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave

Much less do lying lips a prince.—Or, liberal person (Isa. xxxii. 8): noblesse oblige.

(9) A gift is as a precious stone.—A description of the influence of bribery:—A bribe is as a jewel in the eyes of him that receives it; whithersoever he turns he prospereth: all his energies are called out by the prospect of gain, so that he carries out successfully all that he sets his hand to. The constant warnings against this form of corruption, from the time of Moses (Exod. xxviii. 8) to that of the prophets (Amos v. 12; Isa. i. 23, &c.), show the prevalence of the evil in Israel.

(9) He that covereth a transgression seeketh love.—i.e., one who does not notice, but rather conceals and excuses, anything done against him; that man "follows after charity" (1 Cor. xiv. 1). (Comp. chap. xiv. 12.) He that repeateth a matter, who is always returning to old grievances, "alienates (even his) chief friend."

(11) An evil man seeketh only rebellion.—Or, A rebellious man (literally, rebellion; comp. Ezek. ii. 7) seeketh only evil.

A cruel messenger.—Such as the "chief of the executioners" (margin of Gen. xxxvii. 36), who was always ready to carry out the bidding of an Oriental king. (Comp. 1 Kings ii. 34, 46.) The ministers of the Divine wrath against impenitent sinners appear as "tormentors" in Matt. xviii. 34. (For the office of the angels in the same work, comp. Rev. viii. 6, sqq.) A bear robbed of her whelps.—Proverbially dangerous then (2 Sam. xvii. 8; Hos. xi. 8). (See also 1 Kings ii. 24.) A fool (kehilil).—Comp. chap. i. 32.

(14) The beginning of strife is as when one setteth out water:—The drops which once through a tiny hole in the bank of a reservoir soon swell into an unmanageable torrent; so from insignificant beginnings arise feuds which cannot be appeased. Solomon constructed large pools (Eccles. ii. 6) beyond Beth­lehem, and is supposed to have brought the water from these by an aqueduct into Jerusalem.

Before it be meddled with.—The same expression is used at chaps. xvii. 1, xx. 3. It probably means
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off contention, before it be meddled with. (15) He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lorn. (16) Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? (17) A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (18) A man void of understanding striketh hands, and cometh surety in the presence of his friend. (19) He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction. (20) He that hath a froward heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones. (21) A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment. (22) Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. (23) A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. (24) Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity. (25) He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. (26) Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(1) Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom. (2) A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself. (3) When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach. (4) The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

Before (men) show their teeth, a metaphor from an angry dog. (15) He that justifieth the wicked—i.e., acquits. The perversion of justice was a fruitful source of evil in Israel, and a constant topic in reproach in the mouth of the prophets (1 Sam. viii. 3; Ps. lxxxi. 2; Isa. v. 7). (16) Wherefore is there a price ...—He will still remain a fool, though he has paid high for instruction, if he has no capacity for taking it in. (17) A friend loveth at all times ...—Rather, The (true) friend loveth at all times, and (as) a brother is born for adversity. (18) In the presence of his friend.—Or, With his neighbour. (For the same warning, comp. chap. vi. 31, 32.) (19) He that exalteth his gate.—Builds himself a sumptuous house. (20) He that hath a froward heart findeth no good:—For his own abomination to God (chap. xi. 20), and so gains no blessing from Him. (21) He that begetteth a fool (khesil).—See above, on chap. i. 32. (22) A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.—Or rather, Makes good a recovery. (For the duty of religious gladness, in gratitude for the love of God towards us, comp. Phil. iii. 1, iv. 4.) (23) A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom.—Or rather, receives it. “From the bosom” signifies the folds of the dress in which the bribe was concealed, ready to be slipped into the judge’s hand whose favour was to be bought. (24) Wisdom is before him that hath understanding;—i.e., he can easily find her. But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.—He is looking for her everywhere, while all the time she lies straight before him. (For the thought, comp. Dent. xxx. 11—14.) (25) Also.—Among other evil things. The subject of perverseness is again taken up. To punish.—Especially by fining. To strike—i.e., scourge. (Comp. Dent. xxv. 1—3.) For equity—i.e., when they have acted uprightly. (27) He that hath knowledge ...—This verse will better be rendered, He that restrains his words hath knowledge, and one who is cool of temper is a man of understanding. The avoidance of rash speech and hasty temper is here advised.

XVIII.

(1) Through desire a man, having separated himself ...—This should probably be rendered, The separatist seeketh after his own desire, against all improvement he shows his teeth. The man of small mind is here described, who will only follow his own narrow aims, who holds himself aloof from men of wider views than his own, and will not join with them in the furtherance of philanthropic or religious plans, but rather opposes them with all his power, as he can see nothing but mischief in them. (For his temper of mind, comp. John vii. 47—49.)

Intermeddled.—See above on chap. xvii. 14.

Wisdom.—See above on chap. ii. 7.

But that his heart may discover itself ...—i.e., unless his cleverness can be displayed thereby; he does not prize understanding for itself, apart from his own interests.

(3) When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt.—Comp. the whole burden of Ps. cvi., that sorrow and shame follow sin.

The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters ...—i.e., the words of a “man,” properly so called, are as deep waters which cannot be easily fathomed; they are a copious stream, which flows from a never failing source; they are a fountain of wisdom which is never exhausted.
(5) It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment. (6) A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. (7) A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. (8) The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. (9) He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

(9) The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. (10) The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit. (11) Before destruction the heart of man is hasty, and before honour is humility. (12) He that answereth a matter before heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him. (13) The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can provoke by his insolence and quarrelsomeness. (14) Death and life are in the power of the tongue: the righteous runneth into it, and finds tongue. (15) A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men. (16) He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him. (17) The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty. (18) A man offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. (19) A man’s belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. (20) Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. (21) Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord. (22) The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly. (23) A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

(10) His mouth calleth for strokes, which he provokes by his insolvency and quarrelsomeness. (11) A fool’s mouth is his destruction.—See above on chap. xii. 13. (12) The words of a talebearer are as wounds. —Or, more probably, “as dainty morsels” that are eagerly swallowed, and “go down into the innermost parts of the belly,” i.e., are treasured up in the deepest recesses of the heart, to be remembered and brought out again when an opportunity for employing them occurs. (13) He also that is slothful in his work. —Whatever it may be that is committed to his care, is “brother to him that is a great waster,” or “destroyer”; neglect of duty causes almost as much chief in life as active wickedness.

(12) The name of the Lord is a strong tower. —The “name of the Lord” signifies the titles by which He has made Himself known, descriptive of His attributes, as “merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth,” &c. (Exod. xxiii. 5, 7); the righteous takes refuge in these, and finds himself in safety, lifted above the trouble which seemed ready to overwhelm him. The rich man’s “strong city” and “high wall” are such only in “his own conceit,” and fail him in the time of need. (Comp. chap. xxiii. 5.)

(13) He that answereth a matter before heareth it . . . —Comp. Eccles. xi. 8.

(14) The spirit of a man. —That is, one properly so called, who draws his strength from God, will “sustain his infirmity,” help him to bear up against trouble; “but a wounded spirit” (not one crushed with the sense of sin, for that God will lift up, Isa. lxvi. 2; Ps. li. 17), which retires into itself and nurses its griefs, “who can bear” the “wear” of it? (15) A man’s gift. —Judeo liberalit “maketh room for him,” helps him to make his way through life. (Comp. Luke xvi. 9, and the advice there given so to use temporal riches as to gain those of heaven.)

(15) He that answereth a matter before heareth it . . . —Comp. Eccles. xi. 8.

(16) He that is first in his own cause seemeth just. —A man who tells his own story can make a good case for himself out of it, “but his neighbour” (i.e., his adversary in the suit) “cometh and searcheth him,” sifts his statements, and shows them to be untenable.

(17) The lot causeth contentions to cease, as being the judgment of God (chap. xvi. 33). And parteth between the mighty, who would otherwise settle their differences by blows.

(18) A man offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. (19) A man’s belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. (20) Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. (21) Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord. (22) The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly. (23) A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
CHAPTER XIX.—(1) Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool. (2) Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth. (3) The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord. (4) Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour. (5) A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape. (6) Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts. (7) All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? He pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him. (8) He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good. (9) A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish. (10) Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes. (11) The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. (12) The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass. (13) A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping. (14) House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord. (15) Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger. (16) He that despiseth his ways shall die. (17) He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and his heart fretteth against the Lord. (18) He that getteth wisdom.—Literally, heart. For that “wisdom,” or “knowledge,” that begins with the “fear of the Lord” (see above on chap. i. 7), and ends with loving Him, is not a matter of intellect only, but of the heart also,—i.e. the will and affections. (19) Delight is not seemly for a fool. He is ruined by prosperity and luxury: much more is a slave unfit to rule over princes. The writer has in his mind the case of an emancipated slave being raised to high place by court favour, and then insolently trampling on those who were once far above him. (Comp. chaps. xxx. 22; Eccl. x. 6, 7.) (10) It is his glory to pass over a transgression.—In this he imitates a Greater. Comp. Mic. vii. 18; Rom. iii. 25; Matt. v. 45.) (11) A continual dropping.—As of the rain leaking through the flat roof of an eastern house on a wet day. (Comp. xviii. 15.) (12) Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.—Or rather, makes it fall upon a man, as upon Adam (Gen. ii. 21). (13) He that despiseth his ways,—i.e. takes no heed to them, whether they please God or not. Shall die.—Physically (comp. Exod. xii. 21; I Cor. xi. 30), spiritually (comp. Luke i. 79): a death to be completed hereafter (Rev. ii. 11). (14) Lendeth unto the Lord.—Who “for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. viii. 9), and Who regards all done to one of his poor brethren as done unto Himself (Matt. xxv. 40). (15) And let not thy soul spare for his crying. —Or, but set not thy soul on his destruction: or, be not grieved for his sin. (16) For if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again. —As St. Paul says (Gal. vi. 5), “Every man shall bear his own burden.” We cannot shield wrong-headed people from the consequences of their want of self-control, however much we may pity them for the sufferings they have brought on themselves. (17) That thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.—That “though thy beginning might be small, yet that thy latter end should greatly increase” (Job viii. 7).
counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

(21) There are many devices (or, thoughts) in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. (22) The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar. (23) The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil. (24) A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again. (25) Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove him, that he may be wise in the latter end. (26) Therefore I said to the young men, Sleep not in a clothed lodging, neither drink and be merry. (27) For there is no end of the things which they prepare, therefore are they multiplied like the fishes of the sea, and as the birds that are caught with a snare. (28) A scorner, when he saith, I shall be rich in the latter end; (29) His counsel is to err from the words of knowledge. (30) The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whose provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul. (31) It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling. (32) The sluggard will not blow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. (33) Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out. (34) Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? (35) The counsel of the wicked devoureth iniquity. (36) Judgments are prepared for scorners and stripes for the back of fools.

CHAPTER XX. — (1) Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. (2) The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whose provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul. (3) It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling. (4) The sluggard will not blow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. (5) Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out. (6) Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? (7) The

(21) There are many devices (or, thoughts) in a man's heart.—"He disquieteth himself in vain" (Ps. xxxix. 6), endeavouring to carry out his various plans in life, while the one unchangeable "counsel of the Lord," that shall stand—i.e., abide in all its fulness. (Comp. Isa. xlvi. 10, 11; Ps. xcvii. 11; Job xxiii. 13.) (22) The desire of a man is his kindness—i.e., what makes a man desired or beloved is his kindness. Or, the kindness of a man consists in—is shown by—his good-will, even though he cannot carry it out. And a poor man (who would do a kindness if he could) is better than a liar.—Than a rich man who could help another, but professes to be unable to do so. (23) The fear of the Lord tendeth to life.—To life in this world, the reward of uprightness promised to the Israelites of old (Isa. xxxvii. 29); and to life in the next (Mark x. 30). He shall not be visited with evil.—(Comp. Lev. xxvi. 6.) A higher blessing is promised in the New Testament; not immunity from trouble, for trouble may be needed for advance in holiness (Rom. viii. 28), but protection in it (1 Pet. iii 13; Rom. viii. 35, sqq.). (24) A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom.—Better, in the dish that stood in the middle of the table at an Oriental dinner, into which the guests dipped their hands to take out the food for themselves (Matt. xxvi. 23). (25) Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware.—For "scornor" and "simple" see note on i. 22. Reproof is of no avail to turn the "scornor" from his evil way (ix. 7; xiii. 1; xv. 12), punishment will also do him no good; but it may make the "simple," whose character is not yet formed for good or evil, reflect and amend. So God at first punishes sinners for their good (Amos iv. 6, f.), afterwards, when they are obstinate, as a warning to others (ibid. 12; Deut. xxix. 21, f.). (26) Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err...—Or the passage may mean, Cease to hear instruction if you are only going to err afterwards.—Make up your mind what you are intend-
Moral Virtues and

PROVERBS, XX.

just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him. (9) A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes. (9) Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? (10) Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord. (11) Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right. (12) The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them. (13) Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread. (14) It is naught, saith the buyer. (15) Rubies.—See above on chap. iii. 15.

(6) A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment . . . —See note on chap. xvi. 12.

(9) Who can say, I have made my heart clean?—Though we may have done our best by self-examination and confession, and repentance and trust in the atoning blood of Christ to obtain remission of sin, still the heart is so deceitful (Jer. xvii. 9), sins may so easily have escaped our notice (Ps. xix. 12. 1 Cor. iv. 4), that satisfaction with ourselves ought never to be allowed (Rom. xi. 20).

(10) Divers weights and divers measures . . . —See above on chap. xi. 1.

(11) Even a child is known by his doings . . . —The proverb shows itself; all the more reason, therefore, to train it betimes.

(12) The Lord hath made even both of them. —And, therefore, they are to be used as He would have them. (Comp. our Lord's constant warning, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.") The proverb may also remind us of the admonition in chap. xv. 3, and Ps. xcv. 9, to remember God's constant watchfulness over us.

(13) Open thine eyes. —Be up and stirring.

(14) It is naught, saith the buyer. —He cries down the goods he wants to purchase. Then he boasteth. —How he has outdone the seller, and got the goods below their value. For other notices of cheating in trade see above on chap. xi. 1.

(15) Rubies. —See above on chap. iii. 15.

(16) Take his garment that is surety for a stranger. —Another warning against suretliah. (See above on chap. vi. 1.) If a man is rash enough to become surety for another, he must suffer for his imprudence, and learn wisdom by feeling the effects of his folly. And take a pledge of him for a strange woman. —Rather, take him as a pledge ( seized upon his person who has become surety) for a strange woman, (according to the margin) or, for strangers (as the text reads).

(19) Flattereth with his lips. —Rather, is open with his lips, cannot keep them shut.

(20) His lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness. —See above, on chap. xiii. 9.

(21) The end thereof shall not be blessed. —Comp. chap. xxvii. 20: the evil means by which he acquired the possession will, at the last, be visited upon him. Thus Jacob was punished severely for the selfishness by which he gained the birthright, and for the fraud by which he obtained the blessing belonging to his brother.

(22) Wait on the Lord and he shall save thee. —Do not look for vengeance on enemies (for they are to be forgiven), but for deliverance from their attacks; forget their malice, remember only God's love for thee, and trust in Him. (Comp. 1 Peter iii. 13, Rom. viii. 28.)

(23) Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way? —It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry. (Comp. Eccles. v. 2, 4–6.)

(24) A wise king scattereth the wicked. —Rather, winnows them.

And bringeth the wheel over them. —Comp. Is. lvii. 27. A sort of sledge or cart was driven over the stalks of corn spread upon the threshing-floor, by means of which the grain was separated from the husk. A wise king winnows evil persons from among his people, thus putting an end to their corrupting influence. (Comp. Matt. iii. 12.)
wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them. (25) The
spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the
belly. (26) aMercy and truth preserve the
king: and his throne is upheld by mercy.
(27) The glory of young men is
their strength: and the beauty of old
men is the grey head. (30) The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do
stripes of a wound, i.e., or wounds which cut into the flesh,
beauty of old men is the grey head.

CHAPTER XXI.—(1) The king's
heart is in the hand of the Lord, as
the rivers of water: he turneth it
whithersoever he will. (2) Every
way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the
Lord pondether the hearts. (3) To
do justice and judgment is more ac-
tetable to the Lord than sacrifice.
(4) aAn high look, and a proud heart,
and "the plowing of the wicked, is sin.
(5) The thoughts of the diligent tend
only to plenteousness; but of every one
that is hasty only to want.
(6) aThe getting of treasures by a
lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and
fro of them that seek death. (7) The
robbery of the wicked shall destroy
them; because they refuse to do judg-
ment. (8) The way of man is froward and
strange: but as for the pure, his
work is right.
(9) "It is better to dwell in a corner of the
housetop, than with a brawling
woman in a wide house. (10) aThe soul
of the wicked desireth evil: his neigh-
bour findeth no favour in his eyes.
(11) When the scorner is punished, the
simple is made wise: and when the
wise is instructed, he receiveth knowl-
edge. (12) The righteous man wisely

(27) The spirit of man is the candle of the
Lord.—The spirit of man, breathed into him at first
by the Creator (Gen. ii. 7), and afterwards quickened
and illumined by the Divine Spirit, is the "candle of
the Lord," given to man as an inward light and
guide.

Searching all the inward parts of the belly.
That is, of the inmost heart of man; testing all his
thoughts, feelings, desires, by God's law, approving
some, condemning others, according as they agree with
it or not. The word "belly" is equivalent to "heart"
or "soul" in Job xx. 2, 15, xxxii. 19. (Comp. John
vii. 38.)

(28) Mercy and truth preserve the king.—
See above on chap. iii. 3. The love and faithfulness
he shows to his servants draw out the same quality in
them, and these are the safeguard of his throne. So
(Ps. xxx. 4) the mercy shown by God inspires man with
a reverent fear of Him, while harshness might
have made him a slave, or driven him through despair
into rebellion. (Comp. Jer. xxxiii. 9.)

(29) The beauty of old men is the grey head.
—As suggesting the possession of experience and
wisdom. It is the fault of the aged, therefore, if they
do not receive the honour due to them, and this arises
from their not having so spent their youth and middle
age as to make their old age venerable.

(30) The blueness of a wound.—Rather, the
stripes of a wound, or wounds which cut into the flesh,
cleanse away evil.

So do stripes the inward parts of the belly.—
Better, and blows (which reach) the inward parts of
the belly, i.e., which are felt in the inmost recesses of
the heart (comp. verse 27). Kindness is thrown away upon
some people: they can only be touched by punishment.

XXI.

(3) As the rivers of water.—Channels for irrigation
(comp. Ps. i. 3). He turns the heart of the king,
whose favour is as the latter rain (chap. xvi. 15)
dew (six. 12), now towards one suppliant and now
towards another. He thinks fit, for "the hearts of
kings are in His rule and government."
considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness. (13) *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard. (14) A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath. (15) It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. (16) The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead. (17) He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich. (18) *The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright. (19) *It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman. (20) There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise: but a foolish man spendeth it up. (21) He that followeth righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour. (22) A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof. (23) Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles. (24) Proud and haughty scorners are his name, who dealeth in proud wrath. (25) The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. (26) He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not. (27) The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind? (28) *A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly. (29) A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way. (30) There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord. (31) The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but *safety is of the Lord.

The wicked for (their) destruction. He watches the evil to see whether they will repent (Luke xiii. 8), and if they will not, at last overthrows them when their iniquity has become full (Gen. xv. 16).

He also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.—Because he showed no mercy. (Comp. Matt. v. 7, xviii. 30; Jas. ii. 13.)

A gift in secret.—Comp. Abigail and David (1 Sam. xiv. 18).

But destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.—This may also mean, “It is a terror to the workers of iniquity (to do right).” They are afraid to trust such promises as Matt. vi. 33. They think they will be ruined if they do not cheat their neighbours when they have an opportunity. (26) He coveteth greedily all the day long, but the man that heareth speaketh constantly. (29) A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way. (30) There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord. (31) The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but *safety is of the Lord.

Wine and oil.—The accompaniments of a feast. The oil, or precious unguents, were poured over the head (see Matt. xv. 20). The oil, or precious unguents, were poured over the head (comp. Ps. xvi. 4. It was the excessive love and gratitude of the two Marys (Luke vii. 38; John xii. 3) which prompted them to anoint the Lord’s feet. These perfumes were sometimes of great value, the “pound of ointment of spikenard” (John xii. 3) was worth “more than three hundred pence” (£10 12s. 6d.), the wages of a day labourer (Matt. xx. 2) for nearly a year.

The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous.—The righteous is “delivered out of trouble (chap. xi. 8; comp. Isa. lvi. 1), and the wicked cometh in his stead” to receive upon his own head God’s descending punishment. So it was with Mordecai and Haman.

Righteousness and mercy.—He who endeavours to give God and man their due (see above on x. 2), and to shew love to them (chap. iii. 5), will gain for himself length of days (chap. iii. 16) power to live more and more uprightly, and present honour from God and man for so doing. In a higher sense he will gain life eternal now and hereafter (John xvii. 3), righteousness, or the forgiveness of sins (Rom. ii. 13), and more uprightly, and present honour from contravention of the Law (1 Kings iv. 26, and Deut. xvii. 16).
CHAPTER XXII.—(1) *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*  
(2) *The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.*  
(3) *A prudent man forecasteth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.*  
(4) *By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.*  
(5) *Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.*  
(6) *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*  
(7) *The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*  
(8) *Vanity—i.e., calamity, trouble.*  
(9) *The rod of his anger shall fail.*  
(10) *The scorner.*  
(11) *That loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.*  
(12) *The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.*  
(13) *The slothful man saith, There is a lion without . . .—No excuses are too absurd for him, he fears to meet a lion in the open country, or, he might be murdered in the streets.*  
(14) *Strange women.*  
(15) *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*  
(16) *He that oppresseth the poor . . .—Rather, he does so (thereby) giving to the rich, only for the matters.*  
(17) *Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.*  
(18) *For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them with thy lips.*  
(19) *That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.*  
(20) *Have not I written to thee excellent things in thine heart?*  

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**XXII.**

(1) *Loving favour.*—Or, favour is better than silver and gold. "Favour" may signify the grace which wins love, as well as the favour gained thereby.  
(2) *The rich and poor meet together.*—Are thrown together in the world in order to aid each other in the path through life, remembering that they are brethren, sons of one Father. (Comp. I Cor. xii. 27.)  
(3) *A prudent man forecasteth the evil, and hideth himself, as the Israelites hid themselves within their houses from the destroying angel, Noah within the Ark, the Christians before the fall of Jerusalem (Luke xxi. 21) in Pella. (Comp. Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.)*  
(4) *By humility and the fear of the Lord.*—Rather, by (or, the reward of) humility is the fear of the Lord. He guides the humble and teaches them His fear. (Comp. Ps. xxv. 9.)  
(5) *Honour, and life.*—Comp. chap. xxi. 21.  
(6) *Thorns.*—Comp. note on chap. xv. 18.  
(7) *Vanity—i.e., calamity, trouble.*  
(8) *The rod of his anger shall fail.*—When his stroke comes, and his iniquity is full, he shall himself suffer the punishment he brought on others, as Babylon did (Isa. xiv. 6), Assyria (ibid. xxx. 31).  
(9) *The scorner.*—See above on chap. i. 22.  
(10) *For the grace of his lips.*—Rather, who has grace of lips; one who loves the truth and can speak it pleasantly.  
(11) *The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge.*—i.e., men who know and speak the truth. (See above on chap. xxi. 28.)  
(12) *He overthroweth the words of the transgressor.*—i.e., the deceitful; He brings his lies to light.  
(13) *The slothful man saith, There is a lion without . . .—No excuses are too absurd for him,* he fears to meet a lion in the open country, or, he might be murdered in the streets.  
(14) *Strange women.*—See above on chap. i. 6.  
(15) *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.*—Self-will is meant. (See above on chap. i. 7.) Children have to be taught to yield their wills to others.  
(16) *He that oppresseth the poor . . .—Rather, he does so (thereby) giving to the rich, only for the matters.*  
(17) *Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.*  
(18) *For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them with thy lips.*  
(19) *That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.*  
(20) *Have not I written to thee excellent things in thine heart?*
counsels and knowledge, (21) that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth (2) to them that send unto thee? (22) Rob not the poor, because he is poor: (23) for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them. (24) Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: (25) lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. (26) Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. (27) If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee? (28) If thou shalt provide him meat, he shall stand before kings: (29) he shall eat abroad: (30) and his meat shall be for his own profit alone, but in order that he may be able to teach others also. (Comp. 1 Pet. iii. 15.)

CHAPTER XXIII.—(1) When thou

 Iv. 1); each being well known, and an object of love on the part of his Redeemer.

(21) That thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?—This rendering is somewhat doubtful, but seems to give the best sense to the passage. The scholar is to be instructed not for his own profit alone, but in order that he may be able to teach others also. (Comp. 1 Pet. iii. 15.)

5. FIRST APPENDIX TO THE “PROVERBS OF SOLOMON” (chap. i.—xxii. 16), CONTAINING PROVERBS OF DIFFERENT LENGTHS, FROM THE DISTICH TO THE LENGTHENED DIDACTIC POEM (chaps. xxii. 22—xxiv. 22).

(22) Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate. —The place of business (Gen. xxxiv. 20) and of judgment (Deut. xxi. 19; Amos v. 15). (Comp. the title, “the Sublime Porte.”) This, with the following verse 23, forms a tetrastich or verse of four lines, as do also verses 24 and 25.

(23) Lest thou take away thy bed from under thee?—If the mantle was taken in pledge, it was to be restored before sundown for the poor man to sleep in; but this merciful provision of the Law was evidently evaded. (Comp. Ezek. xviii. 12.)

(24) Remove not the ancient landmark.—The stones marking the boundaries of the fields; evidently a not uncommon crime, from the earnestness with which it is forbidden. (Comp. chap. xxii. 10; Deut. xix. 14, xxvii. 17.)

(25) He shall stand before kings.—Shall attend upon them as their minister. (Comp. Gen. xli. 46.) This verse is a tristich, containing three lines.

(26) Be not thou one of them that strike hands.—A warning against suretyship. (See above, on chap. vi. 1.)

(27) Why should he take away thy bed from under thee?—If the mantle was taken in pledge, it had to be restored before sundown for the poor man to sleep in; but this merciful provision of the Law was evidently evaded. (Comp. Ezek. xviii. 12.)

(28) Remove not the ancient landmark.—The stones marking the boundaries of the fields; evidently a not uncommon crime, from the earnestness with which it is forbidden. (Comp. chap. xxii. 10; Deut. xix. 14, xxvii. 17.)

(29) He shall stand before kings.—Shall attend upon them as their minister. (Comp. Gen. xli. 46.) This verse is a tristich, containing three lines.

sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: (3) and put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. (3) Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat. (4) Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. (5) Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

(6) Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: (7) for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. (8) The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words. (9) Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. (10) Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: (11) for their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.

(1) Consider diligently what is before thee. —Rather, Whoso is before thee; that thy host is not an equal, but one who, if offended, might do thee deadly harm.

(2) And put a knife to thy throat.—Use the strongest methods to keep thine appetite in check, if thou art likely to give way to it, and then, overcome by meat and drink, to say or do anything to offend thy host.

(3) Deceitful meat.—Not offered out of friendship and love to thee; for an unguarded word spoken in the insecurity of the festive hour might bring ruin to thee.

(4) Cease from thine own wisdom.—Cleverness shewn in piling up wealth.

(5) They fly away.—Rather, As an eagle that flieth toward heaven, far beyond thy reach.

(6) Him that hath an evil eye.—A sordid, grudging temper.

(7) For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. —He is not really friendly and hospitable, as his words would imply, but he grudges every morsel thou takest, calculating its cost.

(8) Shalt thou vomit up.—Shalt be disgusted at having partaken of hospitality which was not freely offered to thee.

And lose thy sweet words. —All thy civil speeches and thanks for the cold welcome thou hast had.

(9) Speak not in the ears of a fool.—Do not waste thy time in explaining matters to him.

A fool.—A dull, stupid person. (Comp. chap. i. 22.)

(10) Remove not the old landmark.—See above, on chap. xxii. 28.

(11) Their redeemer is mighty.—They may have no near kinsman (Lev. xxv. 25) to redeem their land,
12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge. (13) Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. (14) Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. (15) My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, 1 even mine. (16) Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: be thou in the fear of the Loard all the day long. (18) For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off. (19) Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. (20) Be not among winebibbers: among riotous eaters 3 of flesh: (21) for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. (22) Hearsen unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old, (23) Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. (24) The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. (25) Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. (27) For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. (28) She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men. (29) Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? (30) They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. (31) Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. (32) At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. (33) Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. (34) Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he servances of religion, and obedience in matters of little moment. (Comp. Matt. xxiii. 37.)

27 Strange woman (nokhriyyah).—See above, on chap. ii. 16.

28 Increase the transgressors (faithless) among men.—This vice being the fruitful source of faithlessness both towards man and God.

29 Wounds without cause?—Which might have been avoided, and which serve no good end.

30 Redness of eyes?—Rather, dimness.

31 They that go to seek mixed wine.—Or, To test; to see whether it is to their taste. The wines of the ancients were not generally drunk pure, but diluted with water or flavoured with spices. (See above on chap. ix. 2.)

32 When it giveth its colour.—Or, sparkleth.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women. —i.e., look out for them, impurity being the constant attendant of drunkenness. Or, the word may be translated "strange things," referring to the strange fancies of a drunkard, the horrible and fantastic visions present to his disordered brain.

34 What is the life of right and wrong being completely distorted. As he that lieth down in the midst of the sea. —And so would inevitably be drowned if he trusted to its smooth, glassy appearance.

35 As he that lieth upon the top of a mast.—Whom every roll of the ship might hurl into the waves. The absolute insensibility of the drunkard to danger is here described. Or it may mean that everything round the drunkard and the ground on which he lies, seem to rock like the waves of the sea, or the masthead of a ship.
that lieth upon the top of a mast. (33) They have stricken me, shall thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(1) Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. (2) For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.

(3) Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established; (4) and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. (5) A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. (6) For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

(7) Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate. (8) He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person. (9) The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men. (10) If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. (11) If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; (12) if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

(13) My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: (14) so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

(15) Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place: (16) for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief. (17) Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: (18) lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

(19) Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; (20) for there shall be no reward to the evil man; (21) the candle

(33) They have stricken me, and I was not sick.—The drunken man feels no blows or ill usage.

(34) When shall I awake?—He longs to rouse himself from his slumber that he may return to his debauch.

(35) Through wisdom is an house builded.—See above on chap. xiv. 1.

(36) All precious and pleasant riches.—Not only earthly wealth, but the “true riches” (Luke xvi. 11), the knowledge and love of God. (Comp. note on chap. xxiii. 23.)

(37) A man of knowledge increaseth strength.—For the spiritual sense, comp. 2 Peter iii. 18.

(38) Wise counsel.—See above on chap. i. 5. In the great spiritual fight also (Eph. vi. 12) we need wise counsel, to see the end to be aimed at, and the means of attaining it.

(39) Wisdom is too high for a fool.—For “wisdom” (literally, wisdomes), comp. note on chap. i. 20. He has been too self-willed to learn; so while others express their opinions when the business or justice of his city is being transacted (see above on chap. xxii. 22) he has to remain sheepishly silent.

(40) The thought of foolishness is sin.—Rather, Sin is the contrivance (plotting) of self-will. Sin is the “transgression of the law” of God (1 John iii. 4), when we desert the plain rule of duty, and plot how we can indulge our own self-will.

(41) If thou faint in the day of adversity.—And prove unable to help thyself or others; an exhortation to courage (comp. Heb. xii. 12). A “more excellent way” is shown in the following verse.

(11) If thou forbear . . .—Rather, Deliver those that are taken to death, and those that are tottering to the slaughter, stop them!

(12) If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not.—Man being too much inclined to answer after the manner of Cain (Gen. iv. 9), “Am I my brother’s keeper?” when he might give aid to those who need it.

(13) So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul.—Rather, Know (or understand) that wisdom is such (equally sweet and good) for thy soul.

(14) A reward.—Literally, a future. (Comp. chap. xxiii. 18.)

(15) For a just man falleth seven times and riseth up again.—That is, falls into trouble (not sin, as is often supposed). Therefore thy malice will be of no avail, for God’s protection is about him. (Comp. Job v. 19; Ps. xxxiv. 19, and xxxvii. 24.)

(16) Seven times—i.e., frequently. (Comp. Matt. xviii. 21.)

(17) And he turn away his wrath from him.—Upon thee as at the sight of their prosperity, the same difficulty which occurred to the Psalmist (Ps. xxxvii. 1). (Comp. also Ps. lxix. 3 and Jer. xii. 1.)

(18) For there shall be no reward.—Literally, future, or as in verse 15.
of the wicked shall be put out. (21) My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change: (22) for their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both? (23) These things also belong to the wise.

"It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. (24) He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him; (25) but to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them. (26) Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer. (27) Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house. (28) Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips. (29) Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.

(20) I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; (31) and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. (32) Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. (33) Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: (34) so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

CHAPTER XXV.—(1) These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah copied out. (2) It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. (3) The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and

(21) Them that are given to change.—Perhaps rather, those who think differently.
(22) The ruin of them both—i.e., the rebels against God and the king. 6. Second Appendix to "The Proverbs of Solomon," containing proverbs of various lengths, resembling chaps. i. 7—ix., and the Book of Ecclesiastes (chap. xxiv. 23—34).
(23) These things also belong to the wise—i.e., have the wise for their authors. (Comp. chaps. i. 6, xxii. 17.)
(26) Every man shall kiss his lips. . . . Rather, He kisseth the lips that giveth right answers. His words are as pleasant as if he had kissed the inquirer’s lips.
(27) Prepare thy work without . . . —Method in work is here advised; first till the ground, and then build the house which will be maintained by the produce of the field. In the spiritual life, too, we should seek to "perceive and know what things we ought to do," if we are not to waste time and energy upon unsuitable and unattainable objects.
(29) Without cause—i.e., do not mention thy neighbour’s faults unless for some good reason, not for malice or love of gossip.
(30) Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me.—A wonderful anticipation of this New Testament teaching, very different from the spirit of Lev. xix. 19, 20. Comp. chap. xx. 22, and James ii. 13, "For he shall have judgment without mercy that shewed no mercy."
(31) I went by the field of the slothful . . . —The parable of the vineyard let out to husbandsmen for them to render the fruits in due season (Matt. xxi. 33), and of the thorns which choked the word (ibid., chap. xii. 7), suggest a spiritual meaning for this passage. It warns us not to allow the weeds of evil habits to spring up in the garden of the soul through sloth, nor to suffer God’s protecting care (the wall) to be withdrawn from us because we have not sought it constantly in prayer.
(32) As one that travelleth.—See above on chap. vi. 11.

XXV.

7. The third great division of the book; another collection of Solomonic proverbs, chiefly parabolic in character (chaps. xxv.—xxix.).
(1) These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah copied out. —To this time they had existed, it may be, partly by oral tradition, partly in writing; but now Hezekiah, in his anxiety to preserve these sacred memorials of the past, had them copied out and formed into one collection. To his care we probably also owe the compilation of Books II. (Ps. xlii.—lxii.) and III. (lxiii.—lxxix.) of the Psalter, in the former of which are included several psalms of David’s which had not found a place in Book I., though this last-named book consists almost, if not entirely, of psalms ascribed to him. In the same manner the present book (chaps. xxv.—xxix.) contains proverbs of Solomon which apparently were not known to the compiler of the previous collection.
(2) It is the glory of God to conceal a thing. —For the more we search into the mysteries of nature or revelation, the more do we discover depths of which we had no idea before. God has so ordered things that man may not presume to measure himself with his Maker, but may recognise his own insignificance. (Comp. Rom. xi. 33, f.)
(3) The heart of kings is unsearchable.—A warning, it may be, against presuming upon the favour of a king from thinking that one knows all that is in his mind. (Comp. chap. xxxii. 1, 2.)
the heart of kings is unsearchable.

(4) Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.

(5) Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

(6) Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

(8) Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

(9) Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself: and discover not a secret to another: lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.

(11) A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

(12) An earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.

(13) As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

(14) Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

(15) By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

(16) Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

(17) Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.

(19) A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.

(20) As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

(22) Thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.

(23) The north wind driveth away probably familiar to Solomon in his summer palace at Lebanon (1 Kings xix. 19). The peasants of Lebanon are said now to store up snow in the clefts of the mountains, and convey it in summer to Damascus and the coast towns. For the opposite picture of the unfaithful messenger comp. chap. x. 26.

(24) A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

(25) As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.

(26) As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.
It rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue. (24) It is better to dwell in the corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. (25) As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. (26) A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring. (27) It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory. (28) He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

CHAPTER XXVI.—(1) As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool. (2) As north wind bringeth forth rain: so is a backbiting tongue. (3) It is better to dwell in the corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. (25) As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. (25) A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring. (27) It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory. (28) He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

XXVI.

(1) As rain in harvest.—This was very unusual in Palestine (comp. 1 Sam. xii. 17, sqq.), and of course very unsuitable for carrying on the work of harvest. So honour is not seemly for a fool.—i.e., for a dull person, confident in his own wisdom (chap. i. 22). It only confirms him in his good opinion of himself, making him less inclined than ever to learn.

(2) As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying. —Rather, As the bird (any small one, especially the sparrow) is made for wandering, and the swallow for flying (where it pleases), so the curse causeless (i.e., spoken without reason) shall not come (reach its destination). The Hebrew reads in the margin “to him,” instead of “not,” in the sense that a causeless curse, though it passes out of sight like a bird in its flight, yet returns “to him” who uttered it—an idea expressed in more than one English proverb. (Comp. Ps. cxvii. 18; Isa. iv. 11.)

(4) Answer not a fool.—Comp. chap. i. 22.

A righteous man falling down before the wicked. —See above on chap. xxi. 9.

(25) Good news from a far country.—This is suggestive of the little communication which in old times took place between distant countries.

(26) A righteous man falling down before the wicked. —The mouth of the righteous was described (chap. x. 11) as a “well of life,” from the comfort and refreshment it brings to the weary through the just and kindly counsel it offers. But if the righteous man yields to the pressure put upon him by the wicked, and through fear or favour gives up his principles, then he can no longer give forth counsel out of a pure heart; he becomes like a fountain which has been fouled by the feet of cattle drinking at it (Ezek. xxxiv. 18), and like a corrupted spring.

(27) So for men to search their own glory is not glory. —The sense of this passage is very doubtful. It may mean, “But to search into difficult matters is an honour.” Self-indulgence and study are here contrasted.

(28) Like a city that is broken down, and without walls.—Exposed to the assault of every temptation.
Collected by the PROVERBS, XXVII.

Men of Hezekiah.

all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors. (11) As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly. (12) Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him. (13) The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. (14) As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. (15) The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. (16) The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason. (17) He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. (18) As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, (19) so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? (20) Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. (21) As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. (22) The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. (23) Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. (24) He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; (25) when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. (26) Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation. (27) Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him. (28) A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow: for thou knowest provided for His children, He doth not deny it to them; they have the reward they seek for. But the Hebrew can hardly yield this meaning. Of all the various renderings suggested, perhaps the most unobjectionable is as follows. A master (one skilled in his art), produces everything (by his own care and oversight he sees himself that it is properly done); but a fool hires others to do his work, and he hires passers by, i.e., any casual person that comes in his way, whether skilled or not, and so the work is done badly.

(11) So a fool returneth to his folly.—Though he knows it to be folly, and ruinous to him: but he is afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth.


Seven abominations.—See above on verse 16, and comp. “seven spirits” (Matt. xii. 45) and “seven devils” (Mark xvi. 9).

Whose hatred is covered by deceit.—Rather, hatred may carry itself by deceit (but) his wickedness (i.e., of the hater, implied in “hatred”) will be displayed in the congregation, i.e., openly, when a suitable opportunity for indulging his hatred occurs.

Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein.—A simile taken from hunters making pits as traps for wild animals. The same doctrine of retribution being brought upon the sinner’s head by God the righteous Judge is taught in Ps. vii. 11, sqq.

A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it.—As the remembrance of them calls up his own wickedness to the mind of the offender. This is one reason why “the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. viii. 7), as being conscious of having rejected God’s love, and so hating to be reminded of Him.

Firebrands.—Arrows to which some blazing material was attached, in order that they might set on fire whatever they touched.

The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds.—See above on chap. xviii. 8.

Burning lips—i.e., burning with love, while there is an evil heart within.

 CHAPTER XXVII.

(1) Boast not thyself of to-morrow. — This is forbidden also in James iv. 13, sqq.; but there on the higher ground that it argues a want of submission to the will of Almighty God. This temper of mind, as well as the opposite one of too great anxiety for the morrow (Matt. vi. 34), proceed from the same cause,
not what a day may bring forth. (3) Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. (4) A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool’s wrath is heavier than them both. (5) Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? (6) Open rebuke is better than secret love. (7) Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

(7) The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. (8) As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place. (9) Ointment and perfume rejoise the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel. (10) Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend, and thy father’s friend, and thy father’s friend, and thy father’s friend, and thy father’s friend, and thy father’s friend, and thy father’s friend. (11) My son—The address of a father to his son, or master to pupil. That I may answer him that reproacheth me for having brought you badly when he sees you ignorant or ill-behaved. So Christians are exhorted to let their “light so shine before men” that their Father in heaven may be thereby glorified (Matt. v. 16). (12) A prudent man foreseth the evil. See above on xxii. 3.

(12) A prudent man foreseth the evil. See above on xxii. 3; and for “strange woman” comp. note on chap. ii. 16. (13) He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice. (14) He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice ... If gratitude is to be acceptable, the time, place, and manner of shewing it must all be well chosen. A man who is so eager to express his thanks that he begins early in the morning, and in so loud a voice as to draw upon his patron the attention of all the bystanders, is looked upon as a nuisance; any one would as soon be cursed as blessed by him. So God loves heartfelt gratitude offered in secret. (Comp. Matt. vi. 5, 6.) (15) A continual dropping in a very rainy day. See above on ix. 13. (16) Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself. (17) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (18) Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat
the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured. (19) As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. (20) Hell and destruction are 1 never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied. (22) As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise. (23) Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. (24) Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and 2 look well to thy herds. (25) For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure 4 to every generation? (26) The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered. (27) The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field. (28) And the goats are the price of the field.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—(1) The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. (2) For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged. (3) A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain 5 which leaveth no food. (4) They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them. (5) Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things.

(19) So the heart of man (answereth) to man.—What is in our own hearts we find in others also. Whatever are the distinguishing features of our own characters we discover and elicit the same in others. The merciful, the generous, the devout, the pure, recognise the same qualities in others, and themselves feel and receive sympathy from such persons. So the evil, too, find themselves in harmony with those of like disposition. (20) Hell and destruction.—See above on xv. 11. The eyes of man are never satisfied.—Comp. Eccles. i. 8, iv. 8. God would thus teach us that in Himself only can man find complete satisfaction. (Comp. Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9; 1 Cor. ii. 9.) (21) So is a man to his praise—i.e., as the fining-pot to silver; he must be of its settled condition. Or it may signify "right" (i.e., genuine and well deserved). softened his heart towards his poor neighbours, he will (22) Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. (23) The hay appeareth.—Or perhaps better, is gone. The quiet succession of the crops and seasons is here described. Herbs of the mountains—i.e., pasturage. (24) For riches are not for ever.—Comp. chap. xxiii. 5. So it is well to have a sure source of income, like husbandry or cattle-feeding, upon which to fall back. (25) The hay appeareth.—Or perhaps better, is gone. The quiet succession of the crops and seasons is here described. Herbs of the mountains—i.e., pasturage. (26) And the goats are the price of the field—i.e., you can purchase a field from the profit of your goats. (27) For the maintenance for thy maidens, who tend the cattle.
6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that sinneth therein is a companion of riotous men.

8 Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. But he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

9 As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

10 The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

11 A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.

12 He that is perverse in his ways, though he will have lost great want of food.

13 A prince that wanteth understanding is wicked in his ways; fall into mischief.

14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

15 He that sinneth against his own soul shall have mercy.

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an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

(23) "He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue. (24) Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer. (25) He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat. (26) He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.

CHAPTER XXIX.—(1) He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. (2) When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. (3) Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance. (4) The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it. (5) A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet. (6) In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice. (7) The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

(8) Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath. (9) If a wise man contended with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest. (10) The bloodthirsty hate
the upright: but the just seek his soul. (11) A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. (12) If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked. (13) The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the Lord lightenth both their eyes. (14) The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever. (15) The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. (16) When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall. (17) Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. (18) Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (19) A servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer. (20) Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him. (21) He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length. (22) An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man abounded in transgression. (23) A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. (24) Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not. (25) The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whose puttheth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. (26) Many seek the ruler's favour: but every man's judgment cometh from the Lord. (27) An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.
The Words

PROVERBS, XXX.

of Agur.

CHAPTER XXX.—(1) The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal, (2) Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. (3) I neither learned wisdom, nor have I the knowledge of the holy.

(4) a Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended 2 in the waters, or gathered the wind in his fists? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

(5) c Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. (6) Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

(7) Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: (8) remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me

XXX.

8. The Proverbs of Solomon end here. The rest of the book is composed of three appendices: (a) The words of Agur; (b) The words of King Lemuel; and (c) The praise of a good wife (chaps. xxx., xxxi., xxxii.).

APPENDIX (a).

(1) The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy.—Jewish interpreters have seen in these titles (but apparently without a shadow of reason) a designation of Solomon himself, the “conver” and instructor of assemblies (Eccles. 1. 1; xii. 11), son of the “obedient” man after God’s own heart. But they in all probability belong to some otherwise unknown sage, whose utterances were thought not unworthy of being joined with those of the wise King of Israel himself. In support of this view 1 Kings iv. 30 may be adduced as a proof of the estimation in Gal. iv. 9; 1 Cor. xiii. 12.) The questions in this verse are intended to bring out the nothingness of man as compared with the might of the Creator of the Universe; they resemble Job xxviii.—xli., and Isa. xi. 12 sqq.

Who hath bound the waters in a garment?—Stretching out the clouds as a “curtain” (Ps. civ. 2; Isa. xl. 22), to keep the rain from falling upon the earth. (Comp. Job xxvi. 8.)

What is his name?—We may call Him the Self-existing (Jehovah), Powerful (Shaddai), Strong (El), Awful (Eloah) Being; we may describe Him as merciful, gracious, etc. (Exod. xxxiv. 5 sqq.), but no words will describe Him adequately, for not till the next life shall we see Him as He is (1 John iii. 2), and He has been pleased to reveal Himself only partially to us.

What is his son’s name?—See the description of wisdom in chap. viii. 22 sqq., and the notes there.

Every word of God is pure.—Comp. Ps. xix., where first (verses 1–6) the glories of God as revealed in nature are described, and then (verse 7 sqq.) the excellence of the revelation of Himself in His word is extolled. Every word of God is “pure,” i.e., tested and proved in the furnace of experience; e.g., His promise to be a “shield” (Gen. xv. 1) to those that trust in Him. (Comp. Ps. xviii. 30.)

Lost be reprove thee.—Or, convict thee of thy falsehood.

Two things have I required of thee.—The commencement of a series of numerical proverbs. (See above on chap. vi. 16.)

Before I die,—i.e., while life lasts.

Vanity.—Falsehood either towards God or man.

Food convenient for me.—Literally, bread of my portion, such as is appropriated to me as suitable by the care of the heavenly Father. (Comp. “daily
PROVERBS, XXX.

of Agur.

with food 1 convenient for me: (9) lest I be full, and 2 deny thee, and say, Who is the LorD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

(10) 4 Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.

(11) There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. (12) There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. (13) There is a generation, O how loftily are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.

(14) There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

(15) The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, 4 It is enough: (16) the grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.

(17) The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

(18) There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: (19) the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid. (20) Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

(21) For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear; (22) for a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat; (23) for an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

(24) There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: (25) the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; (26) the locusts are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; (27) the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; (28) the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

(29) There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going: (30) a lion

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1. Heb., of my alms-house.
2. Heb., belle beec.
3. Heb., Hurt not with thy tongue.
4. ch. 6. 17.
5. Heb., Wealth.
6. Or, the brook.
8. Heb., gathered together.

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Too wonderful for me.—The wonder in Agur's eyes seems to be that none of the four leave any trace behind them. (Comp. Wisd. v. 10 sqq.) For a spiritual interpretation of these and other passages in this chapter, comp. Bishop Wordsworth's Commentary.

(16) There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: (19) the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid. (20) Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

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APPENDIX (b).

(1) The words of king Lemuel . . . —More probably this should be translated, “The words of Lemuel, King of Massa.” (See above on chap. xxx. 1.) “Lemuel,” which most likely signifies (dedicated) “to God,” has been, like Agur, supposed to be a designation of Solomon, but with no good reason. The prophecy that his mother taught him. —Mothers were looked upon with great veneration in the East. (Comp. chap. i. 8, vi. 20.) The mothers of kings especially were treated with marked respect, receiving the title of “queen-mother.” (Comp. 1 Kings ii. 19 and xv. 13.) This seems to be the reason why the mothers of Jewish kings are so constantly mentioned, e.g., 1 Kings xiv. 31, xv. 2; 2 Kings xii. 1. At the present time the mother of the Khedive ranks before his principal wife.

(2) What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? —Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. (4) It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: (5) lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. (6) Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. (7) Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

(8) Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. (9) Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

(10) Who can find a virtuous woman?
The Praise of a Good Wife. (Proverbs, XXXI.)

for her price is far above rubies.

(1) The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. (2) She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

(3) She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. (4) She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. (5) She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. (6) She considereth a field, and 1 buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

(7) She girdeth her loins with strength, her hands she planteth a vineyard. (8) She considereth a field.-Fixes upon a suit. (9) She openeth her mouth with wisdom.­—Literally, with the pleasure or willingness of her hands; they, as it were, catch her willing spirit. (10) And worketh willingly with her hands.­—Rather, shall have no lack of gain. His incoming constantly increase from the prudent care of his wife.

(11) She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. (12) She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with *scarlet. (13) She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is *silk and purple. (14) Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. (15) She maketh fine linen, and selleth it: and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. (16) Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. (17) She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. (18) She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. (19) Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. (20) Many daughters *have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. (21) Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. (22) Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

(23) She is not afraid of the snow.—Not uncommon in winter-time in Palestine and the neighbouring countries. (Comp. 2 Sam. xxii. 20; Ps. cxlvii. 16.) All her household are clothed with *scarlet, which by its very colour suggests warmth and comfort. (24) Her husband is known in the gates.—See above on xxii. 22. Instead of being a hindrance to her husband's advancement, she furthers it. Her influence for good extends to him also. Having no domestic anxieties, he is set free to do his part in public life. (25) Strength and honour are her clothing.—She never parts with them; they serve her, like cloth— for protection and ornament. (Comp. Ps. civ. 1.) And she shall rejoice in time to come.—Rather, *smiles at the coming day; does not fear the future. (26) She openeth her mouth with wisdom.—She is not a mere household drudge, with no thought beyond providing food and clothing for her family. She cares for their higher interests, and knows how to guide them with her wisdom.

In her tongue is the law of kindness.—Kindness is the law by which she regulateth all her words. (27) Many daughters.—i.e., women (Gen. xxx. 13; Cant. vi. 9); a term of affection. (28) Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain.—Outward graces do not last; praise that will be real and enduring is for those only who fear the Lord, and, out of regard for Him, perform the duties of life as the "virtuous woman" here described. (29) Give her of the fruit of her hands.—i.e., honour her for her noble life, "and let her own works praise her in the gates;" let them be recounted when men meet together; the mere mention of them will be sufficient, as no words could add anything to her praise.
ECCLESIASTES OR, THE PREACHER.
arrangement for liturgical purposes, oldest dated Hebrew MS. Ecclesiastes is third. It is Turning now to very precarious to draw, arrangement of these rolls was different; and in the design.

in the order in which these festivals occur, Ecclesiastes of the Law (chaps. i. 3 and xii. 13); and in particular, its arrangement is that the last five books, called the five erroneous doctrine ; on the other, explanations were pointed out that the book began and ended with words given which were held to be satisfactory. Nothing was supposed to be known with certainty as to the authorship of some books, which, nevertheless, held an undisputed place in the Canon: for example, Joshua, Judges, Job.

In discussing the authorship of a book, internal evidence holds, relatively to external, a far higher place in the case of the Old than of the New Testament. In the latter case we have available the testimony of witnesses separated by a comparatively short interval from the time of the composition of the books. Thus when a question arises as to a various reading in the best MSS. by an appeal to the testimony of persons from the time of the composition of the books. Thus in the Christian Church, Theodore of Mopsuestia, while accepting Solomon's authorship, supposed him to have written the book by human prudence, not Divine inspiration.

It is proper to mention that the place of the work in modern Hebrew Bibles is not the same as in English Bibles, where all the books ascribed to Solomon are placed together. In the Hebrew, after the Proverbs comes Job; then Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther. But the reason of this arrangement is that the last five books, called the five rolls, were written on separate rolls for use in synagogue worship on special festivals. They are arranged in the order in which these festivals occur, Ecclesiastes being fourth because the Feast of Tabernacles, on which it is read, is fourth in order. The Masoretic arrangement of these rolls was different; and in the oldest dated Hebrew MS. Ecclesiastes is third. It is very precarious to draw, as some have done, from this arrangement for liturgical purposes, a presumption against the acknowledgment of Solomon's authorship by the Jews. And, in fact, the order of our English Bibles may claim to be the older of the two, being the order both of the Septuagint and of the Talmud.

While we consider the canonical authority of the Book of Ecclesiastes as sufficiently guaranteed by the general sanction which the founders of the Christian Church gave to the Jewish Scriptures, we cannot find that any opinion as to the authorship of the book is entitled to claim apostolic authority. The book, as has been remarked, is not mentioned in the New Testament; and the ascription of canonical authority to a book determines nothing as to its authorship. Nothing was supposed to be known with certainty as to the authorship of some books, which, nevertheless, held an undisputed place in the Canon: for example, Joshua, Judges, Job.

In the Jewish schools there was controversy, about the end of the first century of our era, whether the Book of Ecclesiastes was one of those which "defile the hands;" that is to say, whether it was affected by certain ceremonial ordinances, devised in order to guard the sacred books from irreverent usage. We need not inquire what exact amount of authority might be conceded to the book by those who then placed it on a lower level than the rest; for the view which ultimately prevailed, recognised it as entitled to all the prerogatives of Canonical Scripture. It does not appear that the Solomonic authorship of the book was questioned in the course of these disputes. Thus in the Christian Church, Theodore of Mopsuestia, while accepting Solomon's authorship, supposed him to have written the book by human prudence, not Divine inspiration.

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Turning now to examine what we can learn of its authorship from the book itself, we find that the title runs, "The words of Koheleth son of David, King in
ECCLESIASTES.

Jerusalem." We have here the difficulty that the name Koheleth does not occur in the historical books as the name either of king or private person. If the words "son of David" be understood strictly, Solomon must be intended—the only one of David's sons who reigned in Jerusalem. If we were to suppose the words to have been used more loosely, we might think of any of the descendants of David who succeeded him on the throne; in particular, perhaps, of Manasseh, whose experience might well have made him feel the vanity of human life. But this latter view is supported by no authority, and the things attributed to Koheleth agree too well with what is told of Solomon in the Book of Kings, to allow us to think that any one else is intended. Thus Koheleth excels all his predecessors in wisdom (chap. i. 16; see 1 Kings iii. 12), and set in order many proverbs (chap. xii. 10; 1 Kings iv. 32). The description of his state (chap. ii.) corresponds with what is told of Solomon (1 Kings x.); but his unfavourable experience of women (chap. vii. 28) is what might be expected from Solomon (1 Kings xi.).

But if Solomon is intended, why is he called Koheleth? This particular form is not found elsewhere in the Old Testament, but there are of frequent occurrence other forms of the same grammatical root, which have the sense of collecting or assembling. Thus it is this root which furnishes the ordinary name for the congregation or assembly of the children of Israel; while the corresponding verb is used of the gathering together of the congregation. These words are used in connection with Solomon (1 Kings viii.), where it is told (verses 1, 5) how Solomon "assembled" the children of Israel, and (verses 14, 22, 55, 65) how he blessed the "congregation." Accordingly, the LXX. translates Koheleth by the name which we still use, "Ecclesiastes," which St. Jerome explains as one who gathers an assembly. It is less closely translated in our version "Preacher," or one who addresses an assembly; while the rendering which has been proposed, "debater in an assembly," is still more open to the objection that it imports a meaning not suggested by the word. According to our present Hebrew text, Koheleth has in one place the article prefixed, indicating that it is not a proper name, but an official title. We accept the rendering of the LXX. as giving the best explanation of the word; and we reject the explanations: (a) that the word means a collector of sayings, for the Hebrew word is used of collecting persons, not things; (b) that it means the assembly itself, for all through the book the word is used as the name of a person; and, not to mention other explanations, (c) Renan's suggestion that the word Koheleth has no meaning, and is only a mnemonic acrostic, formed, according to a custom of the later Jews, by putting together the first letters of the words of an unknown longer title.

The word Koheleth, however, presents some grammatical anomalies. With one we need not trouble the English reader; but the most important is that the word is feminine in its form. In three places the verb which is in agreement is masculine; once, according to the present text, it is feminine, but so very slight a change of reading would bring this passage into conformity with the others, that we cannot feel sure that there is any real difference. A common explanation of the feminine form Koheleth is that the speaker is Wisdom (in Hebrew a feminine noun) supposed to be incarnate who was king over Israel in Jerusalem." We have here the difficulty that the usage of the language at the time permitted it. It is no uncommon thing that an abstract noun, though feminine in form, should be used as a noun appellative. In a modern language a man may have applied to him titles such as majesté, grandeur, altesse, with corresponding feminine pronouns. A similar use is found in Hebrew, especially in the later Hebrew. It is a feminine noun which denotes the office of governor borne by Nehemiah (Neh. xii. 26) and others; feminine names of form like Koheleth—viz., Sophereth and Pochereth—occur in the lists (Ezra ii. 55, 57).

Having come to the conclusion that Koheleth means Solomon, and that he is so called with special reference to that religious assembly of the people which he brought together and which he addressed, we have still to inquire whether the book purports to be written by Solomon. It certainly professes to record his words, but only to contain the words of Solomon as recorded by another person, who in the epilogue speaks in his own name. Jewish tradition certainly refers to the time of Hezekiah not only the reduction of the Book of Proverbs to its present form (as stated in Prov. xxv. 1), but also in like manner the writing of the Book of Ecclesiastes.

Against the theory that Solomon himself was the writer the following arguments are urged: (a) Koheleth says (chap. i. 12), "I was king over Israel in Jerusalem." We know Solomon was king till his death, therefore he who speaks of his reign in the past tense must be, not Solomon himself, but a later writer, who knew, moreover, that there were kings over Israel who did not reign in Jerusalem. That the tense used conveys to a Hebrew reader the impression that at the time of writing Solomon was king no longer, is evident from the Rabbinical legend which grew out of it. It was related that King Solomon, having displeased God, was deprived of the ring by which he ruled over the demons, whereupon Asmodeus their king assumed the form of Solomon and reigned in his place, while he himself was driven from door to door, and beaten by incredulous hearers to whom he told his story, and among whom he went about saying, "I am Koheleth, who was king over Israel in Jerusalem." On the other hand, whatever the impression conveyed by the words, it cannot be absurd to suppose that Solomon might have had some share in the composition of the book. (b) The title

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have used. The tense used is the same as in the verbs which follow, "I gave my heart," "I communed with my own heart," &c. Solomon is speaking of his past; he is telling how he made his experiment he had the advantage of being king.

A similar argument against the Solomonic authorship is drawn from the comparison (chaps. i. 16, ii. 9) between Solomon's wise sayings and those of the books known to be of early date. The statements required of a later writer could not have used this language, since David was the only predecessor of Solomon whom the later Jews recognised as king, but that he himself might have had in his mind the Jebusite kings who had reigned in Jerusalem before its capture by David.

(b) Kohleth speaks in the tone of a subject, not of a sovereign. Some passages of which this may be said can be paralleled by passages in the Book of Proverbs, but one class of passages is of a special character. Kohleth complains (chap. iii. 16) that wickedness was in the place of judgment; (chap. iv. 6) he tells how, looking on the tears of the oppressed who had no comforter (for with their oppressors there was power), he deemed it better to be dead than to be alive; twice more (chaps. vi. 7, vii. 7) he returns to the subject of the tyranny of the powerful and the corruption of the judges; he complains of the bad choice of rulers by the sovereigns. "Folly set in great dignity, and the rich sitting in low places." All is written in the tone of a man who looked on bad government as an infliction of Providence against which it was hopeless to contend, not of one who was personally responsible for the evil he failed to set right as he was bound to do. This argument makes a strong impression on me, and I am only imperfectly satisfied with the reply that the scene is laid in the old age of Solomon, after he had been persuaded by female influence to trust into unfit hands power which he was not afterwards strong enough to revoke.

In this connection it may be stated that even if the book be accepted as written by Solomon in his old age, there is no warrant for the common opinion that it was intended as an expression of penitence for the errors of his middle life. No such expression of penitence is to be found; his different experiments in search of happiness are recorded as failures, but without shame or repentance; and in particular not only is the sin of contemnancing idolatry, with which he is charged in the Book of Kings, not deplored; but no warning against idolatry is given in the whole book.

The ascription of the work to the old age of Solomon has been made to answer other objections. For example, the general state of the nation appears to have been one of great misery. Death was thought better than life, and men looked with regret on the former days, which they pronounced to be better than the present. This is said to be inconsistent with the prosperity of Solomon's reign; but it is replied that the discontent which broke out so violently immediately after his death must have been growing, and not without cause, during the later years of his reign.

(c) The style of the book is strongly marked by the author's individuality, and is confessedly unlike that of either the Proverbs or the Song of Songs. But it is urged that there may be great differences of style between works written by the same man in his youth and in his old age. It is more important to observe that the Hebrew of the book is not derived from that of the books known to be of early date. It is, in fact, much more like the Hebrew of the Talmud than is that of any other book in the Canon, so that, judged by this test alone, it will be pronounced one of the latest in the Bible. The references we give in the Notes will show that many words occur in this book which are known to be the latest. The argument from the grammatical forms used in the book is not less strong, but the details cannot be given in a Commentary like the present. Concerning each particular instance discussed, there is no warrant in Jewish general belief ascribed to Solomon which have been found for some of the instances brought forward as indications of modern date. In other cases it can be said that it is only the scantiness of the early literature which prevents such parallels from being found; and it has been sought, by tracing analogies in other Semitic languages, to make it probable that the words objected to as modern might easily have been found in the early Hebrew literature, if we had larger remains of it. The force of the argument, however, is cumulative. It would be very precarious to condemn a book as modern because of its containing three or four words or phrases which have a modern ring. Any one who takes up an early English book will be startled at occasionally coming across phrases which he had not imagined to be so old; and yet no one can fail to recognise the reality of the difference of style between an early book and a recent one. The strength of the present argument altogether depends on the number of words and forms of expression for which an apology must be found if the antiquity of the book is to be maintained. Of those who are entitled to speak with authority as Hebrew scholars, a very great majority regard this argument alone as decisive against the Solomonic authorship; and I am myself so much impressed by the marks of lateness in the Hebrew that I do not venture to put forward a theory which otherwise has something to recommend it, viz., that the book was written in the days of the later Hebrew monarchy, as a record of traditions then preserved of the teaching of Solomon on the occasion of his great assembly.

The conclusion, then, at which I arrive is that, while there is no one of the arguments against the Solomonic authorship which might not be made to give way if convincing external testimony in favour of it were produced, the accumulated weight of the internal arguments would be decisive in the absence of such external proof. To some minds the unanimous consent of the Christian Church for many centuries is decisive external proof; and so the answers to arguments of the former class are easily accepted. Formal Church decision on the subject has been none; and to me it appears that the weight which attaches to the opinions of Christian Fathers on a question of canonicity does not belong to their opinions on the authorship of Old Testament books. No one now has any difficulty in owning that many of the psalms are later than the time of David, yet not only does Augustine regard the mention of Babylon as made by David under prophetic inspiration, but Philaster counts in his list of heresies the denial that all the 150 psalms were David's. If an Old Testament book is not mentioned in the New Testament, we have no reason to suppose that any later revelation as to its authorship was made to the Christian Church. At the time of the formation of the Church, Jewish general belief ascribed the Book of Ecclesiastes to Solomon, and that opinion was naturally adopted by Christian critics. The fact just mentioned and some general Jewish belief in the history of our era (and in all probability for a considerable time previously) is one entitled to great weight; but considering...
that the date to which we can trace that belief back is still at least 700 years later than Solomon, I cannot regard it as decisive; and in the face of the arguments on the other side, I find myself unable to assert Solomon's authorship. The case would be different if the alternative were that we should be obliged to impute deception to a book which we accept as canonical, and to suppose that the writer, who knew himself not to be Solomon, falsely tried to make his readers believe that he was. But accepting the view suggested by the epilogue, that a later writer professes to record the teaching of Solomon, we are at liberty to suppose either that he really does what he professes, oral teaching of Solomon having been preserved by a true tradition, or else that the whole is a dramatic fiction, a form of composition common enough among profane writers, and against the use of which by an inspired writer no reason can be assigned.

Those who reject the Solomonic authorship are far from being agreed among themselves as to the date which they will assign the work, from which it is reasonable to infer, not that Solomon after all must have written it, but that the data for any determination of the kind are insufficient. It has been attempted to discover historical references in different passages, such as chap. ix. 14; but none of these attempts inspires any strong conviction as to its success. Indeed, when we remember how scanty are our materials for a knowledge of Jewish history after the Captivity, we shall not be surprised if we find a difficulty in identifying historical allusions. Again, coincidences have been pointed out between the teaching of Koheleth and that of different schools of Greek philosophy; and these have been regarded as proving indebtedness on the part of the former, and thus as establishing a very late date for the book. Yet these coincidences are after all but superficial. It would be equally easy to prove by them that Koheleth was a Stoic or Epicurean; yet he certainly was neither, but one whose theism was thoroughly Hebrew. I have not been able, then, to convince myself that Koheleth had studied a philosophy by which he is so little really influenced, or that the things which he has in common with it are other than thoughts which have occurred independently to reflecting men of different nations. I prefer, therefore, not to put forward any theory as to the date of composition, not regarding any as sufficiently proved. Some considerations, however, must be mentioned which place certain limits on hypotheses. (1) In the time of Herod the Great the book was old enough to be regarded as Scripture. We are told by Josephus that Herod used to go about in disguise in order to learn what was thought of his government, and a story in the Talmud relates that he went in this way to a leading rabbi who had been deprived of sight by his orders, and from whom he expected to draw some angry denunciation of the wrongs which he and his brethren had suffered at his hands. But the rabbi resisted every temptation to curse the king, quoting Eccles. x. 20; and the story goes on to tell that the king was moved to make atonement for these wrongs by rebuilding the Temple. In another Talmudical story, the scene of which is laid somewhat later, the celebrated Gamaliel is represented as depicting the miraculous results that would follow when, in the coming age of the Messiah, the curse should be removed from nature, and a contentious pupil (by whom it is imagined St. Paul is meant) is insistent. Is it not then to be suspected that the alternative was new under the sun? Without overrating the amount of credence that these anecdotes deserve, we do not think that the stories could have originated or been accepted if the composition of the book had been within living memory in the reign of Herod.

(2) Ecclesiastes is more ancient than the apocryphal Book of Wisdom. It cannot reasonably be doubted that the author of the Book of Wisdom was acquainted with Ecclesiastes, the coincidences being such as cannot be ascribed to accident. In particular the whole passage (Wisdom ii. 1—10) is full of echoes of Ecclesiastes. There are several passages in the latter book which appear to teach Epicurean or pessimistic doctrine; and of these the explanation was offered long since, of which every interpreter is still bound to take account, that the writer is not giving his own conclusions, but stating the opinions of an infidel or objector. And this seems to be the view taken by the author of Wisdom, who introduces the passage with the preface, "The ungodly said, reasoning with themselves, but not aright." We need not suppose that the author of Wisdom rejected the authority of Ecclesiastes; he may have only sought to bring out more clearly what he believed to be its true meaning. Accordingly the solution of the problem of life afforded by the doctrine of future retribution is held to be preferable to that of"the Law, the prophets, and the rest of the books," that the Canon had been then closed. And that then, as now, it included Koheleth is made probable by coincidences, some of which no doubt can be explained as indicating that both writers used a common source; for example, "he that diggeth a pit shall fall into it" (Ecclus. xxvii. 14); "the law, the prophets, and the rest of the books," that the Canon had been then closed. And that then, as now, it included Koheleth is made probable by coincidences, some of which no doubt can be explained as indicating that both writers used a common source; for example, "he that diggeth a pit shall fall into it." (Ecclus. xxvii. 14; Eccles. x. 8), has probably its original in Prov. xxvi. 27; Ps. vii. 15. 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practical moment, whether if in obedience to God's command he gave up all the happiness of this life, there was any future life in which he might hope for compensation. And the affirmative answer was then forward embraced by pious Jews with an intensity of faith of which we find no trace in Ecclesiastes. Neither, again, have we in that book any indication of the strong patriotic feeling to which the Maccabean struggles gave rise.

The testimonies that we have produced as to the use of the Book of Koheleth entitle us to say that it must have been composed more than two centuries before Christ. The absence of documentary evidence leaves still some centuries between the age of Solomon and the date we have named, for our choice among which we have no guide except what inferences we can draw from the book itself. But the importance of placing a lower limit on the date of the book is that it controls speculations founded on the character of its Hebrew. This has so many affinities with Talmudical Hebrew that some scholars have attempted to bring down the date almost to our Lord's time. The evidence as to the use of the book for a couple of centuries before that cannot be a certain means of dating it, by relying on the argument from language. A kindred argument has been built on the character of the Greek translation. At the beginning of the second century of our era, a Jew named Aquila published a new translation of the Old Testament, the chief characteristic of which was slavish literalness, even to the violation of Greek idiom. In particular he thought it necessary to represent by a Greek proposition a Hebrew particle which, as being a mere sign of the accusative case, previous versions had properly left untranslated. This peculiarity is found in the now extant Greek translation of Ecclesiastes. Yet the conclusion to which we are tempted, that this translation is the work of Aquila, is contradicted by the fact that a different translation, under the name of Aquila, was known to Origen. No proof being possible that the peculiarity in question was an invention of Aquila's, it would be rash to conclude, as some have done, that Koheleth was not translated into Greek until his time. Nor can we even say with any certainty that the present Greek text has been interpolated from Aquila's translation. But we may, at least, add this to the presumptions against the Solomonic authorship; for if at the time the LXX. translation was made this book was regarded as Solomon's, it seems likely that we should now have a Greek translation of it not differing in character from that of the Book of Proverbs.

It may be stated here that there are some passages in the book which, notwithstanding all that commentators have done to explain them, remain so obscure that there is reason to suspect the difficulty arises from corruption in the Hebrew text. But the remedy of critical conjecture is so precarious that in this Commentary no attempt has been made to resort to it, and it has been preferred to confess inability to give any explanation commending itself as perfectly satisfactory.

The Book of Ecclesiastes contains some internal evidence of having been written in Palestine; not, like the Book of Wisdom, in Egypt. Thus (chap. xi. 2) the clouds full of rain are spoken of. The writer lives near the Temple (chap. v. 1); and the city (chaps. viii. 10, x. 15) is, to all appearance, Jerusalem. It may be doubted, however, whether, if the writer's residence had been exclusively in Palestine, he could have gained that familiarity with royal courts which he more than once exhibits.

Great as has been the diversity of opinion as to the authorship and date of the Book of Ecclesiastes, there has been fully as great as to its interpretation, and even as to its whole plan and object. We may set aside one system of interpretation, although it found favour in the Christian Church for centuries: that, namely, in which this Old Testament book was made to teach New Testament doctrine from one end to the other, and the most unlikely verses were forced to prophecy of Christ. We need not inquire whether, when this style of comment was introduced, anything more was meant than to make the words of the Old Testament book the occasion for edifying practical observations; it is only for such purpose that comment of this sort would be likely to be used now. But even interpreters who, looking at the book solely from its human side, set themselves to discover the intention with which the author wrote, are found unable to agree in any conclusion. The cause of this disagreement is that different utterances of the book unquestionably contradict each other, and in such wise as to leave room for controversy which of them express the author's real sentiments. Indeed, several contradictions are on account of the many discussions that the authority of the book was impugned in the Rabbinical schools. The following are a few of the examples of these contradictions given by a Jewish commentator: that in one place (chap. viii. 15) Koheleth praises mirth, in another (chap. ii. 2) he condemns it as unprofitable; that in one place (chap. ii. 13) he owns that wisdom has an advantage over folly, in another (chap. ii. 13) he denies that there is any; the state of the dead is said to be better than that of the living (chap. iv. 2), and the contrary (chap. ix. 4). We are told (chap. viii. 12) that it shall be well with those who fear God, and (chap. vii. 13) that it shall not be well with the wicked, and that he shall not prolong his days; and yet (chap. vii. 15) that there is a wicked man who does prolong his days in his wickedness, and (chap. viii. 14) that there are wicked to whom it happens according to the doings of the righteous.

Dismissing, however, discrepancies between what may be regarded as incidental statements, we find that the book has suggested opposite answers to the inquiry, what was the main lesson which the author designed to teach? He defines his subject plainly enough in the words which strike the key-note of his work, "vanity of vanities; all is vanity." His theme is the nothingness of human life; the unsatisfying character of its pleasures, the profitless result of its pursuits, the uncertainty whether the best human prudence can gain any real happiness. But as to the practical conclusion which the writer means to recommend, his readers have formed different opinions. Some have imagined that he inculcates an ascetic with-

* For example, "There is one alone, and there is not a second, yet he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour, neither is his eye satisfied with riches: neither saith he, For whom do I labour and be-
drawal from earthly pleasures, which have been proved to be worthless; some, that he gives his disciples the Epicurean counsel to enjoy life while they can, not knowing how long its happiness may last; some, that he teaches a sceptical despair of regulating conduct in a world where all is ruled by chance or fate. And we find ourselves perplexed by different answers when we inquire what solution the writer offers of the difficulties arising from the imperfections of the retribution which conduct meets in this world. He has complained that “all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as its formal conclusion, is to assert that the epilogue is consistent with it. Some have attempted to evade the argument drawn from the last verse by the suggestion that in this passage only a judgment in this life is referred to. But we have no experience in this life of a judgment in which every secret thing is brought to light and receives retribution, and the whole tenor of the book forbids us to imagine that the author asserts that anything of the kind takes place here. The only other way of escaping the necessity of interpreting the book by its formal conclusion, is to assert that the epilogue is not by the same author as the rest of the book. The assertion is easy to make, but difficult to prove. There would be justification for it if the doctrine of the epilogue contradicted that of the rest of the book; but in truth the epilogue does no more than give emphatic adoption to a solution which has been indicated already. Delitzsch (pp. 206, 430, Eng. Trans.) has found in the language of the epilogue, indications that it proceeded from the same author as the rest of the book, far more numerous than one could beforehand have expected to find in so short a passage. But it is that the author of the book was discussed in the Jewish schools, no doubt was entertained that the epilogue formed an integral part of the book; for it was the orthodoxy of the conclusion which banished doubts raised by some earlier passages. At the time, then, of these discussions the epilogue must have been of immemorial antiquity; and, if added by a different hand, then at the time when it was added the book of Koheleth must have been of undisputed authority, and we may reasonably believe must have been received as Solomon’s. For the hypothesis assumes that the sentiments of the author of the epilogue are at variance with those of the writer of the book itself; and there would have been nothing to prevent him from doing as later Jews were tempted to do, and rejecting the book altogether, if its traditional authority at the time had not been too strong for him; and, in that case, he could have succeeded in getting universal acceptance for his addition, as if it had been part of the original tradition, is not easy to explain. To many a modern Christian reader it will seem strange that it should be a question admitting of debate whether or not a canonical Old Testament book recognises the doctrine of a future life.

To such a reader we offer the following considerations:

(1) In the dispensation of God’s providence, the communication of religious knowledge has been progressive, like “light shining more and more unto the perfect day.” Prophets of old earnestly desired to look into those things which are exposed to the view of the least in the Gospel dispensation, and searched diligently into the meaning of dark sayings of their own which the light of subsequent revelations enables us with ease to interpret (1 Peter i. 10).

(2) If we admit this principle, we have no cause for surprise if we find in the earlier portions of God’s revelation intimations rather than frank declarations of those great truths which in the fulness of time were plainly disclosed. Each sacred writer was only empowered to communicate those truths which God had revealed to him. Each could say, “The word that God puttheth in my mouth, that will I speak.” We do not derogate from the inspiration of new Testament writers if we refuse to force his words so as to make
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them convey a more express declaration of Gospel truth than their natural meaning suggests.

(3) Now, it must be owned that the doctrine of future retribution did not occupy in the minds of pious men of the old dispensation the same place among unquestioned truths which it holds in our own convictions. The proof of this assertion does not depend so much on particular texts as on the fact that the stumbling-block which, more than any other speculative difficulty, caused the feet of those of old time wellnigh to slip, was that "they were envious of the foolish when they saw the prosperity of the wicked." Many of the psalms, as well as portions of the Book of Job, resemble the Book of Ecclesiastes in exhibiting the perplexity caused to thoughtful men of old by the frequent distribution of temporal happiness and misery, apparently, irrespective of the deserts of men, or even contrary to what we conceive it ought to be. We hear nothing of these difficulties in the New Testament. The disciples saw their enemies in possession of temporal power, and themselves at the extreme of earthly wretchedness, yet they never dreamed of questioning the ways of God's providence, but counted that their "light affliction, which was but for a moment," was working for them a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But in the case of the Old Testament writers referred to, the conclusion that it shall surely in the end be well with them that fear the Lord, is one which they seem to have arrived at by an effort of faith in the power, goodness, and justice of God as generally known to them, rather than on any more distinct revelation of the way in which He will make His cause to triumph.

(4) If to the reader it seem strange that the Bible should contain a detailed record of perplexities which a later revelation has removed, let him remember that the Bible contains an inspired account of the external history of God's people, including the story of the sins and follies of many of them, and that we have all cause to own that this history contains valuable lessons for our learning. In an age when the trials of many are from speculative difficulties more than from the allurements of vice, can we pronounce it unfitting that the sacred volume should also contain for our instruction an inspired account of the internal history of a pious man of old, should make known to us his doubts and difficulties, and let us see how, apparently without being in possession of any such satisfactory solution of his difficulties as could content his intellect, his heart taught him that surely it shall be well with them that fear God, and that the conclusion of the whole matter is that to fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man? The contradictions of the Book of Ecclesiastes spring out of the conflict between the writer's faith and his experience—his faith that the world is ordered by God, and his experience that events do not fall out as he would have expected God should have ordered them. He seems to have lived in that darkest hour, the hour before dawn, when, through brooding on the imperfections of earthly retribution, many minds were prepared for the reception of the fuller revelation that was coming. The writer of Ecclesiastes takes a gloomy view of life, but he is at the opposite pole from the atheistic pessimists of modern times. The whole book is pervaded by belief in the God who rules the world, though it may be in a way incomprehensible to man.

It is plain, then, what instruction we may derive from the inspired history of the mental struggles of one perplexed by difficulties of which we know the solution. We, too, have our intellectual difficulties, and we must sometimes decide to hold fast to certain great truths of faith, notwithstanding objections which we do not know how satisfactorily to remove. In such a case we may be comforted by the study of the history of one who, in old time, passed through a similar experience, and by observing how, while his understanding was wandering perplexed, his heart by a shorter way arrived at the goal.
ECCLESIASTES; OR, THE PREACHER.

CHAPTER I.—(1) The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

(2) A Vanitv of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. (3) What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? {4} One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever. (5) The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. (6) The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth again according to his circuits.

So “Thus said Benhadad,” “Thus said the Lord” (1 Kings xx. 2, 5, 13 and passim) are rightly translated by the present in our version. In the present case this formula is one which might conceivably be employed if the words of Koheleth were written down by himself; yet it certainly rather suggests that we have here these words as written down by another.

(3—11) Man is perpetually toiling, yet of all his toil there remains no abiding result. The natural world exhibits a spectacle of unceasing activity, with no real progress. The sun, the winds, the waters, are all in motion, yet they do but run a round, and nothing comes of it.

The word translated “vanity” (which occurs thirty-seven times in this book, and only thirty-three times in all the rest of the Old Testament) in its primary meaning denotes breath or vapour, and is so translated here in some of the Greek versions (comp. James iv. 4); so in Isaiah lvi. 13. It is the same word as the proper name Abel, on which see Note on Gen. iv. 2. It is frequently applied in Scripture to the follies of heathenism (Jer. xiv. 22, &c.), and also to the whole estate of men (Pss. xxxix. 5, 6, lxii. 9, cxliv. 4). The translation “vanity” is that of the LXX. We may reasonably believe that St. Paul (Rom. viii. 20) had this key-note of Ecclesiastes in his mind.

“Vanity of vanities” is a common Hebrew superlative, as in the phrases “Heaven of heavens,” “Song of songs,” “Holy of holies,” “Lamentation of lamentations” (Micah ii. 4, margin).

Saith the Preacher.—Heb., said. The Hebrew constantly employs the preterite when English usage requires the present or perfect. In the case of a message the point of time contemplated in Hebrew is that of the giving, not the delivery, of the message.
The Preacher Relates his own Experience.

ECCLESIASTES, II.

The Preacher Relates his own Experience.

I.

The Preacher Relates his own Experience.

II.

Koheleth, having tried wisdom and philosophical investigation, proceeded next to see what cheerful enjoyment could do for human happiness.

(1) In mine heart.—To mine heart (Luke xii. 19; Ps. xii. 11).

Go to now.—Num. xxii. 6; Judg. xix. 11.

Enjoy.—Heb., see.
mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. (2) I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? (3) I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. (4) I made great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: (5) I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: (6) I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees; (7) I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem and all the countries of the kings of the provinces. (8) I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gave me singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. (9) So was I great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. (10) And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. (11) Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun. (12) And I turned myself to behold before me: (9) I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gave me singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. (9) So was I great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. (10) And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. (11) Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun. (12) And I turned myself to behold before me:

(2) Prov. xiv. 13.
Mad.—Ps. cii. 9.
(3) Sought.—The word translated “search out” (chap. i. 13).
“Draw,” margin. There is no Biblical parallel for the use of the word in this sense. The general meaning is plain.
Acquainting.—Rather, guiding. The word is used of the driver of an animal or the shepherd of a flock (2 Sam. vi. 3; Ps. lxxxi. 1; Isa. liii. 4). Koheloth contemplated not an unrestrained enjoyment of pleasure, but one controlled by prudence.
All the days.—(See margin). This phrase occurs again in chaps. v. 17, vi. 12. We have “men of number” in the sense of “few”—i.e., so few that they can be numbered (Gen. xxxix. 30, and often elsewhere). So we may translate here “for their span of life.”
(4) Houses.—1 Kings v. 11; 2 Chron. viii. 4.
Vineyards.—1 Chron. xxvii. 27; Cant. viii. 11.
(5) Orchards.—Rather, parks. The word, which occurs also in Cant. iv. 3, Neh. ii. 8, is originally Persian, and passed into the Greek and into modern languages in the form of “paradise” (Luke xxii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4; and in LXX., Gen. ii. 10, xlii. 10; Num. xxiv. 6; Isa. i. 30; Esclus. xxiv. 30; Susan. v. 4). Parks and trees growing, not only fruit, but shade from the hot Eastern sun, were an almost necessary part of kingly luxury. The king’s garden is spoken of in 1 Kings xxii. 2; 2 Kings xxi. 18, xxv. 4; Neh. iii. 15.
(6) Pools.—In a place south of Bethlehem are still pointed out three gigantic reservoirs, known as the Pools of Solomon (Stanley’s Jewish Church, ii. 197). The place is probably the same as that called Ethan by Josephus in his description of Solomon’s luxury (Ant. viii. 7. 3). Josephus speaks of another Pool of Solomon (Bell. Jud. v. 4. 2). Tanks are necessary for irrigation in a land where natural streams are few and are dried up in summer. The king’s pool is mentioned in Neh. ii. 14.
(7) Got me.—The servants acquired by purchase are distinguished from those born in the house. (Concerning the number of Solomon’s servants, see 1 Kings iv. 27, x. 5; and of his cattle, chaps. iv. 23, viii. 63.)

(9) Peculiar treasure.—The word is used of the Jewish people (Exod. xix. 9; Ps. xxxv. 4; Mal. iii. 17; but generally 1 Chron. xxix. 3). That Solomon had tributary kings is stated (1 Kings iv. 21; 2 Chron. iv. 24; Ps. lxxxi. 10; Ezra iv. 20). The word used for “provinces” here and in chap. v. 8, occurs in reference to the provinces of the Persian Empire repeatedly in the Book of Esther; Ezra ii. 1; Neh. vii. 6; Dan. vii. 2. (See also Lam. i. 1; Ezek. xix. 8.) The word is almost wholly absent from the earlier books, save that it occurs where the “princes of the provinces” are mentioned (1 Kings xx.).

Singers.—Music was regarded as a necessary accompaniment of feasts (Isa. v. 12; Amos vi. 5; Esclus. xxxii. 5, xlii. 1). For David’s employment of professional singers, see 2 Sam. xix. 35.

Delights.—Cant. vii. 6; Prov. xiv. 10; Micol. i. 16, ii. 9.

Musical instruments.—The Hebrew word here used occurs nowhere else, and commentators are reduced to look to the etymology for the explanation of it. Their guesses are so numerous that it would be wearisome to recount them. That adopted in our version is by no means one of the most probable. The interpretation “concernes” is most in favour with commentators, though they differ among themselves as to the grounds on which they justify this translation. And it does appear unlikely that this notorious feature of Solomon’s court should be omitted in an enumeration of his luxury. It will be seen from the margin that the words “of all sorts” have nothing corresponding to them in the original, but are intended as an equivalent for a Hebrew idiom, in which a plural is intensified by prefixing a noun in the singular.

(9-11) Koheloth carried out his plan of tempering his enjoyment with discretion, but while he took his fill of the pleasure that fell to his lot, he found in it no abiding profit. He goes on in the following paragraph to complain that the wisdom and other advantages he possessed in his search for happiness render his failure the more disheartening.

(12) This verse presents some difficulties of translation which need not be discussed here. The Authorised
Version gives this very good sense: If the king has failed in his experiment, what likelihood is there that a private person should be more successful? Yet bearing in mind that in chap. vi. 18 the "man that cometh after the king" means his successor, and also that the theme of the whole section is that in human affairs there is no progress, it is more simply to understand this verse: the king's successor can do no more than run the same round that has been trodden by his predecessor.

(19) Wisdom surely has an advantage over folly, yet how full of "vanity" is that advantage. Let the wise man have done his best, soon death comes; the wise man is forgotten, and all he has gained by his labour passes, without labour, into the hands of one who may be no inheritor of his wisdom.

Excellcit.-There is profit in wisdom more than in folly. The same word "profit" is used as in chap. vi. 11. (See Note on chap. i. 3.)

(20) Event.-Translated "hap," or "chance" (Ruth ii. 13; 1 Sam. vi. 9, xx. 26.)

(21) It might be urged on behalf of the Solomonic authorship that Solomon himself might imagine that in the days to come he and his wisdom would be forgotten, but that such a thought does not become a long subsequent writer who had been induced by Solomon's reputation for wisdom to make him the hero of his work. It would seem to follow that the writer is here only giving the history of Solomon's reflections, and not his ultimate conclusions. Better to omit the note of interrogation after "wise man," and put a note of exclamation after "fool," the "how" being used as in Isa. xiv. 4; Ezek. xxxvi. 17.

(22) Is grievous.-Rather, was.

(23) Eccles. ix. 19. There seems to be no special reference to Rehoboam, but only the assertion of the general principle that the wisest of men must leave all that his labour has gained to be enjoyed by another who may be destitute of wisdom. The thought is not so much that it is a hardship for the wise man to leave what he has gained, as that it is that he should have no advantage over the fool who enjoys the same without any merit.

(24) Have rule.-The word occurs again in chaps. vi. 2, viii. 9; elsewhere only in Nehemiah and Esther, and in Ps. cxix. 133.

(25) Went about.—Chaps. vii. 25, ix. 14, xii. 5.

(26) Equity.—Rather, skill, success (chaps. iv. 4, v. 7). The noun is peculiar to this book. The corresponding verb occurs in chaps. x. 10, xi. 6; Esther viii. 5.

(27) The fact that the wise man must surrender his acquisitions exhibits the inutility of the painful toil by which he has gained them.

(28) Nothing better.—"Not good" is the sense of the Hebrew as it stands, for it will be observed that the word "than" is in italics. But as this word might easily have dropped out by a transcriber's error, interpreters, taking in connection chaps. iii. 12, 22, v. 18, viii. 15, generally agree to modify the text so as to give it the meaning of our version, according to which the sense is: "Seeing the uncertainty of the future, the only good a man can get from his labour is that present pleasure which he can make it yield to himself; and whether he can even enjoy so much as this depends on God." If the text be not altered, the sense is: "It is not good for a man to eat, &c., seeing it depends on God whether or not that is possible."

(29) Hasten.—Hab. i. 8.

(30) More than I.—There is a various rendering, which has the authority of the LXX., and which has every appearance of being right: "without Him."

(31) On the doctrine that the wicked amass wealth for the righteous, see marginal references.
CHAPTER III.—(1) To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: (2) a time to be born, and a time to die; (3) a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; (4) a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; (5) a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; (6) a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and (7) a time to refrain from embracing; (8) a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

The thought expressed at the end of the last chapter is developed in this chapter, which treats of the supremacy of God. Man can have no enjoyment except as He is pleased to bestow it. He has pre-ordained the times and seasons of all human events, and success cannot be obtained except in conformity with His arrangement.

(1) A season.—The word is only found in later Hebrew (Neh. ii. 6; Esther ix. 27, 31), and in the Chaldee of Daniel and Ezra.

Purpos.—The use of the word here and in chaps. iii. 17, v. 8, viii. 6, in the general sense of “a matter that belongs to later Hebrew. The primary meaning of the word is “pleasure” or “desire,” and it is so used in this book (chaps. v. 4; xii. 1, 10).

(2) The list of times and seasons is ranged in Hebrew MSS. and printed books in two parallel columns.

A time to die.—Job xiv. 5.

Mourn.—This is the ordinary word used for noisy funeral lamentsations (Jer. iv. 8; 1 Sam. xxv. 1).

(5) Gather stones.—As the collecting of stones for building purposes is included in verse 4, it is thought that what is here referred to is the clearing or marring of land (Isa. v. 2; Jer. 10; 2 Kings iii. 19, 25).

(6) To lose.—Elsewhere this word means to destroy, but in the later Hebrew it comes to mean to lose, like the Latin “perdere.”

(11) In his time.—In modern English, “its.”

The world.—The word here translated “world” has that meaning in post-Biblical Hebrew, but never elsewhere in the Old Testament, where it occurs over 300 times. And if we adopt the rendering “world” it is difficult to explain the verse so as to connect it with the context. Where the word occurs elsewhere it means “eternity,” or “long duration,” and is so used in this book (chaps. i. 4, 10, ii. 16, iii. 14, ix. 6, xii. 5).

Taking this meaning of the word here (the only place where the word is used with the article), we may regard it as contrasted with that for “time,” or season, immediately before. Life exhibits a changing succession of weeping alternating with laughing, war with peace, and so forth. For each of these God has appointed its time or season, and in its season each is good. But man does not recognise this; for God has put in his heart an expectation and longing for abiding continuance of the same, and so he fails to understand the work which God does in the world.

So that no.—The connecting phrase here employed is rendered “because none” (Deut. ix. 28; 2 Kings vi. 300 times. And if we adopt the rendering “world,” it is difficult to explain the verse so as to connect it with the next topic.

I know.—Literally, I knew: i.e., I came to know. The writer is relating the conclusions at which he successively arrived.

To do good.—This phrase is always used elsewhere in a moral sense: “to act rightly.” When enjoyment is meant, the phrase used is, as in the next verse, “to see good;” but the context seems to require that this sense should be given to the phrase in this verse also.

This verse introduces the consideration of the difficulty arising from the imperfection of moral retri-
ness, that iniquity was there. (17) I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

(18) I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. (19) For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity, and all is vanity. (20) All go unto one place; even of the dust, and all turn to dust again. (21) Who knoweth the spirit of man, that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? (22) Who knoweth that the spirit of the sons of men be fareth as the spirit of the beast? That the sons of men goeth downward to the earth, and the spirit of the beast goeth upward to the heavens. (23) Who knoweth whether the spirit of man goeth upward? and whether the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth? (24) Then I returned, and I saw vanity in a labour of man.

CHAPTER IV.—So I returned, and I saw vanity in a labour of man. Other places where the iniquity of judges is mentioned are chaps. iv. 1, v. 8, vi. 7, viii. 9, 10.

(17) A time there—viz., with God. In this verse a judgment after this life is clearly spoken of, but not yet asserted as a conclusion definitely adopted, but only as a belief of the writer's conflicting with the doubts expressed in the following verses. "I said in mine heart," with which verses 17, 18 both begin, conveys the idea, "I thought," and yet again I thought," the writer returns again to speak of the punishment of the wicked in chaps. vii. 13, xi. 9.

(18) That which befalleth.—The word translated "event" in chap. xii. 13 (where see Note).

Breath.—The same word as "spirit" (verse 21; Gen. vii. 15; Ps. civ. 30).

(20) The LXX., followed by a great body of interpreters, ancient and modern, translate, "Who knoweth whether the spirit of man goeth upward?" &c., and this agrees better with the context of this paragraph. The sceptical thought is, "We see that death resolves into dust (Gen. iii. 19; Eccles. xi. 7; see also Eccles. xii. 10) the bodies of men and animals alike; and if it be alleged that there is a difference as to what becomes of their spirits, can this be associated with the certainty of knowledge?" The writer here seems to have read both Ps. xlix. 14 and Prov. xv. 24.

IV.

(1) Having dwelt on the instability of human happiness, the Preacher now turns to contemplate the actual misery of which the world is full.

Oppressions.—Job xxxv. 9; Amos iii. 9. considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. (2) Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. (3) Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

(4) Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit. (5) The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. (6) Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.

(7) Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. (8) There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my

No comforter.—If Solomon were the writer, one asks, What was the king about? Could he do nothing but express helpless despair?

(5) I praised the dead.—Job iii. 11; Exod. xxvii. 32; 1 Kings xix. 4; Jer. xx. 14; Jonah iv. 3. The word which is translated "yet" in this verse belongs to later Hebrew, and does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament.

(7) Right work.—Rather, skilful. (See Note on chap. ii. 21.)

(6) Eateth his own flesh.—Interpreters have usually taken these words metaphorically, as in Ps. xxvii. 2; Isa. xlix. 26; Micah iii. 3, and understood them as a condemnation of the sluggard's conduct as suicidal. But it has been proposed, taking the verse in connection with that which precedes and those which follow, to understand them literally, "eats his meat;" the sense being that, considering the emulation and envy involved in all successful exertion, one is tempted to say that the sluggard does better who eats his meat in quiet. There is, however, no exact parallel to the phrase "eats his flesh;" and I think that if the latter were the meaning intended, it would have been formally introduced in some such way as, "Wherefore I praised the sluggard." Adopting, then, the ancient interpretation, we understand the course of conduct recommended to be the golden mean between the ruinous sloth of the fool and the vexations toil of the ambitious man.

(7) Then I returned.—The vanity of toil is especially apparent in the ease of a solitary man. It is possible, as has been suggested (see chap. ii. 18), that this may have been the writer's own case. The following verses, which speak of the advantages of

soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.

(9) Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

(10) For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. (11) Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? (12) And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

(13) Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, 1 who will no more be admonished. (14) For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.

(15) I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead. (16) There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them; they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAPTER V.—(1) Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, a than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. (2) Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

(3) For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words. (4) When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. (5) Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. (6) Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should

(1) In the Hebrew division this is the last verse of the preceding chapter; but clearly here a new section begins, containing proverbs in the second person singular, which has not hitherto been used. There is no obvious connection with what has gone before; possibly the precepts here introduced were traditionally known to have been part of Solomon’s teaching.

They consider not. — The most natural translation of this clause would be, “They know not how to do evil,” i.e., are incapable of doing evil. This would force us to understand the subject of the clause to be not the fools, but those who are ready to hear. The Authorized Version exhibits one of the expedients resorted to in order to get a better meaning. Another is, “They are without knowledge, so that they do evil.”

(2) Few.—Ecclus. vii. 14, xviii. 22.

(4) There is here a clear recognition of the passage in Deuteronomy. (See ref.; comp. Ecclus. xviii. 33.)

No pleasure in fools.—Comp. Isa. lix. 4.

(6) The angel.—It has been proposed to translate this word the “messenger,” or ambassador of God, and understand “the priest” (see Mal. ii. 7); and it has been regarded as one of the notes of later date in this book that the word should be used in such a sense. But even in the passage of Malachi there is no trace that the word “angel” had then become an ordinary name for the priest, such as would be intelligible if used in that sense without explanation from the context. Neither, again, is there reason for supposing that the priest had power to dispense with vows alleged to have been rashly undertaken. The power given him (Lev. xxvii.) is of a different nature. I therefore adhere to the obvious sense, which suggests that the real vow is observed and recorded by a heavenly angel. It falls in with this view that the phrase is “before the angel.”

If an excuse pleaded to a priest was intended, we should have, “Say not thou to the priest.”

1 Heb., who know­eth not to be ad­monished.

f 1 Cor. 11. 10.
Vanity in Riches which are not Properly Used.

God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? [7] For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.

(1) If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they. [9] Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field.

(10) He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. [11] When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what profit hath he that laboured for the wind? [17] All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.

(18) Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion. [19] Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God. [20] For he shall not much remember the days of his life: because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

Error.—The word is that which describes sins of ignorance (Num. xv.). The tacit assumption in this verse, that God interposes to punish when His name is taken in vain, clearly expresses the writer's real conviction, and shows that such a verse as chap. ix. 2 is only the statement of a speculative difficulty.

(7) This verse presents some difficulties of translation springing from corruption of text, but not affecting the general sense; according to which the many words which belong to the dreams and vanities of heathendom are contrasted with the fear of the only God.

(8) The interpretation of this verse depends on the sense we give to "marvel." There are some who take it of simple surprise. "You need not think it strange; the instances of oppression which you observe are only parts of a gigantic scheme of mutual wrong-doing, the oppressors of one being themselves oppressed in turn by their superiors." But instead of "Do not wonder," the meaning "be not dismayed" is preferable. (Comp. Ps. xlviii. 5; Job xxvi. 11; Isa. xiii. 8; Jer. iv. 9.)

The verse then supplies the answer to the gloomy view of chap. iv. 4. In the view that the last clause speaks of the Divine rectification of earthly injustice, I am confirmed by observing that the author of this book delights in verbal assonances, and constantly links together words similar in sound. An English version might admit the meaning: "Over the high oppressor stands a higher, and over both, those who are still higher:" though even here there is the difficulty that the highest of all are spoken of in the plural number, of which it is a very awkward explanation that the "higher" is the king, and that the women and favourites who govern him are the "higher still."

But I cannot but think that the language of the Hebrew, that over the "geboh" there be "gebohim," is intended to suggest Elohim to the reader's mind.

On the word "province," see Note, chap. ii. 8; and on "matter," chap. iii. 1.

(9) Is served by.—Or, is servant to. Many eminent interpreters connect this verse with what precedes, and translate, "and on the whole the profit of the land is for the use of the king, who is devoted to agriculture," an observation which it is hard to clear of the charge of irrelevance. I prefer, as in our version, to connect with the following verses, and the best explanation I can give of the connection of the paragraph is that it contains a consideration intended to mitigate the difficulty felt at the sight of riches acquired by oppression, namely, that riches add little to the real happiness of the possessors.

(13) Sore evil.—Chap. vi. 2; Jer. xiv. 17; Nah. iii. 19.

(14) But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. [15] As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.

(16) And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind? [17] All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.

(18) Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion. [19] Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God. [20] For he shall not much remember the days of his life: because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

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CHAPTER VI.—(1) There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: (2) a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease. (3) If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he. (4) For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness. (5) Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. (6) Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place? (7) All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. (8) For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? (9) Better is the sight of the eyes 3 than the wandering of the desire; this is also vanity and vexation of spirit. (10) That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he. (11) Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better? (12) For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

CHAPTER VII.—(1) A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth. (2) It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. (3) Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the.

VI.

(1) Common among.—Rather, heavy upon. In this section it is remarked how even when riches remain with a man to the end of his life they may fail to bring him any real happiness.

(2) Riches, wealth, and honour.—The three words are used together regarding Solomon (2 Chron. i. 11).

(3) That a man should be so occupied in the pursuit of riches as never to take any enjoyment from them is a common experience enough; but that the same man should have no sepulchre to preserve his name after him need not necessarily happen, so that one is tempted to think that the Preacher has some actual occurrence in his mind.

Untimely birth.—See references. We have just had another reminiscence of the Book of Job. (See chap. v. 15.)

(4) He.—Rather, it—viz., the untimely birth.

(5) Though.—The conjunction here used is only found again in Esther vii. 4.

(6) That knoweth to walk.—Understands how to conduct himself. But why this should be limited to the poor is not obvious.

(10) Of this difficult verse I prefer the translation, “What he is his name has been called long ago, and it is known that it is man; neither may he strive.” &c.—i.e., the name given long ago to man (Gen. ii. 7) indicates his weakness; neither can he contend with the Almighty. There may be a reference to Gen. vi. 3, where a kindred word is used.

Mightier.—The word here used is found only in the Chaldee books of the Bible and in later Hebrew.

(11) Things.—We might also translate “words.”

As a shadow.—Chap. viii. 13; Job xiv. 2.

VII.

In the sections immediately following, the continuity of the history of the Preacher’s mental struggles is broken by the introduction of a number of proverbs, some of which have so little apparent relation to the context, that Renan even takes them to be intended as specimens of the “many words which increase vanity.” But of any work, whether actually representing or intended to represent the teaching of Solomon, proverbs might be expected to form a necessary part. And though the ingenuity may not be successful which has been employed in trying to find a strict logical sequence in this part of the work, yet the thoughts are not unconnected with each other, nor out of harmony with the whole. The question with which the preceding chapter concludes, “Who knoweth what is good for a man?” is taken up in this, verses 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, all beginning with the word “good.” This characteristic would have been better kept up in translation if the first word of all these verses had been made “better.” “Better is sorrow than laughter,” &c.
heart is made better. (4) The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. (5) It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. (6) For as the cracking of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity. (7) Surely oppression maketh a wise man man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart. (8) Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. (9) Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. (10) Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this. (11) Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. (12) For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it. (13) Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? (14) In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. (15) All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness. (16) Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself? (17) Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time? (18) It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all. (19) Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which...
are in the city. (29) a For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. (28) Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: (29) For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

(23) All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. (24) That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out from me. (25) To search, and to seek out wisdom, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness: (26) And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whose pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be cursed elsewhere.

(27) Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one

CHAPTER VIII.—(1) Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed. (2) I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God. (3) Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. (4) Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What dost thou? (5) Whoso
keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.

(6) Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

(7) For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be? (8) There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

(9) All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt. (10) And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity.

(11) For because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. (12) Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: (13) But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

(14) There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity.

(15) Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

(16) When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes: (17) Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

CHAPTER IX.—(1) For all this I

(11) Sentence.—This is a Persian word only found in Esther i. 20, and in Chaldee parts of Ezra and Daniel.

(12) Though.—Better, Because; the first part of this verse being in continuation of the preceding. The latter part of the verse states the faith which the writer holds in spite of apparent contrary experience.

(13) As a shadow.—Chap. vi. 12; Wisd. ii. 5; see also Wisd. iv. 8.

(14) Happeneth.—The word is used in this sense only in Esther ix. 26.

(15) The writer returns to the sentiment expressed already (chaps. ii. 24, iii. 12, 22, v. 17).

(16) Eat, and to drink, and to be merry.—The three words occur together 1 Kings iv. 20.

(17) It would have been better if the new chapter had been made to begin here. The sentiment is that already expressed in chap. iii. 11.

(18) Seeth sleep with his eyes.—Ps. cxxii. 4; Prov. vi. 4; Gen. xxxi. 40. The identical expression occurs in Terence, Heaut. III. i. 82, "Somnum hercle ego necote occultis non vidi mei."

IX.

(1) No man knoweth.—If this verse stood by itself we should understand, "Man cannot know whether he will experience marks of the Divine favour, or the reverse;" but taking verse 6 into account, we understand of a man's own love or hatred the objects of which he cannot tell beforehand.
considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.

(2) a All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that fear eth an oath.

(3) This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. (4) For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. (5) For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know nothing, neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

(6, 7) Accepteth.—The thought has been expressed (Ps. 78. 3, 15; Mal. 3. 18), and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth not: for the living know that they shall die: but the dead know nothing, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

(11) I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

(12) For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it faileth suddenly upon them.

(13) This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me:

(14) There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: (15) now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.

(16) a Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. (17) The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. (18) Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

CHAPTER X.—(1) Dead flies cause

By all.—Rather, all is before them.

(2) He that sweareth.—Zech. v. 3.

(3) We have again the sentiments expressed in chap. ii. 14—16; iii. 19, v. 15, vi. 13.

(4) There is a various reading here in the Hebrew. Our translators, following the older translators, adopt the reading of the margin. That of the text gives, instead of "joined," a word signifying "chosen;" the best sense that can be given to which is to translate, "For who is excepted," joining it with the previous verse, beginning this one, "To all the living," &c. With regard to the statement of the following verses, comp. Ps. vi. 3 and the marginal references there given. The shepherd's dog is spoken of Job xxx. 1, and watchdogs Isa. lvi. 10. Elsewhere in the Old Testament the dog is an unclean animal living or dead.

(6) 2 Sam. xii. 20, xiv. 2; Ps. xlv. 8, civ. 14; Rev. vii. 9

(10) Thy hand findeth.—Lev. xii. 8; Judg. ix. 33; and margin, ref.

The grave.—Sheol (John ix. 4).

Chance.—Elsewhere only in 1 Kings v. 4.

(12) Prov. vii. 23; Ezek. xii. 13; Hosea vii. 12.

(14) Idle attempts have been made to find a historic reference in this passage. What is here told is so like the story (2 Sam. xx.) of the deliverance of Abel-beth-Maachah by a wise woman, whose name, nevertheless, has not been preserved, that we cannot even be sure that the writer had any other real history in his mind.

X.

(1) Dead flies.—Literally, flies of death, which, according to a common Hebrew idiom, "weapons of death" (Ps. vii. 14); "snares of death" (Ps. xviii. 5) ought to mean death-giving or poisonous flies; but the existing translation yields so satisfactory a sense that we are unwilling to disturb it. (Comp. 1 Cor. v. 6.) There is a close connection with the last words of the
the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour. (3) A wise man’s heart is at his right hand; but a fool’s heart is at his left. (4) Ye also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, 1 his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.

(6) If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences. (9) There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: (6) folly is precising chapter, which might better have been brought to a close at the end of verse 12.)

Apothecary.—Exod. xxx. 35. Him that is in reputation for.—Substitute “is weightier than.” The sense remains the same, viz., that a little folly undoeth the effect of much wisdom. (3) At his right hand.—Perhaps better, towards his right hand, i.e., leads him to go to the right hand. The thought is the same as chap. ii. 13, namely, that though the actual results of wisdom are often disappointing, the superiority of wisdom over folly is undeniable.

(3) That he is a fool.—In Hebrew, as in English, the antecedent of “he” may be taken differently, and the Vulg. and other authorities understand the verse as meaning that the fool in his self-conceit attributes folly to everyone else. But it is better, as well as more obvious, to take the verse of the self-betrayal of the fool (Prov. xii. 16, xvii. 28, xviii. 2).

(4) We return now to the thought of chap. viii. 3. For “spirit” in the sense of “anger,” see Judg. viii. 3. (6) Rise up.—Ps. lxxxix. 21; 2 Sam. xi. 20.

Yielding.—Literally, healing. (See Prov. xv. 4.) Pacifieth great offences. Rather, probably, quieteth great offences, that is to say, not so much “puts an end to the offence felt by the ruler,” as to the offences likely to be committed if he do not restrain himself.

(5) Error.—The word is the same as at verse 6.

(7) Considering that the importation of horses was a new thing in the reign of Solomon, we look on it as a mark of later age that a noble should think himself dishonoured by having to go on foot while his inferiors rode on horseback.

(8) Commentators cannot be said to have been very successful in their attempts to trace a connection between the proverbs of this chapter. Perhaps nothing better can be said than that the common theme of these proverbs is the advantage of wisdom, and here in particular of caution in great enterprises. It is forcing the connection to imagine that the enterprise from which the writer seeks to dissociate, is that of rebellion against the ruler whose error is condemned (verse 5).

Diggoth a pit.—See Prov. xxvi. 27; Ecclus. xxvii. 26. The word here used for “pit” is found in later Hebrew, and also in the Old Testament.

An hedge.—Rather, a stone wall, in the crevices of which serpents often have their habitation. (Comp. Prov. xxiv. 31; Lam. iii. 9; Amos v. 19.) This verse admits of a curious verbal comparison with Isa. lviii. 26, “builder of the breach,” in one, answering to “breacher of the building” in the other.

The word here used for “spirit” in the sense of “anger,” see Judg. viii. 3. “Mouth of the sword,” for edge of the sword, but the sense remains the same, viz., weightier than.” The sense remains the same, viz., ings, not the removing of stones. For the latter sense, & nbsp;
XI.

(12) a The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. (13) The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. (14) A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him? (15) The labour of the foolish wearith every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city. (16) Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning! (17) Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness! (18) By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

(19) That which hath wings.—Literally, master of wings; and so also Prov. i. 17. (Comp. "master of the tongue," verse 11.)

(20) That which hath wings.—Literally, master of wings; and so also Prov. i. 17. (Comp. "master of the tongue," verse 11.)
and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. (4) He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. (5) As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God which maketh all. (6) In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether thou shalt be as good for to account

(7) Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: (8) But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that

4. But it is idle to try to guard against all possibilities of failure. To demand a certainty of success before acting would mean not to act at all. (5) The wording of this passage leaves it ambiguous whether we have here two illustrations of man's ignorance, or only one; whether we are to understand the verse as declaring that we know neither the way of the wind nor the growth of the embryo, or whether, retaining the translation "spirit," we take the whole verse as relating to the latter subject. (Comp. John iii. 6.) The word for "her that is with child" occurs in that sense only in the Old Testament, and in later Hebrew. (6) Prosper.—The word is used again in chap. x. 10 and Esther viii. 5, and belongs to modern Hebrew. (Comp. Gal. vi. 7, 8.)

(9) Days of darkness.—Ps. lxxxvii. 12, cxliii. 3; Job x. 21. (Comp. also Ps. lii. 13; Job xxxiii. 30.) The beginning of the last chapter would more conveniently have been placed here than where the division is actually made. It is hard to interpret the judgment spoken of in this verse of any future judgment, when we bear in mind how much of the book is taken up with the complaint that retribution does not take place in this life.

(10) Sorrow.—See Note on chap. vii. 3.
Youth.—The word occurs not elsewhere in the Old Testament; but nearly the same word is used of black hair in Lev. xiii. 37; Cant. v. 11.

XII.

(1) Creator.—This occurs as a Divine name in Isa. xl. 23, xlv. 15, and elsewhere. Here it is in the plural, like the Divine name Elohim. (See also Note on verse 8.) We have "thy Maker" in the plural in Job xxxv. 10; Ps. cxlii. 2; Isa. lvi. 5; and "Holy One" in Prov. ix. 10, xxi. 5; Hosea xi. 12.

(2) Here the style rises, and we have a figurative description of the "evil days;" but, as sometimes happens in the case of highly wrought poetry, it is much easier to perceive the general effect intended than to account for all the words which produce it. English readers generally have been deeply impressed by verses 6, 7, in a general way understanding them as speaking of the dissolution of the noble structure of the bodily frame; and they scarcely gain anything by the efforts of commentators to explain to them what exactly is meant by the "silver cord" and the "golden bowl." (3) After using all the help my predecessors have given me, I frankly own myself unable to give more than a vague account of the figures employed in this whole passage.

Darkened.—See chap. xi. 8. On darkness of the heavens as a symbol of calamity, comp. Isa. xiii. 10, 11; Jer. iv. 28, 29; Ezek. xxxiii. 7-9; Joel ii. 1-10; Amos viii. 9, 10; and contrast Isa. xxx. 26, lx. 10.)

(4) In this verse we have a description of an afflicted and affrighted house: the servants below (keepers of the house; comp. 2 Sam. v. 16; Prov. vii. 22) in equal consternation [the word for "tremble" occurs twice more in Biblical Aramaean]; the masters (men of might, translated "able men") Exod. xviii. 21, 25; comp. "mighty in power," Job xx. 7) in equal distress; so also the grinding maids below, disinheriting their work (Exod. xi. 5; Isa. xlvii. 1, 2); the ladies, who look out at the lattices (Judges v. 8; 2 Sam. v. 10; Prov. vii. 6; 2 Kings ix. 30), forced to withdraw. (For the four classes, comp. Isa. xxiv. 2; Ps. cxiiii. 2.)

Expositors have generally understood the house here described as denoting the decaying body of the old man. To the English reader the "grinders" of our version suggest "teeth" in a way that the "grinding maids" of the Hebrew does not; and the ladies looking out of the lattices can easily be understood of "the eyes." But when it is attempted to carry out the figure, and to find anatomical explanations of all the other images employed, the interpretation becomes so forced that some have preferred to understand verse 3 as only a general description of the consternation produced by such a tempest as is spoken of in verse 2: I cannot but think that the "house" does denote the bodily frame; but I regard as unsuccessful the attempts
because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, (9) and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; (9) also when they shall be afraid of that which is high. And fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and he shall rise up at the voice of the last trumpet.

(10) The grasshopper shall be a burden, and the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. (7) Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

(8) Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

Moreover.—This, the first word of the epilogue, is one of the specialties of the book of Ecclesiastes. (See chap. ii. 15.) So is also the word for “set in order” (chap. i. 15, vii. 13).

(11) Words of the wise.—In this and the next verse the weighty words of sages, such as was Koheleth, are contrasted with the volubility of modern book-makers. Though the general purpose of the verses is plain, the words used are enigmatical, and one cannot feel great confidence in assigning their precise meaning. The translation of our version fairly represents the original, if it is observed that the words “by” and “which,” which determine the meaning, are in italics. With regard to the “nail,” compare Ezra ix. 8; Isa. xxii. 23. The word “masters” we have had twice in the Old Testament; but is not a Talmudic word. Considering that the book is filled with complaints of the imperfection of earthly retribution, this announcement of a tribunal, at which “every secret thing,” shall be brought into judgment, cannot be reasonably understood of anything but a judgment after this life; so that this book, after all its sceptical debating, ends by enunciating, more distinctly than is done elsewhere in the Old Testament, the New Testament doctrine of a day when God shall judge the secrets of men (Rom. ii. 16), shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts (1 Cor. iv. 5).
THE SONG OF SOLOMON.
INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

The "Song of Songs"—from its Latin name, "canticum canticorum," known generally as Canticles—holds, without question, the first place among the puzzles of literature. Such uncertainty attaches to its subject, its purpose, its authorship, and even its form, that it would have occupied in any literature a place similar to that of Shakespeare's Sonnets in our own. Born on the sacred soil of Palestine, and appearing among the Holy Scriptures, it offers the greater difficulty of explaining its position. The history of the interpretation of the book from the earliest times has been a long apology to account for its place in the sacred Canon.

For its own beginning to end there is not a single word in it which suggests any connection with religion. It presents itself as a page of secular literature that has become bound up with sacred. Of the rest of the Bible the forty-fifth Psalm is most naturally compared with it, since it has marriage for its theme, and is called in the inscription "A Song of Loves." But there in the space of seven verses the name of God occurs four times. Here it is not found at all. The word "Jah" indeed appears in the Hebrew (viii. 6), but only in its proverbial use as an expression of greatness. The forty-fifth Psalm, on the contrary, though on a secular subject, is as deeply religious in tone as any of those destined for Temple use. In the true Hebrew spirit everything is made subordinate to the master feelings of loyalty to the God Jehovah and reliance upon Him. In the Song of Songs not a trace of this feeling shows itself. There is not a single religious or spiritual sentiment of any kind, nor is there even the most distant allusion to any sacred rite or ordinance whatever. It is only by the cabalistic method of the Rabbis that reference to the Mosaic system can be forced into the book. The Law, the Temple, the Sacrifices, are unknown. There is not the faintest echo of the worship of the sanctuary. The priest and Levite are silent, and the voice of the prophet is not heard.

Yet the absence of direct religious allusion is not the only, is not the principal, distinction which sets the Canticles in contrast with other parts of the Old Testament. Rather it is the absence of the religious intention which everywhere else controls Hebrew poetry. The poem stands alone as an instance of what Hebrew poetic genius could do when released from the religious purpose. Nature is no longer, as in the rest of sacred song, the subject of the poem. The universe is not now filled with the veil of the Divine, admired and loved as the vesture, the dwelling of the Most High. The breath of spring, the flowers of the valley, the woods and hills, are here loved for their own sake. The universe is now filled with the angels of Jehovah, "fulfilling His word." The winds blowing from the north or the south, the streams flowing from the mountains, the lightning flash, "all are but ministers of love, and feed his sacred flame" (chaps. iv. 15, 16; viii. 6). The lessons of the lily, so dear to this poet, are not those of the Sermon on the Mount—it is to him only what the daisy was to Chaucer, a sweet emblem of the "truth of womanhood." The grass is a verdant couch for him (chap. i. 16), not, as to the author of Psalm civ., a suggestion of a wide and beneficent providence, or, as to Isaiah, an emblem of human frailty. It is not because God has planted them that he recalls the cedars of Lebanon, nor because their majestic beauty humbles human pride, but because their branches form a shady bower for meetings with his love. Had we the whole literature of Palestine, doubtless there would be found among it many other specimens of poetry which in distinction from that which is directly religious in tone we call profane. Israel must have given birth to "birds of passion and of mirth," either and with no mediocrity in the language of love be employed (as sister of the heroine's family as to what shall be done with her turn given as to show beyond question that she married the man of her choice. (2) There is impressed on the mind the idea of the admission of a specimen of amatory poetry into the sacred collection. How did the vigilance of those who watched the formation of the Canon allow it? The allegorical and typical methods of interpretation which began with the Talmud, and have continued in favour till comparatively recent times, supply one answer to this question. Modern criticism for the most part substitutes a profound moral purpose for a concealed sacred meaning, as the raison d'être of the poem. This introduction will only set forth the plan and purpose of the book as it can be gathered, without hypothesis, from itself.

1. The subject of the book is the sentiment of love. The language is like that of all love poetry, passionate, sensuous, voluptuous, in some cases with Oriental licence passing the bounds of the Western standards of sobriety and propriety.

2. The lovers whose mutual passion is sung are wedded. This is evident, not alone from the use of the word kallah—see note, chap. iv. 8—which, though its common employment is to designate a wife, might possibly in the language of love be employed (as sister in the same verse) as a term of endearment, but by quite a sufficient number of indications which, combined, leave no doubt on the point. (1) The deliberations of the heroines family as to what shall be done with her when at a marriageable age are introduced in his own manner by the poet in one of the reminiscences of which the book is composed (vii. 8 seq., with note), and such a turn given as to show beyond question that she married the man of her choice. (2) There is impressed on the whole poem a feeling of the superiority of wedded love over concubinage, and of monogamy over polygamy. (3) The glowing pictures of Solomon's marriage (iii. 6 seq.) are introduced now as a foil, to set off the simpler yet greater happiness of the poet, or because this very marriage is the actual subject of the poem. (4) Lastly, the only class of literature with which the poem can be naturally compared is the epithalamium. Many points of analogy with compositions of this class are noticed in the notes, and the one conjecture which is almost irresistible is that first started by Bossuet,
SOLOMON'S SONG.

that it was actually composed for such a purpose, and was a specimen of a species of literature common in Palestine.

4. Certain obstacles that lay in the way of this union, and which constancy and devotion succeeded in surmounting, furnish the incidents of the piece.

5. There is a kind of unity in the book. The lovers are the same throughout, but the unity is of feeling, not of form. The poem has the appearance of a collection of scattered pieces. Certain marks of division are self-evident; e.g., at ii. 7, iii. 5, iv. 7, v. 1, and viii. 4. No commentator makes less than five breaks.

6. The poem does not consist of one continuous narrative, nor exhibit a plot progressively developed, but the same story of courtship is repeated again and again in different forms, with the same conclusion.* In one case the actual form is repeated with expansions (comp. iii. 1 seq. with v. 2 seq.). Descriptions, images, phrases, refrains, repeat themselves.

7. The story is varied by the use of dialogue. Different speakers can be plainly recognised; e.g., a bridegroom in the character of a shepherd (whether real or assumed, as in so much pastoral poetry, is uncertain), a bride, the Shulamite, as a shepherdess, various maidens, the brothers of the bride. Others are conjectured, and the poem has frequently been arranged as a drama, with regular acts and scenes. All that is certain is that the author, as a matter of form, puts his sentiments into the mouth of different persons, instead of writing in his own person, and that his work is thoroughly dramatic in feeling.

These seven indications are clear and apparently beyond conjecture. Whether the writer had a concealed purpose beyond that of telling his story, whether it is his own passion which he paints so feelingly, or only an ideal representation of love, whether the scenes described are actual or imaginary, the characters historical or fictitious, this will continue to be a matter of dispute; but it will never be questioned that there is in the Song of Solomon the delineation of a true and passionate love, a constancy tempted and tried, but triumphant over all obstacles, and proof against all seduction, "strong as death, inexorable as Hades," and that the representation is given in verse of such exquisite melody and poetry of such blended sweetness and power, that it must, apart from all other merits, rank by these alone among the highest lyric attempts of the world.

But it has assumed a place far higher. Not only has it a place in the sacred canon, but it has, in the mystic sense attached to it, been regarded as the most sacred book there. Its first commentator, R. Akiba, who lived in the first century of our era, said of it, "The whole world is not worthy of the day in which this sublime song was given to Israel; for all the Scriptures are holy, but this sublime Song is most holy." On the other hand, its latest commentator, E. Reuss (Le Cantique des Cantiques dit de Salomon, Paris, 1879), hesitates to include it in his commentary on the Bible, lest his readers should be shocked at a book so totally different from all the rest of Scripture, and conceived in a spirit, if not anti-religious, yet positively strange to all religious sentiments. It was no doubt the shock experienced by pious minds that first suggested the allegorical method of interpretation, which in spite of the uncompromising verdict of criticism will probably continue to keep its hold on the book. As Renan says, "the mystical sense is false philosophically, but it is true religiously. It corresponds to the great sanctification of love inaugurated by Christianity." Association consecrates no less than dedication. Words, though in themselves indifferent, when set to sublime music partake of its inspiration. So the Canticles can never, under any interpretation, altogether lose the sacred power impressed upon them by generations of pious minds. But apart from an assumed religious character, the poem has its proper place in the Bible. The passion of love is enabling according as it partakes of the moral sentiment. There have been writers on the Song who have been unable to discover any trace of this controlling influence, "but from beginning to end only marks of folly, vanity, and looseness" (Whiston). Such a view loses sight of the Eastern origin of the poem, and neglects the undoubted contrast displayed throughout between the mercetricious manners of the harem and the purity of a constant passion, between the evils of polygamy and the blessings attending the unalterable attachment of two loving souls. It is not a taint of voluptuousness that can rob of its principal worth such a representation of love as culminates in the magnificent description in verses 6 and 7 of chapter viii., and this representation is alone enough to justify the admission of the Song into the Canon; for, in the language of Bunsen, "There would be something wanting in the Bible, if there was not found there an expression of the deepest and the strongest of all human feelings."

* This may seem an arbitrary assumption in the face of the attempts of so many eminent scholars to present the poem as a regular drama, but the unsatisfactory nature of all such attempts is a sufficient testimony to the fact that they have overlooked the plain indications given by the book itself.
THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

CHAPTER I.—(3) The song of songs, which is Solomon's.

(2) Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:
   * For thy love is better than wine.

(3) Because of the savour of thy good ointments
   Thy name is as ointment poured forth,
   Therefore do the virgins love thee.

(4) * Draw me, we will run after thee:

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<td>1 ch. 4. 10.</td>
<td>The king hath brought me into his chambers:</td>
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<td>1 Heb., thy love.</td>
<td>We will be glad and rejoice in thee,</td>
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<td>3 John 6. 44.</td>
<td>We will remember thy love more than wine:</td>
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| 2 Or, Keep love uprightly. | "The upright love thee."

Verse 1 contains the title of the book: literally, A song of the songs (Heb., Shir hashirûm), which to Solomon, i.e., of which Solomon is author. This has been understood as meaning “one of Solomon’s songs,” with allusion to the 1,005 songs (1 Kings iv. 32) which that monarch composed. But when in Hebrew a compound idea is to be expressed definitely, the article is prefixed to the word in the genitive. So here not merely “a song of songs” (comp. holy of holies), i.e., “a very excellent song,” but “The song of songs,” i.e., the most excellent or surpassing song. For the question of authorship and date of poem, see Ewaldus I.

(2) Love.—Marg., loves, i.e., caresses or kisses, as the parallelism shows. The LXX., followed by the Vulg., read breasts (probably dôdai instead of dôdai), the origin of many fanciful interpretations: e.g., the two breasts = the two Testaments which breathe love, the “Even should the king have divided into three clauses, not into two only, as in the Authorised Version: “Because of their odour (or, with regard to their fragrance) thy ointments (are) sweet.” There is no authority for taking ra‘ach = sense of smell, or we should naturally translate “to the smell thy ointments are sweet.” The rendering of the next clause, “thy name is (like) oil poured forth,” is to be preferred, though it necessitates making either shemen = oil, or shem = name, feminine, for which there is no example, since the alternative, which takes tôrak = poured forth, second masculine instead of third feminine, is harsh: “Thou art poured forth like oil with regard to thy name.” The image is an obvious one (comp. Eccles. vii. 1). There is a play on words in shemen and shemka.

Virgins.—Heb., alamîth; young girls. (See Note, chap. vi. 8) Those who understand Solomon to be the object of the desire expressed in these verses understand by alamîth “the ladies of the harem.” In the original these three verses plainly form a stanza of five lines.

(4) The king hath brought me.—The dramatic theory of the poem (see Ewaldus II.) has been in a great measure built up on interpretations given to this verse. We understand it as a repetition, in another form, of the protestation of love made in verses 1—3. Like them, it forms a stanza of five lines. The clause, “the king hath brought,” i.e., is—in accordance with a common Hebrew idiom, where an hypothesis is expressed by a simple perfect or future without a particle (comp. Prov. xxii. 29, xxv. 16)—to be understood, “Even should the king have brought me into his chambers, yet our transport and our joys are for thee alone; even then we would recall thy caresses, those caresses which are sweeter than wine.”

The upright love thee.—Marg., they love thee uprightly; Heb., negsharîm, used in other places either (1) in the abstract, “righteousness,” &c., Ps. xlii. 2, xxix. 4; Ps. vii. 6 (so LXX. here); or (2) adverbially, Ps. lxxvii. 2, lxxv. 3 (and chap. vii. 9 below; but there the Lamed prefixed fixes the adverbial use). The Authorised Version follows the Vulg., Recti diligentia, and is to be preferred, as bringing the clause into parallelism with the concluding clause of verse 3: “Thou who hast won the love of all maidens by thy personal attractions, hast gained that of the sincere and upright ones by thy character and thy great name.”

As the tents of Kedar.—i.e., Dark as the Kedarren tents of black goats’ hair, beautiful as the royal pavilions with their rich hangings. For a similar style of parallelism, comp. Isa. xxv. 2, 4, Ps. vii. 6 (so LXX. here); or (2) adverbially, Ps. lxxv. 2, lxxv. 3 (and chap. vii. 9 below; but there the Lamed prefixed fixes the adverbial use). The Authorised Version follows the Vulg., Recti diligentia, and is to be preferred, as bringing the clause into parallelism with the concluding clause of verse 3: “Thou who hast won the love of all maidens by thy personal attractions, hast gained that of the sincere and upright ones by thy character and thy great name.”

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Look not upon me, because I am black,  
Because the sun hath looked upon me:  
My mother's children were angry with me;  
They made me the keeper of the vineyards;  
But mine own vineyard have I not kept.  

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,  
where thou feedest,  
Where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon:  
For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,  
Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,  
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

I have compared thee, O my love,  
To a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels,

Look not...—i.e., with disdain, as in Job xli. 34 (Heb. 26).  
Black.—Literally, blackish.

The sun...—The word translated looked upon occurs only twice besides (Job xx. 9, xxxviii. 7). The "all-seeing sun" is a commonplace of poetry; but here with sense of searching. The heroine goes on to explain the cause of her exposure to the sun. Her dark complexion is accidental, and cannot therefore be used as an argument that she was an Egyptian princess, whose nuptials with Solomon are celebrated in the poem.

Mother's children...—i.e., brothers, not necessarily step-brothers, as Ewald and others. (Comp. Ps. i. 20, lxix. 8.) The reference to the mother rather than the father is natural in a country where polygamy was practised.

Mine own vineyard...—The general sense is plain. While engaged in the duties imposed by her brothers, she had been compelled to neglect something—but what? Some think her beloved, and others her reputation; Ginsburg, literally, her own special vineyard. But the obvious interpretation connects the words immediately with the context. Her personal appearance had been sacrificed to her brothers' severity. While tending her vines she had neglected her own complexion.

Where thou feedest...thy flock...—For why should I be...—The unusual alliterative "vesseled," follows the LXX. in rendering the Hebrew literally. But it has been found somewhat difficult to assign a meaning to a literal translation. The suggestions—unknown (Ewald), veiled as a harlot (Delitzsch, &c.; comp. Gen. xxxvii. 15), fainting (Gesenius), seem all wide of the mark, since the question only refers to the danger of missing her beloved through ignorance of his whereabouts. A transposition of two letters would give a word with a sense required = erring, wandering about, a sense, indeed, which old Rabbinical commentators gave to this word itself in Isa. xxii. 16 (Authorised Version, over); and probably the idea involved is the obvious one that a person with the head muffed up would not find her way easily, as we might say, "Why should I go about blindfold?"

The Rabbinical interpretation of this verse is a good instance of the fanciful treatment the book has received: 'When the time came for Moses to depart, he said to the Lord, 'It is revealed to me that this people will sin and go into captivity; show me how they shall be governed and dwell among the nations whose decrees are oppressive as the heat; and where-
The Ornaments

SOLOMON'S SONG, I.

Thy neck with chains of gold.
(11) We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.
(12) While the king sitteth at his table, My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.
(13) A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.
(14) My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.
(15) Behold, thou art fair, my love; Behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.
(16) Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
Also our bed is green.
(17) The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

which is used by the women of all ranks and the men of the wealthier classes to dye the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, and the nails (Nat. Hist. of the Bible, p. 339). (Comp. also Thomson, The Land and the Book, p. 602, who, however, prefers to identify cypress with some specially favourite kind of grapes, but without giving any sufficient reason.) For En-gedi, see Josh. xvi. 62. It is the one place in Southern Palestine mentioned in this poem, the other allusions (except Heshbon, chap. vii. 4, which is in Moab) being to northern localities.

(19) Behold, thou art fair. The song is now transferred to a male speaker—the advocates for the dramatic theory cannot agree whether Solomon or the shepherd; and no wonder, since the poem gives no indication.

My love. Marg., companion. LXX. πήγας, in Heb. ῥαγατι, is used for the female, dōdi being her usual term for her lover. Beyond this the terms of endearment used cannot safely be pressed for any theory.

Thou hast doves' eyes. Literally, thine eyes are doves'. The same image is repeated (chap. iv. 1), and adopted in return by the heroine (chap. v. 12). The point of the comparison is either quickness of glance or generally tenderness and grace. The dove, a favourite with all poets as an emblem of love, is especially dear to this bard. Out of about fifty mentions of the bird in Scripture, seven occur in the short compass of this book. For general account of the dove in Palestine, see Ps. iv. 6, and for particular allusions Notes below chap. xi. 12, 14. (Comp. Shakespeare's Coriolanus, v. 3:

"Or those doves' eyes That can make gods forsworn."

Tennyson's Maud:

"Do I hear her sing as of old, My bird with the shining head."

My own dove, with her tender eye!"

(16) Our bed is green. The heroine replies in similar terms of admiration, and recalls "the happy woodland places" in which they were wont to meet.

(17) Rafters. Marg., galleries (comp. chap. vii. 5). LXX., ραβατή; Vulg., lapuearia; Heb., raḥit, from raḥat = run, flow; hence (1) a gutter, from the water running down (Gen. xxx. 38); (2) a curl, from its flowing down the neck (infra, v. 5—Heb. 6); (3) here rafters, or roof beams, from their spreading overhead. "Our couch was the green grass, the arches of our bower the cedar branches, and its rafters the firs." Others read ῥακθίτις, which is explained as a transposition for ῥακοθίτις = turned work. But the thought is plainly connected with the woods, not with a gorgeous house. For cedar see 1 Kings iv. 33.

Fir. Heb., berōth (Aramaic form of borek), a tree often mentioned in connection with cedar as an emblem.

The Land and the Book.)

Olearius (quoted by Harmer) says:—"Persian ladies use as head-dress two or three rows of pearls, which pass round the head and hang down the cheeks, so that their faces seem set in pearls." Lady Mary Montague describes it thus:—"The Persian ladies adopt in return by the heroine (chap. v. 12). The point of the comparison is either quickness of glance or generally tenderness and grace. The dove, a favourite with all poets as an emblem of love, is especially dear to this bard. Out of about fifty mentions of the bird in Scripture, seven occur in the short compass of this book. For general account of the dove in Palestine, see Ps. iv. 6, and for particular allusions Notes below chap. ii. 12, 14. (Comp. Shakespeare's Coriolanus, v. 3:—
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CHAPTER II.—(1) I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

(2) As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

(3) As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,

of majesty, &c. (Ezek. xxxi. 8; Isa. xxxvii. 24, lx. 13). "The plain here has evidently been buried deep under sand long ages ago, precisely as at Beirut, and here are the usual pine forests growing upon it (Beirut is by some derived from berôth). These are the finest specimens we have seen in Palestine, though every sandy ridge of Lebanon and Hermon is clothed with them. In my opinion it is the Heb. berôth, concerning which there is so much confusion in the various translations of the Bible . . . the generic name for the pine, of which there are several varieties in Lebanon. Cypress is rarely found there, but pine everywhere, and it is the tree used for beams and rafters" (Thomson, The Land and Book, p. 511). The Pines maritimas and the Aleppo pine are the most common, the latter being often mistaken for the Scotch fir. (See Tristram, Nat. Hist. of Bible, p. 353, &c.)

(1) The rose.—Heb., chabateleth. The identification of this flower is a much vexed question. From its derivation, it should be a bulbous plant (batâsel—a bulb), and it happens that the flower which for other reasons best satisfies the requirements of this kind, viz., the Sweet-scented Narcissus (Narcissus tazetta), "Others have suggested the crocus, of which there are many species very common, but they are deficient in perfume, and there is no bulb more fragrant than the narcissus; it is, besides, one of which the Orientals are fondly. While it is in flower it is to be seen in all the bazaars, and the men as well as the women always carry two or three blossoms, at which the Arabs call it khubbazey. In Isa. xxxv. 1, the only other place where chabateleth occurs, the LXX., Vulg., and Chaldee render "lily," and many eminent moderns "autumn crocus." Here the LXX. and the Vulg. have flower.

Of Sharon.—Better, of the plain, as in the LXX. Here (as invariably except 1 Chron. v. 16) the Hebrew has the article before sharon, but without definite local allusion to the district north of Philistia. The verse is by many taken as a snatch from a song about which the heroine breaks in answer to the cullies on her beauty. It is certainly spoken with modest and lowly intonation: "I am a mere flower of the plain, a lily of the valley;" by no means like Tennyson's "Queen lily and rose in one."

Lily.—So the LXX. and Vulg.: Heb., shôšanath (tum. of shôšan, or shôšan; comp. name Susan), a word occurring seven times in the poem, three times in 1 Kings vii., and in the headings to Ps. xlv., lx., lix., lxx. The Arabs have the word, and apply it to any brilliantly coloured flower, as the tulip, anemone, ranunculus. Although many plants of the lily tribe flourish in Palestine, none of them give a predominant character to the farm. There are, however, many other plants which in popular language be called lilies. Of these, the Irisœ may claim the first mention; and Dr. Thomson (Land and Book, p. 256)毫不犹豫地以此为中心，将seven times in one word在百合花中，与excellent of the most delicious fruit as its branches bend under the weight in their setting of bright yet pale foliage?" (Tristram, Nat. Hist. of Bible, p. 335).

(4) Banqueting house.—Marg., house of wine; not the cell of the palace, nor the banqueting hall of Solomon, nor the vineyard, but simply the place of the delights of love. A comparison of love with wine is still in the thought. (Comp. Tennyson's "The new, strong wine of love.")
And his banner over me was love.

(5) Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples:
For I am sick of love.

(6) His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

(7) I charge you, Ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, That ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

(8) The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh, Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

(9) My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
Behold, he standeth behind our wall, He looketh forth at the windows, Shewing himself through the lattice.

(10) My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

(11) For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; The time of the singing of birds is come,

And his banner over me was love.

(5) Flagons.—Heb., ashishoth, apparently a dried cake, but of what substance is uncertain. From the margin of Hosea iii. 1, possibly "grape cakes." In 2 Sam, vi. 19 it occurs as one of the gifts distributed by David at the removal of the ark, and is rendered by the LXX., a cake from the frying-pan. Here the LXX. have sweet unguents, and the Vulg. flowers. The Authorised Version, flagons, follows a Rabbinical interpretation.

Comfort.—The margin, straw me with apples, follows the LXX.; the Hebrew word occurs in Job xvii. 3; Authorised Version, "make my bed"—Rabbin. xi. 30 (Heb. 22). Authorised Version, "spreadeth." Hence some translate here, "make me a bed of apple-leaves;" but the parallelism is well sustained, and this, the root idea, is preserved in both the words translated "comfort" and "stay" is putting a prop or support under. Metaphorically = refresh or sustain.

(7) Roes.—Heb., tsbei, tsebiyah; undoubtedly the ghasal of the Arabs; the gazelle. (See 1 Chron. xii. 8.)

Hinds.—Heb., ayyalah. (See Gen. xliv. 21.) The LXX. strangely read, by the powers and virtues of the field.

My love.—Here almost certainly in the concrete, though there is no instance of such use except in this and the corresponding passages. The Authorised Version, "till he please," is a mistake in grammar. Read, till she please. The poet imagines his beloved sleeping in his arms, and playfully bids her companions keep from intruding on her slumbers. This verse (which possibly from root=grouped upon it. The "daughters of Jerusalem" are very strangely read, material to fancy the presence of spectators of his mean happiness and to call on outsiders to share his bliss requires attention =Hark! (Comp. Ps. xxix.) The quick sense of love discerns his approach a long way off. (Compare—

"Before he mounts the hill, I know He cometh quickly."—Tennyson’s Patima.)

(9) Wall.—As an instance of the fertility of allegorical interpretation, the variety of applications of this passage may be quoted. The wall = (1) the wall between us and Christ, i.e., our mortal condition; (2) the middle wall of partition, the law; (3) the iniquities separating man from God, so that He does not hear or His voice cannot reach us; (4) the creatures behind whom God Himself stands speaking through them, and "si fas dicere, (5) the flesh of Christ itself spread over His Divinity, through which it sounds sweetly and alters its voice" (Bossuet).

Looketh forth.—Rather, looking through, as in the next clause, where the same Hebrew particle occurs, and may = either out or in, as context requires. Here plainly in at.

Shewing himself.—Marg., flourishing. The primitive idea seems to be "to look bright." Hence the Hiphil conjugation = "to make to look bright;" here "making his eyes glance or twinkle as he peers in through the lattice." (12) Winter.—Heb., sathax, only used here; probably from root = to overcast: the season of cloud and gloom.

The rain is over and gone.—Wordsworth uses this line in a description of an early spring in a very different climate.

(12) The time of the singing.—Heb., zamir.—may mean pruning (so LXX. and Vulg.), but parallelism requires singing-time (a meaning which analogy will certainly allow us to give to the Hebrew word zamir). Nor can the correctness of our version in inserting of birds be questioned, since from the context it is plainly "the untaught harmony of spring," and not the voices of men intended. It is true there is no authority for this beyond the context, and the allusions to the singing of birds are besides very few in Scripture; but travellers say that different species of warblers (Turdidae), especially the bulbul and the nightingale, abound in the wooded valleys, filling the air in early spring with the rich cadence of their notes (Tristram’s Nat. Hist. of the Bible, p. 160).
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;  
(13) The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,  
And the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.  
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.  
(14) O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock,  
in the secret places of the stairs,  
Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;  
For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.  
(15) Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines:  
For our vines have tender grapes.  
(16) My beloved is mine, and I am his:  
he feedeth among the lilies.  
(17) Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,  
Turn, my beloved,  
And be thou like a roe or a young hart  
Upon the mountains of Bether.

CHAPTER III.—(1) By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth:  
I sought him, but I found him not.  
(2) I will rise now, and go about the city  
In the streets, and in the broad ways  
I will seek him whom my soul loveth:  
I sought him, but I found him not.  
(3) The watchmen that go about the city  
found me:  
To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?  
(4) It was but a little that I passed from them,  
But I found him whom my soul loveth:  
I held him, and would not let him go,  
Until I had brought him into my mother's house,  
And into the chamber of her that conceived me.

Turtle.—Heb., tör (turtur), from its plaintive note. Three species are found in Palestine, but the one intended is doubtless our own turtle-dove (Turtur auritus). It is migratory, and its advent marks the return of spring (Jer. viii. 7). “Search the glades and valleys even by sultry Jordan at the end of March, and not a turtle-dove is to be seen. Return in the second week of April, and clouds of doves are feeding on the clovers of the plain.” “The turtle, immediately on its arrival, pours forth from every garden grove and wooded hill its melancholy yet soothing ditty from roosting places, and avoids the neighbourhood of men. The rock pigeon (Columba livia), the origin of the domestic races, invariably selects the lofty cliffs or hollows, and avoids the neighbourhood of men. The modesty and shyness of his beloved are thus prettily indicated by the poet. For the expression “clefts of the rock,” see Note, Obad. 3.

The vines with the tender grape.—Literally, the vines (are) blossoms, i.e., are in blossom.

(14) O my dove . . . in the clefts of the rock.—The rock pigeon (Columba livia), the origin of the domestic races, invariably selects the lofty cliffs and steep ravines (comp. Jer. xlviii. 23; Ezek. xvi. 16) for its roosting places, and avoids the neighbourhood of men. The modesty and shyness of his beloved are thus prettily indicated by the poet. For the expression “clefts of the rock,” see Note, Obad. 3.

The stairs—i.e., steep places (comp. Ezek. xxxviii. 20, margin), from root = to go up.

(15) Take us the foxes.—Possibly this is a verse of a familiar country song, introduced here from the suggestion of the “sweet voice” in the last verse; but more probably to be compared to the “avan’t” so commonly addressed by poets in Epithalamia and love songs to all miscchievous and troublesome creatures. Thus Spenser’s Epithalamium, owls, storks, ravens, and frogs are warned off.

Foxes.—Comp. Judges xv. 4. Whether our fox or the jackal (Heb., shual), it is known to be equally destructive to vineyards. Theocritus (Id. v. 112) is often compared:—

“I hate those brush-tailed foxes, that each night  
Spoil Micon’s vineyards with their deadly bite.”

In the allegorising commentators they stand for heretics.

(16) He feedeth.—Heb., he that is feeding his flock  
—the pastor.

(17) Until the day break.—Heb., breathe, i.e., becomes cool, as it does when the evening breeze sets in. The time indicated is therefore evening, “the breathing, blushing hour” (Campbell). (Comp. Gen. iii. 8, “The cool of the day”—margin,reed. This interpretation is also fixed by the mention of the flying, i.e., lengthening shadows. Comp. Virg. Ecl. i. 84: “Majoresque cadunt alitis de montibus umbra;” and Tennyson, The Brook—

“We turned our foreheads from the falling sun,  
And followed our own shadows, thrice as long  
As when they followed us.”)

Bether.—Marg., of division; LXX., of ravines or hollows, either as separating the lovers or as intersected by valleys. Gesenius compares Bethron (2 Sam. ii. 29).

III.

(1) A reminiscence (elaborated in chap. v. 2 seq.) of the intensity of their love before their union, put by the poet into his lady’s mouth. She “arises from dreams” of him, and goes to find him.

(3) The watchmen that go about the city.—

“Henceforward until morning the streets are deserted and silent, with only here and there a company returning from a visit, with a servant bearing a lantern before them. The city-guard creeps softly about in utter darkness, and apprehends all found walking in the streets without a light” (Thomson, Land and Book, p. 32—in description of Beirut).

(4) I held him . . .—Bossuet, following Bede,
regards this as prophetic of Mary Magdalen (type of the Church) on the morning of the Resurrection.

(8) Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all powders of the merchant?  
(7) Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; Three score valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

(8) They all hold swords, being expert in war: Every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

(9) King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.


gave of it, where the word translated covering suggests the notion of a movable litter, rather than of a State bed.

4 ch. 2. 7; & 8. 4.
1 Or, a bed.

He made the pillars thereof of silver, The bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, The midst thereof being paved with love, For the daughters of Jerusalem.

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, And behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him In the day of his espousals, And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

CHAPTER IV.—(1) Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; Thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

The midst thereof . . .—Literally, its interior paved love from the daughters of Jerusalem. There are three possible renderings. (1) Its interior bright by a lovely girl of, &c.; and (2) its interior paved in a lovely way by, &c.; (3) its interior tesselated as a mark of love by, &c. The last of these does the least violence to the text as it stands, but very possibly some words have dropped out between ratzaph, paved, and ababah, love.

IV. 0 Locks.—Heb., tramnah, only besides in chap. vi. 7 and Isa. xxvi. 2. The derivation, and the existence of cognate Arabic words, leave no doubt that it means veil. So, in Isa. xxvi. 2, the LXX. understood it, though here they have given the strange and meaningless translation, "out of thy silence," which the Vulg. has still further mystified into "from that which lies hid within," a rendering which has been a fruitful source of moral allusion to the more hidden beauties of the soul. If the veil was worn in ancient times in Palestine, as by Eastern ladies now, covering the lower part of the face, but allowing the eyes to be seen, the description is very appropriate.

That appear.—Marg., that eat of; Heb., galash: only here and in the corresponding passage, chap. vi. 5. The word has had a variety of most contradictory interpretations. The Authorized Version follows the LXX., and has the support of Ewalt's great authority. The marginal eat of rests only on the existence of cognates in Syriac and Arabic = obtained, collected (see Lee's Heb. Dict.), which would rather point to such a rendering as, "which they obtain from mount Gilead." The Vulg., quos ascenderunt, is followed by some commentators, though the bulk give the exactly opposite: "come down," or "run down," or "hang down from." In such a difficulty only the context can decide, and any translation suggesting the dark hair flowing in masses round the shoulders is allowable. At the same time, from a tendency of the author to accumulate and sometimes to confuse, his figures (verses 12, 15, chap. v. 12, 13), probably here it is the long, soft, delicate, generally black hair of the Oriental goat which is compared to that of

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the lady, as well as the general appearance presented by the whole flock suspended on the mountain side.

3 Thy teeth . . . —i.e., while as newly washed sheep. The word translated shorn is only used as a synonym for sheep, as we see by comparison with chap. vi. 6. The only other place where it is found is 2 Kings vi. 6, where it is used of cutting wood.

4 Bear twins.—The Hebrew word means “to make double.” But this may either be “to produce twins,” as in the text, or “to make pairs,” or “to occur in pairs,” a rendering which gives far better sense. The perfect and regular rows of teeth are exactly paired, upper to lower, like the sheep coming two and two from the washing, not one being bereaved of its fellow.

3 Speech.—Rather, mouth, as the parallelism shows.

4 Thy temples . . .—Rather, like a piece of pomegranate thy cheeks behind thy veil. (See Note to verse 1.) “The pomegranate brings to my mind the bluses of my beloved, when her cheeks are covered with a modest resentment” (Persian Ode, quoted by Ginsburg from Siv Wm. Jones). For the pomegranate see Exod. xxviii. 34. It naturally supplied to the Eastern poet the image for which the Western poet goes to the apple. “Her cheeks like apples which the sun hath rudded” (Spenser).

5 To suppose a rendering which gives far better sense. The perfect and regular rows of teeth are exactly paired, upper to lower, like the sheep coming two and two from the washing, not one being bereaved of its fellow.

6. The only other place where it is found is 2 Kings vii. 7, and, indeed, is too common marriage of the same couple. For the LXX. its primitive meaning, come. To suppose a literal journey, as some do, to these peaks of the mountain chain one after another, is absurd. They are named as emblems of height and difficulty. Shenir (Senir, 1 Chron. v. 23) is one of the peaks of Hermon. Amana has been conjectured to be a name for the district of Anti-Libanus in which the Abana (Barada) has its source, but nothing is certain about it. The appellative spousé first occurs in this verse. In Hebrew it is khallah, and is translated in the Authorised Version either “daughter-in-law,” or “bride,” or “spouse,” according as the relationship, now made complete by marriage, is regarded from the point of view of the parents of the bridegroom or of himself (e.g., daughter-in-law, Gen. xi. 31, xxxviii. 11; Lev. xx. 22; Micah vii. 6, &c., &c.; bride, Isa. xlix. 18, lx. 10, lii. 5, &c., &c.). Its use does not by itself prove that the pair were united in wedlock, because in the next verse the word sister is joined to spouse, and it may, therefore, be only a stronger term of endearment, and in any case, when put into the lover’s mouth while describing the difficulties in the way of union, it is proleptic; but its presence strongly confirms the impression produced by the whole poem, that it describes over and over again the courtship and marriage of the same couple. For lion see Gen. xlix. 9. The leopard was formerly very common in Palestine, as the name Bethnirimah, i.e., house of leopards (Num. xxxii. 36) shows. (Comp. Jer. v. 6, xlii. 23; Hosea iii. 7.) Nor is it rare now. “In the forest of Gilead it is still so numerous as to be a pest to the herdsmen” (Tristram, Nat. Hist. of Bibl., p. 113). The LXX. translates amana by ωιρα, and this has been turned into an argument for the allegorical treatment of the book. But it is a very common error.
The Garden

SOLOMON'S SONG, V.

From the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

(9) Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, With one chain of thy neck.

(10) How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!

a How much better is thy love than wine!

And the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

(11) Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb;

Honey and milk are under thy tongue;

And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

(12) A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse;

A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

(13) Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; of the LXX. to translate proper names. (Comp. chap. vi. 4.)

(9) Ravished.—Marg., taken away, whereas many (including Herder, Ewald, &c.) give an exactly opposite sense: "thou hast given me heart, emboldened me." The literal, "thou hast hearted (libabtini) me," if we can so say, may mean either; the language of love would approve either stolen my heart or given me thine. But the reference to "chain"—awak (a form occurring also in Judges viii. 26; Prov. i. 9) seems to confirm the rendering of the Authorized Version. His heart has been caught, the poet playfully says, by the neck-chain. Tennyson's "Thy rose lips and full-blown eyes Make the heart from out my breast," gives the feeling of the passage.

(12) A garden inclosed.—Comp. with this passage verses 12-15; Prov. v. 15, 21. The closed or walled garden and the sealed fountain appear to have been established metaphors for the pure and established metaphors for the pure and chaste wife. For the latter, at least, there is not only the above passage in Proverbs, but a prayer still in use in Jewish marriages: "Suffer not a stranger to enter into the sealed fountain," &c.

(13) Thy plants.—Some have thought the offspring of the marriage intended here; but the poet is plainly, by a new adaptation of the language of flowers, describing the charms of the person of his beloved.

Orchard.—Heb. pardes; LXX. πάρδος; found only elsewhere in Neh. ii. 8 (where see Note), Eccles. ii. 5. The pomegranate was perhaps an emblem of love, having been held sacred to the Syrian Venus. (See Tristram, Nat. Hist. of Bible, p. 839.)

Campfire.—See Note, chap. i. 14.

Spikenard.—See Note, chap. i. 12. Saffron; Heb. carchom; only here. The Arabic name is still kirkam = Crocus sativus, a well-known bulb of the order Iridaceae. The pistil and stigmas, dried, form the saffron.

Calamus.—Heb. kāneh. (Comp. kāneh bosom = sweet calamus, Ez. xxix. 23; k. hattōn = sweet cane, Jer. vi. 13.) There are many sweet grasses in India and the East. Andropogon calamus aromaticus has been identified (Royle) with the "reed of fragrance" of Exodus, and Jeremiah's "good reed from a far country," but the identification is not to be implicitly accepted. (See Bible Educator, Vol. i., p. 245.)

Cinnamon.—Heb. kinnamōn probably included Cinnamomum Zeylanicum (cinnamon) and Cinnamomum cassia (Cassia Lignea). (See Bible Educator, Vol. i., p. 245.) The rind of the plant is the "cinnamon" in use. The plant belongs to the family of laurels, and grows in Ceylon, on the Malabar coast, and in East Indian Islands. It attains a height of from twenty to thirty feet, having numerous boughs, bearing leaves of a scarlet colour when young, but changing to a bright green, and white blossoms.

Aloes.—See Note, Num. xiv. 6. With all the chief spices—"That in thy sweet all sweets encloses" (H. Constable).

Blow upon my garden.—After the description of his beloved's charms under these figures, the poet, under a companion figure, invokes the perfumes may "flow out" for him—that the object of his affections may no longer keep herself reserved and denied to him. Tennyson's melodious lines are recalled which describe how, when a breeze of morning moves, "The woodbine spices are wafted abroad, And the musk of the roses blown.

Let my beloved .—This should form a separate verse, being the reply made to the appeal in the first part of the verse. The maiden yields to her lover's suit.

V.

(1) I am come into my garden.—This continues the same figure, and under it describes once more the complete union of the wedded pair. The only difficulty lies in the invitation, "Est. O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Marg., and be
Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

(9) I sleep, but my heart waketh: 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,' Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled:
And my locks are filled with dew,
And my locks with the drops of the night.

(8) I have put off my coat; how shall I have it on?
I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

(4) My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,
And my bowels were moved for him.
(5) I rose up to open to my beloved;
And my hands dropped with myrrh,
And my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh.

My head is filled with dew.—Anacreon, iii. 10

Drink with loves). Some suppose an invitation to an actual marriage feast; and if sung as an epithalamium, the song might have this double intention. But the margin, "be drunken with loves," suggests the right interpretation. The poet, it has been already said (Note, chap. ii. 7), loves to invoke the sympathy of others with his joys, and the following lines of Shelley reproduce the very feeling of this passage. Here, as throughout the poem, it is the "new strong wine of love," and not the fruit of the grape, which is desired and drunk.

"Thou art the wine, whose drunkenness is all
We can desire. O Love! and happy soul,
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,
Catch thee and feed, from thine overflowing bowls,
Thousands who thirst for thy ambrosial dew."

Prince Athanase.

(3) I sleep.—This begins the old story under an image already employed (chap. iii. 1). Here it is greatly amplified and elaborated. The poet pictures his lady dreaming of him, and when he seems to visit her, anxious to admit him. But, as is so common in dreams, at first she cannot. The realities which had hindered their union reappear in the fancies of sleep. Then, when the seeming hindrance is withdrawn, she finds him gone, and, as before, searches for him in vain. This gives opportunity to introduce the description of the charms of the lost lover, and so the end of the piece, the union of the pair, is delayed to chap. vi. 3.

My head is filled with dew.—Anacreon, iii. 10 is often compared to this.

"Fear not," said he, with piteous din,
"Pray open the door and let me in.
A poor unshelter'd boy am I.
If for help who knows not where to fly:
Lost in the dark, and with the dews,
All cold and wet, that midnight brews."

(Comp. also Propr. i. 16—23; Ovid, Amor, ii. 19—21.)

(3) Coat.—Heb, cetoneth =cetoneth; Gr. χιτώμα, tunic.

(4) By the hole,—i.e., through (Heb. min), as in chap. ii. 9. The hole is the aperture made in the door above the lock for the insertion of the hand with the key. The ancient lock was probably like the one in use in Palestine now. It consists of a hollow bolt or bar, upon the handles of the lock.

which passes through a staple fixed to the door and into the door-post. In the staple are a number of movable pins, which drop into corresponding holes in the bolt when it is pushed home, and the door is then locked. To unlock it, the key is slid into the hollow bolt, and the movable pins pushed back by other pins in it, corresponding in size and form, which fill up the holes, and so enable the bolt to be withdrawn. It is said that, in lieu of a proper key, the arm can be inserted into the hollow bolt and the pins be pushed up by the hand, if provided with some soft material, as lard or wax, to fill up the holes, and keep the pins from falling back again till the bolt is withdrawn. This offers one explanation of verse 5. Coming to the door and having no key, the lover is supposed to make use of some myrrh, brought as a present, in trying to open the door, and, not succeeding, to go away. The sweet smelling (Marg., passing, or running about) is the myrrh that drops from the tree naturally, before any incision is made in the bark, and is considered specially fine. Others explain verse 5 by comparison with the heathen custom alluded to in Lucretius iv. 1173:

"At lacrimans exclusus amator limina sepe
Floribus et sertis operit posteisque superbos
Unguet amaricino, et foribus miser oscula figit."

(Comp. Tibullus, i. 2—14.) Perhaps Prov. vii. 17 makes the comparison allowable, but the first explanation is preferable.

(6) When he spake.—We can suppose an ejaculation of disappointment uttered by the lover as he goes away, which catches the ear of the heroine as she waketh.

(7) The watchmen.—See Note on chap. iii. 3.

Veil.—Heb. redid; LXX. δεητὸς. Probably a light summer dress for throwing over the person on going out in a hurry, like the taphi put on by Rebecca (Gen. xxiv. 65). Only elsewhere in Isa. iii. 23.

(8) What is thy beloved?—This question, introducing the description of the bridegroom's person, raises almost into certainty the conjecture that the poem was actually sung, or presented as an epithalamium, by alternate choirs (or single voices) of maidens...
What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

My beloved is white and ruddy, The chiefest among ten thousand.

His head is as the most fine gold, His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, Washed with milk, and fitly set.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers:

His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl:

His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.

His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VI.—(1) Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

(2) My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

(3) I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:

He feedeth among the lilies.

and young men, as in the Carmen Nuptiale of Catullus, rying the one in praise of the bridegroom, the other of the bride. More love-poems contain descriptions of the charms of the fair one to whom they are addressed, but not of the poet himself.

Chiefest.—Marg., a standard bearer: Heb. dogal, participle of a word occurring in Ps. xx. 5, where the Authorised Version gives “we will set up our banners.”

Bushy.—Marg., curled; Heb., tallaltim=flowing in curls, or leaped up, i.e., thick, bushy, according as we derive from talah or tel. The LXX. (followed by the Vulg.) take tallaltim for another form of zalaltim (Isa. xviii. 5, sprigs of the vine), and render palm-leaves.

Fitly set.—Literally, sitting in fulness, which the Margin explains, according to one received method of interpretation, as beautifully set, like a precious stone in the foil of a ring. If there is no necessity to have recourse to the figure comparatio compendiosa here, since doves delight in bathing; and though there is a certain delicious haze of indistinctness in the image, the soft iridescence of the bird floating and glancing on the face of the stream might not too extravagantly suggest the quick loving glances of the eye. Keats has a somewhat similar figure:

“Thou didst recline in gladsome search
After some warm delight, that seems to perch
Dove-like in the dim cell lying beyond
Their upper lids ;”

and Dr. Ginsburg apply quotes from the Gitagovinda:

“The glances of her eyes played like a pair of water-birds of azure plumage, that sport near a full-grown lotus in a pool in the season of dew.” The words washed in milk refer to the white of the eye, which swells round the pupil like the fulness of water, i.e., the swelling wave round the dove. The parallelism is like that of chap. i. 5.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices.—Probably with allusion to the beard perfumed (Marg., tocers of perfumes), as in Ps. cxxiii. 2.

Lilies.—Comp. “He pressed the blossom of his lips to mine” (Tennyson, “Eone”).

His hands . . .—Galal, translated ring, is more probably a cylinder (from gahal, to roll), referring to the rounded arm, ending in a well-shaped hand with beautiful nails.

Beryl.—Heb. tarshish: LXX. ἄρησις. Possibly “stones of Tarshish,” and if so, either chrysolite or topaz, both said to have been first found in Tartessus, an ancient city of Spain, between the two mouths of the Botis (Guadalquivir). Mentioned as one of the precious stones in the breastplate of the High Priest (Exod. xxvii. 20, xxxix. 13). The LXX. adopt the various renderings χρυσόλιθος, ἀθηράς, λίθος ἄθρακος, or, as here, keep the original word.

Bright ivory.—Literally, a work of ivory, i.e., a chef-d’œuvre in ivory.

Sapphires.—It is doubtful whether the sapphire of Scripture is the stone so called now, or the lapis-lazuli. The former best suits Exod. xxviii. 18 and Job xxviii. 6. Because lapis-lazuli is too soft for engraving. The comparison in the text either alludes to the blue veins showing through the white skin or to the colour of some portion of dress.

Marble.—Heb. shesh. Here and in Esther i. 6.

His mouth is most sweet.—Literally, his palate (see Margin) sweetnesses, i.e., his voice is exquisitely sweet. The features have already been described, and chek, palate, is used of the organ of speech and speech itself (Job vi. 30; Prov. v. 3).

VI.

(1—3) Whither is thy beloved gone . . .

By a playful turn the poet heightens the description of the lover’s beauty by the impression supposed to be produced on the imaginary bystanders to whom the picture has been exhibited. They express a desire to share the pleasures of his company with the heroine, but she, under the figure before employed (chap. iv. 12—16), declares that his affections are solely hers, and that, so far from being at their disposal, he is even now hastening to complete his and her happiness in their union. Difficulties crowd on the dramatic theory at this passage. Most of its advocates have recourse to
Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,  
Comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.  

(4)  

Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me:  
Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.  

(5)  

Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing,  
Whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.  

(6)  

As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.  

(7)  

There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines,  
And virgins without number.  

(8)  

My dove, my undefiled is but one;  
She is the only one of her mother,  
She is the choice one of her that bare her.  
The daughters saw her, and blessed her;  
Yes, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.  

(9)  

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,  
Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,  
And terrible as an army with banners?  

(10)  

I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley,  
And to see whether the vine flourished,  
and the pomegranates budded.
Arabic语音。Here the LXX. insert, “There I will give thee my breasts”; reading, as in chap. i. 2, dōdai (breasts) for dōdai (careesses).

(12) Or ever I was aware.—Marg., I knew not; Heb. Lo yodahū, which is used adverbially (Ps. xxxv. 8), “at unawares.” (Comp.Prov. v. 6; Jer. i. 24.) The LXX. read, “my spirit did not know.”

Made me like.—Marg., set me on the chariots; but literally, according to the present Hebrew text, set me chariots, &c.

Ammi-nadib.—Marg., of my willing people, as though the reading were ammi hanadib, since the article ought to be present after a noun with suffix. For ammi = my fellow citizens, comp. Gen. xxiii. 11; Lam. ii. 11. A better interpretation, instead of taking the yod as the suffix mg, treats it as an old genitival ending, and renders, companions of a prince. But this does not make the passage more intelligible.

(13) O Shulamite.—Heb. hashulammīṭ. This vocative, with the article, indicates a Gentle name rather than a proper name (Ges., § 108, Eng. Trans.), and no doubt the LXX., Ἠσσωὰρις, “the Shunamite” —that is, maiden of Shunem—is correct.

Shunem was discovered by Robinson in Sōlam, a village on the declivity at the western end of Little Hermon (Duhy), and which answers to all the requirements of Shunem in 1 Sam. xxviii. 4, 2 Kings iv. 8 (comp. Josh. xix. 18); and with a slight correction as to distance with the Sidon which Eusebius (Onomasticon) and Jerome identify with Shunem. For the interchange of n and l, comp. Zerān = Jezreel; Beitān = Bethel; lachats = nachats, to burn.

The fact that Abisag was a Shunamite, and that Adonijah sought her in marriage (1 Kings i. 3), has given rise to the conjecture that these two are the heroine and hero of this poem.

From a comparison with chap. viii. 10, “then was I in his eyes as one that found favour” (Heb. shālōm, peace), arises the untenable theory that Shulam was a heroine of Solomon — the graceful one; untenable, because the feminine of Shelomāh would be Shelomit.

As it were the company of two armies.—Marg., of Mahanaim; LXX., “she coming like dances of the camps”; Vulg., “unless dances of camps”; Heb. khinnōloth hammachānāim. Khinnōloth is fem. of machōth (see Smith’s Bib. Dict., under “Dance”) is supposed to be properly a musical instrument of percussion. The LXX. generally translate, as here, χορός; but in Ps. xxxii. 11 (Heb. x. 12) χορός, joy; Jer. xxxi. 4, 14, σωφρόνις, assembly. In Ps. excl. 3, civ. 4, the Margin suggests pipe instead of dance; and many scholars derive it from chal = to bore (comp. chalil, a flute). (See Bible Educator, Vol. II., p. 78.) Its associated meaning would naturally be dance.

The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a cunning workman.

(2) Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not a liquor: Thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

(3) Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

(4) Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; Thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim:

Mahanaim is either a regular dual = of two camps, or there is some reference, which we cannot recover, to local customs at the place of that name. To see any connection between this passage and Gen. xxxii. 2, and still more to think of angelic dances, borders on the absurd. But the connection between military sports and dancing has always been close in the East, and the custom now existing of performing a sword-dance at weddings possibly gives the clue to this curious passage.

Some conjectural interpretations will be found in the Exegetus, but the whole passage is hopelessly obscure.

VII.

(1) How beautiful .—Literally, How beautiful are thy feet (or thy steps) in the sandals. This description of the beauty of the bride— "From the delicate Arab arch of her feet To the grace that, bright and light as the crest Of a peacock, sits on her shining head "—

is plainly connected with the dance mentioned in the last verse, and possibly proceeds in this order, instead of from the head downwards, because the feet of a dancer would first attract attention. See end of Exegetus III.

O prince’s daughter!—Heb. Bath-nadib (the LXX. keep Naδiβ) — evidently again suggested by Ammi-nadib, in chap. vi. 12. But as the allusion there cannot be recovered, nothing relating to the rank of the heroine can be deduced from the recurrence of nadib (= noble) here. The reference may be to character rather than descent, just as in the opposite expression, “daughter of Belial” (1 Sam. i. 16).

Joints.—Heb. chamāk, from chamāh = went away, probably refers to the rapid movements in dancing, and the image is suggested by the graceful curves formed by a chain or pendulous ornament when in motion. Or the reference may be to the contour of the person.

(6) Heap of wheat set about with lilies.—Weinstein (quoted by Delitzsch in his Appendix) remarks that in Syria the colour of wheat is regarded as the most beautiful colour the human body can have; and after remarking on the custom of decorating the heaps of winnowed corn with flowers in token of the joy of harvest, says:—"The appearance of such heaps of wheat, which one may see in long parallel rows on the threshing-dails of a village, is very pleasing to a peasant; and the comparison of the Song (chap. vii. 5) every Arabian will regard as beautiful.”

Fishpools in Heshbon.—Literally, pools. The Authorised Version follows the Vulg. piscinre, for which there is no authority. For Heshbon, see Note on Num. xxi. 26. The ruins still remain, with the same
SOLOMON'S SONG, VII.

Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus. (5) Thine head upon thee is like 1 Carmel, And the hair of thine head like purple; The king is 2 held in the galleries. (6) How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! (7) This thy stature is like to a palm tree, And thy breasts to clusters of grapes. (8) I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof:

Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, And the smell of thy nose like apples; (9) And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down 3 sweetly, Causing the lips of those that are asleap to speak. (10) I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. (11) Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; Let us lodge in the villages.

name Hesban, in the Wady of that name (Robinson, p. 278). "There are many cisterns among the ruins; and towards the south, a few yards from the base of the hill, is a large ancient reservoir, which calls to mind the passage in Cant. vii. 4" (Smith's Bib. Dict.). Captain Warren took a photograph of "the spring-head of the waters of Hesban," published by the Palestine Exploration Fund. In regard to the image, comp.—

"Adapties oculos tremulo fulgor matutinis Ut sol a liquida spernit refugiet aqua.
Comp. also Keats:

"Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl springs.

The gate of Bath-rabbim.—Doubtless the name of an actual gate, so called from the crowds of people streaming through it: daughter of multitudes. (6) Carmel.—Marg., cremitum, from reading charmil, which preserves the parallelism with the next clause better. But the whole passage deals in the author's favourite figures from localities; and certainly the comparison of a finely-set hand to a mountain is at least as apt as that in the preceding verse, of the nose to a "tower in Lebanon." Besides, there may be a play on words, which in turn may have suggested the allusion to purple in the next clause, or possibly the vicinity of Carmel to Tyre may have led to the thought of its famous dyes.

Hair.—Heb. dollath, most probably = flowing tresses. For comparison—

"Carmine purpurea est Nel coma."
"Et pro purpureo dae peannas Scylla capillo.
(Comp. πορφυρός πλάκας in Lucian, and πορφυρὰ χάτα in Anacreon.) So Collins:

"The youths whose locks divinely spreading, Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue."
Ode to Liberty.

The king is held (Marg., bound) in the galleries. —For galleries, see Note on chap. i. 17. Translate "A king caught and bound by thy tresses," i.e., they are so beautiful that a monarch would be caught by them. (Comp.—

"When I lie tangled in her hair
And fettered in her eye."

(7) This thy stature.—Comp. Ecclus. xxiv. 14. Not only was the tall and graceful palm a common figure for female beauty, but its name, tamar, was common as a woman's name (Gen. xxxviii. 6; 2 Sam. xiii. 1, &c.).

Clusters of grapes.—The italics were probably added by the English Version to bring the verse into agreement with "clusters of the vine" in the next verse; but no doubt the rich clusters of dates are at the moment in the poet's thought.

(8) Boughs.—Heb. sansan; only here. Probably a form derived from the sound, like salal, salal, &c., denoting the waving of the long feathery branches of the palm.

Smell of thy nose—i.e., "fragrance of thy breath," ap = nose being used apparently because of the resemblance of its root, anap = breathe, with that of tapnach = apple.

(9) Causing the lips.—The text in this verse has evidently undergone some change. The LXX., instead of σηθήνην yeshynim, lips of sleepers, reads selphathaim yeshynim, "my beloved's.—This verse ends a section, not, as in the Authorised Version, begins one.

(10) I am my beloved's.—This verse ends a section, not, as in the Authorised Version, begins one.

(11) Forth into the field.—Comp. chaps. ii. 10, vi. 11. The same reminiscence of the sweet courtship in the happy "woodland places." It has been conjectured that this verse suggested to Milton the passage beginning, "To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the East," &c. (P. L. iv. 623, &c.)
The Gift of Love.

SOLOMON'S SONG, VIII.

The Seal of Love.

I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

(3) His left hand should be under my head, And his right hand should embrace me.

(4) I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, That ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.

(5) Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

I raised thee up under the apple tree: There thy mother brought thee forth: There she brought thee forth that bare thee.

(6) Set me as a seal upon thine heart, As a seal upon thine arm: For love is strong as death; Jealousy is cruel as the grave: The coals thereof are coals of fire, Which hath a most vehement flame.

I raised thee up. Literally, aroused: i.e., I inspired thee with love. For this sense of exciting a passion, given to the Hebrew word, compare Prov. x. 12; Zech. ix. 13. Delitzsch restores from the Syriac what must have been the original vowel-pointing, making the suffix feminine instead of masculine.

There thy mother . . . Not necessarily under the apple-tree, which is commemorated as the scene of the betrothal, but near it. The poet delights to recall those early associations, the feelings with which he had watched her home and waited her coming. The Vulg. has here ibi corrupta est mater tua, ibi violata est genetricia tua, which savours of allegory. So in later times the tree has been taken to stand for the Cross, the individual excited to love under it the Gentiles redeemed at the foot of the Cross, and the deflowered and corrupted mother the synagogue of the Jews (the mother of the Christian Church), which was corrupted by denying and crucifying the Saviour.

Seal. See Jer. xxii. 24; Hag. ii. 23, &c. A symbol of something especially dear and precious.

Jealousy. Strong passion, from a word meaning to be red with flame; not in a bad sense, as the parallelism shows:

"Strong as death is love, Inexorable as Sheol is ardent passion."

Grave. Heb. shehôl. Perhaps, as in the LXX., Hades, with its figurative gates and bars (Ps. vi. 5, Note).

Coals. Heb. reshoph; in Ps. lxviii. 48, hot thunderbolts (comp. Hab. iii. 5); in Job v. 7, sparks; Marg., sons of the burning; Dent. xxxii. 24, burning heat of the burning fever of the plague.

A most vehement flame. Literally, a flame of Jah, the only place where a sacred name occurs in the book, and here, as in the Authorised Version, adverbially, to express something superlatively great and strong. Southey's lines are a faint echo of this:

"But love is indestructible, Its holy flame for ever burneth, From heaven it came, to heaven returneth."
SOLOMON'S SONG, VIII.

The little Sister.

(7) Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance
of his house for love,
It would utterly be contemned.

(8) We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts:
What shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?
If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver:

(9) It would utterly be contemned.—Better, he would be, &c., and literally, to despise, they would despise him; infinitive absolute before finite verb expressing intensity. (Comp. 1 Sam. xx. 6; Amos ix. 8, &c.)

This passage, with its reference to the invincible might and untapped constancy of true love, hardly leaves a doubt that the poem, while an ideal picture of the passion, is also a reminiscence of an actual history of two hearts that had been tried and proved true both against difficulties and seductions.

We have a little sister.—Commentators are almost all at one in the feeling that the poem properly ends with verse 7. Those who construct the poem on the plan of a drama can find no proper place for it by order, but simply as they occurred to the memory of the poet, this conclusion presents no difficulty, enjoys an annual rent, so, with such a large and costly vineyards, does not keep any one, even the choicest, in what my one, my solce possession, is to me.” But after the first member of it in verse 11, he breaks abruptly into metaphor. Long succession of different presentments of the same story would have run, “As Solomon, who possesses so many vineyards, does not keep any one, even the choicest, in his own hands, but entrusts it to keepers and only enjoys an annual rent, so, with such a large and costly establishment of wives, he has none that is to him what my one, my sole possession, is to me.” But after the first member of it in verse 11, he breaks abruptly into metaphor, so much more natural to him.”

The substantives denoting weight, measure, or time are frequently omitted (Gen. xx. 16). (Comp. Isa. xlii. 23: a thousand shekels, whence we see that it was customary to portion off vineyards into sections containing a certain number of vines.) For worth of shekel, see Gen. xxiii. 15.
My vineyard, which is mine, is before me:
Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand,
And those that keep the fruit thereof
must have two hundred.

Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
The companions hearken to thy voice:
Cause me to hear it.

And those that keep the fruit thereof
Hcb., Flee away.
Two hundred.

Make haste, my beloved,
And be thou like to a roe or to a young hart
Upon the mountains of spices.

Thou that dwellest.—In verse 13 we have another brief reminiscence of the early days of courtship, when the lover envied every one near the maiden, the companions who could see and hear her, and sighed for tokens of affection which she lavished on them.

Make haste, my beloved.—Verse 14 recalls the answer made last to the sighs. It repeats the metaphor of chap. ii. 17, where we see that the Authorised Version, make haste, is more correct than the margin. Thus the poem ends with two short verses that compress into them all that has been over and over again related under different figures: the wooing and the wedding of two happy souls.
EXCURSUS ON NOTES TO SONG OF SOLOMON.

EXCURSUS I.—ON THE DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE SONG.

The title and Rabbinical tradition are in favour of the Solomonic Authorship. But the value of the evidence of the title is not greater than that of the titles of the Psalms, which need the confirmation of internal evidence before they are accepted as authority. Beyond this there is no external evidence whatever.

Internal Evidence:—1. For the Solomonic Authorship.

(1) The knowledge displayed of plants and animals, and other productions of nature, which is in accordance with 1 Kings iv. 33.

(2) The evidence of wide acquaintance with foreign things, products of the East, &c., such as we know Solomon possessed; add to this the decidedly secular tone and feeling, a tone and feeling belonging only to this age.

(3) Similarity with certain parts of the Book of Proverbs. Comp. chap. v. 6, with Prov. i. 28—chap. iv. 12, with Prov. v. 15—chap. iv. 5, with Prov. v. 19—chap. viii. 7, with Prov. vi. 34, 35—chap. vi. 9, with Prov. xxxi. 28; also for analogies of diction comp. in the Hebrew, chap. iv. 9, with Prov. i. 9—chap. iv. 11, with Prov. v. 3—chap. i. 2, with Prov. xxvii. 6—chap. vii. 2, with Prov. xxv. 12—chap. iv. 14, with Prov. vii. 17.

(4) The language is such as we should expect from the Solomonic age. It belongs to the flourishing period of the Hebrew tongue. Highly poetical, vigorous and fresh, it has no traces of the decay which manifested itself in the declining period of Israel and Judah. All the Aramean colouring it has can be explained by the hypothesis of a northern origin (see below).

No one of these indications is conclusive, and all together amount to no more than a strong probability in favour of a date not far removed from the Solomonic era. They certainly make against the extreme view of Graetz, who finding, as he thinks, in the book, a number of words of Greek origin, brings its date down to the third or second century before our era. Others, also, on linguistic grounds, have referred it to the post-exilic times.

II. The view most generally accepted at present is that the poem was the work of a poet in the northern kingdom, composed not long after the separation of the two kingdoms, probably about the middle of the tenth century before Christ.

EXCURSUS II.—ON THE FORM AND PURPOSE OF THE POEM.

The dramatic feeling was not altogether strange to the Hebrews, as we see from the Book of Job, the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah, the concluding chapters of Micah, and certain of the Psalms. And there is undoubtedly a great deal of the dramatic element in the "Song of Songs." Two characters at least speak, a bride and a bridegroom, and as early as the Alexandrian codex of the LXX. translation the dramatic character was recognised, the words "bride" and "bridegroom" being in many instances prefixed to denote the persons speaking. Following out the suggestions thus given by the poem itself, a great many commentators have arranged it as a regular drama, and suppose that it may actually have been put on the stage, but this hypothesis can only be supported by a long succession of other hypotheses. M. Renan, for example, thinks that all the actors must have been present on the stage at once, but always unobservant of what was going on outside their own role.
And in fact the almost infinite diversity of conjecture hazarded in support of the dramatic theory and the tremendous romances taken with it by textual critics go far to disprove it altogether. But it is not necessary, on the other hand, to have recourse to a theory like Herder's, that the Song is a collection of different love-poems selected and arranged by Solomon. The pieces have a certain unity of subject and style. This is now generally admitted, but they are so loosely connected that it is not easy to tell exactly where the separate poems begin or end, and a new arrangement made without altering the sense and purpose. Indeed various suggestions of such alterations have at times been made.

The division we accept gives the following lyrical pieces, which we regard not, strictly speaking, as separate poems, but as stanzas of the same poem, somewhat loosely strung together, and not arranged after any definite artistic method.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{I. chap. i. 2-9.} & \text{X. chap. vi. 4-9.} \\
\text{II. ii. 3-11.} & \text{XI. xi. 10-13.} \\
\text{III. ii. 8-17.} & \text{XII. vii. 1-10.} \\
\text{IV. ii. 1-6.} & \text{XIII. vii. 11-viii. 2.} \\
\text{V. ii. 6-11.} & \text{XIV. viii. 2-7.} \\
\text{VI. iv. 1-7.} & \text{XV. vi. 8-10.} \\
\text{VII. iv. 8-11.} & \text{XVI. vii. 11-12.} \\
\text{VIII. iv. v. 1.} & \text{XVII. viii. 13, 14.} \\
\text{IX. v. 2-vi. 2.} & \\
\end{array}
\]

The break at the end of II., IV., and XIII. is marked by the formula, "I charge thee," &c., at the end of III. and VI. by another formula, expressing the return of night, "until the day breaks," &c., properly "until the day cools," i.e., the evening. Similarly the emphatic declaration, "I am my beloved's," &c., which ends the pieces IX. and XII. An abrupt change of situation sometimes indicates the beginning of a new stanza, as at end of I., VI., and XIV., or a question marks a new departure, as at the beginning of V. and XI. Some of the pieces, as indicated by the brackets, are more closely related than others. But in every case, without exception, there is described, or at least implied, under figures transparent enough, the complete union of the wedded pair. In fact each piece has exactly, whether short or long, whether more or less elaborate, the same general character and dénouement. Each tells from one or other point of view the story of a courtship, ending in the complete and happy union of the lovers. The book is a series of love-poems, written, or supposed to be written, by husband and wife in the same language, which the bridegroom may actually have been introduced to sing these praises, or they may have only been present in fancy; we have no positive indication to guide us. Bossuet is ready to be credited with this suggestion, though his division into seven portions, each a sort of period, the ordinary duration of an Eastern wedding, is somewhat too arbitrary. His conjecture in its general outline is accepted by Renan as well as by our own scholar Lowth; the former even finds confirmation of the Epithalamium hypothesis in the expression of Jer. vii. 34, and xxv. 10, "the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride." The analogy of modern Eastern weddings is a still stronger confirmation of this conjecture, that the Song was employed as an Epithalamium, if not composed in that character. It also helps to explain what else would seem extravagant in the poem and bordering on the licentious. The manners of many countries allow at weddings a relaxation of the ordinary rules of propriety. It was so in Palestine. "The evening feast was one of boisterous merriment, almost amounting to rioting. There were regular joke-makers; anything however false might be said of the bride, and to make the graver Rabbi, even the President of the Sanhedrim, sing or dance, seemed a special object of delight" ("Marriage among the Ancient Hebrews," by the Rev. Dr. Edersheim, Bible Educator, Vol. IV., p. 270). In the remarks on the Song of Songs, by Dr. J. J. Wetstein, given by Delitsch in an Appendix to his Commentary, many illustrations of the poem are adduced from modern Bedouin customs, among others, that of the Waf, or a description of the personal perfections and beauty of the young couple, of which a specimen is actually given, very analogous in character and imagery to vii. 2-6. But it is not only the East which offers analogy. Love and its language are necessarily the same all the world over. Spenser's famous Epithalamium helps us to understand the Song of Solomon.

As to the versification of the Song of Songs, it contains examples of almost all the different forms of parallelism, the name given to indicate that balance of clause against clause, either in regard to construction or sense, which constitutes the chief element of Hebrew rhythm. But the greater part of it is free even of the very lax rules which seem to have guided the poets of Israel. We may compare them to those irregular measures in which so many modern poets love to express their sweet and wayward fancies, in which the ear alone is the metrical law. Had the Song but the completeness given by rhyme, it would want nothing of the richness of sound of the finest pieces of Tennyson's Maud. (See Bible Educator, Vol. III., p. 48.)
SOLOMON'S SONG.

on account of the four-horsed chariots of Amminadab.
Return, return, Shulamite, that we may look at thee.
What wilt thou see in the Shulamite; if not the chorus of camps."

A comparison of the above seems to show—
(1) That the Hebrew text has not come down to us in its integrity.
(2) That the Greek translators had before their eyes another text.
(3) That neither they nor St. Jerome understood the text which came to them already incomplete.
Yet this impossible passage, "the rags of a text immediately corrupt," has become for many scholars the key to the entire book. The heroine in a moment of bewilderment strays into the midst of a cortege of King Solomon, who instantly falls in love with her; or perhaps into the midst of a detachment of his troops, who capture her for the royal harem, after a comparison of her simple country style of dancing with that of the trained court ladies. This, or some similar device, is resorted to by most of those who construct an elaborate drama out of this series of love-lyrics, the whole structure falling to pieces when we see that on this, the centre, the only passage giving a possible incident on which to hang the rest, no reliance whatever can be placed, since it is so obviously corrupt.

The following are a few of various suggested translations of this piece:—
"My heart led me—I know not how—far from the troop of my noble people. Come back, come back, they cry, that we may see thee, Shulamite. What do you see in me, a poor Shulamite?"
"My desire made of me, so to speak, a chariot of my noble people," &c.
"My desire brought me to a chariot, a noble one," &c.
"Suddenly I was seized with fright,—chariots of my people, the Prince!"
As to "the dance of Mahanaim," even if by itself intelligible, as a reference to an old national dance, as we say "Polonaise," "Scotch dance," or as a dance performed by two choirs or bands (see Note ad loc.) the connection with the context is almost inexplicable. The only suggestion which seems worthy of consideration, connects the words not with what precedes but with what immediately follows. If a word or words leading to the comparison, "like," &c., have dropped out, or if "like a dance of Mahanaim" may be taken as a kind of stage direction, to introduce the choric scene, the passage will become clear in the light thrown on it by the analogy of the modern Syrian marriage customs.

The question, "What do you see in Shulamite?" may be understood as a challenge to the poet to sing the customary "wasf" or eulogy on the bride's beauty, which accordingly follows in the next chapter. But before it began, a dance after the manner of the sword dance that forms at present a customary part of a Syrian wedding, would in due course have to be performed, and the words "(dance) like the dance of Mahanaim" would be a direction for its performance. See end of Excursus II. on the form of the Poem.
THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET
ISAIAH.
I. Life of Isaiah.—(1) We cannot write the life of Isaiah as we can write that of St. Paul. We have no contemporary notices of him by other writers, and only a few dim traditions as to any facts of his life and death. His writings, containing, as they do, the messages which he had to give to men from God, are as far as possible from being intentionally autobiographical. We know less of his home-life than we do of Hosea’s; less of the manner in which he was treated by priests and princes and rival prophets, than we do of the manner in which Jeremiah was treated by his contemporaries. All that we can do, in the dearth of this information from without, is to look to the prophet’s writings, and see what they tell us of the man, to draw inferences more or less legitimate from acknowledged facts, to trace out hints scattered here and there by chance, to supply a theory based upon some phenomena and explaining others, and so to construct what I have elsewhere called an “Ideal Biography of Isaiah.”

(2) Of the father of Isaiah we know nothing but the name which he bore himself, and that which he gave his son. The former, Amoz, is probably a shortened form of Amaziah (“strong is Jehovah”), and if we were to accept the Rabbinic maxim, that where the name of a prophet’s father is given it is because the father also was a prophet, we might infer that Isaiah was trained in early youth for the work that lay before him. The name Isaiah (“Jah,” or “Jehovah, aves”) would seem to indicate that he who gave it was a man whose belief in the Lord God of Israel was strong and living, perhaps that he dedicated his child to be a witness of the truth which the name implies. Isaiah’s practice of giving symbolic and suggestive names to his children may have been inherited from his father. It may be inferred, without much risk of error, from the circumstances of Isaiah’s call (chap. vi. 1), that he was a priest. The vision which he saw was from the court which none might enter but the sons of Aaron. The reformer of the ceremonial hypocrisies that had defiled the sanctuary (chaps. i. 11—14, xxviii. 7) was to come, as in the instances of Jeremiah, the Baptist, Savonarola, Luther, from the sanctuary itself. The character of a man’s mother may always in some measure be inferred from that of the man himself. In Isaiah’s case we have, besides this, suggestive allusions to a mother’s care for her children (chap. xlix. 15). The tenderness with which she comforts her son is the type of the pitying love of Jehovah for His chosen, which remembers even when that natural tenderness forgets (chap. lix. 12, 13). We may feel sure that she presented rather the older pattern of the godly matrons of Israel than the life of frivolous luxury sketched by her son in such vivid colours in chap. iii. 16—23. Looking to the fact that from twenty-five to thirty was the normal age at which priest or Levite entered on his functions, and that Isaiah does not plead his youth, as Jeremiah did (Jer. i. 6), as a reason for shrinking back from his calling as a prophet, we may fix his birth at from B.C. 788—783, and accordingly we have to think of the boy as growing up during the latter half of the reign of Uzziah. His education was naturally grounded on the sacred books of his country, as far as they then existed. Allusive references to Eden and Noah (chaps. ii. 3, liv. 9), to Abraham and Sarah (chaps. xii. 8, li. 1, 2), to Jacob and Moses (chaps. xii. 8, xiii. 11, 12), to Sodom and Gomorrah (chaps. i. 9, xiii. 18), show that these books must have included the substance of Genesis and Exodus. The Book of Judges supplied the memories of the day of Midian (chaps. ix. 4, x. 20). The Proverbs of Solomon, then, as always, prominent in Jewish education, furnished him with an ethical and philosophical vocabulary (chaps. xi. 3, xxxii. 5, 6), and with the method of parabolic teaching (chap. xxviii. 23—29), and taught him to lay the foundations of morality in the “fear of the Lord.” As he advanced to manhood, the Book of Job met him, with its bold presentations of the problems of the universe, and gave the training which he needed for his work as the great poet-prophet of Israel. (See Cheyne’s “Isaiah,” ii. 326, and essay on “Job and the Second Part of Isaiah,” ii. 243.)

(3) The Psalms which were then in use in the Temple supplied emotions, imagery, culture of another kind, which bore fruit in the “songs” or “lyrums” which Isaiah actually incorporated in the collection; of his writings (chaps. v. 1—7, xli., xxvii. 1—4), perhaps also in the Psalms of the sons of Korah, some, at least, of which belong to the same period (Pss. xlv.—xlvi.), and bear traces of parallelism of thought. The instances of a like parallelism between the language of Isaiah and that of Deuteronomy,* are not sufficient to settle the question as to the date and authorship of that book, but they may be at least considered as contributing to its solution. Side by side with this religious education there are signs of a wider culture, of training in the medical science of the time (chaps. i. 6, xxxviii. 21), of some knowledge of the history and religion of the great empires which were contending for the sovereignty of the East (chaps. xviii. 2, xix. 11—13, xxiii. 12, 13, xlvi. 1). The prosperous reign of Uzziah revived the commerce of Jerusalem, and from the men of Tyre and others he heard of the far-off voyages of the ships of

* See a series of papers with this title in the Expositor, Second Series, 1883.

* See Dr. Kay, in the Speaker’s Commentary, Note on Isaiah, chap. i.
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Tarshish to the isles of Chittim (chaps. ii. 16, xxiii. i. 14, ix. 9), of the distant Shinar, and Media, and Elam (chaps. xi. xii. xiii. xvi. 23, xxii. 6), and of the land of Sinim (China) (chap. xliii. 12). His knowledge of Egypt, of Zoan, and Noph, and Pathros (chap. xiii. 11), of the rivers of Ethiopia, and of the seven streams of the Delta (chap. xi. 15), of Dibon and Nebo, and other Moabite cities (chaps. xv. xvi. 9), implied a wide travel, as also the land of the sea (chap. xiv. 11), even of the Aramaic of the northern provinces of Syria, and so been able, like Hezekiah's ministers, to converse even with Assyrians (chap. xxxvi. 11), and have known more than his fellows of their names and titles, and the organization of their armies, as in the Sargon and the Taborian of chap. xx. 1. He may have watched with his own eyes the art of the metallurgist (chap. i. 25), of the sculptor, of the painter, which he describes so vividly (chap. xlv. 12).

(4) Two facts in the reign of Uzziah would seem to have impressed themselves on the mind of the young prophet: (1) the earthquake which is mentioned by Amos (chap. i. 1), and Zechariah (chap. iv. 5), and which has left many traces of its influence as a type of Divine judgments in Isaiah's writings (chaps. ii. 19, xxix. 19, 20); and (2) the leprosy which came on the king as a punishment for the sacrilegious usurpation of the functions of the priesthood (2 Chron. xxvi. 20, 21), and which may well have suggested the terrible question whether he himself, and the whole nation of which he was a member, were not tainted with a like spiritual uncleanness, which yet he felt powerless to remedy (chaps. i. 6, vi. 5).

(5) The theophany of chap. vi. was the answer to these questionings and misgivings. He entered on a new stage of life, with new powers, and the sense of a new vocation. The touch of the burning coal upon his lips was, as it were, an instantaneous purgatory, cleansing his iniquity. But the work on which he entered was, beyond that of any other prophet, an arduous and a terrible one. He had to be a herald of devastation, and defeat, and exile; of messages the immediate effect of which would be to increase the spiritual deafness and blindness of his hearers (chap. vi. 10). The one gleam of hope in the thick darkness was that which told of the (8) At the commencement of that reign, Isaiah must have been an impression on his mind, enlarging his thoughts, completing the training which fitted him for the higher and more commanding position which he was to occupy in the reign of Hezekiah. To Micah especially we can trace his visions of the restored Temple (chap. ii. 2-4; Micah iv. 1), his protests against greed and drunkenness (Micah v. 1-11), his hopes of a Prince of Peace rising out of the house of David (Micah v. 2, 5).

(8) At the commencement of that reign, Isaiah must have been over sixty. The king whom he had trained, and whose mother was under his direction, was born when Ahaz was concerned, was disappointing, the influence which he began to exercise on the mind of his future successor, born when Ahaz himself was scarcely out of the age of tutelage, must have been abundant compensation.

The fact that Hezekiah's mother was the daughter or granddaughter of one who had understanding in the visions of God (2 Chron. xxvi. 5) suggests the influence that she may have been chosen by Jotham, under Isaiah's guidance, as a wife for the young king, and that the devotion and purity of Hezekiah's character were mainly due to her influence, as directed by him. Anyhow, the events of that reign, the invasion of Rezin and Pekah, the conquests of Pul, the intervention of Tiglath-pileser, the rise of the Ethiopian dynasty of the Pharaohs, represented by So, or Sabaeco, the wars with the Philistines, and other neighbouring nations, must have given many occasions, over and above those recorded in his writings, for the exercise of his gifts of insight as a prophet and a statesman, seeing the secret workings that lay below the surface of things, and proclaiming the righteous government of Jehovah, as disposing and ordering all. During this period also we may rightly think of the influence of contemporary prophets such as Hosea and Amos, in the northern kingdom, and above all Mica, his friend and contemporary in Judah, as working upon his mind, enlarging his thoughts, completing the training which fitted him for the higher and more commanding position which he was to occupy in the reign of Hezekiah. To Micah especially we can trace his visions of the restored Temple (chap. ii. 2-4; Micah iv. 1), his protests against greed and drunkenness (Micah v. 1-11), his hopes of a Prince of Peace rising out of the house of David (Micah v. 2, 5).

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minds of men, though, as yet they had not been put together, and in which, as dealing largely with the duties and the faults of rulers, Isaiah may well have found the "ideal of a patriot king" which he hoped to see realised in his pupil (Prov. xxv. —xxix.). It was not long, however, before the bright dawn was overcast. The words, written from without and from within. The successive invasions of Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib, the conquest of Samaria, and the captivity of the Ten Tribes threw the people of Judah into a state of restlessness and agitation. Some of the king's counsellors trusted in the prospect of an alliance with the Ethiopian dynasty ruling in Egypt, represented by Sahaco and Tirhakah (chaps. xviii. 2; xx. 3, xxx. 2). Some thought it more prudent to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Assyrian king and to pay a moderate tribute. Some fell back on new fortifications which were to make Jerusalem impregnable, and gave themselves up to a boastful and defiant revelry (chap. xxi. 9—13). The aged prophet stood almost alone as he told men, now in speech and now in strange and startling acts (chap. xx. 2), that their one way of safety was to repent and to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness (chaps. xxii. 12, xxvi. 8, 9, xxviii. 16), and not to weave their webs of diplomacy and intrigue (chap. xxx. 1). They mocked at his iterated utterances in the words in which the prophet-physician announced the danger there was a sad significance. Men who read between the lines might trace in that "set thine house in order," educate himself, was likely to walk in the steps of his grandfather rather than his father. As soon as Hezekiah's reign opened he was likely to see his teachers' safety and the faults of rulers, Isaiah may well have determined by the counsels of the prophet, who saw in her very name ("my delight is in her"), an augury of good (chap. lix. 4), and the name given to a child who was to succeed him, Manasseh ("forgetting"), bore witness that the king was following up his policy of conciliating the remnant of Ephraim and Manasseh, and of proclaiming an amnesty of all past animosities (2 Chron. xxx. 1—12). There was, however, even then a cloud upon the horizon. The king lent too willing an ear to the insidious proposals of Merodach-baladan, the rebel king of Babylon, against whom Sargon had been carrying on a long-continued warfare, and had in the weakness of his pride displayed the treasures of his palace and his arsenal, as if they, and not the living God, were the strength of Israel (chap. xxix. 1—8; 2 Chron. xxi. 31). Against that alliance the fiery zeal of the old prophet kindled into a white heat of indignation. It was full of untold evils in its immediate and remote consequences. It was in that burst of inspiration that Isaiah had his first clear vision of the Babylonian captivity, beyond which he was afterwards led to see the dawn of a brighter day of resurrection and return.

(10) The danger which Isaiah had predicted soon drew near. Sargon was murdered in his palace, and his successor (Sennacherib) having in the first year of his reign crushed the Babylonian revolt, and driven Merodach-baladan into the marshes of the lower Euphrates (see Notes on chap. xxxvi. 1), turned his arms to subdue the rebels of his southern provinces, and among others Hezekiah, who had attacked and imprisoned the Assyrian ruler of Ashdod, and demanded an exorbitant tribute, which could only be paid by emptying the treasury-house, that had been boastfully shown to the Babylonian envoys, and stripping even the Temple of its gold (2 Kings xviii. 14—16). Even this, however, did not avail. The Assyrian king, suspecting probably that negotiations were going on between Hezekiah and Tirhakah, tore up the treaty, led his armies against Jerusalem, and sent Rabshakeh and his companions to demand an unconditional surrender (2 Kings xviii. 17—36). We need not now follow the history of that mission. In its relation to Isaiah's life we may find in it the hint that there was disorder alike in the policy of which the prophet read the forecast of a future fall (chap. xxii. 20—25).

(9) The danger which had threatened Jerusalem from the armies of Sargon was averted by submission and the payment of tribute. He laid waste Judah, but left the capital untouched. Before long a danger of another kind threatened the frustration of Isaiah's hopes. The king, not yet thirty-five, and as yet without an heir, was soon brought to the grave (chap. xxxiv. 1). The words in which the prophet-physician announced the danger there was a sad significance. Men who read between the lines might trace in that "“set thine house in order,”' the hint that there was disorder alike in the policy of the kingdom and in the inner habitation of the soul, that needed to be set right. As it was, the king's repentance and the prayer of faith prevailed, and fifteen years were added to his life. His marriage with Hephzibah (2 Kings xxi. 1) was probably determined by the counsels of the prophet, who saw in her very name ("my delight is in her"), an augury of good (chap. lix. 4), and the name given to a child who was to succeed him, Manasseh ("forgetting"), bore witness that the king was following up his policy of conciliating the remnant of Ephraim and Manasseh, and of proclaiming an amnesty of all past animosities (2 Chron. xxx. 1—12). There was, however, even then a cloud upon the horizon. The king lent too willing an ear to the insidious proposals of Merodach-baladan, the rebel king of Babylon, against whom Sargon had been carrying on a long-continued warfare, and had in the weakness of his pride displayed the treasures of his palace and his arsenal, as if they, and not the living God, were the strength of Israel (chap. xxix. 1—8; 2 Chron. xxi. 31). Against that alliance the fiery zeal of the old prophet kindled into a white heat of indignation. It was full of untold evils in its immediate and remote consequences. It was in that burst of inspiration that Isaiah had his first clear vision of the Babylonian captivity, beyond which he was afterwards led to see the dawn of a brighter day of resurrection and return.
later years of his life in providing for the perpetuation of his leading ideas in another form, is a question which will meet us farther on.

II. Arrangement of Isaiah's prophecies.—

(1) It is obvious that the writings of a man who has played a conspicuous part as a writer or a teacher may be brought together in various ways. The writer may be his own editor, sifting and selecting from the MS. of many years, and arranging them either in a chronological order or else according to a method independent of that order, and determined by personal or ideal associations. Or the task of editing may be left to a friend, disciple, or secretary, acting as Baruch seems to have acted in relation to Jeremiah (Jer. xxxvi. 4, 18, 32). Or again, the papers may come in a loose and fragmentary state into the hands of the scribes, or men of letters, of a later generation, and they may exercise their functions with varying degrees of insight or of accuracy, editing with or without notes and glosses and interpolations. When we have no record as to which process was adopted, the problem is complicated by the possibility that at least three processes may have mingled in varying and uncertain proportions. It is not to be wondered at that critics who are not content to assume that the arrangement which they find in the existing Hebrew text of the Old Testament can claim a Divine authority which could be claimed by no other, should come on these points with widely different conclusions, and be influenced by considerations more or less subjective. The task of a complete critical analysis lies beyond the limits within which the present writer has in the arrangements of the chapters or other sub-sections of Isaiah's writings.

(2) It is tolerably plain, at the outset, that we have three chief divisions.

(A) Chaps. i.—xxxv. A collection, not necessarily a complete collection, of prophetic writings from the death of Uzziah to the closing years of Hezekiah.

(B) Chaps. xxxvi.—xxxix. An historical appendix to that collection, connected with the most memorable passage in Isaiah's life.

(C) Chaps. xl.—lxi. A complete and systematically arranged collection, manifestly having a unity of its own, and having for its central subject the restoration of the Jews from Babylon.

It remains to examine the arrangement of the sections in each group.

(A) Chap. i. A general introduction to the whole, probably written in the latter part of the reign of Jotham, embodying the results of Isaiah's study of the reign of Uzziah, possibly retouched under Hezekiah.

Chaps. ii.—v. A further denunciation of the sins of Israel, and the judgments coming on them, coloured in part by reminiscences of the earthquake under Uzziah, and painting the social evils of that period. Mingling with the prophecies of judgment are visions of a future restoration (chaps. ii. 2, iv. 2—6), shared by Isaiah with his contemporary Micah. Chaps. i.—v. may be considered deliberately placed before chap. vi., as showing the state of things which preceded the call there narrated.

Chaps. vii.—x. 4. Narrative mingled with prophecies belonging to the early years of Ahaz. First definite prediction of the Assyrian invasion, and of an ideally righteous king (chap. ix. 6, 7), the names of Isaiah's children; the true Immanuel.

Chaps. x. 5—xii. 6. Clearer announcement of the Assyrian invasion of Tiglath-pileser (?), Salmanesser (?), or Sargon (?) Renewed vision of the return of the remnant (the true Shear-Jashub), and of the true Immanuel, or righteous king (chap. xi. 1—16), coloured probably by the virtues of the young Hezekiah, and the captivity of the ten tribes.

Chaps. xiii.—xxii. Obviously in its form an independent collection of "burdens" or oracles, bearing on the history of Jerusalem and the neighbouring nations, all probably written under Hezekiah, and in some cases clearly answer to ambassadors who came to consult the prophet as to the future of the people who sent them (chap. xiv. 32). "The burden of Babylon" (chaps. xiii., xiv.), assuming it to be Isaiah's, was probably among the latest, written after the mission of Merodach-baladan had directed the prophet's mind to that city, as almost equally with Nineveh the capital of the Assyrian empire, and destined for a time to take its place as the great world-power (chap. xiv. 25), but is placed first, as the Epistle to the Romans stands in the New Testament at the head of St. Paul's epistles, on account of its importance. Chaps. xvii.—xx. are connected with the plans of an Egypto-Ethiopian alliance; chap. xxi. with the future destruction of Babylon; chap. xix. with Sargon's or Sennacherib's (?) attack on Judah.

Chaps. xxiv.—xxvii. The four poems seem grouped together, not necessarily as having been written continuously, but as having for their common subject "the day of the Lord," which brings at once judgment and redemption. The recurrence of the phrase "in that day," in chaps. xxvi. 1, xxvii. 1, 12, connects them with chap. iv. 1; the glory of the "mountain of the Lord," in chap. xxv. 6, with chap. ii. 2. With the exception of the passage referring to Moab in chap. xxv. 10, the group is less definitely historical than any other.

Chaps. xxviii.—xxi. xi. like the "burdens" of chaps. xii.—xxi. xi. have an outward unity in the opening formula of "Woe to" (chaps. xxviii. 1, xxix. 1, xxx. 1, xxxi. 1, xxxii. 1, xxxiii. 1), in which the prophet falls back upon one of his earlier writings (chap. v. 8, 11, 18, 20). The whole group belongs to the time when the march of Sargon's (?) or Sennacherib's (?) armies was striking terror into the people, and leading them once again to projects of foreign alliances. The picture of the ideally righteous king, in chap. xxxi. 1—8, reminding us of chaps. ix. 6, 7, xi. 1—9, is suggestive. Hezekiah had not fulfilled the ideal. It was in the distant future; but the hopes of the prophet were incomprehensible.

Chaps. xxxiii.—xxxv. The close of the first great collection, historically turning mainly on Sennacherib's invasion, and the part taken by the Edomites in his attack on Judah (chap. xxxiv. 5, 6), but ending in a vision of the restoration of all things which transcends all history (chap. xxxv. 1—10). They would have been fitting "last words" for the aged prophet, when his work seemed all but over. They were, perhaps, a stepping stone to the greater and more connected work which, more than anything else, was to make his name immortal, in chaps. xli.—lvi.

(B) Chaps. xxxvi.—xxxix. Probably, looking to the difference of style, not written by Isaiah, but appended, perhaps by some disciple, perhaps by a scribe-editor, in the time of Ezra, as embodying what could be gathered of the prophet's closing work, and his almost greatest utterance, and based, perhaps, upon the prophet's history of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 32). In chronological order, chaps. xxxvi.—xxxix. are, indeed, come first, as dealing with events prior to the destruction of Sennacherib's army.

(C) The question of the arrangement of chaps. xli.—
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lxvi. will be considered here independently of its authorship. A tripartite division is indicated by the structure of the book. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," in chaps. xlvii. 22, lxvi. 21, as follows:—

(1) Chaps. xii.—xlvi. 22, open with the proclamation of the return of the exiles, and pass on to the contrast between the greatness of Jehovah and the nothingness of the gods of the heathen. Cyrus appears as a central figure, the ideally righteous man, the anointed of the Lord (chaps. xlvii. 26—xlv. 7) but the Servant of the Lord, afterwards so prominent, appears also in chap. xiii. 1—7.

(2) Chaps. xiii. 1—lxvi. 21 are occupied chiefly with the Servant of the Lord, thought of now in his personal, now in his collective, unity, in whom the prophet is taught to see even more than he had seen in Hezekiah or Cyrus, the instrument by which God's work for Israel and for mankind was to be accomplished, by the victory, not of power only or chiefly, but of vicarious suffering (chaps. xlv. 4—7, lxvi. 6, lxli. 13—lxiii. 12).

(3) Chaps. lviii.—lxiv. 24. This portion ends with an expansion of the thought of the "no peace" of the two previous sections. It is remarkable as gathering up, and developing to their highest point, what had been throughout the prominent thoughts of Isaiah's work as a teacher—his condemnation of his people's sins (chaps. lxv. 2—12, lxvi. 3, 4); his visions of a new world of righteousness and peace (chaps. lxv. lxvi. 17—25); of a redeemed Israel fulfilling its ideal (chap. lxvi. 10—14); of one in whom the ideas of the righteous King and the Servant of the Lord are strangely blended (chap. lxv. 1—3); of the ultimate overthrow of all the enemies of God (chap. lxvi. 15, 24). Not a few critics have gone further than this, and have traced an elaborate tripartite division of three sections in each part; and again a further grouping of three sub-sections under each of the nine thus formed, the structure of the whole book being, on this view, as elaborately planned as Dante's Commedia, on the basis of the mystic number three thus squared and cubed.* It may be questioned, however, whether this arrangement is not too artificial, at variance with the character of Isaiah's mind, and embarrassing rather than helpful in tracing, what it is in any case difficult to trace, the sequence and continuity of thought. A more natural explanation seems to be, that the writer's mind, dwelling now on one great idea, now on another, wrote now this and now that section, often with a considerable interval between them, so that we have not a book after modern fashion, with beginning, middle, and end, but rather a series of detached pieces, connected mainly by subtle links of association, like the Pensees of Pascal, the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, or Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sonnets. On the assumption of Isaiah's authorship, the whole of this second volume must be assigned, with scarcely the shadow of a doubt, to the closing years of the reign of Hezekiah or the opening years of that of Manasseh, and therefore to a very advanced period of the prophet's life. Of him, as of Moses, it might have been said, that "his eye was not dim nor his natural force failing," in the old age of Isaiah must have been the counterpart, in its receptive and apocalyptic power, of the old age of St. John.

III. The authorship of Isaiah xli.—lxvi. 22. The limits within which I must confine myself do not admit of anything like an exhaustive treatment of this question. It may be well to begin by noting what it was that led the authorship of Isaiah disproved, it would not follow that we had a puerulent book, the counterfeit and a forgery, or even, as in the case of the hypothesis of the later date of Ecclesiastes, a case of personated authorship without the animus decipendi. All that would follow would be that some unknown writer, at or about the time of the return of the Jews from Babylon, had so imbued himself with the thoughts and even the style of Isaiah, that his work was accepted by his contemporaries, or by the scribes who were concerned in the completion of the Old Testament Canon under Ezra, as rounding off the cycle of that prophet's teaching. In regard to all the Messianic elements in it, its great argument against idolatry, and its visions of judgment and restoration, it would still retain all the dignity and authority of inspiration, and be entitled to the place which it occupies in the Hebrew Canon. Even its appeals to the foreknowledge of God, as manifested in prophetic announcements of the downfall of Babylon and the victories of Cyrus (chaps. xli. xlv. 26—28, xlviii. 9, xlv. 21), would retain their force as referring to prophecies, like those of Jeremiah and Micah, which foretold a like downfall of the city on the Euphrates, and a like restoration of Jerusalem. (2) The arguments which have led many recent critics to the conclusion that the authorship of Isaiah is disproved, are briefly these:—

(a) That the whole standpoint of the writer is that of one who was living at the time of the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and especially that the name of Cyrus was altogether beyond the horizon of Isaiah's knowledge.

(b) That the central thought of the Servant of the Lord, as made perfect through suffering and dying vicariously for the sins of his people, is entirely foreign to the teaching of the historical Isaiah.

(c) That the style and vocabulary of chaps. xli.—lxvi. are so different from those of chaps. i.—xxxix. as to imply diversity of authorship.

(d) On the other hand, it has been urged—

(a) That on the assumption of Isaiah's inspiration, he may have been led to place himself, as in an ecstatic vision, like that of Balaam and other prophets, in a time and country other than his own.

(b) That the name of Cyrus may have been within the limit of Isaiah's human knowledge, or may have been supernaturally revealed to him. See Note on chap. xlv. 28.

(c) That the knowledge of Babylon and its life and worship as shown in 2 Isaiah is not more than may be accounted for by the commerce of the time, the diplomatic intercourse with Merodach-baladan, and other sources.

(d) That the forms of idolatry condemned in chaps. lvii. 5, lxv. 3—5, 11, belong much more to the state of Palestine under Manasseh than to that of the Babylonian exiles, either before or after their return.

(e) That the reference to Hophzibah and Azubah, the names of the mothers of Manasseh and Jehosaphat, in chap. lxiv. 12, is more natural in one living under the former king than it would be in a writer a century and a half later.

(f) That the local colouring of the book, as seen in the "cliffs of the rocks" in chap. liii. 5, the trees of chaps. xlii. 14, xlv. 14, lv. 12, the "tents" of chap. lv. 12, the references to Midian, Kedar, Nebaioth, Lebanon, Mesopotamia, chap. lx. 6—13, is Palestinian rather than Mesopotamian.

* See Delitzsch's Isaiah, on chaps. xli.—lxvi. in Clark's Foreign Theological Library.
(g) That the idea of the Servant of the Lord was one which might have been developed by Isaiah's experience of the failure of his earlier hopes, from teaching like that of the Book of Job, with which he was obviously familiar, and from the lesson thus learnt that in that apparent failure, in the suffering and death of every righteous servant, culminating in those of Him who was to fulfil the ideal, lay the secret of an eternal victory. The limits within which I have to confine myself as Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; to reproduce the turns and tricks of his style, that it will not be easy even for an expert to distinguish between the counterfeit and the original. All that can be said as to the application of this inductive method to 1 and 2 Isaiah is, that the parallelisms and the peculiarities may fairly be left to balance each other. So far as I can judge, and I speak with the reserve of one who cannot claim the authority of an expert, there seems to me a slight preponderance in favour of the former.

(5) On this ground then, as well as on a review of the other elements of evidence, I adopt the hypothesis that we have in the two books that are placed in the Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament under the name of Isaiah, substantially the work of one and the same author. I admit in so doing that there is so strong a prima facie case for the opposite hypothesis, that it would be simply impertinent and unfair to charge those who adopt it with irreverence, or haste, or prejudice. The least part of Isaiah would remain as a priceless treasure whoever wrote it, just as the worth of the Epistle to the Hebrews is unaffected by the question whether it was written by Paul or by Apollos, or some unknown writer; it would still have for us, as Christians, the incomparable attraction of having been in part, at least, the basis of the theology of Christendom. It was given to that book to revive, from time to time, the dormant Messianic hopes of Israel; to exercise a traceable influence on the minds of later prophets, such as Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; to nourish the souls of those who were looking for consolation and redemption in Jerusalem (Luke ii. 25, 38); to contribute, if "the word be not too bold," to the education of Him who was to meet those longing expectations. There, as in the mirror of the Divine word, Jesus of Nazareth saw, in the Servant of the Lord, the guiltless Sufferer, the righteous King, that which He recognised as the archetype, after which His own life and death were to be fashioned (Mark x. 45). There the Baptist found that which defined his position in the kingdom of God, as a voice crying in the wilderness (John i. 23). There the publican Evangelist found the Christ delineated as he had seen Him in Jesus (Matt. viii. 17). Thero Peter, and Paul, and John, and Philip, found the foreshadowings of all that was most precious to them in the teaching of their Master, a witness to Jesus in His lowliness, His purity, His gentleness, His sufferings and death and victory (Acts viii. 36; i Pet. ii. 21—24), the ground of their hopes of the restoration of Israel (Rom. x. 15), of the redemption of mankind, and of the restoration of all things, the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. iii. 13), the apocalypse of the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. xxi., xxii.). There the souls of devout Christians, century after century, have found, more than in any other utterance of prophecy, the Evangel pre-evangelised, the exceeding great and precious promises which sustained them in their conflict with temptation, under the burden of their sins, and turned their sorrow and sighing into the songs of an everlasting joy.

IV. (1) It remains that I should acknowledge the debt of gratitude which I owe, in greater or less measure, to some of my forerunners. The list of commentators on Isaiah is a very long one, and it is probable, to use a phrase that no one is permitted to use into the House of the Interpreter with reverent footsteps without finding some treasure which he might
ISAIAH.

make peculiarly his own. Of these I cannot claim to have consulted more than comparatively few. The circumstances under which I have had to write the notes that follow—a somewhat prolonged absence from England, and the pressure of other work on my return—have restricted my range of choice. The English student will scarcely complain if that limitation has led me to a more careful study of those whom I chose as the safest and most trustworthy guides. The limits within which I have had to work forbade my discussing the views of other commentators, and I have had to be content with giving results, apart from the processes which led to them. All the more is it right that I should, here at least, acknowledge my obligations to those to whom I am conscious that I am most largely indebted—to Ewald, here, as always, suggestive, bold, original; to Delitzsch, exhaustive and complete, with an almost more than Teutonic exhaustiveness; to my old Oxford instructor in Hebrew, Dr. Kay, looking into the spiritual significance of words and phrases, and investigating suggestive parallelisms with a microscopic minuteness; above all, to Mr. Cheyne, in whom the spirit of a wide and fearless research, and the vividness of historical imagination, are blended, in a measure rarely found elsewhere, with a spirit of devout reverence and insight which makes his Commentary on Isaiah wellnigh all that the scholar student can desire. It has been my effort, while reserving to myself the right of an independent judgment so far as I felt competent to exercise it, to follow, though with unequal steps, in the path in which these interpreters have gone before me, learning myself, according to the old adage, in the endeavour to teach others.

I have further to acknowledge my many obligations to Mr. Sayce, M. Oppert, and the other Assyriologists whose labours, collected in the Records of the Past series, published by Mr. Bagster, have made the inscriptions which have thrown a new light on the writings of Isaiah accessible to the average English student. Looking to the class of readers for whom I write, I have thought it better, as a rule, to refer to that series than to books like Mr. George Smith's Assyrian Discoveries and History of Sennacherib; or Dr. Ginsburg’s Moabite Stone, or Mr. Budge’s Esarhaddon, or Schrader’s Keil-Inschriften; or papers that lie buried, as it were, in the Transactions of learned societies.
CHAPTER I.—The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

(2) Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

(3) The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

(4) Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

(5) Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head of filial duty might have been expected; but it was not so. ye will revolt more and more.—Better, o: of the Lord.

He had chosen them (Exod. iv. 22; Deut. xiv. 1; Hos. xii). The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

The ox knoweth his owner, ... As in Exod. xx. 17; 1 Sam. xii. 3, the ox and the ass rather than, as with us, the horse and the dog, are the representative instances of the relation of domesticated animals to man. These know that relation, and act according to it; but Israel did not, or rather would not, know.

So Jeremiah dwells, turning to a different region of animal life, on the instinct which leads the stork, the swallow, and the crane to fulfil the law of their being (Jer. viii. 7), while Israel “knew not”—i.e., did not acknowledge—the law of Jehovah.

Ah, sinful nation ... The Hebrew interjection is, like our English “Ha!” the expression of indignation rather than of pity.

A seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters.—The first phrase in the Hebrew idiom does not mean “the progeny of evil-doers,” but those who, as a seed or brood, are made up of such. (Comp. chap. xiv. 20, lxxv. 23.) The word “children” (better, as in verse 2, sons) once more emphasises the guilt of those who ought to have been obedient.

They have forsaken the Lord ...—The three verbs paint the several stages of the growth in evil. Men first forsake, then spurn, then openly apostatise. (Comp. Luke xvi. 13). In the “Holy One of Israel” we have the Divine name on which Isaiah most delights to dwell, and which had been impressed on his mind by the Triasagion, which accompanied his first call to the office of a prophet (chap. vi. 3). The thought expressed by the name is that all ideas of consecration, purity, and holiness are gathered up in God. The term occurs fourteen times in the first part of Isaiah, and sixteen times in the second. A corrupt people needed to be reminded ever more and more of the truth which the name asserted.

Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more.—Better, by revolting more and more. The prophet does not predict persistency in rebellion, but pleads against it. (Comp. “Why will ye die?” in Ezek. xviii. 31.)

The whole head is sick ...—Better, every head ... every heart. The sin of the people is painted as a deadly epidemic, spreading everywhere, affecting the noblest organs of the body (see Note on Jer. xvii. 9), and defying all the resources of the healing art. The description that follows is one of the natural parables of ethics, and reminds us of Plato's description of the souls of tyrants as being full of ulcerous sores (Gorg., c. 80). The description may have connected itself with the prophet's personal expe-
The Putrifying Sores of Israel.

ISAIAH, I.

The True Sodom and Gomorrah.

is sick, and the whole heart faint. (6) From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with 1 ointment. (7) a Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, 2 as overthrown by strangers. (8) And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. (9) b Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

(10) Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the

rience or training in the medicine and surgery of his time, or with the diseases which came as judgments on Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi. 18) and Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 20). We find him in chap. xxxviii. 21 prescribing for Hezekiah's boil. It would seem, indeed, from 2 Chron. xvi. 12, that the prophets, as an order, practised the art of healing, and so were rivals of the "physicians," who depended chiefly on idolatrous charms and incantations. The picture of the disease reminds us of the language of Deut. xxviii. 22—35; Job. ii. 7, and of the descriptions of like pestilences in the history of Florence, and of England. Every part of the body is tainted by the poison. We note a certain technical precision in the three terms used: "wounds" (literally, cuts, as inflicted by a sword or knife); "bruises," or "scars," marks of the scourge or rod; "putrifying sores," wounds that have festered into ulcers. As the diagnosis is technical, so also are the therapeutic agencies. To "close" or "press" the festering wound was the process tried at first to get rid of the purulent discharge; then, as in Hezekiah's case (chap. xxxviii. 21), it was "bound up," with a poultice, then some stimulating oil or unguent, probably, as in Luke x. 34, oil and wine were used, to cleanse the ulcer. No such remedies, the prophet says, had been applied to the spiritual disease of Israel.

(7) Your country is desolate... It is natural to take the words as describing the actual state of things when the prophet wrote. There had been such invasions in the days of Ahaz, in which Israel and Syria (chap. vii. 1), Edom and the Philistines, had been conspicuous (2 Chron. xxvii. 17, 18); and the reign of Hezekiah already had witnessed that of Sargon (chap. xx. 1).

The Hebrew has no copulative verb, but joins subject and predicate together with the emphasis of abruptness: Your land—a desolation, and so on. The repetition of the word "strangers" is characteristic of Isaiah's style.

As overthrown by strangers.—Conjectural readings give (1) "as the overthrow of Sodom;" (2) "as the overthrow of (i.e., wrought by) a rain-storm." The word rendered "overthrown" is elsewhere applied only to the destruction of the cities of the plain (Deut. xxiv. 25; Amos iv. 11; Jer. xlix. 15). So taken, the clause prepares the way for the fuller comparison of verses 9, 10.

(8) The daughter of Zion.—The phrase stands, as everywhere (Ps. xlv. 12; Lam. ii. 8; Micah iv. 10), for the ideal city personified.

Is left as a cottage in a vineyard... The "ruth," or "booth," in which the keeper of the vineyards dwelt, apart from other habitations, was an almost proverbial type of isolation, yet to such a state was Zion all but reduced. The second similitude is of the same character. Cucumbers and other plants of the gard type (Jonah iv. 6) were largely cultivated in Judea, and here, too, each field or garden, like the olive groves and vineyards of Italy, had its solitary hut.
The Worthlessness of Outward Worship.

The Call to Repentance.

law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

(11) To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of 1 he goats. (12) When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? (13) Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away from you. (14) For in your sacrifices and your appointed feasts I cannot bear; this is an abomination to me, saith the Lord. (15) When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood, and your doings are an abomination before me.

It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.—The Hebrew construction has the abruptness of indignation: “The new moon and sabbaths, and calling of assemblies . . . iniquity with a solemn assembly I cannot bear.” This was what made the crowded courts of the Temple hateful to the messenger of Jehovah. “Iniquity” was there. The character of a ruling caste is not changed in a day, and the lives of rulers and judges were under Hezekiah as they had been in the days of Ahaz, or at least in those of Uzziah.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts.—The latter word included the sabbaths (Lev. xxiii. 3). The words add nothing to what had been said before, but they come with all the emphasis of iteration.

My soul.—The words are in one sense anthropomorphic. With man the “soul” expresses the full intensity of life and consciousness, and so, in the language of the prophets, it does with God.

When ye spread forth your hands.—The words point to the attitude of one who prays, standing, and with hands stretched out toward heaven. (Comp. Luke xviii. 11–13.)

When ye make many prayers.—The Pentateuch contains no directions for the use of forms of prayer beyond the benediction of Num. vii. 23–26, and two forms connected with the Passover in Deut. xxvi. 5–10, 13–15. The “eighteen prayers” for daily use belong to the later Rabbinic stage of Judaism. It lies in the nature of the case, however, that first a real, and then an ostentatious devotion would show itself in the use of such forms, possibly, as in Ps. cxix. 164, “seven times a day.” In Prov. xxvii. 14, xxviii. 9, which belong to the reign of Hezekiah, and may, therefore, indirectly represent Isaiah’s teaching, we have the warnings of the wise as to the right use of such forms.

Your hands are full of blood.—Literally, bloods, as implying many murderous acts. The words point to the guilt of judges and princes, such as that described in Hosea iv. 2. Life was sacrificed to greed of gain, or lust, or vindictiveness. To the prophet’s eye those hands, stretched upwards in the Temple by some, at least, of the king’s ministers and judges, were red with the blood of the slain. (Comp. chap. lxix. 3.)

Wash you, make you clean . . .—The words were probably as an echo of Ps. ii. 7. Both psalmist and prophet had entered into the inner meaning of the outward ablutions of ritual.

Cease to do evil; (17) learn to do well.—Such words the prophet might have heard in his youth.
judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

(19) Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

(19) If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the fire of the Lord.

from Amos (Amos v. 14, 15). What had then been spoken to the princes of the northern kingdom was now repeated to those of Judah.

(17) Relieve the oppressed.—More accurately, correct the oppressor. The prophet calls on the rulers not merely to act of benevolence, but to the courageous exercise of their authority to restrain the wrong-doing of the men of their own order. We are reminded of what Shakespeare says of Time, that it is his work—

"To wrong the wronger till he render right." (Rape of Lucrece.)

Judge the fatherless.—The words are still primarily addressed to men in office. They are told that they must be true to their calling, and that the "fatherless" and the "widow," as the typical instances of the defenceless, ought to find an advocate in the judge.

(20) Come now, and let us reason together.—

The Authorised Version suggests the thought of a discussion between equals. The Hebrew implies rather the tone of one who gives an authoritative ultimatum, as from a judge to the accused, who had no defence, or only a sham defence, to offer (Micah vi. 3). "Let us sum up the pleadings—that ultimatum is one of grace and mercy—"Repent, and be forgiven."

Though your sins be as scarlet.—The two colours probably corresponded to those now designated by the English words. Both words point to the dyes of Tyre, and the words probably received a fresh emphasis from the fact that robes of these colours were worn by the princes to whom Isaiah preached (2 Sam. i. 1, 24). To the prophet's eye that dark crimson was as the stain of blood. What Jehovah promises is that the guilt of the past, deep-dyed in grain as it might be, should be discharged, and leave the character with a restored purity. Men might dye their souls of this or that hue, but to bleach them was the work of God. He alone could transfigure them that they should be "white as snow" (Mark ix. 3). Comp. the reproduction of the thought, with the added paradox that it was the crimson "blood of the lamb" that was to bleach and cleanse, in Rev. iii. 4, 5, vii. 14.

(19) If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.—The promise of temporal blessings as the reward of a true repentance, instead of the spiritual peace and joy of Ps. li. 8—13, fills us at first with a sense of disappointment. It has to be remembered, however, that the prophet spoke to those who were unjust and selfish, and who were as yet far from the broken and contrite heart of the true penitent. He was content to wake up in them the dormant sense of guilt, and to lead them to recognise the moral government of God. In the long run they would not be losers by a change of conduct. The choice of eating or "being eaten" (the "devoured" of verse 20), enjoying a blameless prosperity, or falling by the sword, was placed before those to whom the higher aspirations of the soul were little known. Such is, at all times, one at least of the methods of God's education of mankind.

(21) How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. (22) Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

(22) Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they

sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(21) How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. (22) Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

(22) Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they

Corruptio optimi pessima.
The City of Righteousness.

ISAIAH, I.

The Destruction of the Transgressors.

judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. (24) Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: (25) and I will turn my hand upon thee, and 1 purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: (26) and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. (27) Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and

The city of righteousness, the faithful city. —The two nouns are not the same, and the second has rather the meaning of “citadel,” the acropolis of Jerusalem. There is possibly an allusive reference to the idea embodied in the names of Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. vii. 2) and Adonizedec (Josh. x. 3), as connected with Jerusalem. So in Jer. xxxiii. 10 the ideal city, no less than the ideal king, is to be called Jehovah Tsidkenu (“the Lord our righteousness”). (27) Zion shall be redeemed with judgment . . . —Better, through justice. The condition of the redemption which primarily proceeds from the compas­sion of Jehovah is found in the renewed righteousness of man to be described in the preceding verse. Without that no redemption was possible, for that was of its very essence.

Her converts.—Literally, those that turn. The conversion implied is obviously not that of Gentiles to the faith of Israel, but of Israelites who had gone astray. The word is the same as that which meets us in the name of Shear-jashub (the remnant shall return), and is prominent in the teaching of Jeremiah, “Turn ye, and live” (chaps. iii. 12, 14, iv. 1, et al.). (28) Of the transgressors and of the sinners. —The first of the two words presents evil in its aspect of apostasy, the second in that of the oaks which may accompany the apostasy or exist without it. (29) They shall be ashamed of the oaks . . . —Better, terebinths. The words point to the groves that were so closely connected with the idolatry of Canaan, especially with the worship of the asherah, and which the people had chosen in preference to the sanctuary of Jehovah (chaps. xvii. 3, xviii. 5, lxvi. 17; Deut. xvi. 21; 2 Kings xvi. 4; Jer. ii. 6). Greek worship presents the parallels of the groves of Daphne at Antioch, and those of Dodona and of the Eumenides at Colônos. The “gardens” were the precint planted round the central tree or grove. (30) Ye shall be . . . —Men were to think of the pleasant places that had tempted them, not as they had seen them, fresh and green, but as burnt up and withered, and then were to see that desolation a parable of their own future. The word for “strong” occurs only in Amos ii. 9, where we find “strong as the oaks.” (31) The maker of it as a spark.—Better, his work as a spark. The sin itself becomes the instrument of destruction. The mighty and the proud, who were foremost in the work of idolatry, and who did not repent, should perish with their work—i.e., with the idol
CHAPTER II.—(1) The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.  
(2) And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (3) And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.  
(4) And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;  

II. 

(1) The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.—On the relation of this chapter to chap. i., see Introduction. The moral and social state described in it points to an earlier date than the reformation of Hezekiah. The sins of the people are more flagrant; but there is not as yet with them the added guilt of a formal and ceremonial worship. The character of the king in chap. iii. 12 corresponds with that of Ahaz. The influence of the Philistines, traceable in verse 6, is probably connected with their invasion of Judah in that reign (2 Chron. xxviii. 18). The mention of “ships of Tarshish” in verse 16 points to a time when the commerce of the Red Sea (1 Kings ix. 26, xii. 48) was still in the hands of Judah, and prior, therefore, to the capture of Elath by Rezin, king of Syria (2 Kings xvi. 6). We are able, therefore, with hardly the shadow of uncertainty, to fix the date of the whole section as belonging to the early years of that reign, with, perhaps, a backward glance to the heathen as distinct from Israel. The prophet sees and welcomes the approach of pilgrims from all regions of the earth to the new sanctuary. Thus early in his work was Isaiah (half unconsciously as to the manner in which his vision was to be realised) the prophet of a universal religion, of which the truths of Judaism were the centre, and of a catholic Church. In the admission of proselytes, commemorated in Ps. cxlvii. (probably written about this time), we may see what may either have suggested the prophecy, or have seemed as the first-fruits of its fulfilment. 

(2) It shall come to pass in the last days.—The three verses that follow are found in almost identical form in Micah iv. 1—3, with the addition of a verse (Micah iv. 4) which describes the prosperity of Judah—every man sitting “under his vine and his fig-tree.” as in the days of Solomon. Whether (1) Isaiah borrowed from Micah, or (2) Micah from Isaiah, or (3) both from some earlier prophet, or (4) whether each received an independent yet identical revelation, is a problem which we have no adequate data for solving. Micah prophesied, like Isaiah, under Ahaz, Jotham, and Hezekiah, and so either may have heard it from the other. On the other hand, the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, on which these verses follow, in Micah iii. 12, appears from Jer. xxvi. 18 to have been spoken in the days of Hezekiah. On the whole, (3) seems to have most to commend it. (See Introduction.) 

For “in the last days” read latter or after days; the idea of the Hebrew words, as in Gen. xlix. 1; Num. xxiv. 14, being that of remoteness rather than finality. For the most part (Deut. iv. 30, xxxi. 29) they point to the distant future of the true King, to the time of the Messiah. 

The mountain of the Lord’s house.—The prophet’s vision of the far-off days sees, as it were, a transfigured and glorified Jerusalem. Zion, with the Temple, was to be no longer surrounded by hills as high as, or higher than, itself (Ps. lxxxvii. 2), scorned by other mountains (Ps. lxviii. 16, 17); but was to be to Israel as a Sinai or a Lebanon, as a Mount Meru, or as Olympus, “an exceeding high mountain” (Ezek. xli. 2), whose physical elevation should answer to its spiritual. (Comp. Zech. xiv. 10.) So in that vision of the future, the waters of Jordan that went softly, were to become a broad and rushing river ( chap. xxxiii. 21; Ezek. xlviii. 3—12). So, when men had been taught by experience that this ideal was to be realised in no Jerusalem on earth, the seer of Patmos saw a yet more transcendent vision of the glorious of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 10—xxii. 5), and yet even these were but types and figures of divine and indelible realities. 

All nations shall flow unto it.—Better, All the nations—i.e., the heathen as distinct from Israel. The prophet sees and welcomes the approach of pilgrims from all regions of the earth to the new sanctuary. Thus early in his work was Isaiah (half unconsciously as to the manner in which his vision was to be realised) the prophet of a universal religion, of which the truths of Judaism were the centre, and of a catholic Church. In the admission of proselytes, commemorated in Ps. cxlvii. (probably written about this time), we may see what may either have suggested the prophecy, or have seemed as the first-fruits of its fulfilment. 

(3) Many people shall go and say . . . What was precious to the prophet’s heart was the thought that these pilgrims from afar would not come as with a formal worship like that of chap. i. 10—15, but, like the queen of Sheba (1 Kings x. 1—10), as seekers after truth, desiring to be taught. (Comp. chap. ix. 3.) The “ways” and the “paths” are the great laws of righteousness, which lead to the eternal life. The verb for “teach” is the root of the Hebrew for “law,” as the “teaching” of Jehovah. 

Shall go forth the law . . . In the preaching of the Christ, in the mission of the Twelve, in the whole history of the Apostolic Church, we have, to say the least, an adequate fulfillment of the promise. The language of St. Paul, however, suggests that there may be in the future a yet more glorious mission, of which Jerusalem shall once more be the centre (Rom. xi. 12—15). 

(4) He shall judge among the nations.—For “reprove” read decide or arbitrate. The ideal Divine King is to be all, and more than all, that Solomon had been (1 Kings x. 24). In reliance on His wisdom and equity, nations would refer their disputes to His decision instead of the arbitration of war. Here again we have a partial fulfillment, it may be hoped, a “springing and germant accomplishment, in the history of Christendom. So far as the teaching of Christ has influenced international polity and law, He has been the supreme arbitrator of their disputes.
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares. —The words invert the picture of an earlier prophet, who spoke of a time of war (Joel iii. 10). Isaiah must have known that prediction, and yet he proclaims (following Hosea ii. 18) that peace, not war, is the ideal goal towards which the order of the Divine government is tending. (Comp. Zech. ix. 10; Luke ii. 14.)

(5) O house of Jacob... —The ideal of the future has been brought before Israel; but it is still far off, and the people must learn repentance, must themselves "walk in the light of the Lord," before they can be as light-bearers to other nations. (Comp. the lines of thought in Rom. xi. 11-15.)

(6) Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people... —Better, For Thou hast... This was the sad, dark present, in contrast with the bright future. Jehovah "went not forth" with the armies of Judah (Ps. lxiv. 7); and the Syrians, Edomites, and Philistines, possibly the Assyrians also (2 Kings xv. 9; 2 Chron. xxviii. 17-20), were laying the lands waste.

Because they be replenished from the east... —The disasters of the time are viewed as chastisements and the "diviners" of Philistia (1 Sam. vi. 2) found of the worshippers of idols, whether of low or high degree. The disasters of the time are viewed as chastisements and the "diviners" of Philistia (1 Sam. vi. 2) found of the worshippers of idols, whether of low or high degree; others refer them to the punishment of that culbut Alah had adopted (2 Kings xvi. 10-12).

And the soothsayers like the Philistines... —Literally, cloud-diviners. The word points to the claim of being "storm-raisers," which has been in all ages one of the boasts of sorcerers. The conquests of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 6) had brought Judah into contact with the Philistines, and the oracles at Ekron and elsewhere (2 Kings i. 2) attracted the people of Judah. There was, as it were, a mania for divination, and the "diviners" of Philistia (1 Sam. vi. 2) found imitators among the people of Jehovah.

They please themselves in the children of strangers... —Literally, they strike hands with, as meaning, (1) they enter into contracts with, or (2) they make common cause with. The commerce of the people with foreign nations, which had expanded under Uzziah (2 Kings xiv. 22), was, from the prophet's point of view, the cause of much evil. It was probably conducted, as at an earlier date, chiefly by Phoenician sailors and merchants (1 Kings ix. 27), and thus opened the way to their impurity of worship and of life (Jonah i. 5). The sense of being a peculiar and separate people wore away. The pictures of the "strange woman" and the foreign money-lender of Prov. v. 3, vi. 1, present two aspects of this evil.

(7) Their land also is full of silver and gold... —The long and prosperous reign of Uzziah, especially his trade with Ophir, had reproduced the wealth of the days of Solomon. Tribute came from the Arabsians and Ammonites (2 Chron. xxiv. 8). The words point to an earlier date than that at which Ahaz was left "naked and distressed" (2 Chron. xxix. 25). Even under Hezekiah, Sennacherib records in the inscription on the Taylor cylinder that the tribute paid by that king amounted to 30 talents of gold, and 800 talents of silver, besides wrought metal; and a like profusion of wealth, prior to Sennacherib's invasion, is shown in the account of Hezekiah's display of his treasures, in chap. xxxix. 2 (Cheyne, in loc.; Records of the Past, i. 38).

Their land is also full of... —Here also the reign of Uzziah was like that of Solomon (1 Kings x. 26-28). Chariots were used probably both for state pageants (Song of Sol. i. 9, ii. 10), and as part of the material of war (2 Chron. i. 14, ix. 25). Isaiah here also agrees with Micah (i. 13) in looking on this as "the beginning of sin" (see Deut. xvii. 16; 1 Sam. viii. 11). For him, as for Zechariah (ix. 9), the true King was to come, not with chariots and horses, but riding, as the judges of Israel had ridden (Judg. v. 10, x. 4, xiv. 14), on "a colt, the foal of an ass."

(8) Their land also is full of... —The word which Isaiah chooses for "idols" (elilim—i.e., vain, false, gods) seems intentionally contrasted with elim (gods, or mighty ones), and may fairly be rendered by no-gods. The reign of Ahaz was conspicuous for the first of this cultus (2 Chron. xxvii. 2, 3), but it had been prominent even under Jotham (2 Chron. xxvii. 2).

(9) And the mean man boweth down... —The English gives adequately the significance of the two words for "man"—in Hebrew, adam and ish. The Authorised Version applies the words to the prostrations of the worshippers of idols, whether of low or high degree; others refer them to the punishment of that idolatry: The mean man must be bowed down... the great man must be humbled.

Therefore forgive them not... —As a prayer the words find a parallel in Psa. lix. 27, cix. 14, but the rendering adopted by Chayne and others, And thou canst not forgive them, is perhaps preferable. The sin is treated as "a sin unto death," for which it is vain to pray (chap. xxiii. 14).

(10) Enter into the rock... —The limestone caverns of Palestine were natural asylum in times of terror and dismay (Judg. vi. 2, xv. 8; 1 Sam. xii. 6, xiv. 11, xxiv. 3; 1 Kings xviii. 4). Here, as in Micah 1. 4, we may probably trace the impression left by the earthquake under Uzziah (Amos i. 1), when the people fled in terror from the city (Zech. xiv. 5). Isaiah foresees the recurrence of a like panic in the future.
Loftiness Brought Low.

ISAIAH, II.

The Idols utterly Abolished.

in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty.  (11) The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.  (12) For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low;  (13) and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,  (14) and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,  (15) and upon every high tower; and upon every fenced wall,  (16) and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.  (17) And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.  (18) And the idols shall he utterly abolish.  (19) And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

(11) The lofty looks of man . . . —Better, the lofty looks of the mean man . . . the haughtiness of the great man. The self-assertion which is the essential element of pride may be found at the opposite extremes of human life.

The Lord alone shall be exalted . . . —The verb, as in Ps. lxi. 21 (see margin and text of Authorised Version), implies the image of a rock-citadel, towering in its strength, and offering one safe asylum in time of danger. (Comp. also Ps. lx. 2.)

The day of the Lord of hosts shall be . . . —Literally, the Lord of hosts hath a day . . . As generally in the prophets, any time of special judgment or special mercy is as “a day of Jehovah.” Man feels himself in the presence of a higher power, working in this way or in that for righteousness. The phrase had been specially prominent in the mouth of Isaiah’s forerunner, Amos (viii. 9–13, ix. 11).

Up, upon every one that is proud and lofty . . . —The emphatic iteration of “lifted up” is noticeable as indicating that the prophet sees in that self-assertion the root-evil of his time, that which was most destructive of the fear of the Lord, and most surely brought down judgment on the offender. So the devout historian of Greece reads the teaching of the Lord as indicating that the prophet sees in that self-assertion the root-evil of his time, that which was most liable to the working of the Divine Nemesis (Herod., vii. 10).

Upon all the cedars of Lebanon . . . —The words find a striking parallel in the passage from Herodotus just referred to. In that storm which is about to burst over the land, the cedars and the oaks, and we may add, those who were as the cedars and the oaks, in their pride and glory, should all alike be shattered.

And upon all the high mountains. —Possibly the prophet may have had in his mind the thunderstorm of Ps. xxix. 5—“the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.” The oaks of Bashan were, like the cedars of Lebanon, proverbially types of forest greatness (chap. xxxiii. 9). Literally, the words must have found a fulfillment in the ravages of Sargon’s and Semachrib’s armies.

Upon every high tower. —Generic as the words are, they have a special reference to the fortifications which were the glory of Uzziah’s reign, and were continued by his successors (2 Chron. xxvi. 9, 10, xxvii. 3, 4; Hosea viii. 14; Micah v. 11; comp. also chap. xxii. 8–11, Ps. xlvii. 10).

And upon every fenced wall . . . —Better, The no-gods shall pass away. The seven words of the English answer three in the Hebrew. As with a profound sense, conscious or unconscious, of the power of rhythm, the prophet first condenses the judgment that is coming on the no-gods, and then expands it.

And they shall go into the holes of the rocks. —The imagery of the earthquake in Uzziah’s reign (see Note on verse 10) is still present to Isaiah’s thoughts. (See Rev. vi. 15.)

When he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. —The Hebrew verb and noun have the emphasis of a paronomasia which cannot be reproduced in English, but of which the Latin “ut terræ clamor” gives some idea.

A man shall cast his idols of silver . . . —The picture of the earthquake is still continued. The
CHAPTER III.—(1) For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, (2) the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, (3) the captain of fifty, and 2 the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, (4) the eloquent orator.—Literally, "the stay and staff" (in the Hebrew the latter word is the feminine form of the former) are really identified with the "pillars of the state," the great women as well as the great men who are named afterwards. On the other hand, verse 7 implies the pressure of famine, and the prophet may have intended to paint the complete failure of all resources, both material and political.

(2) The mighty man, and the man of war.—The first word points to the aristocracy of landed proprietors, the latter to those who, whether of that class or not, had been prominent as leaders in the king's armies.

The judge, and the prophet.—Each is named as the representative of a class. The latter was that to which Isaiah himself belonged, but in which he found, as Jeremiah did afterwards, his chief opponents.

The prudent, and the ancient.—The former word has the more definite meaning of "diviners," those who had a real gift of wisdom, but who by their abuse of that gift had become as degenerate prophets. In the "ancient" we have the "elders" who were prominent in the municipal politics of the East, and formed at least the nucleus of the king's council (Ruth iv. 4; 2 Sam. xix. 11; 1 Kings xx. 7, xx. 8; and elsewhere).

The captain of fifty, and the honourable man.—The first title implies a division like that of Exod. xvii. 20, of which "fifty" was all but the modern unit. So we have the three "captains of fifty" in 2 Kings i. 9—15. The "honourable man" (literally, eminent in countenance) would seem to occupy a position in the civil service of the State analogous to that of the "captain of fifty" in the military.

The counsellor, and the cunning artificer.—From the modern standpoint the two classes seem at opposite extremes of the social order. The latter, however (literally, masters in arts), would seem to have occupied a higher position in the East, like that of military or civil engineers or artists with us. So in 2 Kings xxiv. 14, Jer. xxiv. 1, the "craftsmen and the smiths" are grouped with the "men of might" who were carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and contrasted with the poor who were left behind. The military works of Uzziah had doubtless given a prominence to the "cunning men" who were employed on them (2 Chron. xxvi. 15). By some critics, however, the word is taken as equal to "magician."

The eloquent orator.—Literally, skilled in speech. The Authorized Version suggests the idea of the power of such skill in controlling the debates of popular assemblies. Here, however, the thought is rather that of one who says the right words at the right time; or possibly the enchanter who has his formula (the word implies the whisper of incantations, as in chap. viii. 19) ready at command for all occasions.

men who have taken refuge in the caves flinging away the idols, that they have found powerless to help them, to the moles and bats which had their dwelling there. It is perhaps significant that the animals thus named were proverbial for their blindness and love of darkness. Such, the prophet seems to say, were the fit custodians of the idols whom none could worship except those that hated the light and were spiritually blind.

(23) Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

The stay and the staff...—From the general picture of the state of Judah as a whole, of the storm of Divine wrath bursting over the whole land, Isaiah turns to the Holy City itself, and draws the picture of what he saw there of evil, of that which would be seen before long as the punishment of the evil.

The stay and the staff...—In the existing Hebrew text the words receive an immediate interpretation, as meaning the two chief supports of life—bread and water. So we have the "staff of bread" in Lev. xxvi. 26; Ps. ev. 16; Ezek. iv. 16, v. 16. Possibly, however, the interpretation is of the nature of a marginal gloss, which has found its way into the text, and "the stay and staff" (in the Hebrew the latter word is the feminine form of the former) are really identified with the "pillars of the state," the great women as well as the great men who are named afterwards. On the other hand, verse 7 implies the pressure of famine, and the prophet may have intended to paint the complete failure of all resources, both material and political.
and the eloquent orator. (4) And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. (5) And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable. (6) When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand: (7) in that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.

(8) For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory. (9) The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

(10) Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. (11) Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

(12) As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. (13) The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. (14) The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. (15) What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts. (16) Moreover the Lord saith, Because

(4) I will give children to be their princes. —Better, youths. The words may point obliquely to Ahaz, who had ascended the throne at the age of twenty (2 Chron. xxvii. 1). Manasseh was but twelve when he became king; Josiah but eight (2 Chron. xxxiii. 1, xxxiv. 1). In an Eastern monarchy the rule of a young king, rash and without experience, guided by counsellors like himself, was naturally regarded as the greatest of evils, and the history of Rehoboam had impressed this truth on the mind of every Israelite. (Comp. Eccles. x. 16.)

(5) The people shall be oppressed. —The words paint the worst form of the decadence of an Eastern kingdom. All is chaotic and anarchic; a fierce struggle for existence; the established order of society overthrown; the experience of age derided by the petulance of youth. The picture of the corruption of a monarchy is as vivid and complete in its way as that which Thucydides (iii. 82–84) draws of the corruption of a democracy. It might seem to have been drawn from the Turkey or the Egypt of our own time.

(6, 7) When a man shall take hold of his brother. —Disorder was followed by destitution. The elder brother, the impoverished owner of the ruined dwelling, the head of a family or village, turns in his rags to the younger, whose decent garments seem to indicate comparative wealth, and would fain transfer to him the responsibilities of the first-born, though he has but a ruined tenement to give him. And instead of accepting what most men would have coveted (Gen. xxv. 31–33), the younger brother rejects it. He has enough bread and clothing (same word as in Exod. xxii. 27) for himself, and no more. It is not for him to bind up the wounds of others, or to try to introduce law where all is lawlessness. The supreme selfishness of a save qui peut asserts itself in his answer. In chap. iv. 1 we find another feature of the same social state.

For Jerusalem is ruined. —The outward evils of the kingdom are traced to their true source. Men have provoked, in the prophet's bold anthropomorphic language, "the eyes of His glory," the manifestation of His being as All-knowing, Almighty, All-holy.

(5) They declare their sin as Sodom. —The comparison is, it should be remembered, of probably an earlier date than that in chap. i. 10. In the reign of Ahaz (perhaps the prophet, editing in his old age, thought also of that of Manasseh) there was not even the homage which vice pays to virtue by feigning a virtue which it has not. Men fell into an utter shamelessness, like that of the cities of the plain (Gen. xix. 5), generally in the luxury and profligacy of their lives (Ezek. xvi. 49), perhaps also with a more definite and horrible resemblance (1 Kings xiv. 24, xv. 12; 2 Kings xxiii. 7).

Woe unto their soul! —In the midst of the confusions of the times the prophet is bidden to proclaim that the law of a righteous retribution would be seen working even there.

(12) Children are their oppressors. —This points, as before (verse 4), to the youth and yet more the character of Ahaz. The influence of the queen-mother or of the seraglio was dominant in his counsels. Cowardly (chap. vii. 2), idolatrous, delighting in foreign worship and foreign forms of art (2 Kings xvi. 10), such was the king who then sat on the throne of Judah. And the evil worked downwards from the throne. Those who should have been the leaders of the people were quick only to mislead. Princes, priests, judges were all drifting with the current of debasement.

The Lord standeth up to plead. —The people may think that the prophet is their censor. He bids them know that Jehovah is their true accuser and their judge. "Ye," he says, with all the emphasis of a sudden change of person, as if turning, as he spoke, to the nobles and elders, "ye have devoured the vineyard, ye have spoiled the poor." (Comp. chap. v. 1–8; Prov. xxx. 12–14.)

(16) Because the daughters of Zion. —From the princes that worked evil, Isaiah turns to their
The daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: (17) therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. (18) In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their caul, and their round tires like the moon, (19) the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufllers, (20) the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, (21) the rings, and nose jewels, (22) the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, (23) the glasses, and the fine gold. The "mufllers" were the long flowing veil, or mantilla, worn so as to cover the head, as now in Spain, or Egypt, or Turkey.

The ornaments of the legs.—These were chains connecting the anklets of verse 18, and so regulating the "mincing" or "tripping" motion of the wearer.

The headbands.—Better, girdles, always the most highly ornamented part of an Eastern dress, such as were worn by brides (Jer. ii. 32; Isa. xix. 18).

The tablets.—Literally, houses of the soul—i.e., of the spirit or essence of a perfume. These seem to have been of the nature of scent-bottles, or the modern vinaigrettes.

The earrings.—The noun is connected with the idea of enchantments. Better, anamulet or charms, such as are worn in the East as safeguards against the evil eye.

The rings, and nose jewels.—The first word points to the signet ring, worn both by men and women of wealth (Exod. xxxiv. 22; Num. xxxi. 50; Esth. iii. 12, viii. 8; Jer. xxii. 24); the latter to the ornaments worn pendent from the nostrils as by modern Arabian women (Gen. xxiv. 22).

The changeable suits of apparel.—Better, state, or festal, dresses. The word is used in Zech. iii. 4, of the high priest's garments, "gold and blue, and purple, and fine linen" (Exod. xxviii. 6).

The mantles.—Better, tunics. The uppermost of the two garments, commonly richly embroidered.

The wimples.—The obsolete English word describes accurately enough the large "shawl," like a Scotch plaid, worn over the tunic, as in the "vail" worn by Ruth (Ruth iv. 15).

The crisping pins.—Better, purses (2 Kings v. 23), the small embroidered bags, or reticules, attached to the girdles. The girdle itself was used as a purse by men. This was a refinement of female luxury.

The glasses—i.e., the polished metal mirrors (as in Exod. xxxix. 3; Job xxxvii. 18; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; James i. 23), which the Eastern lady carried in her hand, that she might adjust her toilet. The LXX. rendering, "Laconian [Spartan] garments," i.e., incoherently transparent, is curious enough to deserve notice, as throwing light on the social life of Alexandria, if not of Israel.

The fine linen—i.e., the chemise worn under the tunic next the skin. The Heb. sedin, like the Greek sdrwv (Mark xiv. 51), seems to imply a commerce with India; so our muslin (moult) and calico (calicent) bear record of their origin. In Sanscrit, sindhu is the term for fine linen.

The hoods—i.e., the turbans which completed the attire, and over which was thrown the "vail," or gauze...
linden, and the hoods, and the vails. 
(24) And it shall come to pass, that in stead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.
(25) Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. 
(26) And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

CHAPTER IV. — (1) And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

(2) In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. 
(3) And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that is remnant of the people of Jerusalem, shall be called. The remnant among the people shall be called, to the name of the Lord, and out of the land of Assyria shall come a sower, and they shall spread abroad, and they shall dwell in the midst of the city.

The Downfall of Pride. ISAIAH, IV. The Branch of Jehovah.
remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: 
(4) when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. 
(5) And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. 
(6) And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

CHAPTER V.—(1) Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved would find, as the traveller finds in his tent, a protection against all forms of danger, against the scorching heat of noon, and against the pelting storm.

V. 
(1) Now will I sing to my wellbeloved.—Literally, Now let me sing. The chapter bears every mark of being a distinct composition, perhaps the most elaborately written of the entire book. The prophet has not forgotten the daughters of Zion. Jehovah will wash away, as with the baptism of repentance, the "filth," the moral uncleanness, that lay beneath their outward show of beauty. The song of Jael, Judges iv. 19, verse 4, has a wide range of meaning, from the "murders" of chap. i. 15, 21, to the Molech sacrifices in which the women had borne a conspicuous part (Ps. cvi. 38; Isa. lvi. 5; Ezek. xxii. 2, 3). By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.—The word for "spirit" is better taken in its more literal meaning, as breath or blast, as in chaps. xxx. 27, 28, xl. 7. The words indicate that the prophet saw in the "blood" of which he speaks a greater enormity than that of the daughters of Zion. The one might be washed away. The other needed, as it were, the "fiery baptism" of the wrath of Jehovah. (Comp. chap. xxx. 27; Matt. iii. 11.) The Authorised Version "burning" represents the root-meaning of the word, but it is elsewhere (chap. vi. 13; Deut. xiii. 5, xvii. 7) used for "destruction" generally.

(5) And the Lord will create . . .—The verb "create" has all the solemn force with which we find it in Gen. i. 1. It is one of Isaiah's favourite words. The vineyard for a dwelling-place is almost invariably used for the tabernacle or temple, and would seem to have that meaning here. This determines the character of the "assemblies." They are not the meetings of the people for counsel or debate, as in a Greek ecclesia, but their "gatherings," their "solemn assemblies," in the courts of the temple. The thoughts of the prophet travel back to the history of the Exodus, when the presence of Jehovah was manifested as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exod. xiii. 21; Num. x. 15, x. 34, xiv. 14). In that Presence there would be safety and peace. The image is a favourite one with Isaiah, possibly as connected with the vision of chap. vi. 4, for God's protection of His people.

Upon all the glory shall be a defence.—The phrase is almost startlingly abrupt. The thought seems to be that over the "glory" of the new Jerusalem, as just described, there shall be stretched the overarching canopy of the Divine Love. The word for "defence" occurs in this sense in Ps. xix. 5, Joel ii. 16, and is still used by Jews of the "canopy" held over bride and bridegroom at a wedding. The "baldacchino" over the altar of an Italian church probably represents the image that was present to Isaiah's mind.

(6) And there shall be a tabernacle.—Perhaps It shall be . . . The thought is that of Pss. xxvi. 5, xxxi. 20. In the manifested glory of Jehovah men
hath a "vineyard in a very fruitful hill: (2) and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also 3 made a wine press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. (3) And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge I pray you, bewit me and my vineyard. (4) What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? (5) And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard:

I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be 4 trodden down: (6) and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. (7) For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry. (8) Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! 

The interpretation of the parable implies that there was to be the obliteration, at least for some time and in some measure, of the distinctness and independence of the nation's life. (Comp. Hos. iii. 4, for a like sentence in another form.)

(6) There shall come up briers and thorns.—The picture of desolation is still part of a parable. The "briers and thorns" (both the words are peculiar to Isaiah) are the base and unworthy who take the place of the true leaders of the people (Judges ix. 7–15). The absence of the pruning and the digging answers to the withdrawal of the means of moral and spiritual culture (John xv. 2; Luke xiii. 8). The command given to the clouds (comp. 2 Sam. i. 21, for the outward form of the thought) implies the cessation of all gracious spiritual influences.

(7) For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts.—The words remind us of Nathan's "Thou art the man," to David (2 Sam. xii. 7), and of our Lord's words in Matt. xxi. 42, 43.

Behold oppression.—The Hebrew word carries with it the ide of bloodshed, and points to the crimes mentioned in chaps. i. 15, iv. 4. The "cry" is that of the victims who appeal to Jehovah when they find no help in man (Gen. iv. 10; Deut. xxiv. 15; James v. 4).

(8) Woe unto them that join house to house. —The series of "Woes" which follows has no precedent in the teaching of earlier prophets. The form of Luke vi. 24–26 seems based upon it. The general indictment of chap. i. is followed by special counts. That which leads off the list was the destruction of the old village life of Palestine. The original ideal of the nation had been that it should consist of small proprietors; and the Jubilee (Lev. xxv. 13, xxvii. 24), and the law of the marriage of heiresses (Num. xxvii. 1–11, xxxvi., xxxvii. 54) were intended as safeguards for the maintenance of that ideal. In practice it had broken down, and might have taken the place of right. Landmarks were removed (Deut. xix. 14, xxvii. 17; Prov. xxii. 28), the owners of small estates forcibly expelled (Micah ii. 2) or murdered as Naboth had been (1 Kings xxi. 16); the law of debt pressed against the impoverished debtor (Neh. v. 5), and the law of the Jubilee was practically set aside. In place of the small freeholders there rose up a class of large proprietors, often the novi homines of the state (e.g., Shebna in chap. xxii. 16), while the original owners sank into slavery (Neh. v. 5) or became
In mine ears saith the Lord of hosts,
Of a truth many houses shall be desolate,
even great and fair, without inhabitant.
Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath,
and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.
Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning,
that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night,
till wine inflame them! The harp, and the viol,
the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts:
but they regard not the work of the Lord,
neither consider the operation of his hands.
Therefore my people are gone into captivity,
because they have no knowledge:
and their honourable men are famished,
and their multitude dried up with thirst.
Therefore hell hath enlarged herself,
and opened her mouth without measure:
and their glory, and their multitude,
and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth,
shall descend into it.
And the mean man shall be brought down,
and the mighty man shall be humbled,
and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:
but the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment,
and tenants at will, paying exorbitant rents in kind or money,
and liable at any moment to be evicted. Isaiah's complaint recalls the agrarian laws by which
first Licinius and then the Gracchi sought to restrain
the extension of the latifundia of the Roman patricians,
and Latimer's bold protest against the enclosure of
commons in the sixteenth century. The evil had been
denounced before by Micah (ii. 2), and in a psalm probably
contemporary with Isaiah (Ps. xiv. 11). The fact that the last year of Uzziah coincided with the Jubilee may have given a special point to Isaiah's protest.
Ten acres. The disproportion was as great as
that which we have seen in recent times in vine countries
suffering from the Phyloxera or the oidium, or in the
potato failures of Ireland. The bath was equal to
seventy-two Roman sextarii (Jos. Ant. viii. 2-9),
about seven and a half gallons, and this was to be the
whole produce of ten acres, from which an average
yield of 500 baths might have been expected. The Hebrew word for "acre" means primarily the ground
that could be ploughed in a day by a yoke of oxen.
The seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.
Here also there is an all but total failure. The homer
was a dry measure of thirty-two pecks, and the ephah
was equal to one-tenth of a homer (Exod. xiv. 11; Exod.
xvi. 35). This scanty crop—Ruth's gleanings for a
single day (Ruth ii. 17)—one-tenth of the seed sown,
was to take the place of the "thirtyfold, sixty, and a hundredfold" (Gen. xxvi. 12; Matt. xiii. 8) of average
or prosperous years.
Woe unto them that rise up early. The same class
as in verse 8 meets us under another aspect.
In Judah, as elsewhere, the oppressors were conspicuous
for their luxury (Amos vi. 5, 6). They shouted public feeling by morning banquets (Eccles. x. 16, 17; Acts ii. 14). Not wine only, but the "strong drink"
made from honey and from dates and other
fruits (possibly including, as a generic term, the beer
for which Egypt was famous) was seen on their tables.
The morning feast was followed, perhaps with hardly
a break, by an evening revel. (Comp. chaps. xxii. 15,
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a break, by an evening revel. (Comp. chaps. xxii. 15,
xxviii. 7.)
2 God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. (17) Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

(18) Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: (19) that say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!

(20) Woe unto them 3 that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

(21) Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent 4 in their own sight!

(17) Then shall the lambs feed after their manner.—Better, feed even as on their pasture. The meaning is clear enough. The lands that have been gained by oppression shall, in the day of retribution, become common pasture ground instead of being reserved for the parks and gardens of the rich; and strangers—i.e., invaders, Philistines, Assyrians, or nomadic tribes—shall devour the produce (chap. i. 7). Possibly, however, the “lambs” may stand for the poor and meek, as in contrast with the “fat ones” of the earth. The LXX. version follows a different reading (22) Woe unto them that are mighty to drink . . . strong drink.—The words in part reproduce the "woe"of verses 11, 12, but with the distinctive feature that there the revellers were simply of the careless self-indulgent type, while here they are identified with the unjust and corrupt rulers. They were heroes and vaillant men only in and for their cups. To such men it seemed a light matter to acquit the guilty and condemn the guiltless. The prophet dwells on the familiar truth, Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur. The Targum, it may be noticed, has “the mammon of falsehood” (comp. Luke xvi. 9), for the “reward” of the Hebrew.

(19) That say, Let him make speed.—We have here, as in chap. xxviii. 10, and Jer. xvii. 15, the very words of the wealthy scoffers of Judah. Such taunts are not peculiar to any age or country. We find them in the speech of Zedekiah (1 Kings xxvi. 24), in that of the mockers of 2 Pet. iii. 4. In the name of Isaiah’s second son (chap. viii. 3) we may probably find an answer to the taunt. The words “the counsel of the Holy One of Israel” were obviously emphasised with a sneer at the name on which Isaiah dwelt so constantly. (Comp. chap. xxx. 11.)

(20) Woe unto them that call evil good.—The moral state described was the natural outcome of the sins condemned in the preceding verses. So Thucydidès (iii. 82—84) describes the effects of the spirit of party in the Peloponnesian war. Rashness was called courage, and prudence timidity, and treachery cleverness, and honesty stupidity. That deliberate perversion is in all ages the ultimate outcome of the spirit that knows not God, and therefore neither fears nor loves Him, whether it shows itself in the licence of prodigality, or the diplomacy of Machiavellian statesmen, or the speculations of the worshippers of Mammon. (21) Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes.—Here again the prophet would seem to have definite individual counsellors in his mind. For such men the ideal of statesmanship was a series of shifts and expedients, based upon no principle of righteousness. (Comp. chap. xxi. 15, xxx. 1.)

(22) Woe unto them that are mighty to drink . . . strong drink.—The words in part reproduce the “woe”of verses 11, 12, but with the distinctive feature that there the revellers were simply of the careless self-indulgent type, while here they are identified with the unjust and corrupt rulers. They were heroes and vaillant men only in and for their cups. To such men it seemed a light matter to acquit the guilty and condemn the guiltless. The prophet dwells on the familiar truth, Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur. The Targum, it may be noticed, has “the mammon of falsehood” (comp. Luke xvi. 9), for the “reward” of the Hebrew.

(23) Therefore as the fire devoureth.—Literally, the tongue of fire. The scene brought before us is—(1) that of a charred and burnt-up field, horrible and hideous to Jook upon (comp. Heb. vi. 8); (2) that of a tree decayed and loathsome. The double imagery represents the end of the riotous mirth of the unjust judges.

(24) The hills did tremble.—We again trace the influence of the earthquake which was still fresh in the memories of men. (See Note on chap. ii. 10.)

Their carcasses were torn.—Better, were as sweepings, or, as refuse. The words may point either to pestilence, or war, or famine. The stress laid on scarcity in verse 10 makes it probable that the last was prominent in the prophet’s mind.

For all this his anger is not turned away.—The same formula meets us in chap. ix. 12, 21, x. 4, xiv. 27, with a solemn knell-like iteration. It bids the people remember after each woe that this is not all. They do not as yet see the end of the chastisement through which God is leading them. “For all this”
And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly; none shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind: their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it. (50) And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

CHAPTER VI.—(1) In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one

may mean (1) because of all the sins, or (2) notwithstanding all the punishment already inflicted. (30) The verb is the same as in chap. vii. 18. (31) The verb meets us in a like context in chap. vii. 18. (32) The verb is the same as in chap. vii. 18. It seems to describe the sharp shrill whistle which was to the ear what the banner was to the eye, the signal of a rendezvous. Possibly, as in chap. vii. 18, the idea of the bees swarming at the whistling of the bee-master is already in the prophet's thoughts.

From the end of the earth.—The words point to the Assyrians, the Euphrates being the boundary of Isaiah's political geography. (27—29) None shall be weary. — The three verses paint the progress of the invading army. Unrestraining, unlasting, in perfect order, they march onward. They have no need of their shields for repose. The light-armed troops are there, probably the Medes and Elamites in the Assyrian army (chap. xiii. 18). The chariots of the Assyrians themselves are there, sweeping onward like a tempest. Their unshod hoofs (the practice of shoeing horses was unknown in the ancient East) are hard as flint. Comp. Homer's epithet of "brazen-footed" (Il. v. 329); and Amos vi. 12. The battle-cry is heard far off like the roaring of lions.

They shall roar against them.—Literally, there is a roaring over him. The verb is the same as in the previous verse, and points therefore to the short and tramp of the armies. It suggests the thought of the roaring of the sea, and this in its turn that of the darkness and thick clouds of a tempest; or possibly, as before, of an earthquake; or possibly, again, of an eclipse. The word for "heavens" is not that commonly used; better, clouds.

VI.

(1) In the year that king Uzziah died.—Probably before his death. Had it been after it, the first year of king Jotham would have been the more natural formula. The chapter gives us the narrative of the solemn act of Isaiah to the office of a prophet. It does not follow that it was written at that time, and we may even believe that, if the prophet were the editor of his own discourses, he may have designedly placed the narrative in this position that men might see what he himself saw, that all that was found in the preceding chapters was but the development of what he had then heard, and yet, at the same time, a representation of the evils which made the judgments he was commissioned to declare necessary. On the relation of the call to the prophet's previous life, see Introduction.

The date is obviously given as important, and we are led to connect it with the crisis in the prophet's life of which it tells. He had lived through the last twenty years or so of Uzziah's reign. There was the show of outward material prosperity. There was the reality of much inward corruption. The king who had profaned the holiness of the Temple had either just died or was dragging out the drear of his leprous life in seclusion (2 Chron. xxvi. 21). The question, What was to be the future of this people? must have been much in the prophet's thoughts. The earthquake that had terrified Jerusalem had left on his mind a vague sense of impending judgment. It is significant that Isaiah's first work as a writer was to write the history of Uzziah's reign (2 Chron. xxvi. 22). (See Introduction.) Isaias had seen the holiness of the Temple and had heard the hymns and hallelujahs of the Levites. Suddenly he passes, as St. Paul afterwards passed, under the influence of like surroundings (Acts xxii. 17), into a state of ecstatic trance, and as though the veil of the Temple was withdrawn, he saw the vision of the glory of the Lord, as Moses (Exod. xxiv. 10) and Micaiah of old had seen it (1 Kings xxii. 19), as in more recent times it had appeared to Amos (ix. 1). The King of kings was seated on His throne, and on the right hand and on the left were the angel-armies of the host of heaven, chanting their hymns of praise.

His train filled the temple.—The word for "temple" is that which expresses its character as the "palace of the great King." (Comp. Ps. xi. 4, xxxix. 9; Hab. ii. 20.) The "train" answers to the skirts of the glory of the Lord, who clothes Himself with light as with a garment (Exod. xxxiii. 22, 23). It is noticeable (1) that the versions (LXX., Targum, Vulg.) suppress the "train," apparently as being too anthropomorphic, and (2) that to the mind of St. John this was a vision of the glory of the Christ (John xii. 41).

Above it stood the seraphims.—It is noticeable that this is the only passage in which the seraphim are mentioned as part of the host of heaven.
foundations of the threshold.

(1) The voice of him that cri López of hosts; 2 the whole earth is full of his glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

The house was filled with smoke. — The vision had its prototype in “the smoke as of a furnace” on Sinai (Exod. xix. 18), in the glory-cloud of 1 Kings viii. 10, and possibly in its lurid fire-lit darkness represented the wrath of Jehovah, as the clear brightness of the throne did His love. So in Rev. xv. 5, the “smoke from the glory of God” precedes the pouring out of the seven vials of wrath. The parallelism of the clouds of incense-smoke as the symbol of adoring prayer (Rev. v. 8, viii. 4) suggests an alternative interpretation of the latter; but in that case mention would probably have been made of the censors from which it rose. The incense-clouds of the Temple may in either case have been the starting-point of the mystic vision.

(5) Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

(6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the

The triasgion of the Seraphim.

In Num. xxii. 6, the word (the primary meaning of which is the burning ones) occurs as denoting the fiery serpents that attacked the people in the wilderness. Probably the brazen serpent which Hezekiah afterwards destroyed (2 Kings xviii. 4) had preserved the name and its significance as denoting the instruments of the fiery judgments of Jehovah. Here, however, there is no trace of the serpent form, nor again, as far as the description goes, of the animal forms of the cherubim of Ezek. i. 5—11, and of the “living creatures” of Rev. iv. 7-8. The “burning ones” are in the likeness of men, with the addition of the six wings. The patriarchal and mediaeval distinction between the seraphim that excel in love, and the cherubim that excel in knowledge, rests apparently on the etymology of the former word. The “living creatures” of Rev. iv. 7, 8, seem to unite the forms of the cherubim of Ezekiel with the six wings of the seraphim of this passage. Symbolically the seraphim would seem to be as transfigured cherubim, representing the “flaming fire” of the lightning, as the latter did the storm-winds and other elemental forces of nature (Ps. civ. 4).

Each one had six wings. — The thought seems to be that the human form was dressed as it were with six wings. One pair of wings covered the face in token of adoring homage (Ezek. i. 11); a second, the feet, including the whole lower part of the human form, while with the third they hovered as in the firmament of heaven above the skirts of the glory of the Divine Throne. It is noticeable that the monuments of Persia and of Ephesus represent the Amashaphandans (or ministers of God) as having six wings, two of which cover the feet.

(2) And one cried unto another. — In Ps. xix. 9, which, as describing a thunderstorm, favours the suggestion that the lightnings were thought of as the symbols of the fiery seraphim, we read, “in his temple doth every one say, Glory.” The threefold repetition, familiar as the Triasgion of the Church’s worship, and reproduced in Rev. iv. 8 (where “Lord God Almighty” appears as the equivalent of Jehovah Sabaoth), may represent either the mode of utterance, first antiphonal, and then in full chorus, or the might work his purification. As it is, he and his people have the vision had its prototype in “the smoke as of a furnace” on Sinai (Exod. xix. 18), in the glory-cloud of 1 Kings viii. 10, and possibly in its lurid fire-lit darkness represented the wrath of Jehovah, as the clear brightness of the throne did His love. So in Rev. xv. 5, the “smoke from the glory of God” precedes the pouring out of the seven vials of wrath. The parallelism of the clouds of incense-smoke as the symbol of adoring prayer (Rev. v. 8, viii. 4) suggests an alternative interpretation of the latter; but in that case mention would probably have been made of the censors from which it rose. The incense-clouds of the Temple may in either case have been the starting-point of the mystic vision.

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(6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the
tongs from off the altar: 7 and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

(8) Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. (9) And he said, Go, and tell this people, 8 Hear ye 8 indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. (10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

The Mission of the Prophet.

ISAIAH, VI.

The Sentence of Judicial Blindness.

tell this people, 8 Hear ye 8 indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. (10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not. — No harder task, it may be, was ever given to man. Ardent dreams of reformation and revival, the nation renewing its strength like the eagle, were scattered to the winds; and he had to face the prospect of a fruitless labour, of feeling that he did but increase the evil against which he strove. It was the very opposite mission of that to which St. Paul was sent, to “open men’s eyes, and turn them from darkness to light” (Acts xxvi. 18). It is significant that the words that followed were quoted both by the Christ (Matt. xiii. 14, 15; Mark iv. 15), by St. John (John xii. 40), and by St. Paul (Acts xxviii. 26, 27), as finding their fulfilment in their own work and the analogous circumstances of their own time. History was repeating itself. To Isaiah, as with greater clearness to St. Paul (Rom. ix.—xi.), there was given the support of the thought that the failure which he saw was not total, that even then a “remnant should be saved,” that though his people had “stumbled,” they had not “fallen” irretrievably; that the ideal Israel should one day be realised. The words point at once to the guilt of “this people”—we note the touch of scorn (“populus tace”) in the manner in which they are mentioned (chaps. viii. 11, xxvii. 11, 14; Matt. ix. 3, xxvi. 61)—and to its punishment. All was outward with them. Words did not enter into their minds (“heart,” i.e., “understanding,” rather than “feeling”). Events that were “signs of the times,” calls to repentance or to action, were taken as things of course. For such a stage, after a certain stage, there is but one treatment. It must run its course and “dree its weird,” partly as a righteous retribution, partly as the only remedial possible.

Make the heart of this people fat. —The thought is the same as that of the “hardening” of Pharaoh’s heart (Exod. viii. 19; ix. 34, &c.) and that of Sihon (Deut. ii. 29). It implies the reckless headstrong will which defies restraint and warnings. So the poets of Greece, in their thoughts as to the Divine government of the world, recognised the truth that there is a judicial blindness and, as it were, insanity of will that comes as the consequence of sinful deeds (Ezech. Aq. 370—380). The medieval adage, “Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat,” expresses one aspect of the same law; but the vult perdere is excluded by the clearer revelation of the Divine purpose (Ezech. xviii. 23; 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Peter ii. 9), as “not willing that any should perish.”

Shut their eyes. —Literally, as in chap. xix. 10, daud, or beheur. Possibly the phrase refers to the barbarous practice, not unknown in the East, of thus closing the eyes as a punishment. Burder (Oriental Customs, i. 98) mentions a son of the Great Mogul who was thus punished by his father. For the
(11) Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate. (12) And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. (13) But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teill tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

CHAPTER VII.—(1) And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. (2) And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria 4 is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

VII.

(1) It came to pass in the days of Ahaz.—The whole reign of Jotham comes between chaps. vi. and vii. On Isaiah's life during that period, see Introduction. The work of the prophet now carries him into the main current of history, as recorded in 2 Kings xv., xvi.; 2 Chron. xxviii., and in Assyrian inscriptions. The facts to be borne in mind are—(1) that the kingdom of Israel under Menahem had already become tributary to Assyria (2 Kings xv. 19, 20); (2) that the object of the alliance between Pekah, a bold and ambitious usurper, and Rezin, was to organise a resistance against Assyria, such as that in which Uzziah had taken part (Schrader, Keil-Inscriften, pp. 305—421, quoted by Cheyne), that first Jotham (2 Kings xv. 37), and then Ahaz, apparently refused to join the confederacy, and that the object of the attack of the allied kings was either to force Ahaz to join, or else to depose him, bring the dynasty of David to a close, and set a follower of their own, probably a Syrian, on the throne of Judah. But could not prevail against it.—The words obviously refer to a special stage in the campaign. The king of Syria seems to have been the leading spirit of the confederacy. 2 Chron. xxviii. 5—15 represents Judah as having sustained a great and almost overwhelming defeat. Jerusalem, however, being besieged (2 Kings xvi. 5) was not absolutely taken (2 Kings xvi. 5); 2 Kings xvi. 6 records the capture of the port of Elath, on the Gulf of Akaba, by Rezin. (9) Syria is confederate with Ephraim.—Literally, rests upon. Ephraim stands, of course, as often elsewhere, for the northern kingdom of Israel as a whole.

As his heart was moved.—There was a general panic. King and people alike asked, How could they resist? Would it not be better to join the confederacy, and take their chance with it in attacking the king of Assyria? The image of the trees is generic, but suggests something like the quivering of the aspen leaves.
ISAIAH, VII.  Faith the Condition of Stability.

(3) Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and 1 Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the *conduit of the upper pool in the 2highway of the fuller's field; (4) and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, 3 neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. (5) Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, (6) Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal:

(7) thus saith the Lord Gop, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

(8) For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken, 4 that it be not a people. (9) And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. (10) If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

(3) Go forth now to meet Ahaz . . . -At this crisis the prophet, already recognised as such, and gathering his disciples round him (chap. vii. 16), is told to deliver a message to the king. He finds the nation halting between two opinions. He is making a show of resistance, but in reality he is not depending either on the protection of Jehovah, or the courage of his people, but on a plan of his own. Why should he not continue to pay tribute to Assyria, as Uziah and Menahem (2 Kings xv. 10) had done, and write to Tiglath-pileser to attack the territories of the invading kings, as he actually did at a later stage in the war (2 Kings xv. 29)?

Thou and Shear-jashub thy son. -Assuming chap. vi. to give the first revelation of the idea of the "remnant," it would follow that the birth of the son whose name (Remnant returns—the return being both literal and spiritual—i.e., "is converted"), embodied a prophecy, must have followed on that revelation, and he was probably, therefore, at the time a stripling of sixteen or eighteen. It may be noted that Isaiah had in the history of Hosea i., ii, the example of a prophet who, as his children were born, gave them names which were terribly or hopefully significant. Each child was, as it were, a sign and portent (chap. viii. 18). The fact that the mother of his children was herself a prophetess (chap. viii. 3), sharing his hopes and fears, gives a yet deeper interest to the fact.

At the end of the conduit . . . -The king was apparently superintending the defensive operations of the siege, probably cutting off the supply of water outside the walls, as Hezekiah afterwards did (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4). The "upper pool" has been identified with the Upper Gihon pool (Birket-el-Mamilla) or the "dragon's well" of Neh. ix. 13. A lower pool meets us in chaps. xxi. 9. The "fuller's field" was near En-rogelem (chap. xxxvi. 2; 2 Sam. xvii. 17).

(4) Take heed, and be quiet . . . -The prophet meets the fears of the king by words of comfort. The right temper for such a time was one of calm courage, logical prediction in the prophet's utterances. Others appear to have—"the son of Kish" (1 Sam. x. 11), and Saul himself of David as "the son of Jesse" (1 Sam. xx. 30). It pointed out the fact that Pekah was after all but an upstart adventurer, who had made his way to the throne by rebellion and murder.

(6) Let us make a breach therein for us . . . -The words imply an assault on the line of fortresses that defended Judah (2 Chron. xxvi. 9, 10, xxvii. 1). If they were won the issue of the war would be practically decided. Jerusalem itself does not appear to have been actually besieged.

The son of Tabeal.—The mode of description, as in the last verse, indicates that the man was of low origin. The name "good is God" is Aramaic, and points to his being an officer in Rezin's army. It meets us again in Ezra iv. 7, among the Aramean adversaries of Israel, and appears in the term Tubit in Assyrian inscriptions, which give us his actual name as Ashar (Schrader, Keil Inschrift., p. 118). Tubaal appears in an inscription of Semacherib as appointed by him as governor of Zidon (Records of the Past, i. 35). Dr. Kay, connecting the name with Tab-rimmon ("Rimmon is good"), conjectures that the substitution of El ("God") for the name of the Syrian deity may indicate that he was the representative of the family of Naaman, and, like him, a proeclipse to the faith of Israel.

(8) The head of Syria is Damascus . . . -The prediction of the failure of the alliance is emphasised. Each city, Damascus and Samaria, should continue to be what it was, the head of a comparatively weak kingdom, and should not be aggrandised by the conquest of Judah and Jerusalem. There is an implied comparison of the two hostile cities and their kings with Jerusalem and its supreme King, Jehovah. Bolder critics, like Ewald, assume that a clause expressing that contrast has been displaced by that which now follows, and which they reject as a later interpolation.

Within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken.—Assuming the genuineness of the clause, we have in it the first direct chronological prediction in the prophet's utterances. Others follow in chaps. xvi. 14, xvii. 1, xxvi. 6, xxviii. 1. Rockoning from b.c. 736 as the probable date of the prophecy, the sixty-five years bring us to B.C. 671. At that date Assyrian inscriptions show that Assurbanipal, the "Asnapper" of Ezra iv. 2—10, co-regent with his father Esarhaddon, had carried off the last remnant of the people of Samaria, and peopled it with an alien race (Smith's Assyrian Art, p. 363). This completed the work which had been begun by Salmanasar and Sargon (2 Kings xvii. 6). Ephraim then was no more a people.

(9) If ye will not believe . . . —The prophet reads the thoughts that were working in the king's mind. He had no faith in these predictions terminating at
Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, (11) Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. (12) But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. (13) And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? (14) Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called...
his name Immanuel. (13) Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. (16) For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

The article emphasizes the definiteness of his visions. He sees "the virgin mother" of the far-off future. And the prophet learns to connect the vision with the history of his own time. The growth of that Christ-child in the far-off future serves as a measure of time for the events that were passing, or about to pass, within the horizon of his earthly vision. Before the end of an interval not longer than that which separates youth from manhood, the Syro-Ephraimitic confederacy should be broken up. So far, here also, we have a coherent and consistent view. It is attended, however, by some serious difficulties. A "sign," in the language of Hebrew prophets, is that which proves to the person to whom it is offered that there is a supernatural power working with him who gives it. If a prediction, it is one which will speedily be tested by a personal experience, the very offer of which implies in the prophet the certainty of its fulfillment. He stakes, as it were, his reputation as a prophet on the issue. (Comp. chaps. xxxvii. 30, xxxviii. 7; Exod. iv. 8-14; 1 Sam. xii. 16.) But how could the prediction of a birth in the far-off distance, divided by several centuries from Isaiah's time, be a sign to Ahaz or his people? And what would be the meaning, we may ask again, of the words "butter and honey shall he eat," as applied to the Christ-child? Do not the words "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil . . . " point, not to a child seen as afar in vision, but to one who was to be born and grow up among the men of that generation? Should we not have expected, if the words had implied a clear revelation of the mystery of the virgin-Birth, that Isaiah himself would have dwelt upon it elsewhere, that later prophets would have named it as one of the notes of the Messiah, that it would have become a tradition of the Jewish schools of interpretation? As a matter of fact, no such allusion is found in Isaiah, nor in the prophets that follow him (see Note on Jer. xxxi. 22, for the only supposed, one cannot say even "apparent," exception); the Jewish interpreters never include this among their notes of the Christ. It is indeed, as has been said in the New Testament portion of this Commentary, one of the strongest arguments for the historical, non-mythical character of the series of events in Matt. i., Luke i., and ii., that they were contrary to prevailing expectation. (See Note on Matt. i. 23.) A truer way of interpretation than either of those that have been thus set forth, is, it is believed, open to us. We may remember (1) as regards St. Matthew's interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy, that two other predictions cited, as by the Evangelist himself, in the history of the Nativity, in Matt. i. and ii. are, as it were, detached from their position, in which they had a distinct historical meaning, and a new meaning given to them (see Notes on Matt. ii. 15, 18), and that this holds good of other passages elsewhere cited (see Notes on Matt. xxi. 5, xxvii. 9). It was not, as some have thought, that facts were invented or imagined that prophecies might appear to be fulfilled, but that the facts being given, prophecies were shown to have a meaning which was fulfilled in them, though that meaning may not have been present to the prophet's own mind. In this case the use of the word for "virgin" in the LXX. version may have determined St. Matthew's interpretation of the words. Here, in the history which had come to him attested by evidence which satisfied him, he found One of the highest sense, was the "Immanuel" of Isaiah's prophecy. We must not forget (2) the limits within which the prophets lived and moved, as they are stated in 1 Pet. i. 10. They "enquired and searched diligently" as to the time and manner of the fulfillment of their hopes; but their normal state (the exceptions being only enough to prove the rule) is one of enquiry and not of definite assurance. They had before them the ideal of a righteous king, a righteous sufferer, of victory over enemies and sin and death, but the "times and the seasons" were hidden from them, as they were afterwards from the apostles, and they thought of that ideal king as near, about to burst in upon the stage that was filled with the forms of Assyria, Syria, Ephraim, Judah, as the apostles appear to have thought afterwards that the advent of the Lord would come upon the stage of the world's history that was filled with the forms of Emperors and rebellions Jews and perverse heretics and false prophets (1 Thess. iv. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 51; 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4; 1 Pet. iv. 7; 1 Tim. iv. 1-5; 1 John ii. 18). And neither prophets nor apostles, though left to the limitations of an imperfect knowledge, were altogether wrong. Prophecy has, in Bacon's words, its "springing and germinating accomplishments." The natural birth of the child Immanuel was, to the prophet and his generation, a pledge and earnest of the abiding history of the two kingdoms which they expected (Matt. i.-iii.); the prophecy of the Assyrian and Babylonian confederacy, one of the strongest arguments for the divinity of the Messiah, of the virgin birth, of the coming of the King of Israel, of the coming of the great day of the Lord in which the righteous sufferer, of righteousness shall reign, and the earth be converted to a great city, (see Notes on Jer. xxxi. 22, 26; xxxii. 19); the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, the city of the great kings, the city of the foundation of the world, and the abode of all the holy of Israel (see Notes on Jer. xxxi. 20), probably, as the prophet spoke them, not with reference to the land that thou abhorrest-The words of the far-off future. had come to him attested by evidence which satisfied him, as regards St. Matthew's interpretation of the words, "Choose the good, refuse the evil, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." (16) For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.
The King of Assyria.

ISAIAH, VII. The Desolation of Judah.

(17) The Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria. (18) And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. (19) And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes. (20) In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard. (21) And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; (22) and it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land. (23) And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.

xvi. 9, xvii. 6), a fulfilment all the more remarkable in that it was preceded by what seemed an almost decisive victory over Judah (2 Chron. xxviii. 5—15), of which the prophet makes no mention.

(37) The Lord shall bring upon thee ... The prophet's language shows that he reads the secret thoughts of the king's heart. He was bent on calling in the help of the king of Assyria. Isaiah warns him (reserving the name of the king, with all the emphasis of suddenness, for the close of his sentence) that by so doing he is bringing on himself a more formidable invasion than that of Syria and Ephraim, worse than any that had been known since the separation of the two kingdoms (we note the use of the event as a chronological era), than that of Shishak under Rehoboam (2 Chron. xii. 2), or Zerah (2 Chron. xiv. 9), or of Baasha under Asa (2 Chron. xvi. 1), or of the Moabites and Ammonites under Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 1), or of the Philistines and Arabians under Jehoram (3 Chron. xxi. 16). So in 2 Chron. xxviii. 19, 20, we read that "the Lord brought Judah low and made it naked," that "Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, came unto Ahaz and distressed him," and this was but the precursor of the great invasions under Sargon and Sennacherib.

(40) The Lord shall hiss for the fly ... We read that (21, 22) A man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; ... Better, two eves. Not only should cultivation cease, but the flocks and herds that had before been counted by hundreds or thousands should be counted now by units, two ewes and a heifer for a man's whole stock, and yet (we note the prophet's irony once more in the use of the word "abundance") even that should be enough for a population reduced in proportion. There should be "milk and honey" for the scattered remnant. They should have that, and nothing but that, to eat, ad nauseam vagaque. The words are grouped together with a grim irony as reminding men of the proverbial words of praise which spoke of Canaan as "a land of milk and honey" (Exod. iii. 17).

(20) Shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired.—Better, "with the razor." The words find a parallel in the "made him naked" of 2 Chron. xxviii. 19. The term "hired" applies to the tribute which Ahaz was about to pay to Tilgath-pileser. He thought that he was securing an ally: he was but hiring a razor (there is, perhaps, the implied thought that the razor is in other hands than his) that should sweep away all the signs of strength, and leave him an open shame and scorn to all who looked on him. (2 Sam. x. 4). From head to foot, not sparing even the beard, to maltreat which was the last extreme of Oriental outrage, he and his kingdom should be laid bare and naked to his enemies. Possibly there may be an allusive reference (Kay) to Lev. xiv. 9. The nation, leprous in its guilt (chap. i. 6), needs the treatment which was prescribed for the leper.

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(23) Where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings.—The words seem to contain an allusive reference to Song of Sol. viii. 11, and are therefore worth noting as bearing on the date of that book. There, however, the sun represents the annual produce of the vineyard, here the rent of the vines at a shekel each, a high rent apparently, and indicating a choice quality of vine. The costly vineyards of the hills of Judah should be left to run wild without a keeper (chap. v. 10), and thorns and briers would rapidly cover it. "Silverling" was an old English word for any silver coin, and appears in Tyndale's version of Acts xix. 19, and Coverdale's of Judg. ix. 4, xvi. 5; here it stands for "shekel." The modern rent is said to be a piastrino (2¼d.) for each vine; the shekel was worth 2s. 3d. (Kay).
CHAPTER VIII.—(1) Moreover the Lord said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man’s pen concerning 1 Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

(2) And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

(3) And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said

The words admit of two or three distinct interpretations: (1) the invader shall march through the desolate vineyards shooting down any whom they found, or (2) the people shall carry bows as a protection against the invaders, or (3) the thickets of thorns and briars shall become covert for the wolves and jackals, the hyena and the bear, and men shall need bows and arrows for their protection against the beasts of prey. Of these (3) has most in its favour.

(4) And on all hills that shall be digged . . . —Better, “that are digged,” or that used to be digged with the hoe. The picture of devastation is completed. On the hill-sides, every inch of which was once brought under careful vine culture, “Thou will not enter for fear of thorns and briars,” i.e., thou wilt not venture on the task of tilling the soil in face of such disarrangements. What would be the use of hoeing such a tangled mass of bushwood? At the best it must be left for such pasturage as oxen and sheep might find there as they browsed, and they by their trampling should but increase the mischief. The rendering of the Authorised version conveys the thought that where there was the careful culture thus described, there should be an exception to the general desolation. Below this, if we accept it, there may be a spiritual meaning like that of Jer. iv. 3 (Kay).

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Take thee a great roll . . . —Better, a large tablet. The noun is the same as that used for “mirrors” or “glasses” in chap. iii. 23. The writings of the prophet were commonly written on papyrus and placed in the hands of his disciples to be read aloud. For private and less permanent messages men used small wooden tablets smeared with wax on which they wrote with an iron stylus. (Comp. Job xix. 24; Isa. xxx. 8.) Here the tablet was to be large, and the writing was not to be with the sharp point of the artist or learned scribe, but with a “man’s pen,” i.e., such as the common workmen used for sign-boards, that might fix the gaze of the careless passer-by (Hab. ii. 2), and on that tablet, as though it were the heading of a proclamation or dedication, he was to write to MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ. That mysterious name, which we may render “Speed-plunder, haste- spoil,” was, for at least nine months, to be the enigma of Jerusalem.

(2) And I took unto me faithful witnesses.—That the prophet’s challenge to his gainsayers might be made more emphatic, the setting-up of the tablet is to be formally attested. And the witnesses whom the prophet calls were probably men of high position, among those who had been foremost in advising the alliance with Assyria. Of Uriah or Urijah, the priest, we know that he complied with the king’s desire to introduce an altar after the pattern which he had seen at Damascus (2 Kings xvi. 10, 11). Of Zechariah we know nothing; but the name was a priestly one (2 Chron. xxiv. 20), and it has been conjectured, from his association with Isaiah, that he may have been the writer of a section of the book that has come to be later Zechariah (Zech. ix.—xii.), which bears traces of being of a much earlier date than the rest of the book. The combination of “Zachariah, son of Jeherechiah” reminds us of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, and points to a priestly family. (See Not on Matt. xxiii. 35.) In 2 Chron. xxix. 13 the name appears as belonging to the Asaph section of the Levites. A more probable view is that he was identical with the father of the queen then reigning, and was therefore the grandfather of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxv. 1). Probably, looking to the prophet’s habit of tracing auguries in names, the two witnesses may have been partly chosen for the significance of those which they bore, Uriah, i.e., “Jah is my light,” Zechariah, i.e., “Jah will remember,” each of which comes in with a special appropriateness.

(3) I . . . the prophetess . . . —The word may have been given by courtesy to a prophet’s wife as such. Elsewhere, however, as in the case of Deborah (Judg. iv. 4) and Huldah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 22), it implies prophetic gift. Possibly, therefore, we may think of the prophet and his wife as having been drawn together by united thoughts and counsels, in contrast with the celibate life of Jeremiah (Jer. xvi. 2), the miseries of Hosia’s marriage (Hosea i., ii.), and the sudden bereavement of Ezekiel (Ezek. xxiv.
ISAIAH, VIII.

The Land of Immanuel.

The Lord to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

The Lord spake also unto me again, saying, Forasmuch as this people refuse the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:

16—18. We may, perhaps, trace on this view, the wife's hand in the toilet inventory of chap. iii. 16—24.

For before the child shall have knowledge to cry...

Here then was another sign like that of chap. vii. 14—16. The two witnesses of verse 2 were probably summoned to the circumcision and naming of the child, and the mysterious name at which all Jerusalem had gazed with wonder was given to the now-born infant. The prediction is even more definite than before. Before the first cries of childhood (Heb., Abi, Ami) should be uttered, i.e., within a year of its birth, the spoils of the two capitals of the kings of the confederate armies should be carried to the king of Assyria. The conclusion of the period thus defined would coincide more or less closely with the longer period assigned at an earlier date (chap. vii. 16). Historically the trans-Jordanic region and Damascus fell before Tigrath-pileser; Samaria, besieged by Salmaneser, before his successor Sargon (2 Kings xv. 29, xvi. 8, xvi. 9). Forasmuch as this people refuse the waters of Shiloah...

Grammatically, the words "this people" might seem to refer to Judah, and suggest the thought that the tyranny of Ahaz had made him so unpopular that his subjects welcomed the invaders. On this view Ahaz sought the alliance with Tigrath-pileser as an agnostic, no less than against Syria or Ephraim. He was as a Ferdinand of Naples falling back on Austria to protect him against Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel. What line was the prophet to take? Was he to take the words of the river..."—The metaphor within a metaphor is quite after the manner of Isaiah. The armies of Assyria are like a river in flood; the outspread waters on either side of the main stream are like the expanded wings of a great bird sweeping down on its prey.

And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me...
that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, (12) Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. (13) Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. (14) And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (15) And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. (16) Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. (17) And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth
Isaiah and his Children as Seers.

Isaiah, VIII.

Familiar Spirits, or the Living God.

his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. (19) Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion. (20) And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? (20) To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (21) And they shall pass through it, hardly bested and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret not altogether exempt. He is content to "wait," even though Jehovah "hide His face," though predictions seem to fail (see Note on verse 1), and all seems dark and hopeless. There is, perhaps, a contrast between the fact that Jehovah hides His face from the house of Jacob, that all is dark for the nation's life as such, while yet the prophet, in his own individuality, can "look for Him" with the eye of faith. (18) Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me. . . .—In the mystic significance of his own name (Isaiah—Salvation of Jehovah) and of the names of his sons: Remnant shall return, and Speed-plunder, Haste-spoil, possibly also in that of Immanuel, the prophet finds a sufficient revelation of the future. Each was a nomen et omen for those who had ears to hear. Could the disciples of Isaiah complain that they had no light thrown upon the future, when, so to say, they had those embodied prophecies? The children disappear from the scene, and we know nothing of their after-history, but all their life long, even with or without a special prophetic work, they must have been, by virtue of their names, witnesses to a later generation, of what Isaiah had predicted. In Isaiah's own life, as including symbolic acts as well as prophetic words (chap. xx. 2), we have a further development of the thought that he was "a sign and a wonder." (Comp. Ezek. xii. 11.) The citation of the words, "I and the children whom thou hast given me," in Heb. ii. 13, is noticeable here chiefly as showing how little the writer of that Epistle cared in this and other quotations for the original meaning of the words as determined by the context. It was enough for him that they should lie like the prophecy to him, but claimed a fellowship with the children whom the Father had given him (John xvii. 6, 12), as being alike servants and children of God, called to do His will. (20) And when they shall say unto you. . . .—This was the temptation to which the disciples of Isaiah were exposed, and to which they were all but yielding. Why should not they do as others did, and consult the soothsayers, who were in such great demand (chap. ii. 6), as to the anxious secrets of the coming years. The words point to some of the many forms of such soothsaying (Deut. xviii. 10). The "familiar spirit" (the English term being a happy paraphrase rather than a translation), is closely connected, as in the case of the witch of Endor (1 Sam. xxviii. 1—20), with the idea of necromancy, i.e., with the claim to have a demon or spirit of divination (Acts xvi. 16), on the part of the wizards (comp. Hom. Il., xxiii. 10; Virg. Aen., vi. 492) that "peep" "old English for "pipe," "chirp," "whistle") and mutter. This peculiar intonation, thrilling on the nerves with a sense of expectant awe, seems to have been characteristic of the soothsayers of Isaiah's time (chap. xxix. 4).

Should not a people seek unto their God? . . .—That, the prophet says, is the only true pathway to such knowledge as is good for man. The latter part of the question is abruptly elliptical: Are men to seek on behalf of the living to the dead? What ground, he seems to ask, have we for thinking that the spirits of the dead can be recalled to earth, or, if that were possible, that they know more than the living do? May it not even be that they know less? The prophet views the state of the departed as Hesekiah views it (chap. xxxviii. 18), as one, not of annihilation, but of dormant or weakened powers. (20) To the law and to the testimony.—The words are only remotely and by analogy an exhortation to the study of Scripture in general, or even to that of the Law of Moses in particular. "The law and the testimony" are obviously here, as in verse 16, the "word of Jehovah," spoken to the prophet himself, the revelation which had come to him with such an intensity of power. If they speak not according to this word. . . .—The personal pronoun refers to the people of verse 19 who were hunting after soothsayers. The second clause should be rendered, for them there is no light of morning. The light here is that of hope rather than of knowledge. No morning dawn should shine on those who haunted the caves and darkened rooms of the diviners, the sages of the spiritualists of Jerusalem. The verse admits, however, of a different construction. As the Hebrew idiom, "If they shall . . ." stands, as in Ps. xcvi. 11; Heb. iv. 3, 5, for the strongest form of negative prediction, so "if they shall not . . ." may stand here for the strongest form of positive. So taken the verse would read, Surely they will speak according to this word (i.e., will have recourse to the true Revelation when there is no morning-dawn for them, when they look above and around, and see nothing but darkness. (21) And they shall pass through it . . .—i.e., through the land over which hangs the sunless gloom. The abruptness with which the verse opens, the absence of any noun to which the pronoun "it" may refer, has led some critics (Cheyne) to transpose the two verses. So arranged, the thought of the people for whom there is no dawning passes naturally into the picture of their grooping in that thick darkness, and then the misery of that midnight wandering is aggravated by the horrors of starvation. The words may point to the horrors of a literal famine (chap. ii. 11); but as the darkness is clearly figurative, so probably is the hunger—not a famine of bread, but of hearing the word of the Lord. The Authorised version rightly translates the indefinite singular by the plural. When they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves. . . .—Here is what the faithful who waited for the Lord might bear even that darkness and that hunger, as soldiers bear their night-march fasting before the battle. Not so with the panic-stricken and superstitious crowd. With them despair would show itself in curses. (Comp.
Trouble and Darkness.

CHAPTER IX.—(1) Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphthali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee 1 of the nations.

(2) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

(3) Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, the sheaves bringing their sheaves, the border-lands of the Phoenician frontier of the northern kingdom, inhabited by a mixed population, and therefore known as “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Matt. iv. 15, 16) what in medieval German would have been called the Heidenmark.

The way of the sea...—The words throw us back upon chap. viii. 21, 22. The prophet sees in his vision a light shining on the forlorn and wretched wanderers. They have been wandering in the “valley of the shadow of death” (the phrase comes from Ps. xxii. 4; Job iii. 5), almost as in the gloom of Sheol itself. Now there breaks in the dawn of a glorious day. Historically the return of some of the inhabitants of that region to their allegiance to Jehovah and the house of David (2 Chron. xxx. 11, 13) may have been the starting point of the prophet’s hopes. The words have to the Christian student a special interest, as having been quoted by St. Matthew (Matt. iv. 15, 16) in connection with our Lord’s ministry in Galilee, perhaps with His being “of Nazareth,” which was in the tribe of Zebulun. We cannot positively say that such a fulfillment as that was in the prophet’s thoughts. The context shows that in his thinking of Assyrian invasions, and the defeat of Assyrian armies, of a nation growing strong in numbers and prosperity. In this, as in other cases, the Evangelist adapts the words of prophecy to a further meaning than that which apparently was in the mind of the writer, and interprets them by his own experience. When he compared the state of Galilee, yet more, perhaps, that of his own soul, before and after the Son of man had appeared as the light of the world, Isaiah’s words seemed the only adequate expression of the change.

(2) The people that walked in darkness...—Better, following the marginal reading of the Hebrew: Thou hast increased its joy. The picture is one of unmingled brightness; the return as of a golden age, the population growing to an extent never attained before (comp. chap. xxvi. 15; Jer. xxxi. 15; Ezek. xxxvi. 11), and scarcely admits of the dark shadow introduced by the reading of the text, unless, with some critics (Kay), we see in the words a contrast between the outward prosperity of the days of Solomon and Uzziah, in which there was no permanent joy, and the abundancy of joyfulness under the ideal king.

They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest...—The words “before thee” are significant. The gladness of the people is that of worshippers at a sacrifice fest (chap. xxv. 6; Dout. xii. 7, 12, 13), who find the secret spring of blessing in their consciousness of the presence of Jehovah. So the New Testament writers speak of “rejoicing in the Lord” (Phil. iii. 1), of “joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. xiv. 17). This “joy of harvest” represents the peaceful side of that gladness, thought of as the gift of God (Acts xiv. 17). But it

Rev. xvi. 11, 21.) They would curse at once the king who had led them to destruction, and the God whom they had neglected. Possibly the words may mean, “the king who is also their God,” as in Amos v. 26 (Heb.) and Zeph. i. 5; but the analogy of 1 Kings xxi. 13 is in favour of the more literal meaning. The “upward” look is, we must remember, that of despair and defiance, not of hope. Upwards, downwards, behind, before, there is nothing for them but the darkness in which they are driven, or drifting onward. All seems utterly hopeless. Like Dante, they find themselves in a land “where silent is the sun.”

IX.

Light and Joy.

(1) Nevertheless the dimness...—It is obvious, even in the English version, that the chapters are wrongly divided, and that what follows forms part of the same prophetic utterance as chap. viii. That version is, however, so obscure as to be almost unintelligible, and requires an entire remodelling:—Surely there is no gloom to her that was afflicted. In the former time he brought shame on the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphthali; but in the latter he bringeth honour on the way by the sea, beyond Jordan, the circuit of the Gentiles.

The prophet had seen in the closing verses of chap. viii. the extreme point of misery. That picture, as it were, dissolves, and another takes its place. She that was afflicted, the whole land of Israel, should have no more affliction. The future should be in striking contrast with the past. The lands of Zebulun and Naphthali, the region afterwards known as the Upper and Lower Galilee, had been laid waste and spoiled by Tiglath-pilneser (2 Kings xv. 29). That same region, described by the prophet in different terms (the former representing the tribal divisions, the latter the geographical) is hereafter to be the scene of a glory greater than Israel had ever known before.

The way of the sea...—The context shows that the “sea” is that which appears in Bible history under the names of the sea of Chinnereth (Num. xxxiv. 11; Deut. iii. 17), the Sea of Galilee, the Sea of Tiberias (John vi. 1), Gennesaret (Mark vi. 53). The high road thence to Damascus was known as Via Maris in the time of the Crusaders (Renan, quoted by Cheyne).

Beyond Jordan.—This, the Peræa of later geography, included the regions of Galilee and Bashan, the old kingdoms of Moab and Ammon, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. These also had suffered from the ravages of the Assyrian armies under Pul (1 Chron. v. 26).

Galilee of the nations.—The word Galilee, derived from the same root as Gilgal (Josh. v. 9), means strictly “a circle,” or “circuit.” It was applied to the

1 Or, populous.
2 Or, to him.
and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. (4) For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of a Midian. (5) For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; as the prophet brooded over it, might well lead on to the thought of One who should, in a yet higher sense than as being the pledge of Divine protection, be as "God with us," even the earthly surroundings of the prophet's life may not have been without their share of suggestiveness. The kings of Egypt and Assyria with whom his nation had been brought into contact delighted in long lists of epithetic names (e.g., "the great, the king, the unrivalled, the protector of the just, the noble warrior." Inscription of Sennacherib, in Records of the Past, i. p. 238), teaching their greatness and their glory. It was natural that the prophet should see in the king of whom he thought as the future conqueror of all the world-powers that were founded on might and not on right, One who should bear a name formed, it might be, after that same word as that here rendered "oppressors" drove the people to their labours with their rods.

As in the day of Midian.—The historical allusion was probably suggested by the division of spoil that had been in the prophet's thoughts. Of all victories in the history of Israel, that of Gideon over the Midianites had been most conspicuous for this feature (Judges viii. 24—27). In Ps. lxxiii. 9—11 (which the mention of Assur shows to have been nearly contemporary with Isaiah) we find a reference to the same battle. Men remembered "the day of Midian" centuries after its date, as we remember Poitiers and Agincourt.

(5) For every battle of the warrior . . .—Here again the whole verse requires re-translating: "Every boot of the warrior that tramples noisily, and the cloak rolled in blood, are, (i.e., shall be) for burning, (as) fuel for fire. The picture of the conquerors collecting the spoil is continued from verse 3. The victory is decisive, and the reign of peace begins, and the weapons of war, the garments red with blood (chap. lixii. 1—3), the heavy boot that makes the earth ring with the warrior's tread, these shall all be burnt up. Like pictures of a time of peace are found in Zech. ix. 10; Ezek. xxxix, 9; and the adjective "burning," probably that which follows is as the prophet brooded

for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

The Yoke of the Oppressor Broken.

ISAIAH, IX.

The Coming of the Prince of Peace.

1 Or, When thou hast broken.
2 Or, When the whole battle of the warrior was.
3 Or, and it was given.
4 Heb, ment.
5 John xiv. 16.
6 but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.
7 Isa. xxvi. 20.
8 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
The Kingdom of Righteousness.

ISAIAH, IX

The Pride of Ephraim.

(7) Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

(8) The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel. And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,

(9) The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars. (10) Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together; (11) The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth.

For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they


**The Branch and Rush Cut off.**

The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. (16) For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed. (17) Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall he have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

(18) For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke. (19) Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother. (20) And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm: (21) Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah.

For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

**CHAPTER X.—(1) Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have seen.**

They had not "turned" to the Lord, there were no proofs of that conversion which true prophets and preachers have at all times sought after.

(14) **Head and tail, branch and rush.** . . . The "branch" is strictly that of the palm-tree, which in its stately height answered to the nobles of the land, while the "rush," the emblem of a real or affected lowliness (chap. viii. 5) represented the "mean man" of chap. ii. 9. The same proverbial formula meets us in chap. xix. 15.

(15) The ancient and honourable . . . —Comp. chap. iii. 2, 3, for the meaning of the words. These, the prophet seems to say, were the true leaders of the people. The ideal work of the prophet was, indeed, that of a teacher who was to lead even them, but corrupio optimi pessimia; and to Isaiah, as to Jeremiah, there was no class so contemptible and base as that of spiritual guides whose policy was that of a time-serving selfishness. The verse is rejected by some critics as a marginal note that has found its way into the text; but the prophet may well have given his own interpretation of this formula. (Comp. chap. xxviii. 7, xxix. 10; Jer. xiv. 14, xxxii. 9—40.)

(17) Therefore the Lord shall have no joy . . . —The Hebrew tenses are in the past, The Lord had no joy. The severity of the coming judgment is represented as not sparing even the flower of the nation's youth, the widows and orphans who were the special objects of compassion both to God and man. The corruption of the time was universal, and the prophet's formula, "For all this his anger is not turned away. . . ." tolls again like the knell of doom.

Folly.—Better, blasphemy or villaiing.

(18) **It shall devour the briers and thorns.** . . . —The words are obviously figurative for men who were base and vile, as in 2 Sam. xxiii. 6; but the figure may have been suggested by chap. vii. 23, 24. The outward desolation, with its rank growth of underwood, was to the prophet's eye a type of the moral condition of his people. And for such a people sin becomes the punishment of sin, and burns like a fire in a forest thicket, leaving the land clear for fresh culture and a better growth. (Comp. chap. xxxix. 11, 12; Jas. iii. 5; Heb. vi. 8.)

(19, 20) Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened . . . —The vision of darkness and famine which had come before the prophet's eyes in chap. viii. 21 appears once again, and here, as there, it is a question whether the words are to be understood literally or figuratively. The definiteness of the language of verse 20 suggests the thoughts of the horrors of a famine like that of Samaria (2 Kings vi. 28, 29), or of Deut. xxxiii. 53—57; Zech. xi. 9. But even that scene of horror might be only typical of a state of chaos and confusion pervading the whole order of society, fierce passions, jealousies, rivalries working out the destruction of the nation's life; such as Thucydides (iii. 82—84) has painted as the result of the Peloponnesian war. The mention of Ephraim and Manasseh as conspicuous in the self-destructive work confirms the figurative interpretation. They were devouring "the flesh of their own arm" when they allowed their old tribal jealousies (Judg. vii. 1, xii. 1—4; 2 Sam. xix. 43) to break up the unity of the nation.

And they together shall be against Judah.—This formed the climax of the whole. The only power of union that showed itself in the northern kingdom was to perpetuate the great schism in which it had its origin. The idea that Israel as such was forgotten. Ephraim and Manasseh could join in a common expedition against Judah when they could join in nothing else. Of this the alliance of Pekah with Rezin was the most striking instance (2 Chron. xxvii. 6—15). Traces of internal division are found in the conspiracy of the Gileadites of the trans-Jordanic district of Manasseh, against Pekah's predecessor in Samaria (2 Kings xv. 26).

**X.**

(1) Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees. . . . —The division of the chapters is again misleading. Verses 1—4 continue the discourse of chap. ix., and end with the final knell. "For all this. . . ." With verse 5 a new section begins, and is carried on to chap. xii. 6, which deals, for the first time in the collection of Isaiah's writings, exclusively with Assyria, and is followed in its turn by utterances that deal with Babylon and other nations. The formula
with which the section opens reminds us of that of chap. v. 8, 11, 18, 22, and suggests the thought that the prophet is speaking not only or chiefly of the northern kingdom, as in chap. ix. 21, but of Israel as including Judah. The evils the prophet denounces are, it will be noted, identical with those in chaps. i. 23, v. 23. For the second clause of the verse, read, "and the seraphs who register oppression." All the formalities of justice were observed punctiliously. The decision of the unjust judge was duly given and recorded, but the outcome of it all was that the poor, the widow, and the fatherless got no redress. The words for "prey" and "rob" are those used in the mysterious name of chap. viii. 1. They occur again in verse 6. It would seem as if the prophet sought in this way to impress the thought of the great law of divine retribution. Men were reaping as they had sown.

And what will ye do in the day of visitation?—The question was not without a certain touch of irony. Had those corrupt judges asked themselves what they would do when the Supreme Judge should call them to account? Had they an ally who could protect them against Jehovah? Or had they found a hiding-place for the treasures which they had made their "glory"? Had they made a covenant with Hades and with death? (chap. xxviii. 18).

Without me they shall bow down.—The Hebrew text is obscure, but these words were probably intended as the answer to the taunting question that had preceded them. Dropping the direct address, and passing to the third person, the prophet seems to say as with a kind of ominous "aside," "No, there is no ally, no hiding-place but this, except they bow down among the captives or fall among the slain." Exile or death, that was their only alternative. When that sentence has been uttered, the doom-bell, as we have called it, "For all this..." tolls once more. If we adopt the Authorised version we have the same fact asserted, with the suggested thought that there was a refuge to be found in God.

O Assyrian.—The words open, as has been said above, a perfectly distinct section. Assyria had been named in connection with the Syro-Ephraim alliance against Judah (chap. vii. 17—20, viii. 7, 8); but this is the first prophetic utterance of which it is the direct subject. Anticipating the phraseology of chap. xiii. 1, we might call it the "burden of Assyria." In the judgment of the bed, Assyrian scholars, some years had passed since the date of the alliance and invasion. Tiglath-pileser had taken Damascus and reduced Samaria to submission. Pekah and Ahaz had met at Damascus to do homage to their common suzerain. In B.C. 727 Salmaneser succeeded to the throne of Assyria, and began the conquest of Samaria and the deportation of the Ten Tribes (2 Kings xvii. 3—6). On his death, in B.C. 721, the throne was seized by Sargon, who had been his Tartan, or commander-in-chief (chap. xx. 1). The achievements of this king are recorded at length in an inscription discovered by M. Botta at Khorsabad (Records of the Past, vii. 28. Lenormant's Manual, i. p. 382). In it he says:—"I besieged, took, and occupied the city of Samaria, and carried into captivity 27,280 of its inhabitants. I changed the form of government of the country, and placed over it lieutenants of my own." In another inscription discovered at Kouyunjik, but unfortunately incomplete, Sargon speaks of himself as "the conqueror of the far-off land of Judah" (Layard, Inscriptions, xxxii. 8). It was probably to this king, exulting in his triumphs and threatening an attack on Judah, and not (as was commonly thought prior to the discovery of the inscription) to his son Sennacherib, who succeeded him B.C. 704, that the prophet addressed himself. The first words proclaim that the great king was but an instrument working out the Divine intent, the "rod," and the "hammer" of Jehovah. (Comp. chap. xxxvi. 26.)

I will send him against an hypocritical nation.—Better, impious. The term admits of the various renderings, "I will send," "I did send," and "I am wont to send." The last seems to give the best meaning—not a mere fact in history, nor an isolated prediction, but a law of the Divine government.

To take the spoil.—The series of words, though general in meaning, contains probably a special reference to the recent destruction of Samaria, walls pulled down, houses and palaces turned into heaps of rubbish, the soldiers tramping on flower and fruit gardens, this was what the Assyrian army left behind it. Judah had probably suffered in the same way in the hands of Sargon.

Howbeit he meaneth not so.—The thoughts which Isaiah puts into the mouth of the Assyrian are exactly in accord with the supreme egotism of the Sargon inscription. "I conquered," I boasted; "I burnt," "I killed," "I destroyed"; this is the ever-recurring burden, mingled here and there with the boast that he is the champion of the great deities of Assyria, of Ishtar and of Nebo.
a few. (8) *For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings? (9) Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? (10) As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; (11) shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? (12) Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will destroy the fruit of of Carchemish " appears in numerous cuneiform inscriptions as the standard weight of the time, just as that of Troyes, in the commerce of the Middle Ages, is shown by the survival of the name in the "Troy weight" of our arithmetic books (Records of the Past, vii. 114).

Is not Hamath as Arpad?—(1) Hamath on the Orontes, the capital of an Aramean kingdom, was prominent in the history of the East. Under its kings Toi and Joram it paid tribute to David (2 Sam. viii. 9, 10). It fell under the power of Jeroboam II. of Israel (2 Kings xiv. 25). Damascus (the Hierapolis (chap. vii.) revolted against Tiglath-pileser, and the latter of which had sought to strengthen itself by an alliance with the Egyptian king So, or Sabaco (2 Kings xvii. 6), of the Ethiopian dynasty, against Shalmaneser IV., close for the present the list of Sargon's conquests. (2) Of the early history of Arpad we know less, but it appears as having sustained a three years' siege from the forces of Tiglath-pileser II. It joined Hamath in its revolt against Sargon, and was again, as this verse implies, subdued by him (Lenormant's Manual, i. p. 390). Its king was first among the tributary princes under Tiglath-pileser II. after having joined with Pekah and Rezin in their revolt (ibid. i. p. 389). Lastly, to come to the date of the present prophecy, it again revolted, in conjunction, as before, with Damascus and Samaria, and was again subdued by Sargon (ibid. i. p. 393).—The six weight" of our arithmetic books (Records of the Past, v. 5-26).

Is not Samaria as Damascus?—These cities, which under Rezin and Remaliah had, as we have seen (chap. vii.) revolted against Tiglath-pileser, and the latter of which had sought to strengthen itself by an alliance with the Egyptian king So, or Sabaco (2 Kings xvii. 6), of the Ethiopian dynasty, against Shalmaneser IV., close for the present the list of Sargon's conquests.

As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols.—The word "idols" seems hardly appropriate as a word of scorn in the mouth of an idolatrous king; but Isaiah probably puts into his lips the words which he himself would have used. It is, however, quite in character with the Assyrian inscriptions that Sargon should ascribe his victories to Ashur as the Supreme God, before whose sovereignty all local deities were compelled to bow. To the Assyrian king the name of Jehovah would represent a deity whose power was to be measured by the greatness of the nation that worshipped Him, and inferior, therefore, to the gods of Carchemish or Hamath. The worship of Baal, Moloch, and other deities, in both Israel and Judah, had of course tended to strengthen this estimate. (Comp. Rabshakeh's language in chap. xxxvi. 18, 19.)

Shall I not, as I have done . . .—The verse gives the occasion of Isaiah's utterance. Sargon was threatening Jerusalem, probably in the early years of Hezekiah's reign. The inscriptions show, as chap. xx. 1 leaves no doubt, that in the previous year Pharaoh-Damascus besieged Ashdod (Records of the Past, vii. 40).

Wherefore it shall come to pass . . .—Better, *And it shall come to pass . . . The boast of the proud king is interrupted by the reassertion of the
ISAIAH, X.

The Glory of the Forest consumed.

As if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory shall he kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.

And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame; and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day; and shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.

And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.


doctrine and history.

The King of Assyria's Boasts.

The stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. (13) For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: (14) and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

(15) Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? (16) As if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift it up.
The Return of the Remnant.

(20) And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stand upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. (21) The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. (22) For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. (23) For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. (24) For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction. (25) And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. (26) And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

(27) He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Nahavim, he goeth to Beth-farato, and is come to the borders of Moab. (28) He shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt: and thou shalt be overthrown at the breach of the daughter of my people; and thou shalt go into exile, both to Babylon, says the LORD. (29) I brought thee from the north, and delivered thee unto the border of Mine inheritance; and I made thee to go up, and I delivered thee unto the daughters of the Philistines. (30) I sent thee also against the Kittim, and cast them into the sea: and thou didst take vengeance upon them, and didst pour out thine indignation upon them in the Red sea, in the Reed sea. (31) But thou tookest up the yoke of Sinait, and laidst it upon them; thou gavest them the ten commandments. (32) And the anointing shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and thy yoke from off thy neck; and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. (33) He shall be for a refuge, and a stronghold in the day of evil. 

The Slaughter of Midian repeated...

(34) O my people, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction. And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Nahavim, he goeth to Beth-farato, and is come to the borders of Moab. He shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt: and thou shalt be overthrown at the breach of the daughter of my people; and thou shalt go into exile, both to Babylon, says the LORD.
to Migron; at Michmas he hath laid up his carriages: (29) they are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. (30) Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. (31) Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. (32) As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of Laish.

(33) Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be bewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. (34) And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

CHAPTER XI.—(1) And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse... (2) In the Branch springing from the house of David, and His reign is specifically than before the true King is named as the Branch of Jesse; about four miles north of Jerusalem, in it after it had been cut down, and the rod or sucker survives, a symbol of the restoration of Israel’s national power. (33) Behold, the Lord of hosts... (34) The sudden change of tone indicates another pressure of the strong hand of Jehovah... (35) His reign is specifically than before the true King is named as the Branch of Jesse; about four miles north of Jerusalem, in it after it had been cut down, and the rod or sucker survives, a symbol of the restoration of Israel’s national power. (36) The sudden change of tone indicates another pressure of the strong hand of Jehovah... (37) His reign is specifically than before the true King is named as the Branch of Jesse; about four miles north of Jerusalem, in it after it had been cut down, and the rod or sucker survives, a symbol of the restoration of Israel’s national power. (38) The sudden change of tone indicates another pressure of the strong hand of Jehovah... (39) His reign is specifically than before the true King is named as the Branch of Jesse; about four miles north of Jerusalem, in it after it had been cut down, and the rod or sucker survives, a symbol of the restoration of Israel’s national power. (40) The sudden change of tone indicates another pressure of the strong hand of Jehovah... (41) His reign is specifically than before the true King is named as the Branch of Jesse; about four miles north of Jerusalem, in it after it had been cut down, and the rod or sucker survives, a symbol of the restoration of Israel’s national power.
The Branch out of the Root of Jesse.  ISAIAH, XI.  The restored Paradise.

Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: (2) and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; (3) And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprieve after the hearing of his ears: (4) but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. (5) And righteousness shall be the girdle of his reins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (6) The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. (7) And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat...
straw like the ox. (8) And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the ass, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the 'cockatrice' den. (9) They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

(10) And in that day shall there be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the "Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be 2glorious.

The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.—If, as some have thought, the "earth" here shall be the land (i.e., as in chaps. ix. 19, x. 23, the land of Judah), that region is represented as the paradise centre of a restored world, to which, as in chap. ii. 2, all nations turn for light and blessing. Probably, however, the words may be taken as a generalised statement: "None shall hurt nor destroy . . ." The "holy mountain" is none other than the "mountain of the Lord's house" (see chap. ii. 2) in its future apocalyptic glory (Ezek. xl. 2; Zech. xiv. 10), but may, perhaps, include the whole of the hill-country of Israel, as in chap. lii. 13; Ps. lxxxvii. 54; Exod. xv. 17.

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 corners of the earth. (13) The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. (14) But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. (15) And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over it dry-shod. (16) And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

CHAPTER XII.—(1) And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou...
(2) Behold, God is my salvation. The words admit of the rendering, Behold God the God of my salvation. In either construction "salvation" is taken, as in the New Testament (John iv. 22; 1 Pet. i. 9, 10), as meaning more than mere deliverance from danger, and the latter higher spiritual blessings.

The Lord Jehovah. The Hebrew here and in chap. xxvi. 4 presents the exceptional combination of the two Divine Names (Yah Yahweh). (See Ps. lxvii. 4.) With this exception the second clause of the verse is a verbal reproduction of Exod. xv. 2.

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. As the words admit of the rendering, therefore with joy shall ye draw water; the latter seems more in harmony with the context. In the later ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles, the priests went in solemn procession to the Pool of Siloam, filled a golden vase with water, carried it to the Temple, and red it out on the western side of the altar of burnt offering, while the people chanted the great Hallel (Hymn of Praise) of Ps. cxiii.—cxviii. (See Note on John vii. 37.) If we may assume that this represented the ritual of the monarchy, we may reasonably infer that the words of Isaiah pointed to it. The Talmud expressly connects the act with the symbolism of Isaiah's words (Jer. Saccu, v. 1), and the prophet's reference to the "waters of Siloah" in chap. viii. 6, confirms the inference.

(4) Declare his doings among the people. Literally, among the peoples. The prophet quotes from the hymn which had been sung when the Ark was placed in Zion (1 Chron. xvi. 8), and in part from Ps. cv. 1. There is no indication that the second clause of the verse is a verbal reproduction of Exod. xv. 1: "He hath triumphed gloriously." Here, again, the Hebrew indicates an echo from Exod. v. 1: "He hath triumphed gloriously."

(5) Thou inhabitant of Zion. The Hebrew is feminine. The inhabitant is the daughter of Zion, the restored Church, that has Zion for her dwelling-place.

Great is the Holy One of Israel. The hymn ends with the Divine Name which is characteristic of Isaiah. The presence of the Holy One was to be a joy and blessing to the remnant who were worthy of their calling. With this hymn the whole of what has been called the Immanuel volume of Isaiah's prophecies comes to its close.

The Song of the Wells of Salvation.

CHAPTER XIII.—(1) The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.
(2) Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles; (3) I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.

(4) The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereeth the host of the battle. (5) They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

(6) Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. (7) Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt; (8) and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be as amp one at another; their faces shall be as flames. (9) Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. (10) For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her

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October 31, 1885

Musterings of the Hosts of Battle.

ISAIAH, XIII

The Day of Jehovah.

[6] Ezek. xii. 1; Joel iii. 15; Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 31; Luke 21. 20.

[7] As a destruction from the Almighty.

[8] The Hebrew shodmish. Shaddai comes with the emphasis of assonance, possibly coupled with that of etymology, the Hebrew Shaddai being derived by many scholars from the verb Shadad —to destroy. On this assumption, "destruction from the destroyer" would be a fair equivalent. The name, occurring frequently in the earlier books of the Old Testament (twenty-three times in Job and eight in the Pentateuch), was characteristic of the pre-Mosaic creed of Israel (Exod. vi. 8), and occurs but seldom in the prophets: here, and in Joel i. 15; Ezek. xii. 24, x. 5.

[9] Shall all hands be faint.—Better, be slack, hanging down in the helpless despondency of the terror which the next clause points (Heb. xii. 12).

[10] The constellations thereof.—The noun in the singular (kesil, foolhardy, or impious) is trans. as Orion, probably in Job ix. 9; Amos v. 7; Jer. vi. 24, et al.). Perhaps the most striking parallelism is found in Ps. cxlviii. 6, probably, like the other psalms of the sons of Korah, contemporary with Isaiah.

Their faces shall be as flames.—The comparison seems at first to describe those who cause terror rather than those that feel it. What is described is, however, the moment of horror, when the dejected pallor of ordinary fear flashes into a new intensity, and the eyeballs glare, and the face glows as with a terrible brightness.

[11] In Zeph. iii. 11 the same phrase occurs in a bad sense. Here, apparently, it denotes the proud consciousness of the invaders that they are doing God's work. The noise of a multitude . . . The word is applied even to the fierce tribes of the future destroyers, as being appointed, or consecrated, by Jehovah for that special work. The thought and the words (there translated "prepare") appear in Jer. vi. 4, xxii. 7, li. 27. So in the later prophesies Cyrus appears as "the anointed" of the Lord (chap. xlv. 1). Even them that rejoice in my highness.—In Zeph. iii. 11 the same phrase occurs in a bad sense. Here, apparently, it denotes the proud consciousness of the invaders that they are doing God's work.

[12] They come from a far country . . . The same phrase is used of Cyrus in chap. xlii. 11, and in chap. xxxix. 3 of Babylon itself in relation to Jerusalem. The "end of heaven" represents the thoughts of Isaiah's time, the earth as an extended plain, and the skies rising like a great vault above. The phrase represents (Dent. iv. 32; Ps. xix. 6), as it were, the ultima Thule of discovery. For the "whole land," the Hebrew noun hovers, as often elsewhere, between the meanings of "earth," or "country." The LXX. favours the former meaning.

Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand.—The verse is an almost verbal reproduction of Joel i. 15. On the "day of Jehovah," see Note on chap. ii. 12.

Shall all hands be faint.—Better, be slack, hanging down in the helpless despondency of the terror which the next clause points (Heb. xii. 12).

They shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth.—The image of powerless agony occurs both in earlier and later prophets (Hosea xiii. 3; Mica xii. 9; Jer. vi. 24, et al.). Perhaps the most striking parallelism is found in Ps. cxlviii. 6, probably, like the other psalms of the sons of Korah, contemporary with Isaiah.

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light to shine. (11) And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. (12) I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

(13) Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. (14) And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own

the natural symbolism of a time of terror (Joel ii. 31, iii. 15; Matt. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24; Luke xii. 25).

(15) I will make a man more precious.—Both the words for man (mashah and idolah) express, as in Ps. viii. 2, the frailty of man’s nature. The words may point to the utter destruction, in which but few men should be left. The “gold of Ophir” (the gold coast near the mouth of the Indus) was proverbial for its preciousness (Job xxii. 24; xxvii. 16; 1 Chron. xxix. 4; 1 Kings ix. 28; xxii. 48).

Therefore I will shake.—The description of the great day of the Lord meets us in like terms in Haggai ii. 6, Heb. xii. 26, carried in both instances beyond the overthrow of Babylon or any particular kingdom to that of every world-power that resists the righteousness of God.

(16) And it shall be as the chased roe.—Better, as with a chased roe . . . as with sheep . . . The roe and the sheep represent the “mixed multitude” (Æsch., Pers. 52) of all nations who had been carried into Babylon, and who would naturally take to flight, some, though without a leader, returning to their own lands on the approach of the invader. Every one that is joined unto them.—Better, every one that is caught. The first clause of the verse refers to those that are in the city at the time of its capture, the second to those who are taken as they endeavour to escape.

(17) Their children also shall be dashed.—Better, their sucklings. The words of the prediction seem to have been in the minds of the exiles in Babylon when they uttered their dread besitude on those who were to be the ministers of a righteous vengeance (Ps. cxxxvii. 9). Outrages such as these were then, as they have been ever since, the inevitable accompaniments of the capture of a besieged city.

(18) Behold, I will stir up the Medes.—The Hebrew form Medai meets us in Gen. x. 2, among the descendants of Japheth. Modern research shows them to have been a mixed people, Assyrian conquerors having mingled with an earlier Turanian race, and differing in this respect from the Persians, who were pure Iranians, both in race and creed. The early Assyrian inscriptions, from Rimmon Nirari III. onward (Cheyne), name them, as also does Sargon (Records of the Past, xi. 18), among the enemies whom the kings subdued. Their name had been recently brought before the prophet’s notice by Salmonian’s deportation of the Ten Tribes to the cities of the Medes (2 Kings xvii. 6).

In naming the Medes, and not the Persians, as the conquerors of Babylon, Isaiah was probably influenced by the greater prominence of the former, just as the Greeks spoke of them, and used such terms as “Medes” when they came into conflict with the Medo-Persian monarchy under Darius and Xerxes. So Æschylus (Pers. 760) makes “the Median” the first ruler of the Persians. It is noticeable that they were destined to be the destroyers both of Nineveh and Babylon: of the first under Cyaxares, in alliance with Nabopolassar, and of the second under Cyrus the Persian, and, we may add, the Mede Darius of Dan. v. 31. If we accept the history of a yet earlier attack on Nineveh by Arbaces the Medes and Belesis of Babylon, we can sufficiently account for the prominence which Isaiah, looking at Babylon as the representative of Assyrian rather than Chaldaean power, gives to them as its destroyers. (See Lenormant, Anc. Hist., i., p. 337.)

Which shall not regard silver.—The Medes are represented as a people too fierce to care for the gold and silver in which Babylon exulted. They would take no ransom to stay their work of vengeance. So Xenophon, in his Cyropædia (v. 3), represents Cyrus as acknowledging their un bought, unpaid service.

(19) Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces.—These, as in chap. xxi. 6, Jer. i. 9—14, were the characteristic weapons of the Medo-Persian armies.

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,—The words paint the impression which the great city, even in Isaiah’s time, made upon all who saw it. So Nebuchadnezzar, though his work was mainly that of a restorer, exulted in his pride in the greatness of the city of which he claimed to be the builder (Dan. iv. 30). So Herodotus (i. 178) describes it as the most famous and the strongest of all the cities of Assyria, adorned beyond any other city on which his eyes had ever looked. (Compare the descriptive notices in Jer. ii. 41, and the constantly recurring epithet of “gold- abounding Babylon” in the Persians of Æschylus.)

As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.—The phrase had clearly become proverbial, as in chap. i. 9; Jer. l. 40; Deut. xxxi. 23, carrying the picture of desolation to its highest point. The present state of the site of Babylon corresponds literally to the prediction. It is “a naked and hideous waste” (Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, p. 484). The work was, however, accomplished by slow degrees, and was not, like the destruction of Nineveh, the result of a single
The Desolation of Babylon.

ISAIAH, XIV.

Jehovah’s Mercy on Israel.

excellency, shall be 1 as when God overthrew 4 Sodom and Gomorrah. (30) It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwell in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. (32) But 2 wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of 3 doleful creatures; and 4 5 owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. (22) And 6 the wild beasts of the islands shall cry

in their 7 desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

CHAPTER XIV.—(1) For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. (2) And the people shall take them, and bring them

overthrow. Darius dismantled its walls, Xerxes pulled down the Temple of Belus. Alexander contemplated its restoration, but his designs were frustrated by his early death. Sussa and Ecbatana, Seleucia and Antioch, Oesiphon and Bagdad, became successively the centres of commerce and of government. By the time of Strabo (B.C. 20) the work was accomplished, and “the vast city” had become a “vast desolation” (Strabo, xvi., p. 743). Here, again, we note a literal fulfilment. The Bedouins themselves, partly because the place is desolate, partly from a superstitious horror, shrink from encamping on the site of the ancient temples and palaces, and they are left to lions and other beasts of prey. On the other hand, Joseph Wolff, the missionary, describes a strange weird scene, pilgrims of the Yezidis, or devil-worshipers, dancing and howling like dervishes amid the ruins of Babylon.

(30) Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there . . .—The word “Arabian” is used in its widest extent, as including all the nomads of the Bedouin type east and north of Palestine as far as Babylon (2 Chron. xxii. 16; Strabo, xvi., p. 743). Here, again, we note a literal fulfilment. The Bedouins themselves, partly because the place is desolate, partly from a superstitious horror, shrink from encamping on the site of the ancient temples and palaces, and they are left to lions and other beasts of prey. On the other hand, Joseph Wolff, the missionary, describes a strange weird scene, pilgrims of the Yezidis, or devil-worshipers, dancing and howling like dervishes amid the ruins of Babylon.

(32) Wild beasts of the desert . . .—The Hebrew term, which in Ps. lxii. 9, and perhaps in Isaiah xxiii. 13, is used of men, is “galhus” (bull-shaped demons), “dragons in their pleasant palaces.” The whole passage finds a singular parallel in an inscription of Assurbanipal’s recording his devastation of the fields of Elam: “Wild asses, serpents, beasts of the desert and galhus (bull-shaped demons), safely I caused to lie down in them” (Records of the Past, i., p. 80). Isaiah may have known of such beasts, and if so, his words may have pointed to the working of a law of retribution like that invoked by the Babylonian exiles in Ps. cxxxvii. 8. The doom that Babylon had inflicted on others was to come upon herself. The language of modern travellers illustrates the fulfilment of the prediction. “Owls start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackal stalks among the furrows” (Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, p. 458, quoted by Kay).

Wild beasts of the islands . . .—The Authorised version rests on a false etymology of the words, which strictly mean “wailers,” and in its form is probably the cry of a wild beast, such as the jackal, with which it is commonly identified (see chap. xxviii. 2; Jer. 1. 39). Or, possibly, the hyena. Perhaps, however, as the word “jackal” is wanting in the next clause, it would be best to keep “waivers.”

In their desolate houses.—Literally, as the text stands, among their widows; but the word closely resembles that for “castles” or “fortresses” in chaps. xxxii. 14, xxxiv. 10. The Authorised version is either an attempt to combine the two meanings, or to take the word “widow” figuratively, as in chap. xlvii. 8, for a house bereaved of its owner.

Dragons in their pleasant palaces.—Better, jackals (chap. xxxiv. 13; Jer. ii. 37, and elsewhere) in their palaces of pleasure.

Her time.—The appointed day of visitation (Jer. xlvii. 21, i. 27).

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XIV.

(1) For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob . . .—The words imply a provision of the return of the Israelites from exile, and therefore of the exile itself. The downfall of Babylon was certain, because without it the mercy of the Lord to Israel could not be manifested. The whole section is an anticipation of the great argument of chaps. xlvi.—lxvi., and the question of its authorship stands or falls on the same grounds.

The strangers shall be joined with them . . .—The thought is one specially characteristic of the later prophecies of Isaiah (chaps. xlviii. 5, lv. 5, lvi. 3—6), but is prominent in the earlier also (chap. ii. 2). In later Hebrew the same words came to be applied to the proselytes who are conspicuous in the apostolic age (Acts ii. 10, vi. 5), and in them, as before in the adhesion and support of the Persian kings and satraps, and as afterwards in the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of the Christ, we may trace successive fulfilling of the prophet’s words.

(2) The people shall take them . . .—Literally, the peoples. In Ezra i. 1—4, vi. 7, 8, we have what answered, in a measure, to the picture thus drawn; but here, as elsewhere, the words paint an ideal to which there has been as yet no historical reality fully corresponding. No period of later Jewish history has beheld the people ruling over a conquered race; and if we claim a real fulfilment of the last clause of the verse, it is only in the sense in which the Latin poet said that Græcia cæpta ferum victorem cepit (Horat. Ep. ii. 1. 156). The
to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

(3) And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, (4) that thou shalt take up this 2 proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the 3 golden city ceased! (5) The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. (6) He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

(7) The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

(8) Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

(9) 5 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the 7 chief ones of the earth; it hath triumph of Israel has, so far, been found in that of its leading ideas, and in the victory of the faith of Christ. In chap. i. 3 the proselyte appears as admitted on terms of equality, here on those of subjugation.

(3) It shall come to pass . . . The condition of the exiles in Babylon is painted in nearly the same terms as in Hab. ii. 13. A monarch built on building towers and walls and palaces, who had carried off all the skilled labour of Jerusalem, was likely enough to vex their souls with “fear” and “hard bondage.” So Assurbanipal boasts that he made his Arabian prisoners carry heavy burdens and build brick-work (Records of the Past, i. 104).

(4) That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon . . . -The prophet appears once more (comp. chaps. v. i., xii. 1) in his character as a psalmist. In the wushal or taunting-song that follows, the generic meaning of “proverb” is specialised (as in Micah ii. 4; Hab. ii. 6; Deut. xxviii. 37, 1 Kings ix. 7, and elsewhere) for a derivative utterance in poetic or figurative speech. The LXX., singularly enough, renders the word here by “lamentation.”

How hath the oppressor ceased . . . -If we take “the golden city” of the English version as the correct rendering, it finds a parallel in the epithet of “gold-abounding” applied to Babylon by Æschylus (Pers. 53). The word so translated is, however, not found elsewhere, and the general consensus of recent critics, following in the wake of the Targum and the LXX., is in favour of the rendering, the task-master, or the place of torture. The Vulgate, how has the tribute ceased, expresses substantially the same thought. The marginal reading, exactress of gold, seems like an attempt to combine two different etymologies.

(5) The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked . . . -The “staff” and the “sceptre” are alike symbols of power, the former being that on which a man supports himself, the other that which he wields in his arm to smite those who oppose him.

He who smote . . . -Better, which smote, the whole verse being of the nature of a relative clause, with the “sceptre” for antecedent.

A continual stroke. -Literally, a stroke without ceasing.

Is persecuted, and none hindereth.-Better, completing the parallelism, with a trampling that is not stayed.

(7) They break forth into singing. . . -The phrase is noticeable as characteristic of Isaiah (chaps. xlv. 23, xlix. 13, lii. 9, liv. 1, lv. 12), and is not found elsewhere. The emancipated nations are represented as exulting in the unfamiliar peace that follows on the downfall of their oppressor.

(8) Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee . . . -The tree has been identified (Carruthers, in Bible Educator, iv., 359) with the Aleppo pine (Pinus halepensis), which grows abundantly on the Lebanon range above the zone of the evergreen oaks. The LXX. often translates it by “cypress,” the Vulgate and Authorised version commonly by “fr tree.” Its wood was largely used in house and ship-building, but was less precious than the cedar (1 Kings v. 10, vi. 15, 34; Isa. xli. 19; Ezek. xxvii. 5).

No feller is come up against us. -The literal and figurative senses melt into each other, the former perhaps being the more prominent. It was the boast of Assurbanipal and other Assyrian kings that wherever they conquered they cut down forests and left the land bare. (Comp. chap. xxxvii. 24: Records of the Past, i. 86.) As the fir tree, the cedar, and the oak were the natural symbols of kingly rule (Jer. xxii. 7; Ezek. xvii. 3, xxxi. 3), this devastation represented the triumph of the Chaldean king over other princes. On his downfall, the trees on the mountain, the kings and chiefains in their palaces, would alike rejoice.

(9) Hell from beneath is moved for thee . . . -“Hell,” or Shoel, is, as elsewhere, the shadow-world, the region of the dead. Into that world the king of Babylon descends. The “dead” and the Requiem are there, the giant-spectres, now faint and feeble (Deut. ii. 11, iii. 11), of departed forms of greatness. The verb (“it stirreth up”), which is masculine, while the noun is feminine, seems to personify Shoel, as Hades is personified in Rev. xx. 14. The “chief ones” are, literally, the he-goats, or “bell-wethers” of the flock (chap. xxxiv. 6; Zech. x. 3), of which Hades is the shepherd (Ps. xlix. 14). Even in Shoel the kings of the earth retain their former majesty, and sit on thrones apart from the vulgar dead. In Ezek. xxxii. 17—32 we have a reproduction of the same imagery, and the kings appear, each with his “weapons of war.” The whole passage finds a striking parallel in the Assyrian legend of the Descent of Ishtar (Records of the Past, i. p. 144), where Hades is described.

The abode of darkness and famine.

Night is not seen—in darkness they dwell.

Ghosts, like birds, flutter their wings there.

On the door and gate-posts the dust lies undisturbed.

To be the ruler of a palace shall be thy rank; A throne of state shall be thy seat.”
raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. (10) All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? (11) Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. (12) How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

(13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. (15) Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

(16) They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; (17) that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?
characteristic feature of the cruelty of the Assyrian kings. So Sennacherib and Assurbanipal boast of having carried off captive kings in "chains of iron" (Records of the Past, i. pp. 43, 62, 72), and kept them chained like dogs in the court of their palace (ib., pp. 93, 97). So Jehoiakim was kept in prison for thirty-seven years (Jer. li. 31).

19 All the kings of the nations . . .—The "house" in which the monarchs lie is, of course, their sepulchre. Such sepulchres, as in the case of the pyramids of the Egyptian kings, the "eternal home" as they themselves called it (comp. Eccles. xii. 5), were often almost literally the "house," or palace, of the dead.

Like an abominable branch.—The noun is the same as in chaps. xi. 1, lx. 21. The idea seems to be that of a scion or shoot which is mildewed and blasted, and which men fling away as lost some.

As the raiment of those that are slain . . .—The image reminds us of the "garments rolled in blood" of chap. ix. 5, gathered after the battle, and "cast forth" to be burnt. In such raiment, not in stately robes nor kingly grave-clothes, would the great ruler be found. To lie thus unburied, "a prey to dogs and vultures" (Homer, Iliad, i. 4), was, as with the Homeric heroes, the shame of all shame. That go down to the stones of the pit.—By some critics these words are joined with the following verse: Those that go down . . . with them thou shalt not be joined in burial, i.e., shall have no proper sepulchre. As the passage stands, "the stones of the pit" represent the burial-place into which the carcases of the slain were indiscriminately thrown.

20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial . . .—The curse of the dishonoured death is (23) I will also make it a possession for the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. (23) I will also make it a possession for the Lord of hosts.

21 Prepare slaughter for his children . . . for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

22 Son, and nephew . . .—The latter word, as throughout the Bible, is used in its true sense as "grandson," or "descendant." (Comp. 1 Tim. v. 4.)

23 I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, and fill the face of the world with cities—The phrase has its parallel in the "sieve of vanity," in chap. xxx. 28. (Comp. chap. xxxiv. 11.)
The Purpose of the Lord of Hosts.

ISAIAH, XIV.

The Burden of the Philistines.

(24) The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying,
Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: (25) that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart off their shoulders. (26) This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. (27) For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

(28) In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.

(29) Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because of the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.

(30) And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

(31) Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, Babylon is to be swept away as men sweep away some foul rubbish from their house. The world is cleaner for its destruction. The solemn doom closes the “burden” of Babylon.

(32) The Lord of hosts hath sworn...—The long “oracle” of Babylon is followed by a fragmentary prophecy against Assyria (verses 24-27), possibly misplaced, possibly, as opening with a solemn assurance, like that of the preceding verse, added by way of proof, that the word of the Lord of Hosts would be fulfilled on Babylon, as it had been on Assyria, with which, indeed, Babylon was closely connected—almost, perhaps, identified—in his thoughts.

(33) That I will break the Assyrian in my land...—The words found their fulfilment in the fall of Sennacherib’s army. The “mountains” are the hills round Jerusalem on which the army of the Assyrians was encamped. They were sacred, as the phrase, “my mountains,” shows, to Jehovah (comp. chaps. xlix. 11, lxv. 9; Zech. xiv. 5), and He, therefore, would put forth His power to rescue them from the proud invader.

(34) This is the hand that is stretched out...—The words point, as it were, to the idea of a more terrible than the preceding. The fiery flying serpent (chap. xxvii. 1, the “piercing serpent,” the “serpent life,” which in the days of Ahaz had been “brought very low” (2 Chron. xxvii. 1, 20), the “outstretched hand.”

(35) In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.—The prophecies against Babylon and Assyria are naturally followed by a series of like prophecies against Sennacherib’s army. The “mountains,” shows, to Jehovah (comp. chap. xxvii. 1, the “piercing serpent,” the “crooked serpent,” the “serpent life,” which in the days of Ahaz had been “brought very low” (2 Chron. xxvii. 1, 20), the “outstretched hand.”

(36) And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

The Philistines had invaded the low country (Shaphelah), and the district known as the Negeb, or “south” of Judah, in the reign of Ahaz. He had called in the help of Tiglath-pileser, the Assyrian king, to assist him as against Rezin and Pekah (chap. vii.), so probably against these new invaders. Sargon (who succeeded Tiglath-pileser, b.c. 723) invaded Ashdod in b.c. 710 (chap. xx. 1; Records of the Past, vii. 40). Sennacherib records a like attack on Ashkelon and (according to Rawlinson’s interpretation) Ekron (Records of the Past, vii. 61). With these data we are able to enter on the interpretation of Isaiah’s prediction.

Because the rod of him that smote thee is broken.—The “rod,” as in chap. x. 24, is the power of Tiglath-pileser. The Philistines were exulting in his death, or in that of Ahaz as his ally, as though their peril was past. They are told that their exultation was premature.

Out of the serpent’s root.—The three forms of serpentine life (we need not be careful about their identification from the zoologist’s point of view) may represent the three Assyrian kings named above, from whose invasions the Philistines were to suffer. Each form was more terrible than the preceding. The fiery flying serpent (chap. xxx. 6; Num. xxi. 6), which represented Sennacherib, was the most formidable of the three. So in chap. xxvii. 1, the “piercing serpent,” the “crooked serpent,” and the “serpent life,” which in the days of Ahaz had been “brought very low” (2 Chron. xxvii. 1, 20), the “outstretched hand.”

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whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times. (20) What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

“smoke” may be either that of the cities which the Assyrians burnt, or, more probably, the torch-signals, or beacons, which they used in their night marches or encampments (Jer. vi. 1, 2). (See Note on chap. iv. 5.)

None shall be alone in his appointed times. —Better, there is no straggler at the appointed places; i.e., all the troops shall meet at the rendezvous which was indicated by the column of fiery smoke as a signal. (20) What shall one then answer ...? —The words obviously imply that the prophet either had received, or expected to receive, a message of inquiry from the Philistines, and that this is his answer. It seems not improbable, indeed, that the series of prophecies that follow were delivered in answer to such inquiries. The fame of the prophet had spread beyond the confines of Israel, and men of different nations came to Jerusalem to consult him. So Jeremiah’s oracles are delivered to the ambassadors who came to propose an alliance against Nebuchadnezzar in the time of Zedekiah (Jer. xxvii. 3). Commonly, however, the words are referred to the embassies of congratulation, which came with plans of new alliances after the destruction of Sennacherib’s army (2 Chron. xxxii. 22), and held by the Israelites for forty years. (20) What shall one then answer . . . ? —The words obviously imply that the prophet either had received, or expected to receive, a message of inquiry from the Philistines, and that this is his answer. It seems not improbable, indeed, that the series of prophecies that follow were delivered in answer to such inquiries. The fame of the prophet had spread beyond the confines of Israel, and men of different nations came to Jerusalem to consult him. So Jeremiah’s oracles are delivered to the ambassadors who came to propose an alliance against Nebuchadnezzar in the time of Zedekiah (Jer. xxvii. 3). Commonly, however, the words are referred to the embassies of congratulation, which came with plans of new alliances after the destruction of Sennacherib’s army (2 Chron. xxxii. 22), and held by the Israelites for forty years.

That the Lord hath founded Zion. —This is the answer to all such inquiries. Zion stands firm and safe in the protection of Jehovah. The “poor” (obviously those of verse 30) shall trust (better, shall find refuge) in it. (Comp. chap. xxviii. 16.) They need no foreign alliances, no arm of flesh.

XV.

(1) The burden of Moab. —The oracle which fills the next two chapters deals with the coming history of Moab. The comparative obscurity of that history, the names of towns and villages which it is difficult to identify, present a striking contrast to the evolution of the great world-drama which is brought before us in the “burden” of Babylon. What light can be thrown on that obscurity must be gathered from what we can learn of the contemporary history of Moab and its relation to Israel. This we know partly from the record of 2 Kings iii., partly from the inscription of the Moabite stone found at Dibon, in 1869, by Mr. Klein, and translated by Dr. Ginsburg in Records of the Past, xi. 163. Combining the information from these two sources, we find that Omri and Ahab had subdued Moab when that nation was governed by Chemosh-Gad of Dibon, and had compelled him to pay a sheep tribute reckoned by hundreds of thousands. When Jehoram succeeded Ahab, Mesha, the son of Chemosh-Gad, revolted, and the Moabite inscription records the successful issue of the campaign. Jehoram entered into an alliance with Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom. The Moabites were defeated. Their trees were cut down, their walls stopped, and they were made tribute. The king of Moab in despair offered up his son as a sacrifice to Chemosh in the sight of both armies. With that sacrifice apparently the tide of victory turned. Mesha, in his inscription, records how he took Nebo from Israel and slew seven thousand men, and built or restored fortified towns, and offered the vessels of Jehovah, taken probably from the sanctuaries of the “high places” of Nebo. Exulting in the memory of this victory, Moab became “exceeding proud” (chap. xvi. 6), and in a psalm, probably contemporary with Isaiah (see the mention of Assur, or Assyria, in Ps. lxxviii. 8), they are named as among the enemies of Judah, joined with the Philistines and Assyrians. It is probable enough that, having been kept in check by the prosperous rule of Uzziah, they took advantage of the weakness of Ahaz to renew hostilities, and were looking, half with dread, half with hope, to the Assyrian power. It may be noted here that the following cities named in these chapters—Dibon, Medeba, Nebo, Horonaim—occur also in the Moabite stone, which thus renders a striking testimony to their antiquity, and, so far, to their authenticity. (Comp. Jer. xlvii. 18, which is, to a large extent, a reproduction of Isaiah’s language.)

Ar of Moab is laid waste. —This was apparently the older capital (Num. xxii. 28; Deut. i. 20) sometimes known as Rabbath Moab. In Jerome’s time it was known as Areopolis, the Greeks catching, probably, at the resemblance between the name Ar and that of their god, Ares. Probably Ar was a Moabite form of the Hebrew Ir, a city. One of the names survives in the modern Rabba; but the ruins are comparatively insignificant. The prophet begins with words of threatening. Both that city and Kir (here again the word means “city,” and if we identify it, as most experts do, with Kerak, the castle on a hill, which rises to 1,000 feet above the Dead Sea, it must have been the strongest of the Moabitie fortresses) were to be attacked at night, when resistance was most hopeless. So Mesha boasts (Records of the Past, xi. 66) that he had taken Nebo by a night attack. We note the emphasis of iteration in the words “laid waste and brought to silence.” The latter clause would be more accurately rendered cut off, or destroyed.

(2) He is gone up to Baith . . . —The noun is better taken not as a proper name, but as “the house” or “temple” of the Moabite god. In this and in the “high places” (Bamoth) we may probably recognize the Bamoth-baal (high places of Baal) which appears in Josh. xiii. 17, side by side with Dibon, and the Beth-Bamoth of the Moabite stone (Records of the Past, xi. 167). That stone was, it may be noted, found at Dibon, which stands on two hills, and represents the ancient city of that name. What the prophet sees as following on the destruction of Ar and Kir is the terror which leads men to join in solemn processional prayers to the temples of their gods.

Nebo. —Not the mountain that bore that name as such (Deut. xxxiv. 1), but a city named after the same deity. Mesha boasts of having taken it, and slain seven thousand men (Records of the Past, xi. 66). Mesha is named by him (ib.) as having been taken by Omri, and held by the Israelites for forty years.

On all their heads shall be baldness . . . —This, originally, perhaps, sacrificial in its character,
high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: "on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off. (2) In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly. (3) And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him. (5) My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction. (6) For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing. (7) Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows. (8) For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglain, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim. (9) For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction. (6) For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing. (7) Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows. (8) For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglain, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim. (9) For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring
more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

CHAPTER XVI. — (1) Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion. (2) For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon. (3) Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth. (4) Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be labial letters, are closely connected in all languages so as to resemble the Hebrew word for “blood” (דם, dam), or dumb (“silent”). Men should call the stream no more by the name of Dimon, but by that of the blood, or the silent river. (See Note on chap. xxi. 11.)

I will bring more . . . — i.e., sorrow upon sorrow. The “lions” are either literally such, as in 2 Kings xvii. 25, prowling through the streets of the deserted city (see Notes on chap. xiii. 21), or symbols of Assyrian or other invaders (Jer. iv. 7, v. 6).

XVI.

(1) Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land.
—In the days of Ahaz, Meshah, the then king of Moab, had paid a tribute of sheep and lambs to the king of Israel (2 Kings iii. 4). On his revolt (as recorded in the Moabite Inscription) that tribute had ceased. The prophet now calls on the Moabites to renew it, not to the northern kingdom, which was on the point of extinction, but to the king of Judah as the true “ruler of the land.” The name Sela (“a rock”) may refer either to the city so-called (better known by its Greek name of Petra), or to the rock of Edom and the confines of Moab generally. In either case the special direction implies that the presence of the invaders described in chap. xv. would make it impossible to send the tribute across the fords of the Jordan, and that it must accordingly be sent by the southern route, which passed through Sela and the desert country to the south of the Dead Sea (Cheyne). Possibly the words are a summons to Edom, which had attacked Judah in the reign of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxvii. 17), to join in a like submission.

(2) As a wandering bird cast out of the nest.
—Better as in the margin, a forsaken nest. The “daughters of Moab” either literally, the women driven from their homes, or figuratively (as in verse 1) the whole population of its towns and villages, are represented as fluttering in terror, like birds whose nests are spoiled (comp. chap. x. 14), like the fledglings in the nest, on the fords of Arnon, uncertain whether to return to their old homes or to cross into a strange land. The imagery reminds us of Ps. xi. 1. Prov. xviii. 8, so also of Zech. Agag, 49—52. (3) Make thy shadow as the night . . . —The whole verse is addressed, as the context shows, not by the prophet to Moab, but by Moab to the rulers of Judah. The fugitives call on those rulers to plead for them and set as umpires, to be to them “as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (chap. xxxii. 2), black as night whilst the hot sun glares all around. Some critics, however, hold that the prophet still speaks to the Moabites and calls on them to protect the fugitives from Judah as they had done of old (Ruth ii. 1; 1 Sam. xxi. 3), and so to secure a return of like protection (Kay).

(4) Let mine outcasts dwell with thee . . . —Better, let the outcasts of Moab dwell with thee, Judah, as being herself in safety, is once more appealed to to show mercy to the Moabite fugitives. The “oppressors” are, literally, they that trample under foot.

(5) And in mercy shall the throne . . . —Better, less definitely, in mercy shall a throne be established, and one shall sit upon it in truth. The prophet has in mind the ideal king of chaps. ix. 4—7, xi. 1—5 (of whom Hezekiah was a partial type and representative), whom he expected after the downfall of the Assyrian oppressor. For the “tabernacle of David,” comp. Amos ix. 11.

(6) We have heard of the pride of Moab . . . —The hopes of the prophet are clouded by the remembrance of the characteristic sin of Moab. Of this the Moabite Inscription gives sufficient evidence. (See Notes on chap. xv.) Isaiah’s language finds an echo in Jer. xviii. 29. But his lies shall not be so. —Better, “his lies, or boasts, are of no worth,” are “not so” as they seem to be.

(7) Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab . . . —Either the whole nation wailing for its downfall, or the survivors wailing for the fallen.

The foundations of Kir-hareseth. —The name has been commonly explained as the “brick-fortress,” (city of pottery). Others, with a different derivation, make it “city of the sun.” Others, again (E. H. Palmer, in the Athenaeum of August 19, 1871), connect it with hārēth, the modern Moabite name for the hillocks on which the rock fortresses were built. The word for foundations occurs in Hos. iii. 1, for raisincakes (“flagons of wine” in the Authorised version (comp. 2 Sam. vi. 19, Song Sol. ii. 5), and has been supposed to refer to this as the main product of Kir-hareseth, the traffic in which she lost through the destruction of the vineyards, mentioned in the next verse. Raina would, in any case, be better than “foundations.”

The Daughters of Moab cast out.
Gladness and Joy Departed.

ISAIAH, XVI. The Unavailing Litanies of Moab.

surely they are stricken. (9) For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.

(9) Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease. (11) Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts: for the shouting for thy summer fruits, and for thy harvest is fallen. (10) And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no

(8) The fields of Heshbon languish ••• For Heshbon see Note on chap. xv. 4. Sibmah appears as assigned to the tribe of Reuben, in Num. xxxii. 38, Josh. xiii. 19, and in Jer. xlviii. 32 as famous for its vines. Jerome (Comm. in Esai. v.) speaks of it as about half a Roman mile from Heshbon, and as one of the strongest fortresses of Moab. It has not been identified by recent travellers. The names of the chief Moabite cities are brought together by Milton with a singular rhythmical majesty in Par. Lost, i, 406—411.

They are come even unto Jazer.—The pronoun may be referred either to the “branches of the vine,” or to the “lords of the heathen,” as destroyers. Adopting the former construction, we find in the words a description of the extent of the culture of the Sibmah vine. Northward it spread to Jazer on the Gilead frontier (Num. xxxii. 1, 3; 1 Chron. xxvi. 31), rebuilt by the Gadites (Num. xxxii. 35), eastward to the wilderness, westward it crossed the Dead Sea, and reappeared in the vine-clad slopes of Engedi (Song of Sol. i. 14). In Jer. xlviii. 32, we have “the sea of Jazer.” See Note there.

(9) Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer.—The prophet, in his sympathy with the sufferings of Moab (see chap. xv. 5), declares that he will weep with tears as genuine as those of Jazer itself over the desolation of its vineyards.

The shouting for thy summer fruits ••• Better, as in the margin, on thy summer-fruits, and on thy harvest a shout is fallen, i.e., not the song of the vintage gatherers and the reapers, but the cry of the enemy as they trample on the fields and vineyards. The force of the contrast is emphasized, as in Jer. xlviii. 33 (“a cheer which is no cheer,” Cheyne), by the use of the same word (hedad) as that which in the next verse is employed for the song of those that tread the grapes. (Comp. Jer. xxv. 30.) Possibly the word for “harvest” is used generically as including the vintage.

(10) Out of the plentiful field.—Literally, out of the Carmel, one of Isaiah’s favourite words, as in chaps. x. 18, xxix. 17. The word for “shouting” is the hedad of the previous verse. In the words, “I have made . . .” Jehovah speaks as declaring that the work of desolation, though wrought by human hands, is wrought by his. The prophet, while he weeps in true human pity, is taught not to forget that the desolation is a righteous punishment.

(11) My bowels shall sound like an harp ••• The context leaves it uncertain whether the speaker is the prophet as in verse 9, or Jehovah as in verse 10. The former seems, perhaps, the most natural. On the other hand, the very phrase is used of the compassion of Jehovah in chap. xxxii. 15. The “bowels,” as in modern language the “heart,” were looked on as the seat of the emotions, and as such they vibrate, like the chords of the harp or lyre (kinnûr) used at funerals, with the thrills of pity.

(12) When it is seen ••• Better thus: When Moab appeared (ac, as a worshipper), when he wearies himself on the high place (the scene of Chemosh-worship), though he enter into the sanctuary to pray, yet shall he not prevail. The prophet draws a picture of the unavailing litanies which Moab, like the priests of Baal in 1 Kings xviii. 26, shall offer to his gods.

(13) Since that time.—The phrase is used of an indefinite past, like our “of yore,” or “of old time.” It is variously translated by “hitherto” (2 Sam. xv. 34), “from the beginning” (chap. xlviii. 3, 5, 7). It seems to imply that thus far Isaiah had been in part reproducing the “burden” of an older prophet, or of one given to him to deliver at an earlier date.

(14) But now the Lord hath spoken . . .—The point of contrast seems to lie in the vaguer character of what had gone before, and the specific defined prediction that follows. “Within three years,” measured from the time of the prophecy, shall he not prevail. When it is seen that Moab is weary on his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail. The prophet, while he weeps in true human pity, is taught not to forget that the desolation is a righteous punishment.

(15) This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning Moab since that time. (14) But now the Lord hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be consumed.
of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

CHAPTER XVII.—1 The burden of Damascus.

Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. (2) The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid. (3) The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the Lord of hosts.

(4) And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean. (5) And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim. (6) Yet gleanings shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel.

(7) At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel. (8) And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.

(1) Or, not many.
(2) Or, as images.
(3) Or, not many.
(4) Or, not many.
Seant Harvest of the pleasant Plants.  

ISAIAH, XVIII.  

Trouble at Evening-tide.

(9) In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel; and there shall be desolation. (10) Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:

(11) In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

(12) Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! (13) The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

(14) And behold at evening-tide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(1) Woe to the multitude of many people.

(12) Woe to the multitude of many people.—The three verses 12—14 stand as an isolated fragment, probably placed here as beginning like chap. xviii. 1. They may have been connected with the progress of Sennacherib's army. In the "rushing of mighty waters" to describe the march of an army we have a parallel to chap. vii. 7, 8.

(13) But God shall rebuke them.—Better, He shall rebuke. The insertion of the word "God" weakens the force of the sublime indefiniteness of the Hebrew.

(14) And behold at evening-tide trouble.—The words, though spoken in general terms, received a special fulfilment in the destruction of Sennacherib's army (chap. xxxvii. 36). Possibly the parallelism they present to verse 11 may have led to the insertion of the oracle in this place.

XVIII.

(1) Woe to the land shadowing with wings.—A new kingdom, hitherto unnamed by Isaiah, comes now within his horizon. The movements of Tirhakah, king of Cush or Ethiopia, from the upper valley of the Nile, subduing Egypt, and prepared to enter into conflict with the great Assyrian king (chap. xxxvii. 9), had apparently excited the hopes of such of Hezekiah's counsellors as put their trust in an arm of flesh. To these Isaiah now turns with words of warning. The words "shadowing with wings" have been very variously interpreted as implying (1) the image of a mighty eagle stretching out its imperial wings (Ezek. xvii. 1—5); (2) the uræus or disk with outspread wings which appears in Egyptian paintings as the symbol of Egyptian sovereignty; (3) the rendering resounding being adopted instead of "shadowing," the swarms of the tae-tee fly that have been the terror of all travellers in Abyssinia. Of these (2) has most to commend it, and receives confirmation from the inscription of Piankhi-Mor-Amon, translated by Canon Cook in Records of the Past (ii. p. 89), in which that king, an Ethiopian, who had conquered Egypt, appears with the uræus on his head, and
The burden of Egypt.—In its political bearings, as Egypt and Ethiopia were at this time under the same ruler, Tibrakah, as they had been before under Piankhi-Mer-Amon, this prophecy presents nearly the same features as the preceding. Its chief characteristic is that it presents the condition of the conquered nation as distinct from that of the conqueror. The opening

God is at once unlasting and unresting. He dwells in His resting-place (i.e., palace or throne), and watches the ripening of the fruit which He is about to gather. While there is a clear heat in sunshine, while there is a dew-cloud in harvest-heat, through all phenomenal changes, He waits still. Then, before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the fruit becomes the full-ripe grape, He comes as the Lord of the vineyard, and cuts off the branches with His pruning-hooks. (Comp. the striking parallels of Isa. xix. 30—36, and Shakespeare, Henry VIII., iii. 2.)

They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains. . . .—The figure and the reality are strangely blended. The grapes of that vintage cut off by those pruning-hooks are none other than the carcasses of the host of the Assyrians left unburied, to be devoured by the dogs and vultures.

In that time shall the present be brought . . .—Not “of the people,” but a people, as being themselves the present. The prophet foresees, as one result of the defeat of the Assyrian armies, that the nation, which he again describes instead of naming, will offer themselves to the service of Jehovah. So taken the words have an interesting parallel in Ps. lxviii. 31, “Ethiopia stretches out her hands unto God,” or in the mention of Ethiopia in Ps. lxxxvii. 3, as among the nations whose children are to be enrolled among the conquered nation (chap. viii. 7).

When he lifteth up an ensign . . .—Both clauses are better taken as indefinite, when an ensign is set up . . . when a trumpet is sounded. The prophet calls on all nations (Ethiopia being specially included) to watch for the signal that shall be given, distinct as the beacon-fire on the hill, or the alarm of the trumpet, to proclaim the downfall of Assyria.

I will take my rest . . .—The words that follow paint with marvellous vividness the calmness and deliberation of the workings of Divine judgments, prunings, and take away and cut down the branches. (6) They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people 7 scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down under foot.

CHAPTER XIX.—(1) The burden of Egypt.

Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall...
The Burden of Egypt.

I S A I A H. X IX. The Failure of the Waters of the Nile.

1. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. (3) And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. (4) And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts.

2. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up. (5) And the waters shall fail from the sea; the rivers far away; the brooks, dried up. (6) And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up; the reeds and flags shall wither. (7) The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more. (8) The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish. (9) Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded. (10) And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish.

3. The charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits. (11) Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the word of the long-delayed judgment is at last coming, swift as a cloud driven by the storm-wind, upon the idols of Egypt. Men shall feel that the presence of the Mighty One is among them.

4. The brooks of defence. The latter noun (Heb., matzor) is better treated as a proper name, the singular of the dual form Mitsraim, commonly used for Egypt. Here it would seem to be used for Lower Egypt, the region of Zoan and Memphis, as distinct from Upper Egypt or the Thebaid. The same form occurs in chap. xxxvii. 25; 2 Kings xix. 24; Micah vii. 12. Its primary meaning is that of a fortified land. The "flags" are strictly the papyri of the Nile; the "brooks" are the canals or Nile-branches of the Delta. (12) The meadows by the Nile. And so in the other clauses, the Hebrew word for "brooks" being used specifically for that river. For "shall wither and be driven away," read, shall dry up and vanish. The valley of the Nile is to become as parched and barren as the desert on either side of it. (13) The fishers also shall mourn. With the failure of the river, one at least of the industries of Egypt failed also. Fish had at all times formed part of the diet of the working-classes of Egypt (Herod. ii. 93; Num. xi. 5), and the pictures of Egyptian life continually represent the two modes of fishing, with the "angle" or hook, and with the net. (14) Moreover they that work in fine flax. Another class also would find its occupation gone. The "fine flax" was used especially for the dress of the priests (Herod. ii. 81), and for the mummy clothes of the dead (1 Kings x. 28; Ezek. xxvii. 7). (15) They that weave networks. Better, white cloths, the cotton or byssus fabrics for which Egypt was famous. (16) And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof. Better, the pillars thereof (i.e., the props and columns of the state) shall be broken in pieces, and all those who work for wages (i.e., the great masses of the people) shall be troubled in mind. The word translated "purposes," occurs in the sense here given in Ps. xi. 3, and is there translated "foundations." (Compare the like figure in Ezek. xxx. 4; Gal. ii. 9.)

5. Surely the princes of Zoan are fools. Zoan, the great city of the Delta, was known to the Greeks as Tanis, founded, as stated in Num. xiii. 22, seven years after Hebron. Here the great Rameses II.
wise, the son of ancient kings? (12) Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt. (13) The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and dizzy because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he shaketh over it. (17) And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.

In that day shall there be an altar turned to folly.
The Egyptians sacrificing to the Lord.

ISAIAH, XIX.  The Highway out of Egypt to Assyria.

to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord.

(20) And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

(21) And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it.

(22) And the Lord shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

(23) In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

(24) In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:

note. From the prophet's own stand-point, however, the altar was probably thought of, not as the centre of a rival worship, but, like that erected by the trans-Jordanic tribes in the time of Joshua, as an altar of "witness" (Josh. xxii. 27), and the words that follow supply a distinct confirmation of this view. Substantially the prophet saw in the distant future a time in which the connection between Judah and Egypt should be one influencing the latter for good, and not the former for evil. The admission of Egyptian and Ethiopian proselytes, already referred to, was as the first fruits of such an influence. It may not be without interest to note some of its later workings. (1) In the time of Manasseh, who gave to his son Amon a name singularly Egyptian in its sound, a body of Jewish settlers was invited by Psammuthius to station themselves on the frontier of Upper Egypt ("Pseudo-Aristeas," in Hudson's Josephus). (2) Under Ptolemy I., large numbers of Jewish emigrants fixed themselves at Alexandria, with full toleration of their faith and worship. (3) Under Ptolemy Philadæphus the intercourse between the Palestinians and Egyptians led to the translation of the Old Testament Scriptures known as the LXX., and this was followed by the growth of a Hellenistic or a Greco-Jewish literature, of which we have the remains in the Apocrypha and in Philo. (4) There was the building of the Leontopolis Temple, already spoken of, and this was followed by a series of Jewish synagogues, perhaps also of monasteries for communities of Jewish ascetics of the Essene type, such as that founded by St. Pachomius. (5) Under Ptolemy Euergetes (n.c. 244) came to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple. (6) The tone of the preceding verses seems at first at variance with the stern prophecy of disaster which the chapter opens. The prophet is no eater of his words. What he has learnt is to look beyond the chastisement, and to see that it is as true of Egypt as of Israel, that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." The word of Jehovah smote but to heal, and the healing could not come without the smiting. Through it they would be led to pray, and prayer was the condition of all spiritual recovery.

(25) And the Lord shall smite Egypt.

(22) And the Lord shall smite Egypt...

The tone of the preceding verses seems at first at variance with the stern prophecies of disaster which the chapter opens. The prophet is no eater of his words. What he has learnt is to look beyond the chastisement, and to see that it is as true of Egypt as of Israel, that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." The sword of Jehovah smote but to heal, and the healing could not come without the smiting. Through it they would be led to pray, and prayer was the condition of all spiritual recovery.

(23) In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria.

The prophet's horizon at once brightens and expands. Palestine was in his time the battle-field of the two great empires. The armies of one of the great powers crossed it both before and after, as in the case of Shishak, Zerah, Tirhakah, Nebuchadnezzar, on their march against the other. The prophet looks forward to a time when the long-standing discord should cease (Assyria, or the power which succeeded her, gaining for a time the suzerainty), and both should be joined with Israel, as in "a three-fold cord, not easily broken." Like other bright ideals of the future, it yet waits for its complete fulfilment. The nearest historical approximation to it is, perhaps, found in the Persian monarchy, including, as it did, the territory of Assyria, of Israel, and of Egypt, and acknowledging.
Sargon the King of Assyria.

CHAPTER XX.—(1) In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it; (2) at the same time spake the lord by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. (3) And the lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia: (4) so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. (5) And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. (6) And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our

through the proclamations of Cyrus, Jehovah as the God of heaven (Ezra i. 2). May we connect this prediction with Isaiah’s distinctly defined anticipation of the part which Persia was to play in the drama of the world’s history as an iconoclastic and monotheistic power, and so with the dominant idea of chaps. xi—xvi? (2) Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless. . .—In this tripartite holy alliance Israel is to retain the spiritual supremacy. Egypt, once alien, becomes the people of the Lord. (Comp. Hosea i. 9, 10.) Assyria is recognised as the instrument which He has made to do His work (comp. chaps. x. 15, xxxvii. 26); but Israel has the proud pre-eminence of being His inheritance.”

XX. (1) In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod.—Better, the Tartan. The word was an official title borne by the generalissimo of the Assyrian armies, who was next in authority to the king. He may, or may not, have been the same with the officer of the same rank who appears in 2 Kings xviii. 17 as sent by Sennacherib to Jerusalem.

When Sargon the king of Assyria sent him.—Much light has been thrown by the Assyrian inscriptions on the events connected with this king. Prior to that discovery, there was no trace of his name to be found elsewhere than in this passage, and his very existence had been called in question. As it is, he comes before us as one of the greatest of Assyrian monarchs. He succeeded Shalmaneser V., the conqueror of Israel, in B.C. 721, at first as guardian and co-regent of his son Sandan-Malik, and afterwards in his own name. His reign lasted till B.C. 704, when he was succeeded by Sennacherib. Long inscriptions, giving the annals of his reign, were found by M. Botta at Khorsabad, and have been interpreted by M. Oppert (Records of the Past, vii. 21, ix. 1, xi. 17, 27, 33) and others.

And fought against Ashdod.—The occasion of the campaign is related by Sargon in the annals just mentioned as happening in his eleventh year. Azuri, the king of Ashdod, refused to pay tribute, and revolted. Sargon deposed him, and placed his brother Akhismat, on the throne. The people, in their turn, rose against Akhismat, and chose Yaman as their king. Sargon then marched against the city, took it, and carried off its gods and its treasures as booty (Records of the Past, vii. 40). Those events naturally excited the minds of Hezekiah and his councillors, and led them to look to an alliance with Egypt as their best protection.
The Burden of the Desert of the Sea.

expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

CHAPTER XXI.—(1) The burden of the desert of the sea.

As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land. (2) A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease. (3) Therefore are my loins filled with pain; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth; I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

(4) My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

(5) Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield. (6) For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth. (7) And he said a chariot with a

XXI.

(1) The burden of the desert of the sea.——The title of the prophecy is obviously taken from the catch-word of "the desert" that follows. The "sea" has been explained (1) as the Euphrates, just as in chaps. xviii. 2, xix. 5, it appears as used of the Nile (Cheyne). (2) As pointing to the surging flood of the mingled myrads of its population. (3) Xenophon's description of the whole plain of the Euphrates, intersected by marshes and lakes, as looking like a sea affords, perhaps, a better explanation.

As whirlwinds in the south.——The "South" (or Nêgeb) is here, as elsewhere, the special name of the country lying south of Judah. The tempests of the region seem to have been proverbial (Zeoh. ix. 14; Jer. iv. 11, xii. 24; Hos. xiii. 15).

So it cometh.——The absence of a subject to the verb gives the opening words a terrible vagueness. Something is coming from the wilderness, a terrible land, beyond it. The "wilderness" in this case is clearly the Arabian desert, through part of which the Euphrates flows. The context determines the "terrible land" as that of Elam and Media.

(2) A grievous vision.——The verse contains, as it were, the three tableau which came in succession before the prophet's gaze: (1) The treacherous dealer, the Assyrian, is this day power, spoiling and oppressing, breaking treaties, and, as its kings boasted (Hab. ii. 5; Records of the Past, vii. 42, 44), "removing landmarks." (2) The summons to Elam and Media to put an end to this tyranny. (3) The oppressed peoples ceasing to sigh, and rejoicing in their liberation.

Elam appears here as combined with Media, which is named in chap. xiii. 17 as the only destroyer of Babylon, and this has been urged as evidence of a later date. As a matter of fact, however, Sargon at this very time was carrying on a fierce war against Elam (Records of the Past, vii. 41—49) as well as against Media (ibid., p. 37). In Ezek. xxxii. 24, Elam is numbered among the extinct nations, but the name, at all events, re­appears as applied to the Persians, though they were of a distinct race. It was, even as a mere forecast, perfectly natural that the two should be associated together as the future destroyers of the Nineveh and Babylon empires, which to the prophet's eye were identical in character and policy. The advance described as "from the wilderness" implies a march of part at least of the Medo-Persian army down the Choaspes and into the lowland of Chuzistan, bordering on the great Arabian desert.
The Fall of Babylon.

ISAIAH, XXI. The Burden of Dumah and Arabia.

couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearten
diligently with much heed: (8) and he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continu
ously upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights: (9) and, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.

(10) O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

(11) The burden of Dumah.

He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? (12) The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.

(13) The burden upon Arabia.

In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. (14) The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty,

the iteration of intensity. What had met the watchman's eye in his vision had passed by in silence, and had left him in doubt as to its meaning. Was it the symbol of a Babylonian army marching out against rebels, or of a rebel army on the way to attack Babylon? He listened, but no voice came out of the darkness to interpret the vision for him.

(8) And he cried, A lion.—Better, As a lion. The cry seems to be the low murmur of the eager, almost angry, impatience by which the prophet or the ideal watchman was stirred.

(9) And, behold, here cometh . . .—Better, Behold, there came . . . The words narrate a second vision, not the watchman's narrative of the first. He sees now, as it were, a part of the cavalcade which he had beheld before, and now it is no longer silent, but reports what has been accomplished. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" The words are applied to the destruction of the mystical Babylon in Rev. xiv. 8, xviii. 2. Stress is laid on the destruction of the idols of Babylon by the iconoclastic Persians.

(10) O my threshing, and the corn of my floor.—Literally, and child of my threshing-floor. The words are abrupt, and we have to read the thoughts that lie below them. The "child of the threshing-floor" is none other than Israel, thought of as the corn it.

(11) The burden of Dumah.—Several places of the name are mentioned in the Old Testament (Gen. xxx. 14; Josh. xiv. 52), but these are not in the direction of Seir. Probably here, as in verse 1 and chap. xxii. 1, we have a mystical prophetic name, Edom being altered to Dumah, i.e., "silence," as in Pss. xcv. 17, cxv. 17, the silence of the grave. In this case, as in the preceding, there is first the oppressive silence of expectancy, and then the desolation.

(12) He calleth out of Seir . . . —The subject is indefinite: one calleth. The watchman hears the silence of the night broken by a voice from Seir. It is probable that the prophet had actually been consulted by the Edomites, and that this is his answer to their enquiries. The cry is, "Watchman, what part of the night?" In the weary night of calamity the sufferer desires to know what hour it is, how much of the darkness still remains to be lived through. The answer is mysterious and ill-boding. There is a "morning" coming, a time of light and hope, but the day which is so opened closes too quickly in the blackness of night (Amos v. 13). The words sum up the whole future of Judah, subject as it was to one conqueror after another, rising now and then, as under Herod and the Romans, and then sinking to its present desolation.

(13) If ye will enquire . . .—The words are presupposing a craving to know the meaning of the mysterious oracle just given. The prophet declines to answer. If they like to ask, they may, and return and go back after a fruitless journey. Some interpreters, however, have seen in the "return" a call to repentance like that conveyed by the same word in Jer. iii. 22, but hardly on sufficient grounds. We should, in that case, have expected "return to Jehovah."

(14) The burden upon Arabia.—Better, of the evening land. Here, again, the prophet alters the form of the word (Arab into Ereb) so as to convey a mystic meaning. The land of which he is about to speak is a land of shadow and of gloom. Evening is falling on it. It is a question whether the second Arabia is to retain its geographical form or be translated "evening," as before. In any case, of course, Arabia is the country spoken of. The "Dedanites" appear in Jer. xlix. 8; Ezek. xxv. 13, and seem from Ezek. xxvii. 15 to have been dwelling in the neighbourhood of the Edomites (Jer. xlix. 8) as a commercial people trading with Tyre in ebony and ivory. The point of the oracle against them is that they shall be compelled by the presence of the Assyrian armies to leave the main lines of their traffic, probably, as before, on their way westward to Tyre, and to take by-paths, pitching their tents not near towns and villages, but in the low brushwood of the wilderness.

(15) The inhabitants of . . . Tema . . . —Another element of suffering comes into the picture. The Dedanites, driven out of their usual route into the desert, find their provisions fail them, and the men of Tema, fearing to invite them to their tents, lest they too should be smitten by the invader, are compelled to take out bread and water stealthily. The name of Tema (now Ta'ima), is found on the pilgrim route from Damascus to Mecca, and again on that between Palmyra and Petra, on the east of the Haurin mountains.

They prevented with their bread—i.e., they went out to welcome him (the fugitive), without waiting
The Burden of the Valley of Vision. ISAIAH, XXII. The Day of Trouble and Perplexity.

they prevented with their bread him that fled. (10) For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. (11) For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: (12) and the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it.

CHAPTER XXII.—(1) The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house tops?

Till he came as a suppliant. Their very hospitality, in strange contrast with Arab usage, had to be practised in secret.

(13) For they fled from the swords.—The fourfold repetition of the somewhat full form of the Hebrew preposition (literally, from the face of) seems as if intended to emphasise the several stages of retreat.

(14) According to the years of an hireling... The prophet uses, as in chap. xvi. 14, the formula which expressed the most precise measurement, and so gives a test as to his forecast of the future.

And all the glory of Kedar shall fail.—Kedar is used, as in Ps. cxv. 5, Song of Sol. i. 5, generically for the nomadic tribes of Arabia, including Dedan.

(15) And the residue...—The Hebrew word is the same as the characteristic "remnant" of Isaiah's earlier prophecies. The words point primarily to the salvation of Arabia by Sargon and Sennacherib, who narrate their victories over the Arabian tribes (Records of the Past, vii. 34). In Jer. xlix. 28, 29 we have an echo of the prediction, which, in that case, pointed to the same as the characteristic "remnant" of Isaiah's prophecies.
Jerusalem preparing for a Siege. ISAIAH, XXII. The reckless Revelry of its Defenders.

(7) That thy choicest valleys . . . —These were the valleys of Gibeon, Rehob, Himmon, and Jehoshaphat, which encircled Jerusalem on the west and south. They are painted as filled with the chariots and cavalry of the Assyrian army, ready to make their attack on the very gate of the city, the “great gate” named in Sennacherib’s inscription (Records of the Past, i. 59).

(8) And he discovered the covering of Judah —i.e., Jehovah removed the veil which till then had hidden the approaching danger from the eyes of the inhabitants, and laid bare their weakness to those of the invaders. The verbs which in the English version are in the past tense are really in a kind of prophetic present, painting the future as if actually passing before the prophet’s gaze.

The armour of the house of the forest.—More fully (as in 1 Kings vii. 2, x. 17), “the house of the forest of Lebanon,” which appears to have been used as an arsenal, and to which the people now turn as their chief resource.

(9) Ye have seen also the breaches . . . —The prophet paints the hasty preparations for defence. So in 2 Chron. xxxii. 5: “Hezekiah built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers,” and added an outer line of defence. The “city of David” is, of course, the fortress of Zion.

The waters of the lower pool.—This was the Lower Gihon, now the Birket-es-Sultan. The operation is described more fully in 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4. Its object was to stop the outflow of the streams, and gather them into a reservoir, partly, of course, for the supply of the inhabitants during the siege, but still more that the Assyrian armies might find little or no water in the immediate neighbourhood of the city. Sargon, in his inscriptions, describes like preparations at Ashdod (Smith, Assy. Discov., p. 291).

(10) Ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem.—The preparations for defence are continued. The houses were numbered that some might be pulled down and others left, as strategic plans might determine. (Comp. 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.) So in what was probably a contemporary psalm we have, “Walk about Zion . . . tell the towers thereof . . . mark ye well her bulwarks” (Ps. lxxii. 12). So in the later siege of Jerusalem houses were thrown down by (or, more accurately, on account of) the mounds that were employed by the besiegers (Jer. xxxii. 4).

(11) Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago. (12) And in that day did the Lord Glo of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.

(12) To weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness . . . —National danger, Isaiah adds, should call to a national repentance in its outward manifestations, like the fast described in Joel ii. 15: “And in that day did the Lord of hosts call to a fast.” Baldness, produced by the tearing of the hair in extreme grief, took its place naturally, with weeping and sackcloth, in those manifestations.

(13) And behold joy and gladness . . . —As things were, however, the danger, imminent as it was, led, as in the plague at Athens in the time of Pericles, and that of Florence in the time of Boccaccio, not to repentance, but to recklessness and sensuality. The cry of the baser form of epicureanism in all ages (1 Cor. xv. 32) was uttered, or acted on, and the prophet echoes the spoken words, or gives utterance to the unspoken thought, in tones of burning indignation.

(14) It was revealed in mine ears . . . —The special form indicates that the warning was “borne in,” ringing, as it were, on the inward ears of the prophet, as an oracle of God. That sensuous recklessness could have but one end in all countries and ages, and that end was death. No formal religion, no chastisement, even, would avail to purge an iniquity like that in the absence of a true repentance.

(15) Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house,
His Warning to Eliakim.

with that of the “king’s friend” of Gen. xxvi. 36; 2 Sam. xv. 37; 1 Kings iv. 5. In addition to this office Shebna had the position of being “over the house,” an office, like that of a Lord Chamberlain, of such importance that it was sometimes held by a king’s son (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). It gave him supreme control over the treasury of the king and the internal affairs of his kingdom, and made him almost like a maire du palais under the Merovingian kings. It is obvious that his influence was exercised to thwart the prophet’s counsels; and the probable sequence of thought connecting the two sections is that he was prominent as the representative of the false security and luxury which the prophet had condemned; probably also of the party which rested their hope on an alliance with Egypt. What follows seems to show that he was a novus homo, with no ancestral dignities in his house, possibly even a foreigner (the name is Aramaean in form), pushing himself forward with an obtrusive ambition. We note the touch of scorn in “my servant,” bears witness to his faith and goodness; and the words point to an actual transfer of the robe and girdle (e.g., chap. x. 12, xlii. 13, 14), and Jehovah is the subject of both clauses.

Eliakim the son of Hilkiah.—Nothing is known of Eliakim’s previous history, but the epithet, “my servant,” bears witness to his faith and goodness; and we may well believe him to have been in heart, if not openly, one of Isaiah’s disciples. He was apparently, at the time, in some subordinate office.

I will clothe him with thy robe.—The words point to an actual transfer of the robe and girdle which were Shebna’s insignia of office. There was to be, in this case, a literal investiture.

He shall be a father . . .—The words were, perhaps, an official title given to the king’s vizier or chamberlain. (Comp. 2 Kings v. 13.) Here, however, the words indicate that the idea of the title should be fulfilled, and that the government of Eliakim should be, in the truest sense, paternal.

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: (21) and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. (22) And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

And say, (16) What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock? (17) Behold, the Lord will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee. (18) He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country; there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord’s house. (19) And I...
The Downfall of Eliakim.

The Burden of Tyre.

shall shut, and none shall open. (23) And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. (24) And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. (25) In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it.

CHAPTER XXIII.—(1) The burden of Tyre.

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in; from the land of Chittim it

(1) The burden of Tyre...—The chapter calls us to enquire into the political relations of Tyre at the time of Isaiah. These we learn, partly from Scripture itself, partly from Assyrian inscriptions. In the days of David and Solomon there had been an intimate alliance between Israel and Hiram, King of Tyre. Ps. xiv. 12 indicates at least the interchange of

Or, instruments of viols.

kingly gifts, if not the acknowledgment of sovereignty by payment of tribute. Ps. lxxiii. 7, which we have some reason to connect with the reign of Uzziah, shows that this alliance had passed into hostility. The position of Tyre naturally threw it into more intimate relations with the northern kingdom; “our country was nourished by the king’s country” then as in the days of Herod Agrippa (Acts xii. 20), and there seems reason to believe that the son of Tabeal, whom Pekah and Rezin intended to place upon the throne of Judah, was the son of a Tyrian ruler. (See Note on chap. vii. 6.) It was, at this time, the most flourishing of the Phoenician cities, and had succeeded to the older fame of Zidon. The action of Ahaz in inviting the help of Tiglath-pileser against Israel and the Syrians had tended to make Tyre also an object of attack by the Assyrian armies. The prophecy now before us would seem to have been connected with that attack, and foretells the issue of the conflict on which Tyre had rashly entered. Upon that issue light is thrown by the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings. Sargon records that he “plundered the district of Samaria and the whole house of Omri,” and “reigned from Yatnan (Cyprus), which is in the midst of the sea of the setting sun . . . from the great Phoenicia and Syria . . . to all the cities of remote Media” (Records of the Past, p. 27). Sennacherib boasts of a victory over the land of the Hatti (i.e., Hittites); “fear overwhelmed Luti, the king of Zidon,” and “he fled to Yatnan, which is in the midst of the sea,” and the Assyrian “placed Tubalu” (the Tabeal of Isaiah) on the throne of the kingdom (Records of the Past, p. 61). In anticipation of these events, the prophet utters his note of warning to the great merchant city. It seems more natural to connect it with those events, which came within the horizon of his vision, than to refer it, as some interpreters have done, to the later siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar. The mention of the Chaldeans as having been subdued by the Assyrians, which fits in with Sargon’s and Sennacherib’s victories over Merodach-baladan (Records of the Past, v. 48, 59), who endeavoured to establish an independent kingdom in Babylonia (see Note on chap. xxxix. 1), and is, of course, entirely inapplicable to the time of Nebuchadnezzar, seems, indeed, to be decisive as to this question.

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish...—See Note on chap. ii. 16. The prophet sees, as in vision, the argosies of Tyre speeding on their way homeward across the Mediterranean from Tarshish (Spain), and bids them raise their lamentation over the coming fate of their city. They will hear that their city has been taken, that there is no access to its harbours. At Chittim (Cyprus, or, probably, Citium, the chief Phoenician colony of the island), the tidings which burst upon them were as a revelation, confirming the vague rumours they had heard before.
Tyre as the Mart of Nations.

ISAIAH, XXIII.

City whose Merchants are Princes.

Tyre is a joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffic is the honourable of the earth? The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.

Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength. He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to

Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle. Is this your voice? is it the voice of thy merchant men? What do ye rush about to and fro? What do ye prepare in the sea? What are your masts fastened to? the wind of Tyre.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, concerning the lands of Canaan, i.e. Tyre, where the merchants are princes, and their ships pass through the seas: Tyre was an haven for the ships of Tarshish. They were on the coast of Tarshish.

Is it not the words of him that seeth thy way? the unskilful seer imagines his paths. When Tyre was built, the merchant princes of Tarshish passed through it.

In the day that Tyre was removed from the seas, and was cast off to the desert; there is no place for the merchant men.

The seamen of Hamath and Tyre were upon thy wall; and all thy great merchant men were upon the sea, and they were sad at these tidings. They were grieved as they thought of it, they went about their business, every one bemoaning his friend, because of the destruction of Tyre.

How art thou fallen from the sea, O city which chargeth commerce? the inhabitants of thy seacoast are destroyed; all they that handle the oar are come to bury thee; the spoiler shall pass through the city which was full of people. She is punished even unto death; all her merchant men are fallen down on the ground.

She is become the Vertex of the聚会 of the seas.

Set on the towers, O ye daughters of Sion; behold, how cometh one weak even to judgment.

The waters of Sihor are yours; the rivers of Egypt are yours; the rivers of Aegypt are yours; the rivers of Cush are yours. The rivers of Cush shall be men of faith, and shall be princes, and shall bring up thy revenue in their midst. The field is thine; the vineyard is thine; the Lebanon and the syonitis are thine.

Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

Fixes the date of its foundation at 240 years before Solomon.

Your own feet shall carry her. The English version (tenable grammatically) points to the wanderings of exile. Another rendering, her feet are wont to carry her. is also legitimate, and fits in better with the context, which paints the past glory of Tyre in contrast with her coming calamities. So taken, the words point to her numerous colonies, of which Carthage was the chief.

Whose merchants are princes. It is a fact worth noting in the history of language that the word for "merchants" here, and in Hos. xii. 7; Prov. xxii. 14, is the same as that for Canaanite. The traffickers of the earth were pre-eminently of that race.

The Lord of hosts hath purposed it. This is the prophet's answer. The kings of Assyria, who, under Sargon, served as agents of the Assyrians, were pressed on against the Ethiopian dynasty then dominant in Egypt.

When the report concerning Egypt, to the destruction of the temples of Tyre, such e.g. as that of Melkarth, which was reported to be one of the two most ancient in the world.

Pass through thy land as a river. The word for "river" is that used in verse 3 with special reference to the Nile. Here the inundation of the Nile gives special force to the comparison. The daughter of Tarshish (i.e., Tarshish itself) is to spread and overflow in independent action. The colonies of Tyre are no longer subject to her, paying tribute or custom dues as she might ordain. There is no "strength," no "girdle" now to restrain them, no limit such as Tyre had imposed on their commerce or colonisation. It is significant that Cyprus revolted about this time, and that the Phoenician colonies took part in attacking the mother city under Sennacherib (Jos. Ant. ix. 14. 2).

He shook the kingdoms. The picture of the great convulsion of the time includes more than Tyre and its subject states. Egypt, Ethiopia, Babylon, Syria, Israel, Judah, were all affected, shaken as to their very foundations, by the rapid progress of the restored Assyrian empire under Tiglath-Pileser and his successors.

Inhabitants of the isle. Better, coast. The word was specially appropriate to the narrow seacoast strip of land occupied by the Phoenicians—Tyre, the older city, the "great Zidon" of Josh. xi. 8, xix. 28, appearing as the representative of Phoenicia generally. It was her commerce that had filled Tyre and the other daughter cities. The "dumbness" to which the prophet calls the people is that of stooped terror.

By great waters the seed of Sihor. Sihor ("the dark river") is as in Jer. ii. 18, a Hebrew name for the Nile. The corn-trade with Egypt (Ezek. xxvii. 7, adds the linen-trade) was naturally a chief branch of Tyrian commerce. Practically, indeed, as the Egyptians had no timber to build ships, and, for the most part, hated the sea, their navy consisted of Phoenicians. Tyre practically reaped the harvest that sprang from the inundation of the Nile. For "mart," read "gain." The "great waters" are those of the great sea, i.e., the Mediterranean.

Be thou ashamed, O Zidon. Is this your voice? is it the voice of thy merchant men? What do ye rush about to and fro? What do ye prepare in the sea? What are your masts fastened to? the wind of Tyre.

The waters of Sihor are yours; the rivers of Egypt are yours; the rivers of Cush are yours. The rivers of Cush shall be men of faith, and shall be princes, and shall bring up thy revenue in their midst. The field is thine; the vineyard is thine; the Lebanon and the saronitis are thine.

Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.

Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength. He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to
destroy the strong holds thereof.

(12) And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.

(13) Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin. (14) Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.

(15) And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king; after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. (16) Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered. (17) And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her

Against the merchant city.—Literally, Canaan (the word “city” being an interpolation), taken here as equivalent to Phoenicia. So in Josh. v. 1, the LXX. translates “Canaan” by “Phoenicia.”

(12) Thou oppressed virgin.—Strictly speaking, the noun and adjective are incompatible, the latter conveying the sense of “defiled,” or “deflowered.” Till now Tyre had known no defeat. Her fortress was a virgin citadel. Now the barbarian conqueror was to rob her of that virginity.

Pass over to Chittim.—With a keen irony the prophet gives a counsel which he declares will be of no avail. They may flee to Chittim (Cyprus); but the power of the Assyrians would reach them even there. Once and again the inscriptions of the reigns was of this length, and the words probably mean, “virgin citadel.” Now the barbarian conqueror was to rob her of that virginity.

Years, according to the days of one king:—We look in vain for any ruler of Assyria or Babylon whose reign was of this length, and the words probably mean, as the days fixed by a king—i.e., by a despotic and absolute decree. Possibly, however, the “one king” may stand for one dynasty.

Shall Tyre sing as an harlot.—Literally, there shall be to Tyre as the song of the harlot, possibly referring to some well-known lyric of this type. The commercial city, welcoming foreigners of all nations as her lovers for the sake of gain, is compared to the prostitute who sells herself for money. (Comp. Rev. xvii. 2.)

(10) Take an harp, go about the city. . . .—In a tone half of irony and half of pity, the prophet tells the “harlot that had been forgotten” to return to her old arts of song (the singing women of the East were commonly of this class), and to go about once more with song and lyre, recalling her old lovers (i.e., her old allies) to the memory of their past love.

(17) She shall turn to her hire.—The words indicate, in the strong imagery of verse 15, the revival of the commercial prosperity of Tyre under the rule of the Persian kings. To that commerce there was to be no limit. The ships of all nations were once more to crowd her harbours.

Her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord.—The words seem to reverse the rule of Deut. xxiii. 18, which, probably not without a reference to practices like those connected with the worship of Mylitta (Herod., i. 99), forbade gifts that were so gained from being offered in the sanctuary. Here, it seems to be implied, the imagery was not to be carried to what might have seemed its logical conclusion. The harlot city, penitent and converted, might be allowed, strange as it might seem, to bring the gains of her harlotry into the temple of the Lord. Interpreted religiously, the prophet sees the admission of proselytes to the worship of Israel in the future, as he had seen it
merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(1) Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. (2) And it shall be, as with the people, so with the 3 a priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. (3) The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. (4) The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. (5) The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. (6) Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. (7) The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh. (8) The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. (9) They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. (10) The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come probably in the days of Hezekiah (Ps. lxxxvi. 4). Interpreted politically, the words point to a return to the old alliance between Judah and Tyre in the days of David and Solomon (1 Kings v. 1—12), and to the gifts which that alliance involved (Ps. xivv. 12).

For them that dwell before the Lord . . . These were probably, in the prophet’s thoughts, the citizens of Jerusalem, who were to find in Tyre their chief resource both for food and raiment. Traces of this commerce after the return of the Jews from the captivity are found in Neh. xiii. 16, “men of Tyre” bringing “fish and all manner of ware” to the gates of Jerusalem. Of the more direct service we find evidence in the fact that Tyrians and Zidonians contributed to the erection of the second Temple, as they had done to that of the first (Ezra iii. 7).

XXIV.

(1) Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty . . . —The chapters from xxiv. to xxvii., inclusive, are to be taken as a continuous prophecy of the overthrow of the great world-powers which were arrayed against Jehovah and His people. Of these Assyria was then the most prominent within the horizon of the prophet’s view; but Moab appears in chap. xxv. 10, and the language, with that exception, seems deliberately generalised, as if to paint the general discomfiture in every age (and, above all, in the great age of the future Deliverer) of the enemies of Jehovah and His people. The Hebrew word for “earth” admits (as elsewhere) of the rendering “land”; but here the wider meaning seems to predominate, as in its union with the “world,” in verse 4.

(2) It shall be, as with the people . . . —In the apparently general classification there is, perhaps, in the last two clauses a trace of the prophet’s indignation at the growing tendency of the people to the luxury which led to debt, and to the avarice which traded on the debtor’s necessities. Israel, it would seem, was already on the way to become a nation of money lenders.

(3) The haughty people of the earth.—Literally, the heights, or, to use an English term with a like history, “the highnesses of the people.”

(4) The earth also is defiled.—The verb is used of blood-guiltiness in Num. xxxv. 33, of impurity in Jer. iii. 1, 2, 9. It includes, therefore, all the sins that, in modern phrase, desecrate humanity. Taking the word in its wider range, each form of evil was a transgression of the “everlasting covenant” of Gen. xvi. 34. (5) Therefore hath the curse . . . —The definite article may be either generic, the curse which always follows on evil-doing, or, more specifically, the curse of the Book of the Covenant, as in Lev. xxvi. ; Deut. xxxviii. The curse is personified as a beast of prey or a consuming fire, ready to devour. (Comp. Gen. iv. 7, 11.)

They that dwell therein are desolate.—Better, bear their punishment, or are dealt with as guilty.

Are burned.—The word determines, perhaps, the sense of the word “devour” in the previous clause. The curse, the symbol of the wrath of Jehovah, is the consuming fire that burns.

(7) The new wine mourneth.—Each feature takes its part in the picture of a land from which all sources of joy are taken away. The vine is scorched with the fire of the curse, there is no wine in the winepress, the song of the grape-gatherers (proverbially the type of the “merry-hearted”) is hushed in silence.

(8) The mirth of tabrets . . . —The words point to the processions of women with timbrels (tambourines) and sacred harps or lutes, like those of Exod. xvi. 20; Judg. xi. 34; 1 Sam. xviii. 6, as was customary in seasons of victory. (Comp. the striking parallel of 1 Macc. iii. 45.)

(9) They shall not drink wine with a song . . . —Literally, in their song they drink no wine; i.e., the music of the feasts (Amos vi. 5) should cease, and if they sang at all it should be a chant of lamentation (Amos viii. 10). The very appetite for “strong drink” (probably the palm-wine of the East) should pass away, and for durable clothing.

(10) The city of confusion.—Better, the city of chaos, the tohu of Gen. i. 2, “without form and void.” The world should be cast back out of its cosmos into
in. (11) There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. (12) In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

(13) When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. (14) They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

(15) Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the 1 fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

(16) From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, 3 My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. (17) Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. (18) And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. (19) The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the

All Joy darkened.

ISAIAH, XXIV.

Fear, the Pit, and the Snare.
earth is moved exceedingly. (20) The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

(21) And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. (22) And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. (23) Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

CHAPTER XXV.—(1) O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. (2) For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a fenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

After many days shall they be visited.—The verb is the same as that translated "punish" in the previous verse, but does not in itself involve the idea of punishing, and in some of its forms is used of visiting in mercy. Interpreters have, according to their previous bias, assigned this or that meaning to it. Probably the prophet used it in a neutral sense, drawing his imagery from the custom of Eastern kings, who, after leaving their enemies in prison for an appointed time, came to inspect them, and to award punishment or pardon according to their deserts. In such a company there might be "prisoners of hope" (Zech. ix. 12), waiting with eager expectation for the coming of the king. The passage is interesting in the history of Christian doctrine, as having furnished to Origen and his followers an argument in favour of the ultimate restitution of all created spirits.

(23) The moon shall be confounded.—The thought implied is that the most glorious forms of created light will become dim, the moon red as with the blush of shame, the sun turning pale, before the glory of Jehovah's presence. The Lord of hosts shall reign.—Better, hath become king, the phrase being that used as in 2 Sam. v. 4; 1 Kings xv. 1, for a king's accession to his throne.

And before his ancients gloriously.—Better, and before his elders shall he glory. The "elders" are, like the seventy of Exod. xxiv. 9, like the twenty-four of Rev. iv. 4, the chosen ones of the new Jerusalem, to whom it shall be given, as the counsellors of the great King, to see His glory, that glory resting on them as in old time it rested upon Moses.

XXV.

(1) O Lord, thou art my God.—The burst of praise follows, like St. Paul's in Rom. xi. 33—36, upon the contemplation of the glory of the heavenly city.

Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.—It is better to omit the words in italics, and to translate the previous verse, but does not in itself involve the idea of punishing, and in some of its forms is used of visiting in mercy. Interpreters have, according to their previous bias, assigned this or that meaning to it. Probably the prophet used it in a neutral sense, drawing his imagery from the custom of Eastern kings, who, after leaving their enemies in prison for an appointed time, came to inspect them, and to award punishment or pardon according to their deserts. In such a company there might be "prisoners of hope" (Zech. ix. 12), waiting with eager expectation for the coming of the king. The passage is interesting in the history of Christian doctrine, as having furnished to Origen and his followers an argument in favour of the ultimate restitution of all created spirits.

(2) Thou hast made of a city an heap.—The city spoken of as "the palace of strangers" is probably in the prophet's thought of Nineveh or Babylon; but that city was also for him the representation of the world-power which in every
Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. (6) For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. (5) Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud; the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. (7) And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. (8) He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. (10) For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.
CHAPTER XXVI.—(1) In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. (2) Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. (3) Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. (4) Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHovaH is everlasting strength: (5) for he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust. (6) The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy. (7) The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just. (8) Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. (9) With my soul have I desired thee in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth from the heralds of the king of the heavenly city, proving a living force, saving and protecting. The same characteristic thought appears in chap. xxi. 4, in the character of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.

XXVI.

(11) And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands. (12) And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.

Heb., peace; or, inspiration.

Heb., the rock of eyes.

Heb., truth.

Heb., peace; or, inspiration.

CHAPTER XXVI. Everlasting Strength in Jehovah.
They who Learn not Righteousness.  ISAIAH, XXVI.  The Travail-Pangs of Israel.

the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. (10) Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. (11) Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

(12) Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. (13) O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. (14) They are dead . . .—We get a more vivid rendering by omitting the words in italics. Isa 26:14, they live not; shadows (Rephaim, as in Ps. lxxxviii. 10), they rise not. Those of whom the prophet speaks are the rulers of the great world-empires, who, as in chap. xiv. 9; Ezek. xxiii. 21, have passed into the gloomy world of Hades, out of which there was, for them at least, no escape. Their very names should perish from the memories of men. The LXX., adopting another etymology of the word Rephaim, gives the singular rendering. “Physicians shall not raise them up to life.” (15) Thou hast increased the nation . . .—The nation is, if we follow this rendering, Israel, whose prosperity the prophet contrasts with the downfall of its oppressors (comp. chap. ix. 3). The LXX., however, gives, “Add thou evils to all the glorious ones,” as if referring to the “chastening” of exile in the next verse, and the use of the word “nation” (i.e. heathen) instead of “people,” is, perhaps, in favour of this rendering. “Nation,” however, is used for Israel in chap. ix. 3, which is partly parallel to this passage.

Thou hast removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.—Better, Thou hast moved far off the borders of the land. The English Version seems to speak of the exile and dispersion of the people. What is really meant is, probably, that Jehovah will restore it to its old remoter boundaries, as in the days of David and Solomon. This belongs, of course, to the ideal, and not the historical, restoration.

(16) Lord, in trouble have they visited thee.—Better, have they missed Thee (as in 1 Sam. xx. 6, xx. 15), or sought after Thee, or, remembered Thee. They poured out a prayer . . .—The word for “prayer” is a peculiar one, commonly used, as in chap. iii. 3, viii. 19, for the whispered incantations of the heathen. Here it appears to mean the low-toned prayers, pitched as in a minor key, of the afflicted. In chap. xxiv. 4 we have the same thought more fully developed.

(17) Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord. (18) We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth
The Resurrection of the True Israel.  ISAIAH, XXVII.  The Song of the Vineyard of Red Wine.

wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. (19) Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

(20) Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. (21) For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

CHAPTER XXVII.—(1) In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

(2) In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. (3) I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. (4) Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in

figure), like a false pregnancy, a disease with no birth as its outcome.

Neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.—Better, Neither were the inhabitants of the world brought to birth, the expression “fall” being used, as in Wisd. vii. 3; Hom., II., xix. 10, of the delivery of a woman with child. The words continue the picture of the fruitlessness of mere human strivings and expectations. The LXX., “They that are in the tombs shall rise,” connects itself with John v. 23, 24. (Comp. the like imagery in chap. xxxvii. 3.) The “creation” was “subject unto vanity,” as in Rom. viii. 20—22.

(10) Thy dead men shall live.—Better, Thy dead shall live; my corpses shall rise. The words, though they imply a belief more or less distinct in a resurrection, are primarily like the vision of dry bones in Ezekiel xxxvi. 1—14, and like St. Paul’s “life from the dead” in Rom. xi. 15 (comp. also Hosea vi. 2), used of national and spiritual resurrection.

For thy dew is as the dew of herbs.—The rendering is a tenable one, and expresses the thought that as the dew that falls upon the parched and withered plant quickens it to a fresh life, so should the dew of Jehovah’s grace (comp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4) revive the drying energies of His people. Most interpreters, however, render the words the dew of lights (plural expressing completeness), the dew which is born of the womb of the morning (Ps. cx. 3). This, coming as it does from the “Father of Lights” (so the LXX., “the dew that is from Thee shall be healing for them”), shall have power to make the earth cast forth even the shadowy forms of the dead. The verb for “cast forth” is another form of that used in verse 18 of childbirth, writer of the future day of the triumph of the redeemed. As in the case of Abel’s blood that cried from the ground (Gen. iv. 16), so here the earth first brings to light the blood of those that have been slain, and then the forms of the murdered ones themselves.

XXVII.

(1) Leviathan the piercing serpent.—Rather, fleet, or fugitive. The verse paints in vivid symbolic language the judgment of Jehovah on the great world-powers that had shed the blood of His people. The “sword of the Lord” (primarily, perhaps, representing the lightning-flash) is turned in its threefold character as sword, and swift, and strong, against three great empires. These are represented, as in Ezek. xvii. 3, xxix. 3 Dan. vii. 3—7, by monstrous forms of animal life. The “dragon” is as in chap. li. 19; Ps. lxiv. 13, 14; Ezek. xxix. 3; xxxii. 2, the standing emblem of Egypt: the other two, so generally like, that the “leviathan” (“crocodile”) in Job xli. 1, but here, probably, generically for a monster of the serpent type) serves as a common type for both, while each has its distinctive epithet, may refer respectively to Assyria and Babylon, the epithets indicating (1) the rapid rush of the Tigris and the tortuous windings of the Euphrates; and (2) the policy characteristic of each empire, of which the rivers were looked upon as symbols, one rapidly aggressive, the other advancing as by a sinuous deceit. By some commentators, however, Egypt is represented in all three clauses; while others (Cheyne) see in them the symbols not of earthly empire, but of rebel powers of evil and darkness, quoting Job xxxvi. 12, 13 in support of his view.

In that day sing ye . . .—The prophet appears once again, as in chap. xxvi. 1, as the hymn-writer of the future day of the triumph of the redeemed. He had chanted a dirge over the vineyard that was unfruitful, and therefore given over to desolation. He now changes the wailing into a poem. The word translated “red wine” (comp. Deut. xxxii. 14) signifies “fury” or “foaming.” The LXX. seems to have followed a different text, giving (with the alteration of a single letter) the meaning, “a pleasant vineyard.”

The earth also shall disclose her blood.—Literally, her bloods (plural of intensity). The prophet has in his thoughts the reckless destruction of life which characterised the great world-powers of Assyria and Babylon. As in the case of Abel’s blood that cried from the ground (Gen. iv. 16), so here the earth first
He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. (7) Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of those that are slain by him? (8) In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind. (9) By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up. (10) Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall be the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

The chapter continues with a discussion of the purpose of the exiles and the future restoration of Israel. The cleansing of the nation is described as a purification process, with God's grace and mercy playing a central role.

The text highlights the metaphorical nature of the imagery, using the vineyard and the vine as symbols for Israel. The story of Hosea and his marriage to an unfaithful wife is referenced to illustrate the relationship between Israel and Jehovah. The chapter concludes with a promise of restoration and the anticipation of a new beginning for the nation.
of. (11) When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

(12) And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. (13) And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour. 

Gathering of the Children of Israel. ISAIAH, XXVIII. The Drunkards of Ephraim.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.—(1) Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! (2) Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. (3) The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet: (4) and the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat.

Feeding in what had been the busy streets of a populous city—is analogous to that of the "wild beasts of the desert," roaring among the ruins of Babylon, in chap. xiii. 21, 22.

(3) When the boughs thereof are withered . . . —The picture of the wasted city receives another touch. Shrubs cover its open spaces (perhaps the prophet thinks of the gardens and parks within the walls of a city like Babylon), and women come, without fear of trespassing, to gather them for firewood.

For it is a people of no understanding.—The words are generic enough, and may be applied, like similar words in chap. I. 5; Jer. viii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 28, to Israel as apostate, or to the world-power, which was the enemy of Israel. In this case, as we have seen, the context turns the scale in favour of the latter reference. So taken, the words are suggestive, as witnessing to the prophet's belief that the God of Israel was also the Maker and the Former of the nations of the heathen world.

(10) The Lord shall beat off . . . —The English Version conveys scarcely any meaning. The verb used is that which we find in chap. xxviii. 27 for the "beating out" of seeds from their husks, as a form of threshing. In Deut. xxiv. 20 it is used of the beating down of the olive crop. So understood, the words imply a promise, like that of chap. xviii. 6, but on a far wider scale. Instead of the gleaning of a few olives from the topmost boughs, there should be a full and abundant gathering, and yet each single olive, "one by one," should receive an undivided care. Judah and Israel should once more be peopled as in the days of old, and the ideal boundaries of their territory should be restored.

The channel, or flood of the river, is the Euphrates.

The stream of Egypt.—As in Gen. xv. 18, 1 Kings vii. 65, not the Nile, but the river which divides Palestine from Egypt, known by the Greeks as Rhinocolura, and now the Wady-el-'Arish.

(19) The great trumpet shall be blown . . . —The symbolism had a probable origin in the silver trumpets which were used in the journeys of the Israelites of chaps. viii. 7, 8, xxv. 4. Here the picture is that of the "destroying storm," the pestilent or blasting tempest withering, and the flood sweeping away, the beautiful "garland" of Samaria.

(4) And the glorious beauty . . . —Better, And the fading flower of his glorious beauty . . . shall be

worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.
The Priest and the Prophet Erring. ISAIAH, XXVIII. Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line.

... valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

... as the early fig before the fruit-gathering. The " early fig", as a special delicacy (Hos. ix. 10; Micah vii. 1), becomes a type of the beauty and pride of Samaria, doomed to inevitable destruction. (Comp. Nahum iii. 12.) Such a fig the passer-by seizes, and eagerly devours. So, the prophet says, with a Dante-like homeliness of comparison, should the Assyrian king treat Samaria.

9 In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory. — The words are obviously used in direct contrast with the "crown of pride" in verses 1-3. The true glory of the people for "the remnant that should be left" of Israel, as well as Judah, should be found in the presence of Jehovah, whom they would then acknowledge. In the gathering of some of the Ten Tribes at Booznah's passover (2 Chron. xxx. 11) there had already been an earnest of such a restored union.

6 And for a spirit of judgment ... — The words remind us of the list of spiritual gifts in chap. xi. 2. The injustices of corrupt judges were the crying evil of both Samaria and Jerusalem, and their place was to be taken by those who should be just and faithful. And brave warriors, able to drive back the enemy to the gate of the city from which they had issued forth (2 Sam. xi. 23)—or, perhaps, to defeat them at the gate of that which they attacked—should be the companions of the upright judges.

7 But they also have erred through ... — Better, yet these also reel ... Isaiah sets on the method of Nathan when he said, "Thou art the man." He has painted the drunkards of Ephraim; now he turns and points in yet darker colours the drunkards of Judah. Priests were seen reeling to their services, prophets reeling in the very act of their counterfeit inspiration. The threefold iteration of the word for "reel" emphasizes the scandals of the scene. The sins of the sons of Eli, those of which Micah (chap. ii. 11) had spoken, were reproduced in all their enormity. The most loathsome features of their drunkenness are printed in verse 8 with a boldness which is almost photographic. The prohibition of wine during the time when the priests were on duty (Lev. x. 1-9) adds to the guilt thus represented.

9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

... For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: (11) for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. (22) To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. (23) But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

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... Whom shall he teach knowledge? — The two verses that follow reproduce the language of the drunkards as they talk scornfully of the prophet. "To whom does he come with what he calls his 'knowledge' and his 'doctrine'?" (better, message, as in verse 19). Does he think that they are boys just weaned, who are to be taught the first elements of the religion of the infant school? Then in their mockery they describe (verse 10) his teaching, with what was to them its wearisome iteration, "Always precept upon precept, line upon line . . ."—petty rebukes and puerile harping upon the same note, semper candem canens cantilenas. We can scarcely doubt that Isaiah was indignantly reproducing, as St. Paul does in 2 Cor. x. 10, xi. 16, 17; the very words, almost the drunken accents, in which the priests and false prophets had spoken of him.

... With stammering lips and another tongue ... — The "stammering lips" are those of the Assyrian conquerors, whose speech would seem to the men of Judah as a barbarous pottois. They, with their short sharp commands, would be the next utterers of Jehovah's will to the people who would not listen to the prophet's teaching. The description of the "stammering tongue" re-appears in chap. xxxiii. 19. (Comp. Deut. xxviii. 49.) In 1 Cor. xiv. 21, the words are applied to the gift of "tongues," which, in its ecstatic utterances, was unintelligible to those who heard it, and was therefore, as the speech of the barbarian conquerors was in Isaiah's thoughts, the antithesis of true prophetic teaching.

... To whom he said, This is the rest . . . — The prophet vindicates himself against the charge of being a repeater of wearisome messages of rebuke. Rather had he pointed the way to a time of repentance, and therefore of rest and refreshment. But to this end they also closed their ears. They had but one formula of derision, whatever might be the subject of the prophet's teaching; and the prophet, with all the scorn of irony, repeats that formula in the words that follow.

... That they might go, and fall backward . . . The words are an echo of those in chap. viii. 14, 15. The preaching which might have led to "rest and
Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. (15) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves; (16) therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. (17) Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. (18) And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. (20) For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it. (21) For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of 'Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his refreshing" would become to those who scorned it a "stumbling stone," on which they would fall, a "net," in which they who boasted of their freedom, would be entangled.

Ye scornful men, that rule this people . . .—The last words emphasise the fact that the men who derided the prophet in their worldly wisdom were found among Hezekiah's chief princes and counsellors, the partisans now of an Assyrian, now of an Egyptian alliance—anything rather than the policy of righteousness and repentance.

We have made a covenant with death . . .—The phrase was a proverbial one. (Comp. Job v. 23; Hos. ii. 13.) Chaym quotes Lucan, ii. 394, Pass illis cum morte data est (They have made peace with death). "Hell" is the Hebrew Sheol (Hades), the region of the dead. The two are joined together, as in Hos. xiii. 14; Rev. xx. 13, 14.

When the overflowing scourge . . .—The words probably implied a snare at the imagery which the prophet had used, painting the Assyrian invasion first as a flood (v. v. 17) and then as a scourge (chap. x. 34). (Comp. verse 2.) The scourgers think that their "lies" will give them a refuge from the danger under either form.

Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation . . .—We have first to deal with the imagery, then with the interpretation. The former connects itself with the importance which attached, in ancient as in modern architecture, to the foundation stone of a building (1 Kings v. 17). So in Zion the foundation stone was laid, as witnessed in the Arabic name of the Mosque of Omar (Kubhet-es-Sakhra), (i.e., "dome of the rock"), on the solid rock. In the stone which was made "the head of the corner" (Ps. cxliii. 22) we have a like thought. From the prophet's stand-point this was identical with the manifestation of Jehovah's righteousness in and through the Temple in its higher spiritual aspect. Christian interpreters have rightly found the true foundation of the words in the person of the Christ (Eph. ii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 6, 7). The "corner stone," the lapis angularis of the Vulg., is that upon which two walls at right angles to each other rest and are bonded together. The "tried stone" (literally, stone of proof) may be one (1) which stands every test, or (2) one which tries those who come in contact with it, becoming an asylum, or a "stone of stumbling," according to their character. (Comp. Luke ii. 34, 35; xx. 18.)

He that believeth shall not make haste.—The LXX. and some other versions give "shall not be ashamed," which is a paraphrase rather than a translation. The English Version, following the Vulgate, represents the meaning of the Hebrew, haste and hurry being regarded in their contrast to the calm temper of a steadfast faith. (Comp. chap. v. 19.)

Judgment also will I lay to the line . . .—Rather, I make judgment for a line, and righteousness for a plummet. The architectural imagery is continued. The "elect corner stone" shall come up to the line of Dent. (Comp. verse 9, and stands, in each case, for the derided words that follow, should prove a false one. They would see their place of refuge swept away by the great waters. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27.) Their treaty with death and Hades should be treated as null and void. They should be trampled under foot by the invading armies. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you.—The words that follow remind us of Deut. xxviii. 66, 67. Day by day would come the dread rumours of the Assyrian march. Then the "report" would no longer be unintelligible. Instead of the "line upon line, precept upon precept," there would be "mourning upon mourning," "day and night," each with its sad burden of alarming tidings. To understand those tidings would be a vexation and a terror. The word for "report" is the same as the "doctrine" of verse 9, and stands, in each case, for the derided "message" of the prophet.

For the bed is shorter . . .—The image represents vividly a policy that ended in failure. Hezekiah's counsellors had "made their bed," and would have to lie on it, in their Egyptian alliance, but it would not meet their wants. Bed and blankets would be all too scanty, and leave them in a restless disquietude.

The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim . . .—The point of the reference to David's victories at Baal Perazim (2 Sam. v. 20; 1 Chron. xiv. 11), and at Gibeon (1 Chron. xiv. 16) is that then Jehovah had interposed on behalf of His people against
act, his strange act. (23) Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

(20) Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. (24) Doth the ploughman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? (25) When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the 3rie in their place? (26) For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

(27) For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

(28) Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. (29) This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts.

ISAIAH, XXVIII. 
Wisdom of the Sower and the Reaper.

... The rulers are warned that the scorn in which they indulge so freely will only make the sowers which already gall them tighter and heavier. In the words that follow the prophet reproduces his own language in the language of the prophets (Micah iv. 13; Hab. iii. 12). The novelty of Isaiah's treatment of it consists in his bringing in the minute details, and drawing this lesson from them.
which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

CHAPTER XXIX. — (1) Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. (2) Yet I will distress and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel. (3) And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. (4) And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. (5) Moreover the multitude of the strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. (6) Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire. (7) And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision. (8) It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion. (9) Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry
ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. (10) For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. (11) And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a 2 book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: (12) and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

(13) Wherefore the Lord said, a Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: (14) Therefore, behold, 3 I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: 4 for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

(15) Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, 5 Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? (16) Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the 4 work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? (17) Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall even then a traditional system of ethics and religion, based upon wrong principles, ending in a dishonest casuistry and a formal devotion. Commentaries even then were darkening counsel by words without knowledge, as they did in the Mishna and the Gemara of the later days of Judaism (Matt. xv. 3; Mark vii. 6).

(18) I will proceed to do a marvellous work ... —The sure doom of hypocrisy would come upon the hypocrites: not loving the light, they would lose the light they had, and be left to their self-chosen blindness. Here, again, history was to repeat itself, and the words of Isaiah were to be fulfilled in an age and in a manner that lay beyond the horizon of his thoughts.

(19) Woe unto them ... —The words sound like an echo of chap. v. 8, 11, 18, and show that Isaiah had not lost the power of adding to that catalogue of woes. The sins of which he speaks here may have been either the dark sensuality which lay beneath the surface of religion, or, more probably, their clandestine intrigues with this or that foreign power—Egypt, Ethiopia, Babylon—against the Assyrian invader, instead of trusting in the Lord of hosts.

(20) Surely your turning of things upside down.—The words are better taken as exclamatory, 6 your perversity! Isaiah was indignant at that habit of always taking things at their wrong end, and looking on them from the wrong side. Shall be esteemed as the potter's clay ... —Better, Shall the potter be counted as the clay? The Authorised version is scarcely intelligible. Taken as a question, the words bring out the character of the perversity, the upside-downness, of which the prophet speaks. The men whom he condemns were inverting the relations of the Creator and the creature, the potter and the clay, acting practically as atheists, denying that there was a Divine order of which they formed a part.

(21) Is it not yet a very little while ... ? The image of the potter does not suggest to us the thought of an arbitrary sovereignty, but of a love which will in the long run fulfil itself. He paints it not far off the restoration at once of the face of nature and of the life of man. Lebanon, that had been stripped of its cedars by the Assyrian invader (chap.
be esteemed as a forest? (18) And in that
day shall the deaf hear the words of the
book, and the eyes of the blind shall see
out of obscurity, and out of darkness.
(19) The meek also 1 shall increase their
joy in the Lord, and the poor among
men shall rejoice in the Holy One of
Israel. (20) For the terrible one is
brought to nought, and the scorner is
consumed, and all that watch for in­
quity are cut off: (21) that make a man
an offender for a word, and lay a snare
for him that reproveth in the gate, and
turn aside the just for a thing of
nought.
(22) Therefore thus saith the Lord,
who redeemed Abraham, concerning

accretions brought against the prophet were, as we
say, incoherent, absolutely chaotic in their falsehood.
(22) Thus saith the Lord, who redeemed
Abraham.—The words gain in vividness if we think
of them as referring to the Jewish tradition that
Abraham had been accused by his kinsmen before
Nimrod for not worshipping the host of heaven. That
history was for the prophet the assurance that Jehovah
would not abandon him to his accusers.

Jacob shall not now be ashamed . . .—The
patriarch appears, as Rachel does in Jer. xxxi. 15, as
if watching over the fortunes of his descendants with
varying emotions. Those emotions had been of shame
and terror; now there was the dawning of a brighter
day.

(23) The work of mine hands.—Possibly the direct
object of the verb “seeth,” the word “his children”
being an interpretative insertion, to explain the change
from the singular to the plural. The joy of the patri­
arth as he watched his people centred in the fact that
they repented, and once more worshipped God as the
Holy and the Dread, entering at last into that true
fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom
(Prov. i. 7; Job xxviii. 28).

(24) They that murmured shall learn doctrine.
—Better, instruction. The word is prominent in the
sapiential books of Israel, and is therefore adapted to
describe the process of growth and education that
followed on conversion. The word, too, “murmured”
is noticeable, as occurring only in Deut. i. 27; Ps. evil.
25, of which its use here may be an echo.

xxx.
(1) Woe to the rebellious children . . .—The
interjection perhaps expresses sorrow rather than in­
dignation, Alas, for . . . as in chap. i. 4. The prophet
hears that the intrigues of the palace have at last
issued in favour of an alliance with Egypt, and that
an embassy has been already sent.

That cover with a covering.—Better, that weave
a web. The word was fitly chosen then, as now, to
describe the subtle intricacies of a double-dealing diplo­
macy. Some, however, render “form a molten image,”
not as referring to actual idolatry, but to the trust in
human plans which the prophet condemns.
(2) To strengthen themselves in the strength
of Pharaoh.—Literally, the fortress of Pharaoh, used
have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! (3) Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

(4) For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes. (5) They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

(6) The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them. (7) For the Egyptians shall help

as the symbol of his kingdom. This, then, was the course into which even Hozekiah had been led or driven, and it had been done without consulting Isaiah as the recognised prophet of Jehovah. For the “shadow of Egypt” see Note on chap. xviii. 1.

(4) His princes were at Zoan...—Better, are, in the vivid use of the historic present of prophecy. Zoan, the Tanis of the Greeks, was one of the oldest of Egyptian cities. Hanes, identified with the Greek Heracleopolis, as lying in the delta of the Nile, would be among the first Egyptian cities which the embassy would reach.

(5) They were all ashamed...—Better, are: historic present, as before. The prophet paints the dreary disappointment of the embassy. They found Egypt at once weak and false, without the will or power to help them. So Habakake compares that power to a “broken reed,” which does but pierces the hand of him who leans on it. So Sargon (Smith, Assyrian Canon, p. 133, quoted by Cheyne), describing the resistance of his foes, says that they “carried presents, seeking his alliance, to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, a monarch who could not help them.”

(6) The burden of the beasts of the south.—It has been conjectured that this, which reads like the heading of a new section, was first placed in the margin by a transcriber, as suggested by the mention of the lions, the vipers, the camels, and the asses, and then found its way into the text (Cheyne). There seems no reason, however, why the prophet should not have prefixed it as with the sarcasm of an ignoble origin. “You ask for an oracle,” he seems to say, “and you shall have one; but its very heading will imply condemnation and derision;” and then he continues his picture of the journey of the embassy. They pass through the Negev, the south country, arid and waste, haunted only by lions, and vipers, and fiery (i.e., venomous) serpents, and they had their asses and camels with them, laden with the treasures with which they hoped to purchase the Egyptian alliance.

(7) Concerning this.—Better, it, or her—i.e., Egypt.

Their strength is to sit still.—The Authorised version fairly gives the meaning: “Their boasted strength will be found absolute inaction,” but the words, as Isaiah wrote or spoke them, had a more epigrammatic point—“Rahab, they are sitting still.” He uses the poetical name for Egypt which we find in the historic present, as before. The prophet paints the dreary disappointment of the embassy. They found Egypt at once weak and false, without the will or power to help them. So Habakake compares that power to a “broken reed,” which does but pierces the hand of him who leans on it. So Sargon (Smith, Assyrian Canon, p. 133, quoted by Cheyne), describing the resistance of his foes, says that they “carried presents, seeking his alliance, to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, a monarch who could not help them.”

(8) Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: (9) that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: (10) which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: (11) get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

(12) Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: therefore

in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

(8) Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: (9) that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: (10) which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: (11) get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

(12) Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: therefore
this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. (14) And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the breaking of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water without out of the pit.

(15) For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall ye be your strength: and ye would not. (16) But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. (17) One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

(18) And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: he blessed are all they that wait for him. (19) For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. (20) And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of oppression, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: (21) and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. (22) Ye shall defile also the

The Strength of Quietness. ISAIAH, XXX. The Eyes that see the true Teachers.

the outward imagery of the parable. First comes the threatening bulge, then the crack, and then the crash. That was to be the outcome of the plans they were building up on the unsound foundation of corrupt intrigue. In Ezek. xiii. 10 we have the additional feature of the "untempered mortar" with which such a wall is built.

(14) As the breaking of the potters vessel ... Ps. ii. 9 had given currency to the figure. In Jer. xviii. 4, xix. 10, it passes into a parable of action. The schemes of the intriguers were to be not crushed only but pulverised.

(15) In returning and rest ... —The words describe a process of conversion, but the nature of that conversion is determined by the context. In this case it was the turning from the trust in man, with all its restless excitement, to a trust in God, full of calmness and of peace.

(16) We will flee upon horses. —These were expected as the Egyptian contingent of the forces of Judah. With them and the prestige attaching to their fame, the generals and statesmen reckoned on being able to resist Assyria. Isaiah, with his keen insight into the present temper of Egypt, tells them that the only use of the horses will be for a more rapid retreat, not for the charge of battle.

(17) One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one. —The hyperbole is natural and common enough (Deut. xxxii. 30; Josh. xxiii. 10; Lev. xxvi. 8); but the fact that the inscription of King Piankhi Mer. Amon, translated in Recorde of the Paok, ii. 84, gives it in the self-same words ("many shall turn their backs on a few; and one shall rout a thousand") as his boast of the strength of Egypt, may have given a special touch of sarcasm to Isaiah's words.

As a beacon upon the top of a mountain.—Literally, as a pine. As with a poet's eye, the prophet paints two of the most striking emblems of solitariness: the tall pine standing by itself on the mountain height, the flag-staff seen alone far off against the sky. (Comp. the lowlier imagery of chap. i. 8.)

(18) And therefore ... —The words seem to embody the thought that "man's extremity is God's opportunity." Precisely because of this isolated misery Jehovah was "waiting," i.e., "longing, with an eager expectation, to come to the rescue.

And therefore will he be exalted.—A very slight alteration gives a meaning more in harmony with the context, will wait in stillness (Cheyne). If we adhere to the existing text, we must take the meaning will withdraw himself on high, will seem to wait, that He may at last interpose effectually.

A God of judgment.—Better, of righteousness. All they that wait for him. —This waiting is, as in the first clause, that of wistful longing.

(19) Shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem.—The two words are, of course, practically synonymous; but the prophet dwells with a pathetic and tender emphasis on both the names which were dear to him. The words admit of being taken as a vocative, "Yea, O people that dwellest."

(20) The bread of adversity.—Better, bread in small quantity, and water in scant measure. The words seem to imply an allusion to the scant rations of a siege such as Jerusalem was to endure from the Assyrian armies. For this there should be the compensation that the true "teachers" of the people, Isaiah and his fellow-workers, should at least be recognised — no longer thrust into a corner, as they had been in the days of Ahaz. The clearer vision of the truth was to be the outcome of the sharp teaching of chastisement. A various reading gives "thy teacher," i.e., Jehovah Himself; but the plural seems more in harmony with the context. In the mission of chap. xxxvii. 2 we have a virtual fulfillment of the prediction.

(21) Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee. —The voice of the human teacher on whom the people looked as they listened would find an echo in that inner voice telling them which was the true way, when they were tempted to turn to the right hand or the left.

(22) Ye shall defile also ... —The first effect of the turning of the people was to be the putting away
covering of the graven images of silver, and the ornament of the molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. (25) Then shall he give the rain in his season, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. (26) The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat straw clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. (27) And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and heal eth the stroke of their wound.

(27) Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: and his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. (28) Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the beginning of blessings, but this was but the earnest of a more glorious future. Isaiah reasons as St. Paul does. If one is the “reconciling of the world,” what shall the other be but “life from the dead”? (Rom. xi. 15). (Comp. also Deut. xxxii. 39.)

(27) Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far... The use of “the Name of Jehovah” for Jehovah Himself is noticeable as an anticipation of the later use of the memra (sec., “word”) in the Targumim (or paraphrases) of the sacred writings, and of the logos of St. John, a distinct, though not defined, conception of a duality in the Divine essence. In other respects the vision of the Theophany has its parallels in Judg. v. 4, 5; Exod. xxiv. 17.

And the burden thereof is heavy. — Better, in thick uplifting of smoke. (28) His breath, as an overflowing stream.— Water supplies its symbolism, as well as fire. The wrath of the judge sweeps onward like an autumn torrent, threatening to engulf all that stand in its way. To sift the nations with the sieve of vanity. — Better, the winnowing fan of nothingness. Sifting is, as elsewhere, the symbol of judgment (so Osiris appears in Egyptian monuments armed with a flail, as the judge of the dead; Cheyne), and the “fan” in this case is one which threatens to annihilate the guilty. A bridle in the jaws of the people. — The words find a parallel in chap. xxxvii. 29. The enemies of Jehovah should find themselves under a constrained power, leading them on against their will to their own destruction. Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat. (29) Ye shall have a song... — The “holy solemnity,” or feast, was probably the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast of in-gathering, of all the festivals of the Jewish year the most abounding in its joy. In later times, and probably, therefore, in earlier, it had a night-ritual of special solemnity, the court of the Temple being illuminated with a great candelabrum. It was known as being pre-eminently “the feast” (1 Kings vii. 2, 65, xii. 32; Ezek. xlv. 25; 2 Chron. vii. 8, 9). The second clause of the verse completes the picture, by introducing the day-ritual of the procession of pilgrims from the country, bringing their firstfruits and playing on their flutes.” (Comp. 1 Sam. x. 5.)
mountain of the Lord, to the 1 mighty One of Israel. (30) And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hail-stones. (31) For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod. (32) And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. (33) For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it was intended to convey. Better, and he that helpeth shall pass with it. (34) And in every place where the grounded staff fall upon him.

The mighty One of Israel.—Literally, the Rock of Israel, as a name of Jehovah (chap. xvii. 10; Deut. xxxii. 4, et al.). (30) And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice ... —The peace and joy at home are contrasted with the judgments that fall on the enemies of Israel. They are exposed to the full thunderstorm of the wrath of Jehovah. “Hailstones and coals of fire” were the natural symbols of His anger.

(32) Shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.—Better, and He (Jehovah) shall smite with the rod. Asshur appears as the foremost and most dreaded enemy of Judah. The prediction points to the destruction of the armies of Sennacherib.

(33) And in every place where the grounded staff ... —It is not clear what meaning the English was intended to convey. Better, Wherever shall pass the destined rod (literally, the rod of foundation) which the Lord causes to fall upon him.

It shall be with tabrets and harps ... —i.e., at every stroke of God’s judgments upon Asshur Israel should raise its song of triumph with the timbrels and harps (or, perhaps, lutes), which were used by the people in their exultation after victory. So after Jephthah’s and David’s victories we have like passages (Judges xii. 4; 1 Sam. xviii. 6). Isaiah was to sing, as it were, its Te Deum over the fall of Assyria. So the long walls that connected Athens and the smile (chap. xxxvi. 9), with an Egyptian contingent. It shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight, with it.

(32) Tophet is ordained of old.—Literally, the Tophet, or place of burning, with perhaps the secondary sense of “a place of loathing.” Tophet was the name given to the Valley of Hinnom, outside Jerusalem, where, within the memory of living men, Ahaz had made his son to pass through the fire to Moloch (2 Kings xvi. 3), and where like sacrifices had taken place up to the time of Heckeiah’s accession. “The king” is, of course, the king of Assyria; but the Hebrew, “for the melek,” suggests a sarcastic reference to the god there worshipped, as if it were “for Moloch.” There was to be a great sacrifice of the Melek to the Moloch, who was as a mighty king (the name of the Ammonite god being a dialectic form of the Hebrew Melek) exulting in his victims. (Comp. for the idea chap. xxxi. 9.)

The pile thereof is fire and much wood.—The word seems partly literal, and partly figurative. The king of Assyria, though he did not die at Jerusalem, is represented as burnt with stately ceremonial in Tophet. Probably, as a matter of fact, it was the burial place of the corpses that were lying round the city after the pestilence had destroyed the Assyrian army, and they were literally burnt there. For such a Moloch funereal, making the valley of Hinnom then, as it afterwards became, a sort of Gehenna, a trench deep and wide and a mighty pyre were needed. Comp. Jer. xix. 12, where like words are spoken of Jerusalem.

Wo to them that go down...—The Egyptian alliance was, of course, the absorbing topic of the time, and Isaiah returns to it yet again. As in chap. xxx. 16, the princes of Judah were attracted by the prospect of strengthening themselves in their weakest point, and reinforcing the cavalry of Judah, which could hardly be mentioned by an Assyrian ambassador without a smile (chap. xxxvi. 9), with an Egyptian contingent. Isaiah once more condemns this as trusting in an “arm of flesh” instead of in the “Holy One of Israel.”

Yet he also is wise.—The words have a ring of sarcasm in them. Isaiah admits ironically that the counsellors of Hezekiah were wise in their generation. He reminds them that there might be some little wisdom in Jehovah, and in the prophet by whom He spake.

And will not call back his words.—Such words, e.g., as those of the preceding chapter (verses 12, 13, 16, 17).

The Egyptians are men ...—We hear again the key-note of Isaiah’s teaching. The true strength of a nation lay in its spiritual, not in its material, greatness: in seeking the Holy One of Israel by practising holiness. Without that condition the alliance with Egypt would be fatal both to those that sought for help and those who gave it.

CHAPTER XXXI.—(1) Wo to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! (2) Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. (3) Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall there be none that helpeth.
The Lord defending Jerusalem.

ISAIAH, XXXII. The King reigning in Righteousness.

fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fall together.

(4) For thus saith the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof. (5) As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem: defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

(6) Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. (7) For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin. (8) Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee 3 from the sword, and his young men shall be 4 5 discomfited. (9) And 4 he shall pass over to 7 his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXXII.—(1) Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. (2) And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the

(4) Like as the lion . . . —The similitude is noteworthy, as for its fulness and vividness, so also for the fact that the lion is made the symbol, not of destruction, but protection. As the king of beasts stands haughtily defiant over the prey which he has made his own against the shepherds who seek to rob him of it, so will Jehovah, in His character as the Lord of hosts, refuse to surrender Jerusalem, His peculiar possession, to the armies of the Assyrians. (Comp. Homer, Il., xviii. 161.)

To fight for Mount Zion.—The preposition has been differently rendered as for, on, against. The lion in the last case is claiming the sheep as his own prey, and will not suffer interference from without. Jehovah, using the Assyrian armies as His instruments, will fight against Jerusalem, and will not allow the Egyptian allies to interfere with His chastisements. (Comp. chap. xxix. 7, 8.) The second clause simply marks Jerusalem as the scene of the conflict, but agrees in substance with the first. Looking to the verse that follows, the idea of protection seems more natural than that of hostility. The thought of supreme ownership, however, includes both; Jerusalem belonged to Jehovah to protect or to chastise.

(5) As birds flying . . . —The picture that follows (Eschylan, as the former was Homeric; see Aesch. Agam. 49–54, though there the point is the wailing of the parent birds over the plundered nest) is, at least, not doubtful in its meaning, whether it be meant as a counterpart or antithesis to that which precedes it. The eagles hovering over their nest, and scaring off man or beast that attacked their nestlings, supplied the most vivid image possible of protection. (Comp. the image, like, but not the same, in Deut. xxxii. 11.)

Passing over.—The word is the same as that used in connection with the Passover festival, and may perhaps imply a reference to it.

(6) Turn ye unto him.—Then, as ever, this was the sum and substance of the prophet's teaching, conversion; with that, all was hope; without it, all was fear. (Comp. 2 Chron. xxx. 6.)

(7) In that day every man shall cast away . . . —The act is the same as that of chap. ii. 20, but with a marked difference of motive: there it springs from the terror of despair, here from the repentance which is the ground of hope.

(8) Not of a mighty man . . . —The Hebrew has no adjectives, but the nouns are those which are commonly opposed to each other in this way, as in chap. ii. 9, like the Latin vir and homo. The thought expressed is, of course, that the whole work would be of God, and not of man. The "sword" was that of the Divine judgment (Deut. xxxii. 41), perhaps, as in 1 Chron. xxii. 16, of the destroying angel of the pestilence.

(9) He shall pass over to his strong hold for fear.—Most recent critics translate, His rock will pass away for terror, the "rock" (not the same word, however, as that elsewhere, e.g., Deut. xxxii. 31, used for God) being the symbol of Assyria's strength. The laws of parallelism point to our taking the noun as the subject of the sentence, corresponding to "princes" in the next clause, and so exclude the Authorised version.

Whose fire is in Zion.—Fire, as the symbol of the Divine glory, giving light and warmth to the faithful, and burning up the evil. (Comp. chap. x. 16, 17.)

XXXII.

(1) Behold, a king shall reign . . .—More accurately, the king. Verses 1–8 form a separate section, standing in the same relation to the foregoing chapter that the picture of the ideal king in chap. xi. does to the anti-Assyrian prophecy of chap. x. "The king" is accordingly the true Anointed one of the future, not, of course, without a reference to the character of Hezekiah as the partial and present embodiment of the idea. The addition of "princes" worthy of their king emphasises this reference. The words are as an echo of Prov. viii. 15, 16.

(2) A man shall be . . .—The word is that used in chap. xxxi. 8 for "mighty man," in chap. ii. 9 for "great man," and probably retains that meaning here. The nobles of Judah, who had been tyrannous and oppressive (chap. i. 23), should become a true aristocracy, beneficent and protecting. Of both the "king" and the "man" it is true that they find their fulfilment in the true servant of the Lord, who is also the ideal king.

As rivers of water . . .—The words paint the picture of the two great blessings of an Eastern landscape: the streams that turn the desert into an oasis, the "rock" throwing its dark shadow as a shelter from
shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

"And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken."

The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.

the noontide heat. The word for "rock" is the same as that used for Assyria in chap. xxxi. 9, and is obviously chosen to emphasise the contrast.

The eyes of them that see...—Another reversal, like that of chap. xxix. 18, of the sentence of judicial blindness with which Isaiah's work as a prophet had begun (chap. vi. 10).

The heart also of the rash...—"Heart," as in Prov. iv. 23 and elsewhere, for the intellect rather than the emotions. The "rash" are those that are "hurried, precipitate, reckless;" the "stammerers," those who have no power to speak clearly of the things of God, who hesitate and are undecided.

The vile person shall be no more called liberal.—Better, noble, the εὐγενεία of the Greeks, the ingenuus of the Latin. So for "bountiful," read gentle. Here, again, we have a picture, the exact contrast of that which met us at the beginning of Isaiah's work, when men "called good evil, and evil good" (chap. v. 20).

The vile person will speak villany.—Another echo, like that of chap. xxvii. 23—29, of the teaching of the Book of Proverbs. In that better day men would learn to see men as they are, and not as they pretend to be. "By their fruits ye shall know them..." Isaiah himself, making even him an "offender for a word" (chap. xxvii. 21).

To utter error against the Lord.—The "error" is either that of "hersesy," or of hollow profession, or of open scoffing. In either case it finds its practical outcome, like the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Matt. xxiii. 14), in violence and wrong towards the poor and weak.

To destroy the poor with lying words...—The words, though perfectly generic in their form, are probably not without an implied reference to those who had thus acted towards Isaiah himself, making even him an "offender for a word" (chap. xxix. 21).

The liberal deviseth liberal things...—Better, as before, noble.

Rise up, ye women that are at ease...—The beginning of a new section, probably a distinct sermon, or, as it were, pamphlet, against the evils of which the prophet had spoken in chap. ii. 16—26, and which continued, it would seem, unabated, in spite of Hezekiah's reformation. It probably finds a place here as painting the harem influence, which then, as in the policy of modern Eastern monarchies, Constantino-pole and elsewhere, lay behind the counsels of the king and his ministers. The whole tone is that of inductive against the women of the pseudo-aristocracy that had been covertly attacked in the preceding verses.

Give ear unto my speech...—Another echo of the teaching of the Proverbs (Prov. ii. 1, iii. 1, iv. 1, vi. 1, 20).

Many days and years...—Literally, "days to the year," a phrase after the pattern of "add ye year to year" in chap. xxix. 1, but implying, not the long continuance of the trouble, but its quick arrival, as in "a year and a day." The vintage shall fail...—The words are commonly taken as predicting a literal failure of the vine-crop, and therefore of the supply of wine for the banquets of the rich. A truer insight into the language of a poet-prophet would lead to our seeing in it a symbol of the failure of all forms of earthly joy.

Tremble, ye women that are at ease...—The words find at once a parallel and a contrast in those spoken to the daughters of Jerusalem in Luke (chap. xxiii. 28—30). The call to repentance includes their stripping themselves of their costly finery, and putting on the "sackcloth" (the word is implied, though not expressed in the Hebrew), which was the outward symbol of repentance (Jonah iii. 5—8). The words, it may be noted, are masculine, the call not being limited to the women.

They shall lament for the teats...—Better, shall smite upon the breasts. The Hebrew nouns for "teats" and "fields," Shádatim and Sáde, have an assonance which may be represented by the Latin ubertas and ubertas. In the renewed, unabated luxury of the women of Jerusalem Isaiah sees the precursor of another time of desolation like that which he had foretold before in the reign of Ahaz (chap. vii. 24). "Thorns and briars" are again to take the place of the fair gardens in the outskirts of Jerusalem during the invasion of Sennacherib, as they had once before in that of Rezin and Pekah. The "houses of joy" are manifestly what we should call the stately villas of the rich.

The palaces shall be forsaken.—With a bold pencil and rapid strokes the picture of desolation is...
of the city shall be low; and the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; 
(15) Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. 
(16) Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. 
(17) And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. 
(18) And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places; 
(19) when it shall hail, coming down on the forest, and the city shall be low in a low place.

sketched in outline. The forts are those of Ophel (so in Heb.), the fortified south-eastern slope of the Temple mountain; the towers, probably such as "the tower of the flock," mentioned in conjunction with Ophel in Mic. iv. 8. These would serve as dens for the wild asses, which commonly roved in the open country. 
(15) Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high . . . There was, then, a fixed limit of the desolation then described. Isaiah dwelt, as Joel (chap. ii. 28) had dwelt before him, on the outpouring of the Spirit which should sweep away the frivolities of a profligate lead and lead to a nobler life. The effect of that outpouring is described in symbolic language which had been used before (see Note on chap. xxi. 17), the "wilderness" taking the place of Lebanon. 
(16) Then judgment shall dwell . . . —Outward blessings, themselves symbols of something beyond themselves, are followed by spiritual. Over the whole country, from the one extreme of cultivation to the other, the judgment and righteousness which had been so lacking should now find a home, and bring their blessed fruits of peace, and confidence, and calm. The whole picture is that of a smiling land, a God-fearing and contented people, all in striking contrast with the panic and unrest with which the people had been but too familiar. 
(17) When it shall hail, coming down on the forest.—Better, But it shall hail. A time of sharp judgment, "hailstones and coals of fire," is to precede that of blessedness and peace. Of such a judgment "hail" was the natural symbol. (Comp. chap. xxx. 30; Ezek. xiii. 13.) The "forest" stands in the symbolism of prophecy for the rulers and princes of any kingdom, as in chap. x. 34 for those of Assyria, and here probably of Judah. Not a few commentators refer the words here also to Assyria, but the city that follows is clearly Jerusalem, and the interpretation given above harmonizes accordingly better with the context. Of that city Isaiah says that it shall be "brought down to a low estate," its pride humbled even to the ground, in order that it may afterwards be exalted. 
(18) Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.—The picture of a golden age of agriculture receives its final touch. The whole land should be irrigated by calmly flowing streams, and men should cast their seed broadcast, and the oxen and the asses should draw the plough over a rich and fertile land. The whole land should be under tillage, instead of being left to supply (as in chap. vii. 21, 22) a poor and meagre pastureage, or to bring forth nothing but the "thorns and briars" of verse 13. It is obvious that here also a spiritual meaning underlies the literal.

XXXIII.

(1) Woe to thee that spoileth . . .—No chapter in the prophet's writings presents so little traceable connection. A thought is expressed in one, or it may be two, verses, and then another follows without anything to link it on. This may be, perhaps, explained either by the strong emotion which filled the prophet's mind as he looked on the coming perils of his country, or, as I think, more probably, on the assumption that we have a series of rough notes, memoranda for a long discourse, which was afterwards delivered in a more continuous form. They would, perhaps, be more intelligible if they were printed separately, as we print (1) of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee. 
(2) O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble. 
(3) At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered. 

CHAPTER XXXIII.—(1) Woe to thee that spoileth, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee. 
(2) O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble. 
(3) At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.
(4) And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them. (5) The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high; he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. (6) And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

(7) Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadours of peace shall weep bitterly. (8) The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despoiled the cities, he regardeth no man.

(9) The earth mourneth and languiseth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down; Sharon, like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.

(10) Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself. (11) Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you. (12) And the people shall be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire. (13) Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.

(14) The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? (15) He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that shaketh his eyes from seeing of blood, and shutteth his ears from hearing of lies; (16) he shall dwell on high: he hath filled him with the fear of the Lord; (17) he hath put oned on him the sunshine of his glory; (18) he hath made him his heritage for ever; the everlasting burnings are his joy.

Your breath, as fire, "Breath," the hot panting of rage; this, instead of working the destruction of Judah, should prove suicidal. Your breath, as fire, "Breath," the hot panting of rage; this, instead of working the destruction of Judah, should prove suicidal.
(17) Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. (18) Thine heart shall meditate terror. "Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers? (19) Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand. (20) Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that is very far off. (21) But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. (22) For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us. (23) Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey. (24) And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—(1) Come near, Jehovah would be to Jerusalem, that could boast only of the softly going waters of Shiloah (chap. viii. 6). Here, again, we have an echo of Ps. xlvi.: "There is a river, the streams thereof shall make glad the city of God." The words help us to understand the symbolism of Ezekiel's vision of the "river that could not be passed over," flowing out of the Temple (Ezek. xlviii. 7—5). And the spiritual river of the Divine Presence would have this advantage over those of which the great cities boasted, that no hostile fleet, no pirate ships, could use it for their attacks. So in Ps. xlviii. 7 the "ships of Tarshish" are probably to be taken 'figuratively rather than literally' for the Assyrian forces.

(22) The Lord is our judge...—The verb is better omitted, and the threefold iteration of the name of Jehovah, in each case with a special characteristic, taken as the subject of the final verb: "The Lord, our judge, the Lord, our lawgiver... He will save us." (23) Thy tacklings are loosed...—The words have been taken as applicable either to Assyria, as one of the "ships of Tarshish" that had been wrecked, or to Zion, as a vessel that had been driven by the wind and tossed, but had escaped shipwreck. On the whole, the first view seems most in harmony with the context. The terms have been taken by some critics for the cords, poles, and canvas of a tent, but the rendering of the Authorised version seems preferable.

The lame take the prey.—The wrecked Assyrian ship is represented as being plundered by those whom it came to plunder. "The lame" were commonly excluded, as incapable of active service, from sharing in the spoils. Here they also were to have their portion.

(24) The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick...—The words seem to have had their starting-point in the pestilence which attacked the Assyrian army, and which had probably been felt, during the siege, in Jerusalem itself. The prophet, seeing in such a pestilence the punishment of iniquity, couples together the two blessings of health and pardon. Healthy, because holy, was his report as to the restored Jerusalem. (Comp. Matt. ix. 2.)

XXXIV.

(1) Come near, ye nations, to hear...—The two chapters that follow have a distinct character of their own. They form, as it were, the closing epilogue of the first great collection of Isaiah's prophecies, the historical section that follows (chaps. xxxvi. — xxxix.) serving as a link between them and the great second
The Enemies of Israel destroyed. ISAIAH, XXXIV. The Day of the Lord's Vengeance.

ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. (2) For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. (3) Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. (4) And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a fig falling from the fig-tree.

(5) For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. (6) The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. (7) And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be 3 soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. (8) For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

(9) And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. (10) It shall not be quenched night nor day; 

volume, which comes as an independent whole. Here, accordingly, we have to deal with what belongs to a transition period, probably the closing years of the reign of Hezekiah. The Egyptian alliance and the attack of Sennacherib are now in the back-ground, and the prophet's vision takes a wider range. In the destruction of the Assyrian army he sees the pledge and earnest of the fate of all who fight against God, and as a representative instance of such enemies, fixes upon Edom, then, as ever, foremost among the enemies of Judah. They had invaded that kingdom in the days of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxvii. 17). The inscriptions of Sennacherib (Lenormant, Anc. Hist., i. 389) show that they submitted to him. They probably played a part in his invasion of Judah, in his attack on Jerusalem, analogous to that which drew down the bitter curse to Zephaniah throughout his prophecy, and to Jer. xxv., xlvi. 3-12, I., li., parallelisms with which will meet us as we go on. The prophecy opens, as was natural, with a wider appeal. The lesson which Isaiah has to teach is one for all time and for all nations: "That they take the sword shall perish by the sword." There rises before his eyes once more the vision of a day of great slaughter, such as the world had never known before, the putrid carcases of the slain covering the earth, as they had covered Tophet, the Valley of Hinnom, after the pestilence had done its work on Sennacherib's army. (Comp. as an instance of like hyperbole, the vision of the destruction of Cog and Magor in Ezek. xxxix. 11-16.) (4) And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved... -No prophetic picture of a "day of the Lord" was complete without this symbolism (see chap. xiii. 10, 11), probably written about this period. Like the psalmist (Ps. cxvii. 20), Isaiah contrasts the transitoriness of man, moon, and stars, with the eternity of Jehovah. The Greek poets show that the "life of the generations of men is as the life of the leaves of the trees" (Homer, Il. vi. 146). To Isaiah's sublime thoughts there came the vision of a time when even the host of heaven would fall as "a leaf from the vine, and as a fig from the fig-tree."

(9) My sword shall be bathed in heaven... -Literally, hath drunk to the full. The words find an echo in Deut. xxxiii. 41, 42, and Jer. xlv. 10. There, however, the sword is soaked, or made drunk with blood. Here it is "bathed in heaven," and this seems to require a different meaning. We read in Greek poets, of the "dippings" by which steel was tempered. May not the "bathing" of Isaiah have a like significance?

It shall come down upon Idumea... -Better, for Edom, here and in the next verse. No reason can be assigned for this exceptional introduction of the Greek form.

(6) The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah... -Two cities of this name appear in history; one in the Hauran, more or less conspicuous in ecclesiastical history, and the other, of which Isaiah now speaks, in Edom. It was a strongly fortified city, and is named again and again. (Comp. chap. lix. 1; Amos i. 12; Jer. xlix. 13, 22.) The figure both of the sword and the sacrifice appears in Jer. xlv. 10.

(7) And the unicorns shall come down with them... -Better, the aurochs, or wild bulls... The Hebrew, rem, which meets us in Deut. xxxiii. 17; Ps. xxii. 21, has been identified with the buffalo, the antelope (Antilope leucogryp), and by Mr. Houghton, a naturalist as well as a scholar, on the strength of Assyrian inscriptions, pointing to the land of the Khatti (Hittites) and the foot of the Lebanon as its habitat, and of bas-reliefs representing it, with the Bos primigenius of zoologists (Bible Educator, ii. 24-29). Here, the fierce wild beasts stand for the chiefs of the Edomites. (Comp. Ps. xxii. 12, 21.) The verb, "shall come down," as in Jer. xviii. 15, 1, 27, li. 40, implies going down to the shambles, or slaughtering house.

(8) The year of recompences for the controversy of Zion... -The long-delayed day of retribution should come at last. This would be the outcome from the hand of Jehovah, the persistent implacability of the Edomites to the city which He had chosen. (9, 10) The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch... -The imagery of the punishment which is to fall on Edom is suggested partly by the scenery of the Dead Sea, partly by the volcanic character...
smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. (11) But the crow" and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. (12) They shall call the names thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. (13) And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

CHAPTER XXXV.-—(1) The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad of Edom itself, with its extinct craters and streams of lava. (Comp. Jer. xix. 18.) The prophet sees the destruction, as continuing not merely in its results, but in its process, the smoke of the burning craters rising up perpetually, and making the land uninhabitable. (11) But the corvus and the bittern shall possess it. (12) They shall call the names thereof. (13) An habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. (14) The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. (15) There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

16. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord...—The phrase is an exceptional one. Isaiah applies that title either to this particular section, or to the volume of his collected writings. When the time of the fulfilment comes, men are invited to compare what they shall then find with the picture which Isaiah had drawn. Keith and others have brought together from the descriptions of modern travellers, illustrations of the condition of Edom as it is well summed up by Delitzsch in loc. “It swarms with snakes, and the desolate heights and barren table-lands are only inhabited by wild cows and eagles, and great flocks of birds.” It has to be remembered, however, that the decay was very gradual. The ruins of Petra and other Idumean cities are of Roman origin, and indicate a period of culture and prosperity stretching far into the history of the Empire.

His spirit.—In the sense of the creative breath of the Almighty working in Nature (Ps. civ. 30).

17. He hath cast the lot for them...—i.e., hath allotted, or assigned it as by a formal deed of transfer, to the savage beasts who are to be its future possessors. The thought is the same as that of Acts xvii. 26. God is represented as the Supreme Ruler assigning to each nation its place in the world’s history, its seasons of prosperity and judgment.

XXXV.

(1) The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them...—The desolation of the chief enemy of Israel is contrasted with the renewed beauty of Israel’s own inheritance. The two last words are better omitted. The three nouns express varying degrees of the absence of culture, the wild pasture-land, the bare moor, the sandy steppe.

Shall... blossom as the rose.—Better, as the narcissus, but the primrose and the crocus (Colchicum autumnale) have also been suggested. The words paint the beauty of the chosen land flourishing once more as the “garden of Jehovah” (Gen. xiii. 10), and therefore a fit type of that which is in a yet higher sense the “Paradise of God” (Rev. ii. 7).
for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. (2) It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

(3) §Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. (4) Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

(5) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. (6) Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. (7) And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. (8) And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the uncircumcised shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. (9) No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: (10) and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and
Sennacherib's Invasion.

ISAIAH, XXXVI.

The Mission of the Rabshakeh.

gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

CHAPTER XXXVI. — (1) Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defended cities of Judah, and took them.

(2) And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.

(3) Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder. (4) And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this where-in thou trustest? (5) I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? (6) Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.

probably, in his old age, and in the midst of much trouble, whether he wrote at the close of Hezekiah's reign, or the beginning of Manasseh's, which must have been sufficiently dark and gloomy. (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 26, xxxiii. 1–10.) The hopes of the prophet were, however, inextinguishable, and they formed a natural starting-point for the words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," with which the second collection opens, the intermediate chapters being obviously of the nature of an historical appendix. They find their echo in Rev. vii. 17, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

XXXVI.

(1) It came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah. — In the judgment of nearly all Assyriologists (Sir Henry Rawlinson, Sayce, Hincks, Lenormant, Schrader, Cheyne), we have to rectify the chronology. The inscriptions of Sennacherib fix the date of his campaign against Hezekiah in the third year of his reign (B.C. 700), and that coincides not with the fourteenth, but with the twenty-seventh year of the king of Judah. The error, on this assumption, arose from the editor of Isaiah's prophecies taking for granted that the illness of Hezekiah followed on the destruction of Sennacherib's army, or, at least, on his attack, and then reckoning back the fifteen years for which his life was prolonged from the date of his death. Most of the scholars named above have come to the conclusion that the illness preceded Sennacherib's campaign by ten or eleven years, and this, of course, involves throwing back the embassy from Babylon (chap. xxxix.) to about the same period. Lenormant (Manual of Ancient History, i. 181) keeping to the Biblical sequence, real or apparent, of the events, meets the difficulty by assuming that Hezekiah reigned for forty-one instead of twenty-nine years, and that Manasseh was associated with him in titular sovereignty even for the first three years of his reign reckoned from that epoch.

Sennacherib king of Assyria. — According to the Assyrian inscriptions, the king succeeded Sargon, who was assassinated in his palace, B.C. 704, and after subduing the province of Babylon which had rebelled under Merodach-baladan, turned his course southward against Hezekiah with four or five distinct complaints — (1) that the king had refused tribute (2 Kings xviii. 14); (2) that he had opened negotiations with Babylon and Egypt (2 Kings xviii. 24) with a view to an alliance against Assyria; (3) that he had helped the Philistines of Ekron to rise against their king who supported Assyria, and had kept that king as a prisoner in Jerusalem (Records of the Past, i. 36–39).

(2) The king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh. — The word is a title (the Rabshakeh) probably the chief officer or cup-bearer. In 2 Kings xviii.; 2 Chron. xxxii., we have the previous history of the war. Hezekiah, on hearing Sennacherib's reproach, began to strengthen the fortifications of Jerusalem, called his officers and troops together, and made an appeal to their faith and courage. In chap. xxi. we have the prophet's view of those preparations. Probably by Isaiah's advice, who put no confidence in this boastful and blustering courage, Hezekiah sent to Sennacherib, who was then besieging Lachish, to sue for peace, acknowledging that he had offended. A penalty of three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold was imposed and paid, Hezekiah being reduced to empty his own treasury and that of the Temple, and even to strip the Temple doors and pillars of the plates of gold with which they were overlaid. Peace, however, was not to be had even at that price. Encouraged, perhaps, by this prompt submission, and tearing up the treaty of which Isaiah complains in chap. xxxv. 1), Sennacherib sent his officers, the Tartan, the Rabshak, and the Rabshakeh (the name is a plural of a official titles) to demand an unconditional surrender.

He stood by the conduit of the upper pool. — The spot was the same as that at which Isaiah had addressed Ahaz thirty or more years before (chap. vii. 3). It was probably chosen by the Rabshakeh as commanding one end of the aqueduct which supplied the city with water, and thus enabling him to threaten that he would cut off the supply (verse 12).

(3) Eliakim. — It is significant that Eliakim now fills the office which, a short time before, had been filled by Shebna, while the latter is reduced to the inferior position of a scribe (chap. xxii. 15–25). The change is clearly traceable to Isaiah's influence. The "scribe" was the secretary who formulated despatches and degrees; the "recorder," probably the registrar of the official annals.

(5, 6) I have counsel and strength for war. — Reports of Hezekiah's speech, probably also of his negotiations with Egypt, had reached the ears of the Assyrian king. So Sennacherib, in his inscriptions, speaks of "the king of Egypt as a monarch who could not save those who trusted in him" (Smith, Assyrian Canon). The Pharaoh in this case was Shabatoka, or Sabaco II., the father of the Tir-hakah of chap. xxxvii.
ISAIAH, XXXVI. A Royal Proclamation.

67 But if thou say to me, we trust in the Lord our God: is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar? (8) Now therefore give the pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part, to set riders upon them. (9) How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? (10) And am I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? the Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

(11) Then said Eliakim and Shebna, and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall. (12) But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?

(13) Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. (14) Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. (15) Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. (16) Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, (17) until I come and take you away to a

9, one of the Ethiopian dynasty that reigned in Egypt from B.C. 725-665.

(7) Is it not he, whose high places . . .—This was this impression left on the mind of the Rabshakeh by what he heard of Hezekiah's reformation. From the Assyrian standpoint a god was honored in proportion as his sanctuaries were multiplied, but wherever he went, the Rabshakeh had found "high places" where Jehovah had been worshipped, which Hezekiah had desecrated. How could one who had so acted expect hope for shows that Hebrew was the common speech of Palestine from spies or deserters of Hezekiah's speech (2 Chron. xxxii. 18 excepted) in which the term meets us in the narrower sense, and that is after the exile.

In the Jews' language.—It is certain whether this means simply Hebrew, which Isaiah elsewhere calls the language of Canaan (chap. xix. 18), or a special dialect of Judah. The Moabite stone, on the one hand, shows that Hebrew was the common speech of Palestine and the border countries. On the other hand, dialects spring up quickly. Nehemiah vii. 24 is the only other passage (the parallels of 2 Kings xvii. 26 and 2 Chron. xxxii. 18 excepted) in which the term meets us in the narrower sense, and that is after the exile.

(12) Hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall . . .?—The words, which in their brutal coarseness have hardly a parallel in history, till we come to Bismarck's telling the Parisians that they may "stew in their own gravy," imply that the Assyrians were in a position to cut off the supplies both of food and water.

(15, 16) Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord.—Rabshakeh had apparently heard from spies or deserters of Hezekiah's speech to his people (2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8). In contrast with what he derides as trust in a God who was against those who trusted Him, he offers tangible material advantages. They have only to leave the besieged city, and to go to the Assyrian camp, and they will be allowed provisionally to occupy their own houses and till their own fields, and, instead of dying of thirst, shall have each man the waters of his own cistern; and then, not without a latent sarcasm, worse than the cui victis which is the normal utterance of conquerors, he offers the doom of exile as if it were a change for the better, and not the worse, as though the conquered had no love of country as such, no reverence for the sepulchres of their fathers, no yearning for the Temple of their...
land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

(19) Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? (19) Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? (20) Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

(21) But they held their peace, and answered him not: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

(22) Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—(1) And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.

(2) And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. (3) And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. (4) It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.

(5) So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. (6) And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have reproached thee. But the words are预备, not the words of man: for they are预备, and the Lord will hear them.

(7) Then came Eliakim, and Shebna, and Joah, to Isaiah the prophet, saying, Thus saith Hezekiah, I have heard the words of which thine servants have spoken to the servants of the king of Assyria; but the words are预备, and the Lord will hear them.

(8) And the Lord said unto Isaiah, Go forth to meet him the king's messengers, and say unto them, Is it a hard thing for you to tell the king, Thus saith the Lord, Because he hath heard that I have set my power and my strength against him, for to destroy it: therefore hath he sent his servants to say, We will come and make a covenant with thee to leave thou the land, and that thou makest not war against us in the land of Judah.

(9) But thus saith the Lord, Because he hath set his heart to rebel, and hath made against thee great words, do I come and destroy him?

(10) Therefore thus saith the Lord, The counsel of man is nothing, neither the planning of man profiteth: for the counsel of God shall prosper in the land.

(11) Beware thou, and consider the path wherein thou art; for the way thou goest shall be an everlasting wilderness, and thou shalt perish from the land which thou shalt cause the inheritance of Jacob to inherit.

(12) Isaiah said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, This is the thing which shall happen, the beginning of evil, to the land of Zebulun, and to the land of Naphtali; and to the land beyond Jordan toward the east, and Lebanon, with all the cities thereof.

(13) Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of you; be dismayed, O Judah, all of you: be sorrowful, and be bareheaded, and cover yourselves: and let him go on like a horseman that halteth by reason of the multitude of his people.

(14) And remove them; it shall be brought unto silence like straw: take them; for less than a stroke they are put to shame.

(15) And the inhabitant shall say, Who is Jacob? and Ephraim say, Who is Hezekiah? (16) For the Lord shall have removed from thee all the inhabitants of the land; he shall utterly destroy all that is left, and all that dwell in this city.

(17) Because they have said, The Lord have said, He shall have none: therefore will I prophesy of the king whom thou shalt put to death, and of his kingdom, by which the sword shall come to destroy the inhabitants thereof.
The Siege of Libnah.

**ISAIAH, XXXVII.**

**Hezekiah’s Prayer.**

Assyria have blasphemed me. (7) Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

(8) So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

(9) And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

(10) I will send a blast upon him.—Better, I will put a spirit in him. The Authorised Version suggests the idea of some physical calamity, like that which actually destroyed the Assyrian army. Here, however, the “spirit,” stands for the impulse, strong and mighty, which overpowers previous resolves. (Comp. chap. xxx. 28.)

He shall hear a rumour.—The words admit of being explained either as a prediction rising out of a purely supernatural foresight, or as resting on some secret intelligence which Israel had received as to the movements of Tirhakah.

(11) Where is the king of Hamath . . . Telassar?—The third of the twenty-fifth, or tified, but Anah is found as the name of the king of Hamath, and the king of Telassar, which was, as it were, laid before the judge, and received an oracle from her as a vision of the night.

(12) Where is the king of Hamath . . .—The question which had been asked in chap. xxxvi. 19 as to the gods of the cities named is now asked of their kings, and the implied answer is that they are in the dungeons of Nineveh.

Hena, and Ivah.—The sites have not been identified, but Anah is found as the name of a city on the Euphrates, and Ivah may be the same as the Ava of 2 Kings xvii. 24.

(13) Hezekiah received the letter.—The Hebrew noun is plural, as though the document consisted of more than one sheet.

And spread it before the Lord.—The act was one of mute appeal to the Supreme Arbiter. The corpus delicti was, as it were, laid before the judge, and then the appellant offered up his prayer. Mr. Cheyne quotes a striking parallel from the “Annals of Assyrian” (Records of the Past, i. 67), who, on receiving a defiant message from the King of Elam, went into the Temple of Ishtar, and, reminding the goddess of all he had done for her, besought her aid, and received an oracle from her as a vision of the night.

(14) That dwelleth between the cherubims.—A like phrase in Ps. xviii. 10 refers, apparently, to the dark thunder-clouds of heaven. Here, probably, the...
The Word of the Lord by Isaiah.  

ISAIAH, XXXVII.  The Answer to Hezekiah's Prayer.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. (22) Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel. (24) By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel. (25) I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.

(26) Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into

reference is to the glory-cloud which was the symbol of the Divine presence, and which rested, when it manifested itself, between the cherubims of the ark (Num. vii. 89), those figures also symbolising the elemental forces of the heavens. (Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 33.)

Thou art the God, even thou alone.—The absolute monotheism of the faith of Israel is placed in alternative to their being taken as trophies for the invaders, but Zion was to escape the ravisher, and laugh his lust to scorn.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: (22) this is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him:

est between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. (17) Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. (18) Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the 1 nations, and their countries, (19) and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. (20) Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: (22) this is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him:

by the invaders, but Zion was to escape the ravisher, and laugh his lust to scorn. (23) Whom hast thou reproached . . .—The speech of Hezekiah, if he was not present at its utterance, was reported to him, and in the name of Jehovah he was commissioned to reply to it.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion.—The same phrase had been used in chap. xxiii. 12 of Zidon. There the virgin had been "oppressed," i.e., "ravished" by the invaders, but Zion was to escape the ravisher, and laugh his lust to scorn.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. (22) Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel. (24) By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel. (25) I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.

(26) Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. (22) Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel. (24) By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel. (25) I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.

(26) Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into.
ruinous heaps. (22) Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house-tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up. (23) But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. (24) Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

(25) And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as growth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vine-yards, and eat the fruit thereof. (26) And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:

(27) for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

(28) Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. (29) By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. (30) For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

(31) Then the 'angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the invaders. (32) The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.—Here, again, the prophet returns in his old age to the formula of the earlier days of chap. ix. 7, with an implied reference to the grand promise with which it had then been associated. (33) Nor come before it with shields.—The clause points to the two forms of attack: (1) the invaders marching to the assault, protected by their serried shields against the darts and stones which were flung by hand or from engines by the besieged; and (2) the earth-works which were piled up to make the attack on the walls more feasible. (Comp. Hab. i. 10; Ezek. iv. 2.) Isaiah's prediction is not only that Jerusalem will not be taken, but that the enemy, though now encamped around it, will not even proceed to the usual operations of a siege. (34) For mine own sake...—The words set forth, as it were, the two motives of Jehovah's action: "for His own sake," as asserting His majesty against the blasphemy of the Assyrians; for "David's sake," as mindful of the promise made to him, showing, in the spirit of the second commandment, that the good as well as the evil influences of men survive, and that a later generation may profit by the good that was in its predecessor, as well as suffer for its guilt. (35) Then the angel of the Lord...—The words do not exclude—rather, as interpreted by 1 Chron. xxi. 14, they imply—the action of some form of epidemic disease, dysentery or the plague, such as has not seldom turned the fortunes of a campaign, spreading, it may be, for some days, and then, aggravated by atmospheric conditions, such as the thunderstorm im-plied in chaps. xxix. 6, xxx. 27—30, culminating in one night of horror. History, as written from the modern stand-point, would dwell on the details of the pestilence. To Isaiah, who had learnt to see in the winds the messengers of God (Ps. civ. 4), it was nothing else than the "angel of the Lord." So he would have said of the wreck of the Armina, "Affert Deus et dissipantur inimici," or of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, "He sendeth forth his ice like morsels: who is able to abide his frost?" (Ps. cxlv. 17). The Assyrian records, as might be expected, make no mention of the catastrophe, but a singular parallel is

thou not heard "suggest the thought that Isaiah assumes that Sennacherib had heard of his prophecies, or those of his fore-runners, as to the purposes of Jehovah—an assumption which, looking to the fact that he had ministers who were well acquainted with Hebrew (chap. xxxvi. 12), was in itself probable enough. (35) Therefore.—Better, and. They were as the grass of the field.—One symbol of weakness follows after another. The "grass on the house-tops" was, in this respect, a proverbial emblem (Ps. cxxi. 6). The italics in as corn seem to suggest some error in transcription. The words as they stand give a field before the blades; those in 2 Kings xix. 20, a blasting. (36) Thy abode...—The three words include, in the common speech of the Hebrews, the whole of a siege. (37) Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose...—The Assyrian sculptures represent both beasts and men as dragged in this way (Ezek. xxviii. 4). (Comp. the same image in chap. xxx. 28.) (38) And this shall be a sign unto thee.—The prophet now turns to Hezekiah, and offers, as was his wont later generation may profit by the good that was in its predecessor, as well as suffer for its guilt. (39) And the remnant that is escaped.—We note the "remnant of the familiar formula of Isaiah's earlier days. The name of Shear-jashub had not ceased to be an omen of good (chap. vii. 3). And that remnant should be as the scion from which should spring in due course the goodly tree of the future (chap. vi. 13).
Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. [37] So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. [38] And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of 1 Armenia; and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. (1) In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus said the Lord, 2Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not presented by the account which Herodotus gives (chap. ii. 141), on the authority of the Egyptian priests, of the destruction of Sennacherib’s army when he invaded Egypt, then under the rule of Sethon, a priest of Ptha or Hephastos. The priest-king prayed to his gods, and the Assyrian army, then encamped before Pelisium, were attacked by myriads of field-mice, who gnawed the straps of quivers, bows, and shields, and so made all their weapons useless, and led to their taking flight. Therefore, the historian adds, there stood a statue of Sethon in the Temple of Hephastos at Memphis, with a mouse in one hand and with the inscription, “Whosoever looks at me let him fear the gods.” Some writers (e.g., Ewald and Canon Rawlinson) have been led by this to the conclusion that the pestilence fell on Sennacherib’s army at Pelisium, and not at Jerusalem. It may be questioned, however, whether, even admitting that the narrative in its present form may be later than the exile, the probabilities are not in favour of the Biblical record, compiled as it was by writers who had documents and inherited traditions, rather than of the travellers’ tales which the vergers of Egyptian temples told to the good Herodotus.

In the camp of the Assyrians.—Josephus (Bell. Jud. v. 7, 2) names a site in the outskirts of Jerusalem which in his time still bore this name. The narrative of Isaiah leaves room for a considerable interval between his prophecy and the dread work of the destroyer (2 Kings xix. 35). “In that night” does not necessarily imply immediate sequence, the demonstrative adjective being used, like the Latin hic, idem, for “that memorable night.” [37] So Sennacherib ...—We have to remember that the Assyrian king had been engaged in the siege of Libnah, probably also in an Egyptian expedition, which from some cause or other was unsuccessful. The course of events was probably this: that in Egypt he heard of the ravages of the pestilence, returned to find his army too weak to fight, and then, abandoning all further action in the south, withdrew to Nineveh.

Departed, and went and returned.—We are reminded by the three synonyms of the proverbial “abiit, evasit, erupit” of Cicero, in Catil. ii. (Del.). [38] And it came to pass.—The Assyrian inscriptions fill up the gap of twenty years between the events which appear here, as if in immediate sequence, with five campaigns in the north and east of the Assyrian Empire, chiefly against the Babylonians, who revolted again under the son of Merodach-baladan.

Nisroch.—Some experts (Oppert and Schrader) have found the name in the Khorsabad inscriptions, in a prayer of Sargon to Nisroch as the patron of marriage, but the identification is disputed by others, as G. Smith, Sayce, and Cheyne. The etymology of the name, as meaning the “eagle” deity, is also one of the open questions of Assyrian research.

Adrammelech and Sharezer.—The former name appears in that of a deity of Sepharvaim in 2 Kings xvii. 31—its probable meaning being “the king of glory,” that of Sharezer, “the ruler preserves,” or, in a variant form, Sanazutu, “Sin (the moon-god) preserves.” The Assyrian records, so far as they are yet interpreted, make no mention of the murder, but an inscription of Esar-haddon’s, mutilated at the beginning, begins with an account of his victory over rebel princes, and the narrative of his campaign speaks of snowy mountains, which at least suggest Armenia (Heb. Arrarat), (Records of the Past, iii. 101). Armenian traditions make the two particides the founders of royal houses, the Sassourians and Alzerrians. From the latter, in which the name of Sennacherib was common, sprang the Byzantine Emperor, Leo the Armenian. Esar-haddon is further memorable as having peopled Samaria with the mixed population of Babylonians, Cutheans, and others (2 Kings xvii. 24; Ezra iv. 10), from whom the later Samaritans were descended—as having taken Zidon and deported its inhabitants (Records of the Past, i. p. 111)—as having left inscriptions at Nahr-el-kelb, near Beyrut, in which he describes himself as “King of Egypt, Thebes, and Ethiopia,” as having probably been the “king of Assyria” who carried Manasseh bound in fetters to Babylon. The will of Sennacherib (Records of the Past, i. 136), giving him his chief treasures, and renaming him with a new title of sovereignty (Assur­Ehil-Muni-pal, i.e., “Assur is lord, the establisher of the son”), seems to imply that he was a younger son, whom the fondness of Sennacherib had exalted above his elder brothers, who needlessly revenged themselves by the murder of their father.

XXXVIII. (1) In those days.—On any supposition, the narrative of Hezekiah’s illness throws us back to a time fifteen years before his death, and therefore to an earlier date than the destruction of the Assyrian army, which it here follows. So in verse 6, the deliverance of the city is spoken of as still future. Assuming the rectified chronology given above, we are carried to a time ten or eleven years before the invasion, which was probably in part caused by the ambitious schemes indicated in chap. xxxix. It follows from either view that we have no ground for assuming, as some commentators have done, (1) that the illness was an attack of the plague that destroyed the Assyrian army, or (2) that the treasures which Hezekiah showed to the Babylonian ambassadors were in part the spoil of that army.

Set thine house in order.—Literally, Give orders to thy house, the femine form for “make thy will.” The words are a striking illustration, like Jonah’s announcement that Nineveh should be destroyed in three days (Jonah iii. 4), of the conditional character.
Hezekiah's Sickness.

ISAIAH, XXXVIII. The Sign on the Sun-dial of Ahaz.

live. (2) Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, (3) and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. (4) Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, (5) Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. (6) And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city toward Assyria: and I will defend this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, twenty years. (7) And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken; (8) behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

(9) The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:

(10) I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. (11) I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living. of prophecy. It would seem as if Isaiah had been consulted half as prophet and half as physician as to the nature of the disease. It seemed to him fatal; it was necessary to prepare for death. The words may possibly imply a certain sense of disappointment at the result of Hezekiah's reign. In the midst of the king's magnificence and prosperity there was that in the inner house of the soul, as well as in that of the outer life, which required ordering.

(2) Turned his face toward the wall . . . —The royal couch was in the corner, as the Eastern place of honour, the face turned to, as seeking privacy and avoiding the gaze of men. (Comp. Ahab in 1 Kings xxi. 4.)

(3) Remember now, O Lord. —Devout as the prayer is, there is a tone of self-satisfaction in it which contrasts with David's prayer (Ps. li. 1—3). He rests on what he has done in the way of religious reformation, and practically asks what he has done that he should be cut off by an untimely death. The terms may probably have been less egotistic than the words, and, therefore, were more prevailing.

(5) Fifteen years. —The words fix the date of the illness, taking the received chronology, as B.C. 713. The next verse shows that there was danger at the time to be apprehended from Assyria, but does not necessarily refer to Sennacherib's invasion. Sargon's attack (chap. xx. 1) may have caused a general alarm.

(7) This shall be a sign unto thee . . . —The offer reminds us of that made to Ahaz; but it was received in a far different spirit. In 2 Kings xx. 8—11 the story is more fully told. Hezekiah asks for a sign, and is offered his choice. Shall the shadow go forward or backward? With something of a child-like simplicity he chooses the latter, as the more difficult of the two. The sun-dial of Ahaz, probably, like his altar (2 Kings xvi. 10), copied from Syrian or Assyrian art [the meaning of a sun-clock is ascribed to Herodotus (ii. 109) to the Chaldeans], would seem to have been of the form of an obelisk standing on steps (the literal meaning of the Hebrew word for dial), and casting its shadow so as to indicate the time, each step representing an hour or half-hour. The nature of the phenomenon seems as curiously limited as that of the darkness of the crucifixion. There was no prolongation of the day in the rest of Palestine or Jerusalem; for the backward movement was limited to the steps of such phenomenon had been observed, and one observable purpose of Merodach-baladan's embassy was to investigate its nature (2 Chron. xxxii. 31). An inquiry into the causation of a miracle is almost a contradiction in terms, but the most probable explanation of the fact recorded is that it was the effect of a supernatural, but exceedingly circumscribed, refraction. A prolonged after-glow following on the sunset, and reviving for a time the brightness of the day, might produce an effect such as is described to one who gazed upon the step-dial.

(9) The writing of Hezekiah . . . —Verses 21 and 22 would seem to have their right place before the elegiac psalm that follows. The culture which the psalm implies is what might have been expected from one whom Isaiah had trained, who had restored and organized the worship of the Temple (2 Chron. xxix. 25—30), who spoke to Levites and soldiers as a preacher (2 Chron. xxx. 22, xxxii. 6), “speaking comfortably” (literally, to their heart), and who had directed the compilation of a fresh set of the proverbs ascribed to Solomon (Prov. xxv. 1). It will be seen, as we go through the hymn, that it presents echoes of the Book of Job as well as of the earlier Psalms.

(10) I said in the cutting off of my days . . . —The words have been very differently interpreted —(1) “in the quietness,” and so in the even tenor of a healthy life. As a fact, however, the complaint did not, and could not, come in the “quiet” of his life, but after it had passed away; (2) “in the dividing point” sic., the “half-way house of life.” Hezekiah was thirty-nine, but the word might rightly be used of the years between thirty-five and forty, which were the meoties of the seventy and eighty years of the psalmist (Ps. xc. 10). We are reminded of Dante's “Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita” (Inf. i. 1).

The gates of the grave. —The image is what we should call Dantesque. Sheol, the Hades of the Hebrews, is, as in the Assyrian representations of the unseen world, and as in the Inferno of Dante (iii. 11, vii. 2, x. 22), a great city, and, therefore, it has its gates, which again become, as with other cities, the symbol of its power. So we have “gates of death” in Job xxxviii. 17; Ps. ix. 18, civ. 18.

The residue . . . —The words assume a normal duration, say of seventy years, on which the sufferer, who had, as he thought, done nothing to deserve punishment, might have legitimately counted.

(13) I shall not see the Lord . . . —The words are eminently the expression of a cheerless dimness of the Hebrew's thoughts of death. To St. Paul and those who share his faith death is to “depart, and to be
living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

(12) Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. (13) I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. (14) Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, with Christ" (Phil. i. 23), to be "ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17). To Hezekiah, it would seem, the outward worship of the Temple, or possibly, the consciousness of God's presence in the full activity of brain and heart, was a joy which he could not bear to lose. The spiritual perceptions of death after death would be spectral and shadowy, like the dead themselves. (Comp. the Greek idea of Hades in Homer (Od. xi. 12-19). It may be noted that the Hebrew for "the Lord" is the shorter, possibly the poetical, form "Jah" (as in Ps. lxviii. 4). The LXX paraphrases "I shall not see the salvation of God."

(12) Mine age is departed . . . —Better, my home, or habitation. . . . as in Ps. xlvii. 19, and thus fitting in better with the similitude that follows. The "home" is, of course, the body, as the dwelling-place of the spirit. (Comp. Ps. lii. 5, "hurl thee away, tentless," God and the performance which fulfils it. For "in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live." (17) Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but theion hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. (18) For the grave cannot praise

something like an appeal to the judge, who is also the accuser, to be bail for the accused.

1 Or, from the throne.
2 Or, cease me.
3 Or, on my poor
4 Heb., thou hast loved my soul from the pit.

(14) Like a crane . . . —The three birds—strictly, the "swift," the "crane," the "dove"—each with its special note of lamentation, represent, as it were, the cries of pain and the low suppressed wail of the sufferer. The three appear again together in Jer. viii. 7.

(15) What shall I say?—With the same force as in 2 Sam. vii. 20; Heb. xiii. 32. Words fail to express the wonder and the gratitude of the sufferer who has thus been rescued for the fulfilment which followed so immediately on the promise.

I shall go softly . . . —Better, That I should walk at ease upon (i.e., because of, or, as others take it, in spite of) the trouble of my soul. The verb is used in Ps. xlii. 4 of a festal procession to the Temple, but here refers simply to the journey of life, and implies that it is to be carried on to the end as with calm and considerate steps. The Authorised Version suggests wrongly the thought of a life-long bitterness.

(16) By these things . . . —i.e., by the word of God and the performance which fulfils it. For "in all these things," read wholly through them. The words remind us of Deut. viii. 3, "Man doth not live by bread alone . . . ."

For peace I had great bitterness . . . —The words in the Authorised Version read like a retrospect of the change from health to suffering. Really, they express the very opposite. It was for my peace (i.e., for my salvation, in the fullest sense of the word) that it was bitter, was bitter unto me (emphasis of iteration). All things were now seen as working together for good. "Thou hast in love to my soul . . . —The italics show that the verbs "delivered it" are not in the present Hebrew text. A slight change, such as might be made to correct an error of transcription, would give that meaning, but as it stands, we have the singularly suggestive phrase, Thou hast loved me out of the pit of corruption. The very love of Jehovah is thought of as ipso facto a deliverance.

Thou hast cast all my sins . . . —As in our Lord's miracles, the bodily healing was the pledge and earnest of the spiritual. "Arise and walk" guaranteed, "Thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. ix. 2-5). (For the symbols of that forgiveness, comp. Micah vii. 19.)

(17) For the grave . . . —i.e., Sheol, or Hades. We return to the king's thoughts of the dim shadow-world, Death and Sheol (joined together, as in chap. xxviii. 15; Ps. vi. 5). In that region of dimness there are no psalms of thanksgiving, no loud hallelujahs. The thought of spiritual energies developed and intensified after death is essentially one which belongs to the "illuminated" immortality (2 Tim. i. 10), of Christian thought. (Comp. Pss. vi. 5, xxx. 9, lxxxviii. 11, 12, cxv. 17; Eccl. ix. 4, 5, 10).
The Ambassadors from Babylon.

The Plaister laid upon the Boil.

ISAIAH, XXXIX.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—(1) At a time time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. (2) And Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

(3) Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country

(19) The father to the children . . .—The words are perfectly general, but they receive a special significance from the fact that Hezekiah's son and successor, Manasseh, who was only twelve years old at his father's death (2 Kings xxii. 1), was not born till two or three years afterwards. At the time of his illness the king may still have been childless, and the thought that there was no son to take his place may have added bitterness to his grief. "Thy truth," has here the sense of "faithfulness" rather than of the truth about God which is the object of belief.

(20) Was ready.—Better, as fitting in with the praise and hope of the close of the prayer, is ready.

We will sing.—The king identifies himself with the great congregation, perhaps even yet more closely with the Levite minstrels of the Temple whom he had done so much to train and re-organise.

(21) For Isaiah had said . . .—The direction implies some medical training on the part of Isaiah (see Note on chap. i. 6, and Introduction), such as entered naturally into the education of the prophet-priests. They were to Israel, especially in the case of leprosy and other kindred diseases, what the priests of Asclepius were to Greece. The Divine promise guaranteed success to the use of natural remedies, but did not dispense with them, and they, like the spittle laid on the eyes of the blind in the Gospel miracles (Mark vii. 33, John ix. 6), were also a help to the faith on which the miracle depended. Both this and the following verse seem, as has been said, to have been notes to verse 8, supplied from the narrative of 2 Kings xx. and placed at the end of the chapter instead of at the foot of the page, as in modern MSS. or print. The word for "boil" appears in connection with leprosy in Exod. ix. 9, Lev. xiii. 18, but is used generically for any kind of abscess, carbuncle, and the like. (Comp. Job. ii. 7.)

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The Captivity in Babylon.

ISAIAH, XL.

The Cry of Comfort.

unto me, even from Babylon. (4) Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

(5) Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: (6) Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.

(7) And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

(8) Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

CHAPTER XL.—(1) Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. (2) Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

(4) What have they seen in thine house?—The question was pressing home. Had the king contended himself with such hospitality as would have satisfied the demands of the code of Eastern ethics? or had he, as the prophet rightly suspected, done more than that, in his vain-glorious hope of figuring among the "great powers" of the East? On the minds of the ambassadors, we may well believe the impression left was like that made on Blucher as he passed through London: that it would be "a grand city to plunder."

(6, 7) Behold, the days come. . .—The words, it may be noted, received a two-fold fulfilment, under widely different conditions. Hezekiah's son Manassch, at the time when Isaiah spoke uncom, was carried as a prisoner to Babylon by Esar-haddon, king of Assyria (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11). The last lineal heir of the house of David, Jehoiachin, died there after long years of imprisonment (2 Kings xxv. 27). Daniel and his three companions were "of the king's seed and of the princes," and were, probably, themselves reduced to that state, placed under the care of "the master of the eunuchs" (Dan. i. 3). The actual treasures which Hezekiah showed were probably handed over to Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. 15, 16); but looking to the fact that the king records his capture of Babylon, after defeating Merodach-baladan, and established his son Esar-haddon there (Lenormant, Ancient History, i., p. 490), it is probable enough that the treasures may have been taken thither, and displayed, as if in irony, to the king and the counsellors, who had hoped to profit by them. Sennacherib indeed boasts that he had carried off not only the king's treasures, and his musicians to Nineveh, but his daughters also (Records of the Past, vii. 63).

(6) Good is the word of the Lord. . .—The words have the appearance of a pious resignation, but we feel that they are less true and noble than those of David on a like occasion: "I have sinned and done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house" (2 Sam. xxiv. 17). Hezekiah's thanksgiving reminds us a little too much of "Après moi le deluge."

Peace and truth.—The latter word is used in the sense of "stability" (so Ps. liv. 5). The two words are used in the same way in Jer. xiv. 13, where we find "assured peace" in the text of the Authorised Version, and "peace of truth" in the margin.

XL

(1) Comfort ye. . .—I start with the assumption that the great prophetic poem that follows is the work of Isaiah himself, referring to the Introduction for the discussion of all questions connected with its authorship and arrangement. It has a link, as has been noticed, with the earlier collection of his writings in chap. xxxiv. 9, 10. The prophet's mind is obviously projected at the outset into the future, which it had been given him to see, when the time of punishment and discipline was to be succeeded, having done its work, by blessedness and peace. The key-note is struck in the opening words. The phrase "my people" is a distinct echo of Hos. ii. 1. Lo Ammi (i.e. "not my people") has been brought back to, his true position as Ammi (i.e. "my people").

Saith your God.—Noticeable as a formula which is at once peculiar to Isaiah and common to both his volumes (chaps. i. 11, 18, xxxiii. 10, xli. 21, lxvi. 9).

(2) Speak ye comfortably. . .—Literally, Speak ye to the heart. The command is addressed to the prophets whom Isaiah contemplates as working towards the close of the exile, and carrying on his work. In Hagri. i. 13, ii. 9, iii. 19—23, and Zechariah i. 13, ii. 5—10, ix. 3—12, we may rightly trace the influence of the words as working out their own fulfilment.

That her warfare is accomplished.—The time of war, with all its suffering, becomes the symbol of sufferings apart from actual war. The exile was one long campaign with enemies who were worse than the Babylonian conquerors. In Job vii. 1, xiv. 14, the word is applied (rendered "appointed time") to the battle of life from its beginning to its end. This, too, may be noted as one of the many parallelisms between Isaiah and Job.

That her iniquity is pardoned.—Strictly, as in Lev. xxvi. 41, 43, is paid off, or accepted. The word implies not exemption from punishment, but the fact that the punishment had been accepted, and had done its work.

She hath received of the Lord's hand. . .—Primarily, the thought is that Jerusalem has suffered a more than sufficient penalty. (Comp. Exod. xxxii. 9, Rev. xviii. 6.) This seems more in harmony with the context than the view which takes the meaning that Jerusalem shall receive a double measure of grace and favour. In the long run, however, the one meaning does not exclude the other. It is the mercy of Jehovah which reckons the punishment sufficient, because it has been
The Cry of the Herald of Jehovah.

ISAIAH, XL.

The Message of Good Tidings.

(6) The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: (5) and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(6) The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: (7) the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. (8) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

(9) O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

"accepted" (Lev. xxvi. 41), and has done its work. (Comp. Jer. xvi. 18.)

(5) The voice of him that crieth . . .—The laws of Hebrew parallelism require a different punctuation: A voice of one crying, In the wilderness, prepare ye . . . The passage is memorable as having been deliberately taken by the Baptist as defining his own mission (John i. 23). As here the herald is not named, so he was content to efface himself—to be a voice or nothing. The image is drawn from the march of Eastern kings, who often boast, as in the Assyrian inscriptions of Sennacherib and Assurbanipal (Records of the Past, i. 65, vii. 64), of the roads they have made in trackless deserts. The wilderness is that which lay between the Euphrates and Judah, the journey of the exiles through it reminding the prophet of the older wanderings in the wilderness of Sin (Ps. lxviii. 7; Judg. v. 4). The words are an echo of the earlier thought of chap. xxxv. 8. We are left to conjecture to whom the command is addressed: tribes of the desert, angelic ministers, kings and rulers—the very vagueness giving a grand universality. So, again, we are not told whether the "way of Jehovah" is that on which He comes to meet His people, or on which He goes before and guides them. The analogy of the marches of the Exodus makes the latter view the more probable.

(4) Every valley shall be exalted.—The figure is drawn from the titanic engineering operations of the kingly road-makers of the East, but the parable is hardly veiled. The meek exalted, the proud brought low, wrong ways set right, rough places smoothed: that is the true preparation for the coming of the Lord, and therefore the true work of every follower of the Baptist in preparing the way. (Comp. Matt. iii. 3—7; Luke iii. 3—9.)

(5) The glory of the Lord shall be revealed.—Did the prophet think of a vision of a glory-cloud, like the Shechinah which he had seen in the Temple; or had he risen to the thought of the glory of character and will, of holiness and love? (John i. 14.)

All flesh.—The revelation is not for Israel only, but for mankind. So in Luke iii. 6, the words are quoted from the LXX., "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." The phrase meets us here for the first time, and occurs again in chaps. xix. 25, lxxvi. 16, 25, 24, marking, so to speak, the growing catholicity of the prophet's thoughts. (See Note on chap. xxxviii. 11.)

(6) The voice said, Cry.—Literally, A voice saith, Cry. The questioner ("and one said") is probably the prophet himself, asking what he is to proclaim. The truth which he is to enforce thus solemnly is the ever-recurring contrast between the transitoriness of man and the eternity of God and of His word, taking that term in its highest and widest sense. Two points of interest may be noted: (1) that this is another parallelism with Job (xiv. 2); (2) the naturalness of the thought in one who, like Isaiah, was looking back, as Moses looked (Ps. xc. 5, 6) in extreme old age upon the generations whom he had survived, and forward to the fall of mighty monarchies one after another. The marginal references show how dominant the thought is in the mind of Isaiah. Isaiah himself had uttered it in chap. ii. 22.

(7) The spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.—Better, the breath, or the wind of Jehovah, as we are still in the region of the parable, and the agency is destructive, and not quickening. A "wind of Jehovah" would be a mighty storm-blast, tearing up the grass and hurling it to destruction. The image of the fading flower reminds us of the well-known Homeric simile, "As are the generations of leaves, so are those of men." (Comp. Ps. civ. 15, 16.)

The word of our God . . .—Primarily the prophetic word revealing the will of God, but including all manifestations of His being (Ps. cxli. 41, 65, 89; John i. 1). (9) O Zion, that bringest good tidings.—A new section begins. In some versions (LXX. and Targum) and by some interpreters "Zion" is taken or as the participle, "that bringest, or bright," is in the feminine, and a female evangeliser other than Jerusalem has not appeared on the scene, the Authorised Version is preferable. In that rendering the ideal Zion, seeing or hearing of the return of the exiles, becomes the bearer of the good news to the other cities of Judah. It is not without emotion that we note the first occurrence of the word which, passing through the Greek of the LXX. and the New Testament (ἐγγέγραμμένος), has had so fruitful a history, as embodying the message of the Gospel—good-spell, glad tidings—to mankind. The primary meaning of the Hebrew word is to make smooth, or bright, and so to gladden. (Comp. the connection of this English word with the German glätten.)

The high mountain.—There is no article in the Hebrew, but the word is probably connected with the ideal exaltation of the holy city, as in chap. ii. 1. Behold your God!—The words have, in one sense, only an ideal fulfilment; but the prophet contemplates the return of the exiles and the restoration of the Temple worship, as including the renewed presence of Jehovah in the sanctuary which He had apparently abandoned. He would come back with His people, and abide with them.
Behold, the Lord God will come
with strong hand, and his arm shall
rule for him; behold, his reward is
with him, and his work before him.

He shall feed his flock like a sheep;
he shall gather the lambs with his
arm, and carry them in his bosom,
and shall gently lead those that are
with young.

Who hath measured the waters in
the hollow of his hand, and meted out
heaven with the span, and comprehended
the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Who hath directed the Spirit of the
Lord, or being his counsellor hath
taught him?

With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

Behold, the nations are as a drop
of a bucket, and are counted as the small
dust of the balance: behold, he taketh
up the isles as a very little thing.

And Lebanon is not sufficient to
burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient
for a burnt offering.

All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God?
or what likeness will ye compare unto
him?

The workman melteth a graven
image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it
as distinct from that of the material world. "Isles" as elsewhere, stands vaguely for "far-off lands, or seacoasts." The word is that of one who looks on the Mediterranean, and thinks of the unexplored regions that lie in it and around. It is one of Isaiah's favourite words in this aspect of its meaning.

A drop of a bucket.—Better, on a bucket. Such a drop adds nothing to the weight which the bearer feels; as little do the nations and the isles to the burden which Jehovah bears. The "small dust in the balance" presents another illustration of the same idea.

Lebanon is not sufficient.—The thought is the same as that of Ps. l. 10—12. Lebanon is chosen as the type of the forests that supply the wood for burnt-offerings, in which Judah was comparatively poor. In Nehemiah's organisation of the Temple ritual the task of supplying wood for this purpose was assigned by lot to priests or Levites (Neh. x. 34).

Less than nothing.—Literally, as things of nought.

Vanity.—Once more the tohu, or chaos, of Gen. i. 2—one of Isaiah's favourite phrases (chaps. xiv. 10, xxix. 21, xxxiv. 11).

To whom then will ye liken God . . .
The thought of the infinity of God leads, as in St. Paul's reasoning (Acts xvii. 24—29), to the great primary argument against the folly of idolatry. It is characteristic, partly of the two men individually, partly of the systems under which they lived, that while the tone of Isaiah is sarcastic and declamatory, that of St. Paul is pitying, and as with indulgent allowance for the "times of ignorance." We must remember, of course, that the Apostle speaks to those who had known nothing better than the worship of their fathers, the prophet to those who were tempted to fall into the worship of the heathen from a purer faith.

The workman melteth . . .—"The reign of Ahaz, not to speak of that of Manasseh, must have supplied the prophet with his picture of the idol factory not less fully than if he had lived in Babylon or Nineveh.

Spreadeth it over with gold.—The image of lead was covered over, as in the well-known story of Phidias' "Zeus," with plates of gold. The "silver chains" fastened it to the wall.
over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

(20) He that is so impoverished ...—The transition is abrupt, but the intention apparently is to represent idolatry at its opposite extremes of the elaborate art in which kings and princes delighted, and the rude rough image, hardly more than a fetich, the inutile lignum of Horace, "which cannot be moved," standing on its own wide base, so as not to fall.

(21) Have ye not known? ...—Strictly speaking, the first two verbs are potential futures: Can ye not know! ... We note that the prophet appeals to the primary intuitions of mankind, or, at least, to a primitive revelation, rather than to the commandments of the Decalogue. (Comp. Rom. i. 20; Ps. xix. 4.)

(22) The circle of the earth —i.e., the vault of heaven over-arching the earth (Job xxii. 14; Prov. viii. 27).

As grasshoppers.—The word indicates some insect of the locust tribe. The comparison may have been suggested by Num. xxxii. 33.

That stretcheth out the heavens.—A favourite phrase of 2 Isaiah (chap. xliii. 5, xlv, 24, et al.), taken probably from Ps. civ. 24.

As a curtain ... as a tent.—The words indicate a clearer perception of space than the older Hebrew word for the "firmament" of Gen. i. 7. The visible heavens are thought of as a thin, filmy veil of gauze, the curtains of the tent of God.

(23) That bringeth the princes to nothing.—The words imply, like those of chap. xiv. 9, the prophetic strain of experience. The past is full of the records of kingdoms that are no more; so also shall the future be; mortalia facta peribunt. In "vanity" we have the familiar tohu once more.

(24) They shall not be planted ...—Better, Hardly are they planted, hardly are they sown. Such are empires before the eternity of Jehovah: so soon withered that we cannot say that they were ever really planted (Ps. cxxxix. 6).

(25) To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

(26) Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, that for he is strong in power; not one faieth.

(27) Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? (28) Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? "there is no searching of his understanding."

(29) He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

(30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: (31) but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles;...
they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint

CHAPTER XLI.—(1) Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

(2) Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. (3) He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.

Shall mount up with wings.—Better, shall lift up their wings, or, shall put forth wings’ feathers, the last, like Ps. ciii. 5, implying the belief that the eagle renewed its plumage in extreme old age. For the faithful there is no failure, and faith knows no weariness.

XLI.

(1) O islands.—See Note on chap. xl. 15.

Let the people renew their strength . . .—The same phrase as in chap. xl. 31, but here, perhaps, with a touch of irony. The heathen are challenged to the great controversy, and will need all their strength calls (or, whom He calls in righteousness) to tread in His steps. (Comp. chap. xlv. 2.) The man so raised up to rule over the “islands” and the “peoples” is none other than Kores (Cyrus), the future restorer of Israel. The thought of Cyrus as working out the fall of the nations before him, and made their hammer who smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.

(2) Who raised up . . .—More accurately, Who hath raised up from the East the man whom righteousness calls (or, whom He calls in righteousness) to tread in His steps. (Comp. chap. xlv. 2.) The man so raised up to rule over the “islands” and the “peoples” is none other than Kores (Cyrus), the future restorer of Israel. The thought of Cyrus as working out the righteousness of God is dominant in these chapters (chaps. xiii. 6, xlv. 13). In the rapidity of his conquest, the prophet bids men see the proof that he is doing his God’s work. So Jeremiah speaks of Nebuchadnezzar as the servant of Jehovah (Jer. xxvii. 6). One may notice, if only to reject, the exposition of the Targum, according to the flesh, now in the true Israel of God, made up, and appear in the Alpha and Omega of Rev. i. 11, iv. 8. The identical formula, “I am He” meets us in chaps. xliii. 10, xlv. 13, xlvii. 4, xlviii. 12. It is probably used as an assertion of an eternal being in the “I AM” of John viii. 58.

(3) He pursued . . .—Tenses in the present, as before. By the way that he had not gone—i.e., by a new un trodden path. So Tiglath-Pilesrer and other Assyrian kings continually boast that they had led their armies by paths that none had traversed before them. (Records of the Past, i. 15, v. 16.)

(4) The words are the utterance of the great thought of eternity which is the essence of the creed of Israel (comp. Exod. iii. 14; Ps. xc. 2, cii. 26), and appear in the Alpha and Omega of Rev. i. 11, iv. 8. The identical formula, “I am He” meets us in chaps. xliii. 10, xlv. 13, xlvii. 4, xlviii. 12. It is probably used as an assertion of an eternal being in the “I AM” of John viii. 58.

(5) The isles saw it, and feared . . .—The words paint the terror caused by the rapid conquests of Cyrus, but the terror led, as the following verses show, to something very different from the acknowledgment of the Eternal. As the sailors in the ship of Tarshish called each man on his God (Jonah i. 5), so each nation turned to its oracles and its shrines. The gods had to be propitiated by new statues, and a fresh impetus was given to the manufacture of idols, probably for the purpose of being carried forth to battle as a protection. (Comp. 1 Sam. iv. 5—7; Herod. i. 26.)

(6) Be of good courage.—Literally, Be strong: i.e., work vigorously.

(7) So the carpenter.—The process is described even more vividly than in chap. xl. 19. For “the carpenter,” read the caster, the idol being a metal one. The image of lead or copper is then covered with gold plates, which are laid on the anvil, and are smoothed with the hammer; the soldering is approved by the artist, and then (supreme touch of irony) the guardian deity is fixed with nails, that it may not totter and fall.

(8) But thou, Israel, art my servant: . . .—The verse is important as the first introduction of the servant of the Lord who is so conspicuous throughout the rest of the book. The idea embodied in the term is that of a calling and election, manifested now in the idea of God. So in the later language of Christian thought we have (1) the visible Church falling short of the ideal; (2) the spiritual Church approximating to the ideal; (3) Christ Himself, as identified with His People.

The seed of Abraham my friend.—The word for “friend” implies loving as well as being loved. Of
Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. (9) Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. (10) Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (11) Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. (12) Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, for I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having two teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. (13) Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

(17) When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. (18) I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. (19) I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah all the names of Abraham, it has had the widest currency (comp. 2 Chron. xx. 7; Jas. ii. 23). For the Arabs of the present time Abraham is still Khalil Allah—the friend of God, or simply, el Khalil, the friend.

(9) From the ends of the earth.—Ur of the Chaldees, as belonging to the Euphrates region, is on the extreme verge of the prophet's horizon.

From the chief men thereof.—Better, from the far-off regions thereof.

I have chosen . . . —Isaiah becomes the preacher of the Divine election, and finds in it, as St. Paul found, the ground of an inextinguishable hope for the nation of which he was a member. As in St. Peter's teaching, it remained for them to "make their calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10), though God, in the unchangeableness of His nature, had chosen them before the foundation of the world. (10) Fear thou not . . . —The thought of the election of God gives a sense of security to His chosen.

I will strengthen thee.—The verb unites with this meaning (as in chap. xxxv. 3; Ps. lxxix. 21) the idea of attaching to one's self, or choosing, as in chap. xlv. 14.

(11, 12) Behold . . . —The choice of the Servant has, as its complement, the indigination of Jehovah against those who attack him, and this thought is emphasised by a four-fold iteration. "They that strive with thee, &c.," represents the Hebrew idiom, the men of thy conflict, which stands emphatically at the end of each clause.

(13) Fear not, thou worm Jacob.—The servant of Jehovah is reminded that he has no strength of his own, but is "as a worm, and no man" (Ps. xxii. 6). He had not been chosen because he was a great and mighty nation, for Israel was "the fewest of all people" (Deut. vii. 7). As if to emphasise this, the prophet in addressing Israel passes from the masculine to the feminine, resuming the former in the second clause of verse 15, where he speaks of his God-given strength.
tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

(23) Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.

(24) Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.

(25) I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.

(26) Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.

(27) The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings. For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when
I asked of them, could I answer a word.
(29) Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing; their molten images are wind and confusion.

CHAPTER XLII.—(1) Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul is delighted; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

(4) He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

(5) Thus saith God the Lorn, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spreadeth forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

(6) I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of

(29) They are all . . . their works . . .—The first pronoun refers to the idols themselves, the second to the idolaters who make them. In “confusion” we have the familiar tohu.

XLI.

(1) Behold my servant . . .—Here the words point not, as before, to the visible, or even the ideal Jerusalem, but to One who is the centre of both, with attributes which are reproduced in His people in the measure of their fulfilment of the ideal. “Elect” is another of the words with which Isaiah has fashioned the theology of Christendom. It meets us there four times (xlv. 4, lxv. 9, 22), and is echoed and interpreted in the voice from heaven of Matt. iii. 17. That voice fixed on the human consciousness of the Son of Man that He was “the servant of the Lord,” and throughout His life we trace an ever expanding and conscious reproduction of the chief features of Isaiah’s picture. Disciples like St. Matthew learnt to recognise that likeness even in what might seem to us subordinate details (Matt. xii. 17—21).

I have put my spirit . . .—An echo from chap. xi. 2, heard once more in chap. lxi. 1. The promise we note as fulfilled in closest connection with the utterance of the previous words in Matt. iii. 16; Luke iii. 22; John i. 32, 33.

He shall bring forth judgment to . . .—The ministry of “the servant,” as extending to the Gentiles, is prominent in 2 Isaiah (xlv. 6, 7, lii. 15). It expands the thought of chap. ii. 1—4. There the Temple is the centre from which the knowledge and the “judgment” (used here in the sense of law, or ordinance) flow; here it is from the personal teaching of “the servant.”

(2) He shall not cry . . .—Isaiah’s ideal of a teacher, but partly realised in himself, is that of one exempt from the violence of strong feelings, calm in the serenity of authority, strong in his far-reaching and pitiing sympathy. False prophets might rave as in orgiastic frenzy. We are reminded of Solon affecting the inspiration of a soothsayer in order to attract attention to his counsels. Even true prophets might be stirred to vehement and incisive speech, but it should not be so with him. No point of resemblance between the archetype and the portrait seems to have impressed men so deeply as this (Matt. vii. 29, xii. 17—21). The “street” describes the open space of an Eastern city, in which, as in the Greek agora, men harangued the people, while “the gate of the city” was reserved for the more formal administration of justice. (Ruth iv. 1; Prov. xxii. 23.)

(3) A bruised reed shall he not break . . .—Physical, moral, spiritual weakness are all brought under the same similitude. In another context the image has met us in chap. xxxvi. 6. The simple negative “he shall not break” implies, as in the rhetoric of all times, the opposite extreme, the tender care that props and supports. The humanity of the servant of the Lord was to embody what had been already predicated of the Divine will (Ps. ii. 17). The dimly burning flame, the wick of a lamp nearly out, He will foster and cherish and feed the spiritual life, all but extinguished, with oil till it burns brightly again. In Matt. xxv. 1—13 we have to deal with lamps that are going out, and these not even He could light again unless the bearers of the lamps “bought oil” for themselves.

Judgment unto truth—i.e., according to the perfect standard of truth, with something of the sense of St. John’s “true” in the sense of representing the ideal (John i. 9, xv. 1).

(4) He shall not fail nor be discouraged . . .—Both verbs in the Hebrew point back to those of the previous verse, He shall not burn dimly nor be crushed, as if to teach that in helping others to strength and light, the servants of the Lord, after the pattern of the Servant, gain light and strength for themselves.

The isles shall wait for his law.—The relation of “the servant” to the far off Gentile world is still dominant in the prophet’s mind. The LXX. Version, given in Matt. xii. 21, “In His name shall the Gentiles hope,” is a paraphrase rather than a translation. The words describe the “earnest expectation,” the unconscious longing of the heathen for One who shall be a true teacher (Rom. viii. 22).

(5) He that created.—The accumulation of Divine attributes, as enhancing the solemnity of a revelation, has an earlier parallel in Amos v. 8; a later one in Zech. xii. 1.

(6) Have called thee in righteousness . . .—The words apply to the personal servant. His call was in accordance with the absolute righteousness of God, manifesting itself in love. xxxvi. 31.

A covenant of the people.—The context limits the “people” to Israel. The “servant of the Lord” is to be in Himself not only the mediator of the covenant, but the covenant, the meeting-point between God and man, just as He is the “peace” as well as the peace-maker (Mic. v. 5; Eph. ii. 14). The words may well have furnished a starting-point for the “new covenant” of Jer. xxxi. 31, and the whole series of thoughts that have grown out of it.

The Deliverance of the Prisoners.

ISAIAH, XLII. The Leading of the Blind.

the Gentiles; (7) to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. (8) I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. (10) Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. (11) Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. (12) Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.

The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. (14) I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once. (15) I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. (16) And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. (17) They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.

(18) Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind,
that ye may see. (19) Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? (20) Seeing many things, a but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. (21) The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable. (20) But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

(22) Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come? (24) Who gave Jacob a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. (25) Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle; and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

CHAPTER XLIII.—(1) But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. (2) When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:

(19) Deaf, as my messenger ...—The work of the messenger of God had been the ideal of Isaiah, as it was of the servant in whom the ideal was realised (Rom. x. 15; verse 1). But how could a blind and deaf messenger, like the actual Israel, do his work effectually? (Ps. cxiii. 2). As he that is perfect.—Strictly speaking, the devoted, or surrendered one. The Hebrew meshullahm is interesting, as connected with the modern Moalem and Islam, the man resigned to the will of God. The frequent use of this, or a cognate form, as a proper name after the exile (1 Chron. ix. 21; Ezra viii. 6, x. 15; Neh. iii. 4) may (on either assumption as to the date of 2 Isaiah) be connected with it by some link of causation. Other meanings given to it have been “perfect” as in the Authorised Version, “confident,” “recompensed,” “meritorious.”

(20) Seeing many things ...—With a clear vision into the future, the prophet sees that the future Israel will be as far from the ideal as his contemporaries had been. In the actual work of the Servant we find the fulfilment of his vision. Scribes and Pharisees are as those who “learn nothing and forget nothing,” on whom all the lessons of experience are cast away, reproducing the state from which Isaiah started (chap. vi. 10; Matt. xiii. 14; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40; Acts xxviii. 20). The transfer of the words to the sufferers of the Christ, who bore them as though He neither heard nor saw, is scarcely tenable.

(21) The Lord is well pleased ...—The tenses require a change: The Lord was well pleased. He made His love great and glorious. This had been His purpose, and He had not failed in it. He had done all that it was possible to do. (Comp. chap. v. 4; Rom. ix. 4.)

(22) But this is a people robbed and spoiled ...—It is hard to say whether the prophet contemplates the state of the exiles in Babylon, or sees far off yet another exile, consequent on a second and more fatal falling off from the true ideal.

None delivereth ... none saith, Restore.—The tone of despondency seems to come in strangely after the glorious promise of deliverance. On the whole, therefore, the second view seems the more probable; and, so taken, the verse finds its best commentary in Rom. ix.—xi., which is permeated through and through with the thoughts of 2 Isaiah. The “holes” are, primarily, rock-caves, used, not as places of refuge (chap. ii. 19), but as dungeons. (24) Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in the path that he had made for them.
I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. (5) Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; (6) I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. (7) Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

(8) Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.
(9) Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. (10) Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (11) I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. (12) I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. (13) Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

(14) Thus saith the Lord, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships. (15) I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

(16) Thus saith the Lord, which maketh...
a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; (17) which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow. (18) Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. (19) Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. (20) The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. (21) This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise. (22) But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. (23) Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. (24) Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. (25) I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. (26) Put me in remembrance; let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified. (27) Thy first father hath sinned, and thy mediators, thy teachers, have transgressed against me. (28) Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

17 Quenched as tow—i.e., as the wick of a lamp going out. (See Note on chap. xlii. 3.)

18, 19 Remember ye not ... All the wonders of the great historic past of Israel were to be nothing compared with the new manifestation of the power of Jehovah, which Isaiah sees as already dawning in the future.

Shall ye not know it?—Better, Will ye not give heed to it?

I will even make a way in the wilderness ... The literal and the spiritual senses melt into each other. The very beasts of the field shall lose their ferocity in the presence of the saints of God. For ‘dragons and owls,’ read jackals and ostriches.

But thou hast not called upon me.—The startling abruptness of the complaint has led many critics to question the genuineness of these verses (22–24). Their insertion, however, by a later writer would be at least as hard to understand as their having come from the hand of the same writer as the glowing picture that precedes them. May we not find the solution of the problem in the fact that Isaiah’s experience taught him that there would be in the future, as in the past, a dark as well as a bright side to the picture? That the mercies shown to the exiles would not be according to their merits, but to God’s great goodness? The worship of the restored exiles would be as that of the people had been in his own time, meagre and unsatisfactory.

Visions of failure alternate with the glowing hope that the ideal will be realised, and this alternation constitutes the great problem of the book, as it does of all like apocalyptic intimations.

But thou hast been weary.—Better, so that thou shouldst be weary. Others render it, Much less hast thou troubled for me. Sacrifice elsewhere than in the Temple was forbidden by the Law, and the prophet does not so much blame the people for not offering these as for not compensating for their absence by the true worship of which they were the symbols.

I have not caused thee to serve ... The words practically imply the suspension of sacrifices during the exile. Jehovah had not imposed that bond-service on them—that had not wearied them with demanding incense when they were far away from the Temple whose ritual it belonged.

No sweet cane ...—Probably some species of Amonomum for the anointing oil (Exod. xxx. 23). It is distinguished from the incense, and is not one of the ingredients (Exod. xxx. 34).

Thou hast made me to serve.—The verbs of verse 23 are repeated with the emphasis of scorn, the thought being analogous to that of chap. i. 14. The people had made this hypocritical worship as a service which their God had to endure, till He was altogether weary of it.

I, even I ...—As in chap. i. 2, 18, the analogy with which may be noted as evidence of identity of authorship, the incisive words that prove the guilt of Israel are followed by the fullest offer of pardon on repentance. And this He does “for His own sake,” to manifest the everlasting righteousness which is also the everlasting love. The “blotting out” finds an echo in Col. ii. 14.

Put me in remembrance ...—The object of the verb has been differently supplied: (1) “Remind me, if thou canst, of thy merits; plead in thine own defence for an acquittal;” and (2) “Remind me of my promises to thee, of that erecting grace which called thee to be my servant.” The former seems to fit in best with what follows.

Thy first father hath sinned ...—The words have been interpreted: (1) of Adam; (2) of Abraham; (3) of Jacob; (4) of the ancestors of Israel collectively; (5) of this or that high priest individually. (3) fits in best. (See verse 28.)

Thy teachers.—Literally, thy interpreters (Job xxxiii. 23), or thy mediators. The term is used in 2 Chron. xxxii. 31 of the “ambassadors” of the king of Babylon, and stands here for the priests and the prophets, who ought officially to have been the exponents of the Divine will.

I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary.—Better, holy princes. The title is given to the chief priests in 1 Chron. xxiv. 5. In the exile their priestly functions were in abeyance. They were practically desecrated.
CHAPTER XLIV.—(1) Yet now hear, “O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: (2) thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; thou, Josurun, whom I have chosen. (3) For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: (4) and they shall spring up among the grass, as willows by the water courses. (5) One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. (6) Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; ‘I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.’ (7) And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. (8) Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. (9) They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their desirable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. (10) Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? (11) Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. (12) The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the}

The curse.—The cherem, or ban, answering to the anathema. The state described answers to that of Hos. iii. 4.

XLIV.

(1) Yet now hear.—The thoughts of Israel are turned from their own sins to the unchanging love of God, and that is the ground of their hope. (2) Thou, Jesurun.—The ideal name of Israel as “the upright one;” so the Book of Jasher is the book of the “upright,” of the heroes of Israel. (3) Let them stand up.—The words gain in vividness when we remember that the challenge is addressed to the guild of idol-makers. They are but men; how can they make a god? (4) Thus saith the Lord.—A new section opens, repeating the argument of chaps. xlii., xliii. against idolatry.
strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.

(13) The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. (14) He heareth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. (15) Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. (16) He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh: he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: (17) and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

(18) They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. (19) And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? (20) He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

(21) Remember these, O Jacob and Israel, for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. (22) I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. (23) Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

(24) He feedeth on ashes: The verb passes readily through the meanings "feeding," "pasturing," "following after," and the last is commonly accepted. The first, however, has the merit of greater vividness. (Comp. Hosea xii. 1) The "ashes" of the smith's furnace become the symbols of the vanity of his work (Eccles. vii. 6), and yet he has not even the germ of truth which lies in the questions of the sceptic.

(25) Remember these.—Better, these things—i.e., the whole argument against idolatry. In contrast with the blind worshippers of idols, Israel is addressed in its ideal character as the "servant of Jehovah" with all the emphasis of iteration.

Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.—The LXX., Vulg., and some other versions take the verb as middle, thou shalt not forget, but the evidence for the passive sense preponderates, to say nothing of its greater fitness in connection with the next verse, and its bearing upon complaints like those of chaps. xxl. 27, xlii. 14.

(26) I have blotted out, as a thick cloud.—Better, midst. The Authorised Version half suggests the idea that it is the cloud that hides the sins from view. What is meant is that the sins of Israel are put away, as the sun and wind drive away the mists and fog (Job xxx. 15); and that this is, in idea at least, if not in time, prior to the conversion as that which makes it possible.

(27) The Lord hath done it.—The pronoun supplied in the Authorised Version refers to the redemption of verse 22; but the word may be taken absolutely in the sense hath done mightily.
Ye lower parts of the earth.—These, as in Ephes. iv. 9, are equivalent to Sheol, or Hades. Even they, commonly thought of as echoing no song of praise (Pss. vi. 3, lxxviii. 12; Isa. xxxviii. 18), are invited to join in the great doxology.

(1) Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; (25) that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; (26) that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be inhabited; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

CHAPTER XLV.—(1) Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the promise of deliverance. Cyrus as the anointed one.

As most analogous with the methods of prophetic teaching. The main facts in the case are these—(1) Events had made Isaiah acquainted with the name of the Medes, and with a people bearing the name (Elam), afterwards given by the Jews to the Persians of the Greeks (xi. i. xiii. 7, 7; 2 Kings xxv. 29, xvi. 11). (2) Korys or Kyros was the name of a river in that region, and the conqueror is said to have changed his previous name (Agradates) for it (Strab. xv. 3, 6). (3) The name has been said to mean “the sun” (Plutarch, Ctesias), and this, though not accepted by many modern scholars as philologically accurate, at least indicates that the Greeks assigned that meaning to it. It would be a natural name for one who, as a worshipper of Ormuzd, saw in the sun the supreme symbol of the God of heaven. (4) The grandfather of the great Cyrus is said to have borne the same name (Herod. i. 111). (5) The facts point to the conclusion that the name Kur’us, if not a titular epithet, like the Pharaoh of Egypt, may yet have had the prestige of antiquity and dignity, historical or mythical. (6) Is it altogether impossible that the prophecy, circulating among the Babylonian exiles, helped to bring about its own fulfilment, and that Agradates may have been led to take the name of Kur’us because he found it described in connection with it (Josh. Ant. xii. 2)?

My shepherd.—As guiding the flock of Jehovah, each to their own pasture. Thou shalt be built.—Both verbs are better taken as imperatives, Let her be built; Let thy foundations be laid.

XLV.

(1) To his anointed...—The name is none other than the Messiah, the Christ, with which we are familiar, here and here only applied to a heathen king. It has to be remembered that the words had not yet received the special application given to it in Dan. ix. 26, and had been used of the theocratic kings, of Saul (1 Sam. xxv. 9, 11, 16), of the house of David (2 Sam. xxii. 51, xxiii. 1), and of the patriarch Abraham (Ps. cv. 15). What is meant, therefore, is that Cyrus, the future deliverer, would be as truly a king “by the grace of God” as David had been, not only, like Nebuchadnezzar, “a servant of Jehovah” (Jer. xxvii. 6, xlii. 10), but “fulfilling all his pleasure,” whom He groups by the right hand and guides. I will loose the loins.—Literally, I will ungird, either as a general symbol of weakening, or specifically for disarming, the sword that was suspended from the girdle. The “two-leaved gates” are those of...
two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; (9) I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: (3) and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. (4) For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. (5) I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me. (6) I am the Lord, and there is none else. (7) I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.

(8) Let the skies pour down righteousness . . . —The vision is that of a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness is at once as the rain that falls from the one, and as the product of the other.

(9) Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? (10) Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

(11) Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands.
The Triumphs of Cyrus.  

ISAIAH, XLV.  

The Just God and Saviour.

command ye me. (12) I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. (13) I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.

(14) Thus saith the Lord, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabæans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.

(15) Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour; (16) They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. (17) But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, to come, concerning my sons . . . will ye command me! This was what they were practically doing when they murmured against the providence of God.

(18) I have made . . . —The Creator is also the Ruler, supreme in history as in nature.

(19) I have raised him up in righteousness . . . —This was the answer to the murmurers. It would be seen by the results, the city rebuilt, the exiles restored to their home, that the conquests of Cyrus had been ordered by the loving righteousness of Jehovah; and he would do this, not through the greed and ambition of other conquerors, but because the spirit of the Lord stirred him (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22).

(20) Thus saith the Lord . . . —A new section opens. In chap. xliii. 3, Egypt, Ethiopia, Seba, had been given to Cyrus, as a reward, or ransom, for the deliverance of Israel. Here the prophet goes a step farther, and contemplates them as coming, in the spirit of a voluntary surrender, as proselytes to the faith of Israel, in self-imposed bondage, offering to Israel, as one with God, the "supplication" which, elsewhere, is offered to Jehovah. The promise reminds us of Psa. lxxviii. 31, lxxii. 10, and yet more of chaps. xix. 23, lx. 5–7. A partial fulfilment may have been found in the command given by Cyrus, that these and other nations should assist in the work of rebuilding the Temple (Ezra i. 4). Egypt and Ethiopia send the products of their labour. The Sabæans (i.e. the people of Mevoe), strong, but not wealthy, come freely to offer their own labour.

(21) Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself . . . —The words have been variously taken: (1) as continuing the wondering homage of the heathen; (2) as spoken by the prophet as he surveys the unsearchable ways of God. (Comp. Rom. xi. 33.) Through the long years of exile He had seemed to hide Himself, to be negligent of His people (chaps. viii. 17, liv. 8; Ps. 1v. 1) or unable to help them. Now it would be seen that He had all along been as the Strong one (El) working for their deliverance.

(22) World without end.—Literally, for the ages, or aon{ aon} in Ps. lxxvii. 5.

(23) He hath established it . . . —i.e., prepared it (see Dent. xxxii. 6; Gen. xii. 16) for human habitation. It was not a loku or chaos (Gen. i. 2; Isa. xxiv. 10), but the scene of human action. We note the grandeur of the prophet's thoughts of creation.

(24) I have not spoken in secret.—The words are in marked contrast to the thought expressed in verse 15. God had been all along revealing Himself, not like the oracles of the heathen, in the gloom of chaos, but in the broad daylight of history and in the law written on men's hearts. He had hidden men seek Him not in chaos, but in a world of order, and to recognise His utterances by their righteousness.

(25) Ye that are escaped of the nations.—Primarily, the words point to the survivors of the conquests of Cyrus, who are contemplated as acknowledging the God of Israel. Ultimately the words find their fulfilment in the conversion of the heathen to the true anointed of Jehovah, of whom Cyrus was a type. They will bear witness from their experience to the vanity of idols. They will learn that it does not avail to set up (or carry) their idols in religious processions (Jer. x. 5; Amos v. 26; I Sam. iv. 4).

(26) Tell ye, and bring them near.—Yet another challenge to the idols and their worshippers.

A Just God and a Saviour.—Stress is laid on the union of the two attributes which in human actions are often thought incompatible. (Comp. Ps. lxxxv. 10.) In virtue of that union the invitation of verse 22 is
and there is none else. (23) I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. (24) Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. (25) In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

CHAPTER XLVI.—(1) Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden to the weary beast. (2) They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity. (3) Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: (4) and even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

(5) To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? (6) They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. (7) They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove; yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. (8) Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.

addressed to all the ends of the world. The offer of salvation is universal. (23) I have sworn by myself.—The highest conceivable form of asseveration (Gen. xxii. 16; Jer. xxii. 5; Heb. vi. 13).

Unto me every knee shall bow.—The faith of Israel becomes the religion of mankind, though, from the prophet's standpoint, Israel does not lose its distinctive nationality. We note the application of the words to the Christ in Phil. ii. 10; Rom. xiv. 11.

Surely, shall one say.—The prophet hears that confession as uttered in the far-off time.

In the Lord.—We note the germ of the New Testament thought of the mystic union of man with God, in the phrases "in the Lord," "in the Holy Spirit," "in Christ," which embody that thought. Jehovah is the sphere, or region, in which men "live and move and have their being." The seed of Israel, as interpreted by verse 23, includes all who have joined themselves to the true Israel of God.

XLVI.

(1) Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth.—Bel or Belus ("Lord"), is perhaps identical with Marduk or Merodach, but see Note on Jer. i. 2. Nabu ("the Revealer") was a kind of Assyrian Hermes. Isiakh sees the idols carried off as spoil, at the command of Cyrus, a heavy burden for the beasts that drag them. An inscription recently deciphered by Sir H. Rawlinson (Journal of Asiatic Society, Jan. 1880, quoted by Cheyne) presents the conduct of the conqueror under a somewhat different aspect. In that inscription he describes himself as a worshipper of Bel and Nebo, and prays to them for length of days. The king would seem from this to have been as wide in his syncretic liberality as Alexander the Great was afterwards. How are we to reconcile the two? May we say that the prophet idealises the policy and character of the king, or that the monotheistic element which appears in his treatment of the Jews (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23; Ezra i. 1, 2) was, after all, dominant in his action, in spite of episodes like that indicated in the inscription. It is possible that the recognition of the Babylonian deities may have followed on the submission of the people, and been preceded by some rougher treatment. Anyhow the contrast makes it probable that the prophecy was not written after the inscription.

Your carriages.—Here, as elsewhere (1 Sam. xvii. 22; Acts xxi. 15) in the sense of things carried; i.e., in this case, the images of the gods, which used to be carried in solemn procession, but are now represented as packed into a load for transport. So Herod. (i. 183) states that Xerxes carried off from Babylon the golden image of Zeus (sc. Bel), the grandson thus fulfilling the prediction which his grandfather apparently had left unfulfilled.

They could not deliver the burden.—The deities are, for the moment, distinguished from their images. They are powerless to rescue them. So far as they have a soul or being at all, that very being is carried away captive.

Hearken unto me.—The prophet's choice of words is singularly emphatic. The false gods are borne away as a burden. The true God bears, i.e., supports, His people. He is able to bear that burden. Every "I" is emphasised in the Hebrew.

Even to your old age.—The care of a mother ceases, in the natural course of things, before a man grows old, but the fatherly, we might almost say the mother-like, maternal care of Jehovah for His chosen ones endures even to the end of life.

To whom will ye liken me?—The argument against idolatry is renewed in nearly its old form (chap. xl. 18—25, xlv. 9—17). The fate of Bel and Nebo is urged against those who thought that they might worship Jehovah as those deities had been worshipped. Such had been the sin of the calves at Bethel and at Dan. Like it had been the act of Israel when it had carried the ark into battle against the Philistines (1 Sam. iv. 5).

Shew yourselves men.—As elsewhere, the prophet's challenge is couched in the language of
ISAIAH, XLVII.

The Daughters of the Chaldeans.

(9) Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me, (10) declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; (11) calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

(12) Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness; (13) I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off; and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

CHAPTER XLVII.—(1) Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. (1) Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. (2) Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man. (4) As for our redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. (5) Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.

(6) I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient host thou very heavily laid thy yoke. (7) And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever; so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. (8) Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside

irony. The worshippers of idols should at least have the courage of their convictions. A conjectural emendation gives the opposite meaning, Be ye deeply ashamed.

I am God.—The first predicate is El, the mighty and strong one, the second Elohim, the one true object of worship. The verse that follows asserts what in modern language would be called the omniscience and omnipotence of God.

(11) Calling a ravenous bird.—Cyrus is thus described as Nebuchadnezzar is in Jer. xix. 22; Ezek. xlvii. 3. The image derives a special significance from the fact that the standard borne by Cyrus and his successors was a golden eagle (Xen., Cyrop. vii. 1. 4; Anab. i. 10, 12). (Comp. also Matt. xxiv. 25; Luke xvi. 37.) The “sun-rising” is, of course, Persia; the “far country” probably represents Media.

I have spoken.—The word of Jehovah passes, unlike that of the false gods, into a certain and immediate act.

(12) Ye stouthearted.—The word, like analogous terms in Ezek. ii. 4, iii. 7, implies at once obdurancy and ignorance. Such as these are self-excluded at once from the “righteousness” and the “salvation” of Jehovah, which ultimately imply, and coincide with each other. Their unfaithfulness, however, does not hinder the faithfulness of God. He brings near His salvation to all who are ready to receive it. (Comp. chap. lvi. 1.)

XLVII.

(1) Come down . . .—The virgin daughter of Babylon, i.e., Babylon itself, personified as till now unconquered, is called to leave her throne and sit in the dust as a menial slave. The epithets “tender” (better, perhaps, wanton) and “delicate” point to the luxury which had been identified with Babylon, and which was now to cease.

(2) Take the millstones.—Always the most servile form of female labour (Exod. xi. 5; Job xxxi. 10; Matt. xxiv. 41).

Uncover thy locks.—The picture of suffering is heightened by the fact that the female slave has to wade unveiled, and bare-legged, all sense of shame outraged, to the scene of her labours. The picture is, of course, to be taken symbolically, not literally.

(3) I will not meet thee as a man.—The words in italics show that the phrase is difficult. Omitting them we get I shall not meet a man, i.e., there will be none to oppose me, or I will not spare a man.

(4) As for our redeemer . . .—The verse comes in somewhat abruptly, but may be viewed (unless we suppose it to have been originally a marginal addition, which has found its way into the text) as Israel’s song of praise, as it looks on the overthrow of Babylon. As such it finds a parallel in the overthrow of the mystical Babylon in Rev. xviii. 20.

(5) Sit thou silent.—Another contrast between the stir of the rejoicing city and the stillness of its later desolation. “The lady” (we might almost say, the empress) “of kingdoms” was reduced to the loneliness of widowhood.

(6) I was wroth with my people . . .—The sin of Babylon was that she had gone beyond her commission as the chastiser of Israel, casting off all reverence for age, and making even the old men do the hard tasks of bond-slaves (Lam. iv. 16, v. 12). (Comp. Zech. i. 15.)

(7) Thou saidst . . .—The boastful confidence of Babylon in her own perpetuity blinded her, as it had long blinded other nations, to “these things,” still, the Divine law that pride and cruelty bring their own Nemesis.

(8) I am, and none else beside me . . .—The boasts of Babylon are purposely embodied by the
me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: (10) but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. (10) For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath prevailed thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. (11) Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

(12) Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. (13) Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. (14) Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. (15) Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

CHAPTER XLVIII.—(1) Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. (2) For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The Lord of hosts is his name.

(3) I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they came to pass. (4) Because I knew that the prophet in praises that recall Jehovah's assertion of His own eternity. She practically deified herself. So a like boast is put into the mouth of Nineveh in Zeph. ii. 15, and was repeated almost verbally by the poets of Rome: Terrarum dea gentiumque Roma, cui par est nihil, et nihil secundum (Martial).

(9) In their perfection.—Better, in their completeness. She should taste the full bitterness of widowhood and bereavement.

The Sorceries of Babylon.

ISAIAH, XLVIII.

The Sorceries of Babylon. The Hypocrisy of Israel.

For the multitude of thy sorceries.—Better, in spite of...

(10) For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness...—Babylon, like other nations that have followed in her steps, took for its law that Might was Right, practically denied the existence of a Ruler who saw and judged, and boasted of its wisdom. The context implies that the special form of wisdom spoken of was that of astrology and magic.

(11) Thou shalt not be able to put it off...—The words have been variously rendered: (1) of which thou shalt know no dawn, i.e., after the night of calamity; and (2) which thou shalt not be able to charm away. Stress is laid on the destruction being at once unforeseen and irretrievable.

(12) If so be thou shalt be able...—The words come with a subtle tone of irony. Persevere in thy enchantments...perchance thou wilt be able to profit, perchance thou wilt strike terror.

(13) List now the astrologers...—The three words describe two aspects of the same art—(1) the dividers of the heavens, assigning stellar influences to the signs of the Zodiac; (2) the "star-gazers," further defined as those who make known things to come at the new moon. The Assyrian and Chaldean observers compiled an almanack, in which the days of the month were noted as severally lucky or unlucky for the incidents of war or of home-life, as the case might be.

(14) There shall not be a coal to warm at.—Better, it shall not be...The destroying flame shall be altogether other than the fire on the hearth, at which a man can sit and warm himself.

(15) Thy merchants, from thy youth...—The commerce of Babylon is specially prominent in all descriptions. (Comp. Jer. 1.184—186; Ezek. xvii. 4.) The time was coming when those who had thronged her markets would desert her and leave her to her desolation.

XLVIII.

(1) Are come forth out of the waters of Judah.—The words limit the wider terms of Jacob and Israel to the Judaeo-exiles. For the phrase, comp. "ye that are of the fountains of Israel" (Ps. lxviii. 26). The ideal attributes of Israel, "swearing by the name of Jehovah..." are pressed in contrast with their actual state of hypocrisy and unrighteousness.

(2) They call themselves of the holy city...—The words of praise are spoken, as the preceding words show, with a touch of irony. Those who so boasted were not true citizens of Zion (Ps. xv. 1; Matt. iii. 9). They did not enter into all that was implied in their confession of Jehovah Sabaoth.

(3) I have declared...—Once more, for the seventh time, the prophet presses the fact of the Divine foreknowledge, not as before, against the "no-faith" of the heathen, but against the "little faith" of Judah.

(4) Because I knew that thou art obstinate...—The point is that Jehovah foresees not only the
The Argument from Prophecy.  

ISAIAH, XLVIII. 

Cyrus, the Beloved of Jehovah.

thou art 1 obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; 2 I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. 3 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. 4 They are created now, and not from the beginning; even not before the day when thou hearest them not; lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them. 5 Yea, thou hearest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. 6 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. 7 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. 8 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another. 9 Behold, I have chosen thee, but not with silver. ...—The meaning is obscure, and perhaps depends on some unknown process in ancient metallurgy. Commonly the refining of silver is taken as a parable of God's dealings with His people (chap. i. 25; Ezek. xxiii. 18-22; Mal. iii. 3). Here the thought seems to be that the discipline had been less fierce than that of the refiner's fire. Silver was "purified seven times in the fire" (Ps. xii. 6), but that would have brought about the destruction of Israel, and He sought to spare them.

I have chosen thee.—Better, I have tested thee. 10 Will I do it?—The neuter pronoun includes the whole work of redemption. For how should my name be polluted?—The italics show that "my name" is not in the Hebrew, but the context requires its insertion as from verse 9, or that of "my glory" from the clause that follows. The "pollution" or desecration of the name of Jehovah would follow, it is implied, on the non-completion of His redeeming work.

Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. 11 (3) Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and (3) my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. 12 All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The Lord hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. 13 I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from

conquests of Cyrus, but the obduracy of His own people. In Egypt (Jer. xlvii.) and in Babylon, as of old, they were still a stiff-necked people, inclined (verse 5), to ascribe their deliverance to another god, and to worship that god in the form of a graven image. 8 Thou hast heard ...—The appeal is to the conscience of the exiles. They had heard the prediction. They are bidden to consider it all. Should not they declare the impression it had made on them? I have shewed thee.—Better, I shew thee, as a present incipient act.

Now is the time.—The "new things" are those that lie in a more distant future than the conquests of Cyrus, which are referred to as "former things." They are created now.—The verb is an unusual one, as applied to the events of history. What is meant is that the things which had been from the beginning in the mind of God are now, for the first time, manifested, through the prophet, as about to pass into act. What these are the prophet develops in the following chapters, as including the spiritual redemption and restoration of Israel. They were kept in store, as it were, to make men wonder (Rom. xvi. 25, 26).

Even before the day when ...—Better, and before to-day thou hearest them not ...—The reason given for what we might almost call this method of reserve and reticence, was that the people had been till now unprepared to receive the truth, and in their state it would but have increased their condemnation (John xvi. 12; Mark iv. 33).

For my name's sake ...—The thought is two-fold, in answer to the implied question why Jehovah had not punished so guilty a people: (1) after the manner of men, that had He destroyed His chosen people, the nations of the world would have thought Him changeable and capricious; (2) taking "name" as the symbol of character, that He might assert His own everlasting righteousness and love, as willing to save rather than destroy.

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The Departure from Babylon.

ISAIAH, XLIX.

The polished Staff.

the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me. (17) Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go. (18) O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: (19) thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.

(20) Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

and start at once on their homeward journey, and as they go, to proclaim what great things God hath done for them.

(21) He caused the waters to flow . . .—A dead prosaic literalism makes men wonder that there is no record of such wonders on the return from Babylon. A truer insight recognises that the “water out of the rock” is, as ever, the symbol of spiritual refreshment (chaps. xlii. 17—xliii. 19; 20; John iv. 10).

(22) There is no peace.—The warning was needed even for the liberated exiles. There was an implied condition as to all God’s gifts. Even the highest blessings, freedom and home, were no real blessings to those who were unworthy of them.

CHAPTER XLIX.—(1) Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. (2) And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; (3) and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be united with “peace” it implies every element of sequence.

(1) Listen, O isles . . .—The argument against idolatry has been brought to its close, and a new section opens, and with it there is a new speaker, the mysterious “Servant of the Lord,” (chap. xlii. 1), at once identified with Israel (verse 3), in fulfilling its ideal, and yet distinguished from it, as its Restorer and Redeemer. “Isles” as before stand vaguely for “far-off countries.” The invitation is addressed to the heathen far and wide.

The Lord hath called me from the womb.

—The words indicate a predestined vocation. (Comp. Jer. i. 5; Luko i. 15, 41; Gal. i. 15.) Admitting the thought of a Divine order working in human history, the idea of such a vocation follows in inevitable sequence.

(2) He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.—The words indicate at once the spiritual nature of the “Servant’s” victories. It is his speech that wounds and heals, his words that go like winged arrows to their mark. The description finds an echo in Heb. iv. 12; Rev. i. 16, xix. 15; Eph. vi. 17. The “shaft” is “polished,” as piercing without impediment. It is “hid in the quiver,” reserved, in the drama of the world’s history, and in each crisis of the Servant’s life, till the “hour was come,” the appointed “fulness of time” (John ii. 4, vii. 6; Gal. iv. 4).

Thou art my servant, O Israel.—Not that the “Servant” is merely the nation, but that he fulfils
ISAIAH, XLI.

Light to the Gentiles.

The Servant of Jehovah as a

is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

(9) Thus saith the Lord, "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; (10) that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

(10) They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. (11) And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. (12) Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

its ideal. "Israel" had begun with being an individual name. It should be so once more in the person of Him who would be truly "a prince with God."

In whom I will be glorified.—Better, in whom I will glorify myself. The words find a conscious echo in John xiii. 31, xxvii. 1—5.

(4) Then I said.—The accents of disappointment sound strangely on coming from the lips of the true Servant; but the prophet had learnt by his own experience that this formed part of the discipline of every true servant of God, in proportion to the thoroughness of his service, and therefore it was not strange to him that the ideal Servant should also taste that bitterness. We find in the prophet of Anathoth a partial illustration of the law (Jer. xx. 14). We find its highest fulfilment in the cries of Gethsemane and Golgotha. The sense of failure is surmounted only, as here, by looking to another judgment than man's, and another reward (better than "work"). (Comp. I Cor. iv. 3.)

(5) Though Israel be not gathered.—Better, and that Israel be gathered to Him. The negative, as in chap. ix. 3, comes from an error of transcription; for "yet" read and. The Servant falls back upon the greatness of the work committed to him, that of restoring Israel, and is certain that sooner or later it will be accomplished. Comp. the argument of Rom. ix.—xi.

(6) And he said.—The words are repeated from "saith the Lord" of the preceding verse, where they had been followed by a long parenthesis. The Servant becomes conscious of a higher mission. All national barriers are broken down. He is to be the bearer of a message of peace to the whole race of mankind, and has "other sheep not of this fold" (John x. 16).

(7) To him whom man despiseth.—Literally, to one despised of soul, where "soul" may either stand for "men" as in the Authorised version, or imply that the contempt enters into the soul of the sufferer. (Comp. Ps. cv. 18.) The point of the words lies in the fact that the doer of the great work is to be despised by the world's judgment or by his own people, by proud rulers (comp. 1 Cor. i. 27); and yet he, and no other, will accomplish it.

(8) In an acceptable time.—Literally, in the season of good pleasure. The message is borne in on the soul of the servant as the secret of confidence and strength. It will be his work to be the link in a new covenant with the people, an idea afterwards developed by Jeremiah (xxxii. 31), and reaching its fulfilment in Matt. xxvi. 28; Luke xxii. 20.

To cause to inherit the desolate heritages.—The prophet may have thought of a literal fulfilment such as was probably in part accomplished by Zerubbabel. We, seeing the prediction in the light of its fulfilment, look to the spiritual inheritance.

(9) That thou mayest say to the prisoners . . . —Comp. chap. xlii. 6, 7. Here, perhaps, the thought of the deliverance of Israel is more exclusively prominent; but the words have obviously a yet wider and higher application.

(10) Neither shall the heat . . . —The word is the same as the "parched ground" of chap. xxxv. 7, and stands, as there, for the mirage of the scorching desert.

(11) My mountains . . . my highways . . . —The pronoun asserts the universal lordship of Jehovah. The whole earth is His.

(12) From the west.—Literally, from the sea, which commonly has this meaning. In Ps. cvii. 3, however, it clearly stands for the south, and is probably used in that sense here. In this case "from far" stands for the south, probably for the distant Ethiopia, where Jewish exiles had already found their way (Zeph. iii. 10).

From the land of Sinim.—The region thus named is clearly the ultima Thule of the prophet's horizon, and this excludes the "Sinites" of Canaan (Gen. x. 17), and the Sin (Pelusium) of Egypt. Modern scholars are almost unanimous in making it refer to the Chinese. Phoenician or Babylonian commerce may have made
Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yet, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.

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Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their two arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know the outlines of his home, or the face of her he loved, upon his hands or arms. So, by a boldly anthropomorphic figure, Jehovah had "graven" Jerusalem on His hands. He could not open them, i.e., could not act, without being reminded of her. The "walls" may be either those of the earthly city lying in ruins, or those of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Thy children shall make haste.—A various reading adopted by the LXX., Targum, and Vulg., gives thy builders. They rush to their work of restoration; the destroyers and ravagers go forth.

Lift up thine eyes.—The daughter of Zion is called on to gaze on the returning exiles. They shall bow her gems and her girdle as the bride of her new espousals. All recent discoveries tend to the conclusion that the commerce of the great ancient monarchies was wider than scholars of the sixteenth century imagined. The actual immigration of Jews into China is believed to have taken place about B.C. 200 (Dolitzsch in loc.).

Sing, O heavens.—As in chap. xlv ii. 23, all nature is invited to join in the chorus of praise for the deliverance of Israel.

But Zion said . . . .—In the midst of all that Jehovah was doing for his people they were still showing their little faith, and thinking of themselves as forsaken. They shared the misgivings which were felt even by the Servant, but they did not rise out of them as quickly as He did into the full assurance of faith.

Can a woman forget . . . .?—The love of Jehovah for His chosen ones is more than that of a father, more tender and unchangeable even than the maternal love which exists even in the most degraded. Even that may perish, but not so His pitying affection.

Behold, I have graven thee . . . .—The words point to the almost universal practice of tattooing. A man thus "engraved" the name of his god, or the outlines of his home, or the face of her he loved, upon his hands or arms. So, by a boldly anthropomorphic figure, Jehovah had "graven" Jerusalem on His hands. He could not open them, i.e., could not act, without being reminded of her. The "walls" may be either those of the earthly city lying in ruins, or those of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Kings shall be thy nursing fathers . . . .—As a rule kings gave their children to be brought up by their nobles (2 Kings x. 5). Zion should have
that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. (24) Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? (25) But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. (26) And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine:

CHAPTER L.—(1) Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away. (2) Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? (3) Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst. (4) I clothe the blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

(5) The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. (6) The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. (6) I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame.
and spitting. (7) For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. (8) *He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. (9) Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up. (10) Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. (11) Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. (12) This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

(7) The Lord God will help me.—That one stay gives to the suffering Servant an indomitable strength. (Comp for the phrase Jer. i. 18; Ezek. iii. 9.)

(8) He is near that justifieth.—i.e., declares innocent and righteous. Appealing from the unrighteous judgments of the earth, the Servant commits himself to Him who judges righteously (Luke xxiii. 46). With that Judge to declare his innocence, what does he care for the accuser? (Comp. Rom. viii. 33, 34.)

Who is mine adversary?—Literally, the master of a law-suit, i.e., the prosecutor.

(9) They all shall wax old as a garment.—An echo of Job xxxii. 26; Ps. clii. 26; reproduced in chap. ii. 6.

(10) That obeyeth the voice of his servant.—The question may be asked of any servant of Jehovah, such as was Isaiah himself, but receives its highest application in the Servant who has appeared as speaking in the preceding verses.

That walketh in darkness.—The words grow at once out of the prophet’s own experience and that of the ideal Servant. All true servants know what it is to feel as if the light for which they looked had for a time failed them, to utter a prayer like that of Ajax, “Give light, and let us die!” (Rom. ii. 647). The Servant felt it when he uttered the cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. xxvii. 46). For such an one there were the words of counsel, “Trust, in spite of the darkness.” So the cry of the forsaken Servant was followed by the word “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke xxiii. 46).

(11) All ye that kindle a fire.—The words obviously point to any human substitute for the Divine light, and thus include the two meanings which commentators have given them: (1) Man’s fiery wrath, that worketh not the righteousness of God; and (2) man’s attempt to rest in earthly comfort or enjoyments instead of in the light and joy that comes from God.

CHAPTER LI.—(1) Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. (2) Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. (3) For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. (4) Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. (5) My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. (6) Lift up your hearts. (7) The Lord God will help me.—That one stay gives to the suffering Servant an indomitable strength. (Comp for the phrase Jer. i. 18; Ezek. iii. 9.) (8) He is near that justifieth.—i.e., declares innocent and righteous. Appealing from the unrighteous judgments of the earth, the Servant commits himself to Him who judges righteously (Luke xxiii. 46). With that Judge to declare his innocence, what does he care for the accuser? (Comp. Rom. viii. 33, 34.)

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That compass yourselves about with sparks.—The words are rendered by many commentators, girl yourselves with burning darts, or firebrands, i.e., with calumnies and execrations as your weapons of warfare. (Comp. Ephes. vi. 16.)

Ye shall lie down in sorrow.—The words point to a death of anguish, perhaps to the torment that follows death (comp. Luke xvi. 24), as the outcome of the substitution of the earthly for the heavenly light.

LI.—(1) Look unto the rock.—The implied argument is, that the wonder involved in the origin of Israel is as a ground of faith in its restoration and perpetuity. The rock is, of course, Abraham, the pit, Sarah.

(2) I called him alone.—Literally, as one. If so great a nation had sprung from one man (Heb. xi. 12), so would God out of the faithful remnant once more create a people. (Comp. Ezek. xxxiii. 24, where the exiles are represented as boastfully inverting the argument: “Abraham was one, and we are many; therefore we shall prosper, the chances are in our favour.”)

(3) He will make her wilderness like Eden.—Interesting as showing Isaiah’s acquaintance with Gen. i.—iii. (Comp. Ezek. xxxii. 9, 16, xxxvi. 35; Joel ii. 3.) “Paradise” has already entered into the idea of future restoration (Rev. ii. 7).

(4) A law shall proceed.—“Law” and “judgment” include all forms of divine revelation, and specially the “glad tidings” which are the ground-work of the highest law. (Comp. Luke i. 77; Rom. i. 17.)

(5) Mine arms shall judge the people.—Literally, the peoples, including Israel and the heathen. The work of judgment thus, as ever, comes first; after it the isles (i.e., far-off countries), as representing the heathen, shall be converted, and trust the very Arm that smote them.

(6) Shall die in like manner.—i.e., shall vanish into nothingness. Many commentators, however, render, shall die like gnats; shall live their little day and pass away; thus supplying a third similitude, in
eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

(7) Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. (8) For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

(9) Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? (10) Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? (11) Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

(12) I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; (13) and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy; and where is the fury of the oppressor? (14) The captive exile hath teneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. (15) But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The Lord of hosts is his name. (16) And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

addition to the "smoke" and the "garment." We are reminded once again of Ps. cii. 26; and we may add, Matt. xxiv. 35; 2 Peter iii. 10.

(7) Ye that know righteousness. — Jehovah, through His Servant, speaks to the Israel within Israel, the Church within the Church. They need support (13) As if he were ready.—Better, through His Servant, speaks to the Israel within Israel, the Strong.

(8) For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

(9) Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? (10) Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? (11) Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

(12) I, even I. — The iterated pronoun emphasises the true grounds of confidence. If God be with us, what matter is it who may be against us? The enemies are mortal and weak; the Protector is the Eternal and the Strong.

(13) As if he were ready. — Better, as he makes him ready to destroy. The Authorised version unduly minimises the amount of danger. In the case contemplated by the prophet, the oppressor was the Babylonian monarchy, which he sees as already belonging to the past; but the words have, of course, a far wider application.

(14) The captive exile. — Literally, he that is bowed down, i.e., bound in fetters. The "pit," as in the case of Jeremiah (Jer. xxxviii. 6), is the underground dungeon, in which the prisoner was too often left to starve.

(15) But I am. — Better, Seeing that I am. The fact which follows is not contrasted with that which precedes, but given as its ground. The might of Jehovah is seen in the storm-waves of the sea. It is seen not less in the fall and rise of empires.

(16) And I have put my words in thy mouth. — Some interpreters assume, that while verse 12 was spoken to the Jewish exiles, this, which reminds us of chap. xlix. 2, is addressed to the Servant of the Lord. Of these, some (Cheyne), struck by the apparent abruptness, assume it to be misplaced. There seems no adequate reason for adopting either hypothesis. The words are spoken to Israel, contemplated as in its ideal, as were the others to the actual Israel. It remains true, as ever, that that ideal is fulfilled only in the Servant.

That I may plant. — Noteworthy as the first intimation of the new heavens and the new earth, implying
The Dregs of the Cup of Trembling. ISAIAH, LI.

The Holy City in its Beauty.

(17) Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out. (18) There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up. (19) These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee? (20) Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the Lord, the reprobate of thy God. (21) Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: (22) thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleaseth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: (23) but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

CHAPTER LI.—(1) Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. (2) Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. (3) For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money. (4) For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed a restitution of all things, of which we find the expression in chaps. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22.

(17) Awake . . .—The words present a strange parallelism to verse 9. There they were addressed to the arm of Jehovah, and were the prelude of a glorious promise. Here they are spoken to Jerusalem as a drunken and desperate castaway, and introduce a startlingly bold; but our word “prostration,” as applied to the condition of a people, embodies precisely the same thought. (Comp. Ps. cxxix. 3.) The previous words paint the last humiliation of Eastern conquest (Josh. x. 24).

LII.

(1) Awake, awake . . .—The repetition of the burden of chap. li. 9, 17, indicates, by a subtle touch of art, the continuity of thought. The call is addressed as before to Zion, as a castaway. It summons her to the highest glory. She is to put on the garments of beauty, which belong to her as the priestly queen of cities. (Comp. Ezek. xlv. 3, and the picture of the heavenly Jerusalem in Rev. xxi.)

(2) Sit down . . .—As Jerusalem has risen from the dust, the “sitting” here implies a throne, and so stands in contrast with that of Babylon in chap. xlvii. 1.

(3) Ye have sold yourselves . . .—Literally, ye were sold. The people had complained that Jehovah had “sold them” into the hands of their enemies (Ps. xlvii. 12). “Not so,” is the answer. “There was no real sale, only a temporary transfer, and therefore Jehovah can redeem you at His own pleasure. A comparison with chap. xliii. 3, shows how spiritual truths may present aspects that require the most opposite illustrations.

(4) My people went down . . .—Stress is laid on the unprovoked character of the oppression in the case both of Egypt and the Assyrian invaders Sargon and Sennacherib. It is possible that Assyria may be used in its wider sense as including Babylon. If so, the fact tends to the conclusion that the book was written at a time when the kings of Assyria included Babylon in their titles. Probably, however, the prophet refers to the deliverance from the army of Sennacherib as a pledge of the deliverance from Babylon.
them without cause. (5) Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. (6) Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

(7) How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! (8) Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; and with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. (9) Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. (10) The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

(11) Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

(12) For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.

(13) Behold, my servant shall deal...
The Man of Sorrows, despised and rejected of Men.

ISAIAH, LIII.

(1) Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? (2) For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. (3) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Ver. 14.-The words "sorrow" and "grief" in the Heb. imply the thought of bodily pain or disease. Comp. Exod. iii. 7; Lam. i. 12, 18. Men have sometimes raised the rather idle question whether the body of our Lord was subject to disease, and have decided on a priori grounds that it was not. The prophet's words point to the true view, that this was an essential condition of His fellowship with humanity. If we do not read of any actual disease in the Gospel, we still find evidence of its existence in the physical results of the agony in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 44; John xix. 34), the "blood and water" from the pierced heart, the physical agony of the cross (Matt. xxvi. 55), the "sorrows, and acquainted with grief" of the Son of the woman.(Matt. xxvii. 56). The intensity of His sympathy and concern for the pain of others as His own (Matt. viii. 17), the "blood and water" from the pierced heart, the physical agony of the cross (Luke xxii. 44; John xix. 34), indicate a nature subject to the conditions of our humanity. We hid as it were...-Literally, As the hiding of the face from us, or, on our part. The words startle us with the picture of the leper covering his face from men, or their covering their own faces, that they might not look upon him (Lev. xiv. 40). In Lam. iv. 15, we have a like figurative application. (Comp. also Job xix. 13-19, xxx. 10.)

LIII.

The Man of Sorrows, despised and rejected of Men.
Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the rich, for he had done no violence to any, nor was any mouth taken against him.
The Servant seeing of 
ISAIAH, LIV. 
the Travail of his Soul.

wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. (10) Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

CHAPTER LIV.—(1) Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. (2) Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; (3) for thou shalt break forth on the

includes both. Chap. xi. 2 and Mal. ii. 7 are in favour of (2).

For he shall bear. The conjunction is not necessarily more than and. The importance of the renewal of the assurance given in verse 4 lies in its declaring the perpetuity of the atoning work. The sacrifice of the Servant is “for ever” (Heb. x. 12). He “ever liveth to make intercession for us” (Heb. vii. 25). He taketh away the sin of the world, through the means of all duration (John i. 29). (3) Therefore will I divide. The “great” and the “powerful” are words which describe the kings and rulers of mankind. The Servant, once despised and forsaken, takes his place with them, though not in the same manner, or by the same means. We may have echoes of the words in our Lord’s language as to the “spoiling of the strong” (Matt. xii. 23) as to the contrast between the greatness of His Kingdom and that of the rulers and great ones of the world (Matt. xx. 25; Mark x. 42; Luke xii. 21). The LXX., Vulg., Luther, and some modern scholars render, “I will give him the multitude as a prey, the spoil of the mighty ones.”

Because he hath poured out. The absolutely voluntary character of the sacrifice is again emphasised. The next clause is better taken as he let himself be numbered. So it was that he bore (and took away) the sin of many, and gained the power for availing intercession, both in the hour of death (Luke xiii. 34) and in the eternal triumph (Heb. vii. 25). The ideal Servant, condemned, condemned, falling, is seen, at last, to be identical with the ideal King.

LIV.

(1) Sing, O barren. The words seem to carry on the jubilant strain of chaps. li., lii. 1—12, leaving the section lii. 13—liii. 12, as a mysterious episode, inserted, it may be, by the prophet to show how it was that the restoration of Israel and the victory of righteousness had become possible. We note, as bearing on Isaiah’s studies, the parallelism with 1 Sam. ii. 5. The “children of the desolate” are primarily the returning exiles, ultimately all the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

(2) Enlarge the place of thy tent. Interesting parallels are found in chap. xxxiii. 20; Jer. x. 20.

(3) On the right hand and on the left. Comp. Gen. xxviii. 14. Strictly speaking, the words indicate specially the north and the south, in relation to one who
right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

(4) Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

(5) For thy maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall be called.

(6) For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. (7) For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. (8) In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

(9) For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

(10) For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

(11) O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. (12) And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. (13) And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. (14) In righteous-
ness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. (15) Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. (16) Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. (17) No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

CHAPTER LV.—(1) Ho, *every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

(2) Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. (3) Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. (4) Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. (5) Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

(6) Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is

“oppression” of Ahaz, of the “fear” and “terror” caused by Sargon and Sennacherib.

(15) But not by me . . .—Another contrast with Isaiah’s experience. The power of Sargon and Sennacherib rested on the fact that they were instruments in God’s hands (chap. x. 15, xxxvii. 26). Against the new Jerusalem no command would be given such as had been given to them.

(16) Behold, I have created the smith . . .—The words assert the same thought. The “axe,” the “hammer,” the “sword,” of the great ravagers of the earth are formed by the great Work-Master, and He would fashion no such weapon against the new Jerusalem.

(17) Every tongue that shall rise . . .—The thought implied is that war comes as the punishment of guilt, and that it is preceded by the “cry” of accusation. Many such cries had risen up against the old Jerusalem (chap. v. 7). There should be none such heard against the new.

This is the heritage.—The solemn asseveration indicates the close of a distinct section.

LV.

(1) Ho, *every one that thirsteth . . .—The whole context shows that the water, the wine, the milk are all symbols of spiritual blessings as distinctly as they are, e.g., in John iv. 10; Matt. xxvi. 29; I Pet. ii. 2. The word “buy” is elsewhere confined to the purchase of corn, and would not rightly have been used of wine and milk. The invitation is addressed, as in a tone of pity, to the bereaved and afflicted one of chap. lv. 6, 7.

Without money and without price.—Literally, For not-money and not-price. The prophet had used the word “buy,” but he feels that this word may be misinterpreted. No silver or gold can buy the blessing which He offers. Something, indeed, is required, and therefore the word “buy” is still the right word; but the “price” is simply the self-surrender that accepts the blessing. Comp. Prov. iii. 14, 15; Matt. xlii. 45, 46.

(2) Wherefore do ye spend money . . .—Here again the “bread” is that which sustains the true life of the soul. “Labour” stands for the “earnings of the old life.” Israel had given her money for that which was “not-bread,” she is called to accept the true bread for that which is “not-money,” saith, as the next verse shows, for the simple “hearing of faith.” “Fatness,” as in chap. xxv. 6, and the “fatted calf” of Luke xv. 23, represents the exuberance of spiritual joy.

(3) Your soul shall live . . .—Better, revive. The idea is that of waking to a new life.

I will make an everlasting covenant . . .—The words find their explanation in the “new covenant” of Jer. xxxi. 31, Luke xxii. 20, but those which follow show that it is thought of as the expansion and completion of that which had been made with David (2 Sam. vii. 12—17; Ps. lxxxix. 34, 35), as the representative of the true King, whom Isaiah now contemplates as identical with the “servant of the Lord.” For “sure mercies” read the unfailing loving-kindnesses, which were “of David,” as given to him and to his seed by Jehovah.

(4) I have given him . . .—Better, I gave, the words referring primarily to the historic David (Comp. Ps. lxviii. 70, 71), though realised fully only in Him who was the “faithful and true witness” (John xviii. 37; Rev. i. 5, iii. 14), the “captain” or “leader” of our salvation (Heb. ii. 10).

(5) Thou shalt call a nation.—The calling of the Gentiles and the consequent expansion of the true idea of Israel is again dominant. The words sound like an echo from Ps. xviii. 43.

Because of the Lord thy God . . .—The words are repeated, as expressing a thought on which the prophet loved to dwell, in chap. lx. 9.

(6) While he may be found . . .—The appeal shows that the promised blessings are not unconditional. There may come a time (as in Matt. xxv. 11) when “too late” will be written on all efforts to gain the inheritance which has been forfeited by neglect (2 Cor. vi. 2).

ISAIAH, LV. The Sure Mercies of David.
The Parable of the Rain and Snow.  ISAIAH, LVI.  Instead of the Brier the Myrtle Tree.

near; (7) let the wicked forsake his way, and 1 the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for 2 he will abundantly pardon. (8) For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. (9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (10) For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: (11) so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (12) For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. (13) Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

CHAPTER LVI.—(1) Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. (2) Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. (3) Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither that I cannot altogether accept that statement, and find circumstances in the closing years of Isaiah's life which may well have given occasion to his teaching here. It obviously does not stand in any close connection with the preceding chapter. Keep ye judgment—i.e., the righteousness of the law. The general exhortation is specialised in the next verse. (3) That keepeth the sabbath from polluting it. . . . It lies in the nature of the case that a devout king like Hezekiah would be an observer of the Sabbath. It is almost certain that the counsellors of the young Manasseh (probably the Shemai party), abandoning the religion of Israel in other things, would also disregard this. I take the prophet's teaching accordingly as directed against that evil. He utters his beatitude for those who are faithful to the régime of Hezekiah's reign, even though their alien birth or their condition as eunuchs seemed to exclude them from the polity of Israel (Deut. xxii. 1—8).

(3) Neither let the son of the stranger. . . . Two classes of persons were likely to suffer specially from Manasseh's policy—(1) the heathen proselytes, who, as in Ps. lxxvii., had been admitted as citizens of Zem under Hezekiah's special protection; and (3) in the highest degree, those of that body who had been taken, as Ebed-Melech afterwards was (Jer. xxxviii. 7), into the king's household as eunuchs. The courtiers of Manasseh would taunt them as aliens, and in the second case would press the letter of Deut. xxii. 2. The principle of Isaiah's teaching was, of course, applicable to the Israelites who, like Daniel and his friends, had been mutilated against their will by heathen conquerors (Dan. i. 3), and most commentators refer the words to such cases. It is scarcely probable, however, that the household of Hezekiah would have been supplied with home-born eunuchs, and, on the hypothesis which I have adopted, I find in the eunuchs a sub-section of the proselytes. The words put into the mouths of the complainers are...
The Blessings of the Strangers.

ISAIAS, LVI. Dumb Dogs that cannot Bark.

let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. (6) For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; (7) even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. (8) Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; (7) even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

(9) The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

(10) All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. (11) His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; (12) sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. (13) Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. (14) Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

The natural utterances of men treated as they had been.

(6) Even unto them will I give . . .—The words may refer simply to the spiritual blessedness of the faithful (Rev. ii. 17, iii. 5), but the customs of Eastern temples and of the later synagogues suggest that they may refer primarily to the memorial tablets which were put up in such places in commemoration of distinguished benefactors. For “place” read memorial. We note, of course, the special adaptation of the words “better than of sons and daughters” to the case which the prophet has in view; but it has to be remembered also that the whole promise substitutes the principle of catholicity for the rubrics of exclusiveness which we find in Deut. xxiii. 1.

(7) Also the sons of the stranger . . .—Proselytes also were to share in the blessings of the wider covenant. The words “to serve him” have been referred to some menial offices like that of the Nethinim, “hewers of wood and drawers of water” (Josh ix. 27; 1 Kings viii. 41-43). The usage of the word, however, limits it to honourable functions. The germ of Isaiah’s thought appears in Solomon’s dedication prayer (1 Kings viii. 41-43). It receives its highest development (in its entire separation from the building with which there and here it is associated), in John iv. 23. Comp. a further emancipation from the bondage of the law in chap. lxvi. 21.

(8) Even them will I bring . . .—The words foreshadow the breaking down of the “middle wall of partition” (Eph. ii. 14). Every privilege of the Israelite worshipper is to belong also to the proselyte. It is perhaps assumed that the proselyte is circumcised. The development of truth is in such cases gradual, and it was left for St. Paul to complete the work of Isaiah (Rom. xi. 26-29; Gal. vi. 15).

(9) The Lord God . . . saith.—The phrase is the normal one for introducing an oracle of special importance. This, so to speak, was to be one of the “faithful sayings” of Isaiah. We can hardly fail to find in John x. 16 a deliberate reproduction of Isaiah’s thought. The first clause refers clearly to the gathering of the heathen as following on that of the “outcasts” of Israel.
The Righteous taken away

CHAPTER LVII.—(1) The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. (2) He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

(3) But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore. (4) Against whom do ye sport yourselves against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood. (5) Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

(6) Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these? (7) Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed; even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

(8) Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and madest thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their

Under every green tree is almost a stereotyped formula in this connection (Deut. xii. 2; 1 Kings xiv. 23; Jer. ii. 20), the tree itself becoming a direct object of the culture.

Slaying the children in the valleys. . . .—This had been done by Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii. 3). It was perfectly natural that it should be done by Manasseh. There is not the slightest trace of the revival of the practice among the exiles in Babylon or after their return. The scenery described—the torrent-stream, the cliffs of the rock—belongs distinctively to Palestine.

Among the smooth stones. . . .—The worship of stones was almost as widely diffused as that of trees and serpents. In Gen. xxviii. 18 we have, at least, an analogous practice, which might easily become identical. Among the Phoenicians such stones were known as Baalatim (probably a Grecisized form of Bethel), and were connected with the worship of the reproductive powers of nature. As the true portion of Israel was emphatically Jehovah (Jer. x. 16; Ps. xvi. 5) there is an ignignant irony in the word thus used. The idolators had chosen a fetish instead of the Eternal One. In thy portion, we have the feminine singular, designating Israel as the faithless woman.

Should I receive comfort in these?—i.e., better, Should I be quiet in spite of all this? (Comp. Jer. v. 7.)

Set thy bed. . . .—Idolatry being as adultery, the "bed" follows naturally as representing the locality of the idol-worship. Comp. Ezek. xvi. 31, xxiii. 17.

Hast thou discovered thyself?—The noun has been commonly referred to the Mesuwa, or memorial text, "Jehovah is our God; Jehovah is one," which was to be written on the door-posts of each house (Deut. vi. 9, xi. 20); and the prophet is supposed to point to the fact that this had been written behind the door, as showing that Israel had been ashamed to confess her creed. The explanation seems tenable, but it is possible that "remembrance" may stand for some idolatrous symbol or inscription which had been substituted for the true confession.

Thou hast discovered thyself.—The figure of the unfaithful wife is carried into its details almost with Ezekiel's boldness.

Made thee a covenant with them . . . .—The noun, as the italics show, is implied in the verb. The faithless wife forsook the covenant of her youth with her husband, and made a fresh compact with the adulterers.

"The righteous taken away from the Evil to Come."
deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain; (14) and shall say, “Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. (16) For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I

We have seen the words being used euphemistically for the obscene image of a Chemosh-like idol.

The alteration of a single letter would give the words being used contemptuously of the crowd of gods introduced by the confluent idolatry of Manasseh. (Comp. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3—7.) The prophet taunts the worshipper with their impotence, “Let them save thee, if they can,” but that taunt is followed by a declaration that true help and strength will be given to all who trust in Jehovah.

And shall say . . .—Better, And one said. The prophet hears, as it were, a voice behind him, bringing an oracle from Heaven, which renews the cry of the herald in chap. xi. 3. The verb, cast up, points to the construction of the “highway” of a spiritual return, from which all impediments are removed.

For thus saith the high and lofty . . .—The central truth for the comfort of God’s people is that the infinitely Great One cares even for the infinitely little. The truth of the greatness of lowliness manifested in the life of Christ was but the reflection of the permanent law of the Divine government. The “high and holy place” is, of course, the heavenly temple, the “light inaccessible.” The verse, as a whole, combines the truths of 2 Chron. vi. 18, and Ps. li. 17.

I will not contend for ever . . .—The words come as a message of comfort to the penitent who is still bearing the chastisement of his sins. The time during which God “contains” with him as an accuser and a judge has its limits. Were it not so, the souls which he had made would be utterly consumed, and His purpose in creation would be frustrated. The words seem like an echo of Gen. vi. 3, viii. 21. (Comp. Ps. ciil. 9, 10.)
The Healing of the Transgressor.

The Counterfeit and the True Fast.

have made. (17) For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on 1frowardly in the way of his heart. (18) I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. (19) I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him. (20) But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

(21) "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

CHAPTER LVIII.—(1) Cry aloud, 2

(17) For the iniquity of his covetousness ... —Literally, of his gain. This was the root-evil, out of which all others sprang (Jer. vi. 13; Ezek. xxxiii. 31; 1 Tim. vi. 10), and for this, therefore, a sharp chastisement was needed that men might learn what their true wealth consisted in. The last clause may either state the guilt which caused the wrath, or paint the obduracy which went on doing evil in spite of it.

(18) I have seen his ways ... —The words have been interpreted: (1) of the evil ways described in the previous verse; (2) of the way of repentance into which Israel had been led by chastisement. (1) seems most in harmony with the context. The paths had been rough and thorny, but Jehovah presents Himself as the Healer to those who had been wounded by them, and leads them into a better way. The "mourners" are those who have been touched as with the "godly sorrow" of 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

(19) The fruit of the lips ... —The words point primarily to the praise and thanksgiving of the pardoned penitent (comp. Hos. xiv. 2; Heb. xiii. 15), but include also all true utterances of the wise of heart (Prov. x. 31). All these alike have their origin in the creative fiat of Jehovah, which proclaims "peace" (i.e., salvation) to all, whether near or far, Jews in Jerusalem, or Jews in exile, or (as in Eph. ii. 17) the Gentiles whose distance was that of spiritual remoteness. The message of healing is for all.

(20) The wicked are like the troubled sea ... —The promise of healing is, however, not unconditional. The acceptance of peace requires calmness; but for the wicked, whose thoughts are restless seething with evil ripening into act, this true peace is, in the nature of the case, impossible. We note the recurrence of the watchword of chap. xlviii. 22, as indicating the close of another section of the prophecy. The MSS. and versions present a curious variation in verse 21: some "saith Jehovah," some "God," some "the Lord God." It would almost seem as if transcribers and translators had shrunk from the prophet's boldness in claiming God as in some special sense his God. It has a parallel, however, in chap. vii. 13, and may be noted, accordingly, as one of the characteristic touches common to the two parts of Isaiah. The "Sea" of which Isaiah speaks may possibly have been the Dead Sea, casting up its salt bituminous deposits.

spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. (2) Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

(3) Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou taketh no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. (4) Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as
The Fast of the Hypocrite.

ISAIAH, LVIII.

The Fast of the Godly.

Is it *such* a fast that I have chosen? *a* day for a man to afflict his soul? *Is it* to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? *Is* not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo *the* heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? *Then* shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord *shall* be thy reward.

*Then* shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; *and* if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; *then* shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day; *and* the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in 6 drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. *And* they shall be of thee *shall* build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of

an unspiritual fasting irritates the nerves and embitters the temper. Extremes meet, and the disputes of fasting controversialists are often as fierce as those of drunken disputants. (Comp. the conspiracy of Acts xxiii. 21.)

*Then* shall thy light be for a man to afflict his soul.—The phrase comes from Lev. xvi. 29, and describes the soul-sorrow which was the true ideal of fasting. In contrast with this we have the picture, reminding us of Matt. vi. 16, of the mechanical prostrations, which are as the waving of a bulrush in the breeze. The image suggests a new aspect of our Lord's statement, that the Baptist was not as “a reed shaken by the wind” (Matt. xi. 7), *still* that his fasting was not outward and ceremonial, like that of the Pharisees.

*To lose the bands of wickedness.*—The words do not exclude abstinence from food as an act of blessing that follows on that true renunciation of vanity; (9) Then shalt thou call.—The words point to the putting forth of the finger and *speak*—the formal worship that found no acceptance (verses 11-13). The Pharisees who fasted laid heavy burdens on men's shoulders. He, who was thought not to fast, relieved them of their two-fold yoke of evil selfishness and ceremonial formalism.

*To deal thy bread.*—Literally, *to* break bread, as in the familiar phrase of the New Testament (Matt. xxvi. 26; Acts xi. 11, xxvii. 24). The bread of the Jews seems to have been made always in the thin oval cakes, which were naturally broken rather than cut.

*The poor that are cast out.*—The words include all forms of homelessness—tenants evicted by their landlords, debtors by their creditors, slaves fleeing from their masters' cruelty, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, perhaps even political refugees. Note the parallelism with Matt. xxv. 35, 36.

*From thine own flesh.*—Usage, as in Gen. xxi. 14; Neh. v. 5, leads us to refer the words primarily to suffering Israelites, but those who have learnt that “God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth” (Acts xvii. 26) will extend its range to every form of suffering humanity.

*Then* shall thy light . . . *The* dawning of a new day, as in 2 Sam. xxiii. 4; the growth as of new and healthy flesh after long illness; “righteousness,” i.e., the sentence of acquittal in the eyes of all the world, as leading the van of a triumphant march, the “glory of Jehovah” following in the rear as a protection; all these images are heaped together to paint the fulness of blessing that follows on that true renunciation of the old evil selfishness of which fasting is but a symbol and a part.

*Then shalt thou call.*—The words point to the secret of the prayer which is answered in contrast to the formal worship that found no acceptance (verses 2, 4).

*The putting forth of the finger.*—The gesture (Cheyne compares the “infamis digitus” of Persius ii. 33) has in well-nigh all nations been a natural symbol of scorn. It is in action what the words “Raca” and “Thou fool” are in the language of Matt. v. 22.

*Draw out thy soul.*—The words have been interpreted as meaning (1) giving up sensuous desires for the sake of others; (2) ministering of thy substance; (3) extending thy sympathy. On the whole, (3) seems preferable.

*Then* shall thy light rise.—We note the recurrence of the imagery of chap. ix. 2.

*In drought.*—Literally, *droughts,* either with the force of intensity or as meaning “dry places.”

*And make fat.*—Better, *shall strengthen, or make supply.*

Like a watered garden.—Comp. Ps. i. 3, Isa. xliv. 3, 4, Jer. xxxii. 12, in the last of which we have the self-same phrase.

*Shall* build the old waste places.—The prophet contemplates primarily the restoration of the
many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. (13)

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: (14) Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

CHAPTER LIX. — (1) Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: (2) but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. (3) For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. (4) None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; (5) they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. (6) They hatch cockatrice’ eggs, and weave the spider’s web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. (7) Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. (8) Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. (9) The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. (10) Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for His face. — Better, the face. The Hebrew has neither article nor possessive pronoun, the substantive being treated almost as a proper name. (11) Your hands are defiled with blood.—The accusation of the “grand indictment” of chap. i. 15 is reproduced verbatim. (12) None calleth for justice. — Better, none preferreth his suit with truthfulness. The words point chiefly to the guilt of unrighteous prosecutions, but may include that of false witness also. (13) They trust in vanity. — Literally, in chaos—the characteristic tohu of both parts of Isaiah (chaps. xxiv. 10, xxix. 21, xl. 17, 23). (14) They hatch cockatrice’ eggs. — Better, basilisk’s, as in chap. xiv. 29. The schemes of the evil-doers are displayed in their power for evil and their impotence for good. To “eat of the eggs,” which are assumed to be poisonous, is to fall in with their schemes, and so be ruined: to “crush” them is to oppose and so to rouse a more venomous opposition. Men break the egg, and the living viper darts forth to attack them. (15) Their webs shall not become garments.—See the same figure in chap. xxx. 1. The point of the comparison lies chiefly in the uselessness of the spider’s webs, but the second clause emphasises also the fact that the only purpose which the webs serve is one of mischief. They may catch flies, they cannot clothe men. (16) Their feet run to evil.—Note the parallelisms, entirely after the manner of Isaiah, with Prov. i. 16, xvi. 17. So the four words “paths,” “goings,” “ways,” and “paths” (another word in the Hebrew) are all from the same book. (17) Therefore is judgment.—The pleading of the prophet is followed by the confession which he makes on their behalf. They admit that the delay in
The Groping of the Blind.  

ISAIAH, LIX.  

The Armour of Righteousness.  

The manifestation of God's judgment against their enemies, and of His righteousness (i.e., bounty) towards themselves, has been caused by their own sins.  

We wait for light.—The cry of the expectant Israelites is, mutatio mutandis, like that of the "How long?" of Zech. i. 12; Rev. vi. 10. On the assumption that the words come ideally from the Babylonian exiles, the first of these passages presents an interesting coincidence.  

(10) We grope for the wall . . . .—The words present a striking parallelism with Deut. xxviii. 29, and may have been reproduced from, or in, it.  

We are in desolate places . . . .—Many critics render, (1) among those full of life, or (2) in luxuriant fields, of which (1) is preferable, as giving an antithesis like that of the other clauses. So taken, we have a parallelism with Ps. lxxi. 5—8.  

(11) We roar all like bears . . . .—The comparison is not in Scripture, but Horace (Epp. ii. 51) gives "circumgemit uror ovile." For the dove, comp. chap. xxxviii. 14; Ezek. vii. 16.  

(12) For our transgressions . . . .—The parallelism with the confessions of Daniel (chap. ix. 5—15) and Ezra (chap. ix. 6—15) is singularly striking, but is as explicable on the hypothesis that they reproduced that of 2 Isaiah as on the assumption that this also was written at the close of the exile. It would, of course, be as true in the time of Manasseh as at any subsequent period. The self accusations of the people are now, as they were in the time of Manasseh, and therefore He came, as it were, alone and unaided, to the rescue. (Comp. Joel ii. 17—19.)  

(13) And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter,  

(14) Truth is fallen in the street—i.e., the broad open place, or agora, of the city. The words point naturally to Jerusalem. If they refer to Babylon, we must assume, unless we deal with the language as altogether figurative, that the exiles had a quarter of their own, in which they had an agora for business and judicial proceedings.  

(15) Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:  

And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.  

(16) And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.  

(17) For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.  

(18) According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies;  

(19) To his adversaries . . . .—The judgment is equivalent to "no champion."  

(20) He put on righteousness . . . .—The close parallelism with chap. xi. points, as far as it goes, to identity of authorship; and that with Eph. vi. 14—17 suggests a new significance for St. Paul's "whole armour of God."  

The garments of vengeance . . . .—As parts of a warrior's dress the "garments" are the short tunic, or tabard, which hung over the breast-plate; the "cloak," the scarlet mantle (the chlamys of the Roman soldier), its colour probably making it a fit symbol of the zeal of Jehovah.  

(21) To his adversaries . . . .—The judgment is generally against all, in Israel or outside it, who come under this description. The word "islands" is used, as elsewhere, for far-off lands. The words point to every such judgment, from that of Cyrus to the great final day.  

(22) When the enemy shall come in . . . .—The noun admits of the senses "adversary," "adversity,"
The Redeemer coming to Zion.

ISAIAH, LX.

The Gathering of the Gentiles.

shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. (20) And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.

(21) As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

CHAPTER LX.—(1) Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (2) For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. (3) And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (4) Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. (5) Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. (6) The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. (7) All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

(8) Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? (9) Surely the isles shall wait for me,

"hemmed in," "rushing," and the verse has accordingly been very differently rendered. (1) He (Jehovah) shall come like a rushing stream which the breath of Jehovah (i.e., a strong and mighty wind) driveth. (2) Adversity shall come like a stream. The verse is difficult, but the Authorised Version is, at least, as tenable as any other rendering, and finds parallelisms in Jer. xlv. 7, 8 for the image of a flood, and in Ps. lx. 4 for that of the banner. (Comp. also chap. xi. 10.) (20) And the Redeemer shall come. —The picture of the Theophany is continued—Jehovah comes as a Redeemer (Goel, as in chaps. xli. 14, xliii. 1, Job xix. 22) to the true Zion, to those who have turned from their transgression. The verse is noticeable as being quoted, with variations, by St. Paul in Rom. xi. 26.

(21) As for me, this is my covenant. —The words are, as to their form, an echo of Gen. xvii. 1-8; as to their meaning, the germ of Jer. xxxi. 31; Heb. viii. 10, x. 16. The new covenant is to involve the gift of the Spirit, that writes the law of God inwardly in the heart, as distinct from the Law, which is thought of as outside the conscience, doing its work as an accuser and a judge.

LX.

(1) Arise, shine. —The description of the redeemed Zion —i.e., the new Jerusalem—seen in the prophet’s vision as under the forms of the old. She has been prostrate, as in the darkness of Sheol (as in chaps. li. 23, lvii. 9). The word comes that bids her rise to a new life, radiant with the glory of the Lord. In Eph. v. 14 we have, perhaps, an echo, though not a quotation, of the prophet’s words.

(2) The darkness shall cover the earth. —The darkness which had shrouded Zion still spreads its veil over the heathen nations of the world, but they also are to share in the light which is to stream forth from the new Jerusalem. (Comp. Mal. iv. 2; Ps. lxxxiv. 11.)

(4) Lift up thine eyes. —Repeated from chap. xxix. 18.

Thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. —As in chap. lxvi. 12, the words point to the Eastern custom of carrying young children on the hip of their mother, with their arms clasped round her waist.

(6) The multitude of camels. —The verse paints the commerce of the East, as verse 5 had described that of the West. For the camels and riches of Midian, see Judg. vi. 5, viii. 26. "Ephah" appears in Gen. xxv. 4 among the sons of Midian. "Sheba" keeps up its traditional fame for gold and incense (Ps. lxxxii. 10; Strabo xvi. 4, 19).

(7) Kedar. —The nomad tribes (chap. xxxi. 17) come as well as the trading ones. Nebaioth, mentioned with Kedar, in Gen. xxv. 13, among the descendants of Ishmael, expanded in the centuries preceding the Christian era, into the kingdom of the Nabathean Arabs, spreading from the Atlantic Gulf to the Hauran. The two names together include what were known to the Roman geographers as Arabia Felix and Arabia Petraea. The primary thought is that the Temple of the new Jerusalem will be supplied with its sacrifices from the inexhaustible flocks of these regions.

(8) Who are these. —The vision of the prophet brings before him the cloud-like sails of the ships that are bringing back the exiles over the Mediterranean and the Red Seas, hastening to their home like doves to their dove-cote. (Comp. Hos. xi. 11.)

(9) The isles. —i.e., as in chap. xlix. 1, the off-maritime regions of the West.
and the ships of Tarshish first, "to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. (10) And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. (11) Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. (12) For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. (13) The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. (14) The sons also of them that are afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. (15) Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. (16) Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. (17) For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. (18) Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

Ships of Tarshish.—These are, as in chap. ii. 16, the first-class trading ships, whether trading with that country (Spain) or in the Indian Ocean. (Comp. 1 Kings x. 22, xxii. 48.) The mention of silver and gold may, therefore, point to Ophir as well as Spain.

The Holy One of Israel.—We note once more the recurrence of the characteristic Name.

The sons of strangers shall build . . . —Either as willing proselytes or as being brought into subjection. (Comp. Zech. vi. 15.) To build the temples or palaces of conquerors was, as in the case of the Egyptian and Babylonian bondage, the almost inevitable lot of the conquered.

Thy gates shall be open continually . . . —The words imply (1) a state of peace in which there would be no danger of attack; and (2) the constant stream of caravans of pilgrims, with their offerings, entering by night as well as day. It is interesting to note St. John's transfer of the thought to the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 25, 26).

The forces of the Gentiles.—Better, the richest, or the possessions.

That their kings may be brought . . . —The verb, as in chap. xx. 4, 1 Sam. xxx. 2, implies that they are brought as captives, acknowledging, with or against their will, the sovereignty of Zion.

The glory of Lebanon . . . —The prophet sees in the new Jerusalem a revival of the glories of the days of Solomon. The cedars of Lebanon, and other trees of the forest, are to furnish timber for its buildings, or even to be planted in the courts of the Temple, or in its open places and streets (Pss. lii. 8, xci. 12, 13; Isa. xxxv. 2).

The box is probably, as in chap. xlii. 19, a species of cedar.

The place of my feet is clearly parallel with the "sanctuary" of the previous clause. So the word "footstool" is used in the Temple in Pss. xxix. 5, cxxxii. 7.

The sons also of them that afflicted thee . . . —The explanation commonly given is that the "sons" are named because the persecutors themselves are thought of as no more. It seems better, however, to see in the words an expression of the law of inherited retribution, which entered so largely into the Hebrew's thought of the moral government of the world. That law will show itself in the prostrate condition of the old oppressors. Wherein the descendants of the old oppressors will recognise that the restored city is indeed the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Whereas thou hast been forsaken . . . —The figure of the daughter of Zion, who had been as a forsaken and slighted wife (comp. chap. lxii. 4), mingles with the literal picture of a city in ruins, abandoned and unvisited.

Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles . . . —The metaphor is bold, but the prophet had already presented it in a less startling form in chap. xlii. 23. What is meant in either case is that the new Jerusalem shall be supported by the offerings of the Gentiles.

For brass I will bring gold . . . —The material wealth of the days of Solomon (1 Kings x. 21—27) furnishes another element in the picture of the ideal city, but with this striking difference: that there the "officers" and "exactors" of the king had been instruments of oppression (1 Kings xii. 4), while now they were to be the very embodiment of righteousness, and, in the widest sense, of "peace," and, therefore, of prosperity.

Violence shall no more . . . —Following the thought of the previous verse, we see in the words a picture of freedom from internal misgovernment rather than from external invasion.

Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation . . . —The idea, almost the very phrase, has met us before in chap. xxvi. 1. They probably found a starting-point in the Eastern practice of giving to the walls of a city names that implied a consecration. Thus the walls of Babylon were named Imgur Bel and Nimetti Belkit (Records of the Past, v. 124, 125).
The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. (20) Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. (21) Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. (22) A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.

CHAPTER LXI.—(1) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; (2) to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; (3) to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

(4) And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former

The sun shall be no more . . . —The ideal picture becomes bolder and more transcendent. Sun and moon may still shine, but, as in Rev. xxi. 23 (obviously derived from this), they shall not be needed in the radiance of the greater glory of the presence of Jehovah. Here on earth the sun sets and the moon wanes, but in that Divine glory there is no waning and no setting. “Mourning” will belong to the past (comp. Rev. xxi. 4), everlasting joy to the future. (21) Thy people also shall be all righteous . . . —The city is to realise the as yet unfulfilled ideal of Pss. xlv. 17, xlii. 1, and xxiv. Evil will be blotted out, and, therefore, there will be no forfeiture of the inheritance. In the “branch” we have the words which had been prominent in chap. xi. 1, and which is now extended from the ideal representative of the nation to the whole body of the people.

A little one shall become a thousand . . . —The noun is probably to be taken not in its merely numerical value, but, as in Judges vi. 15, 1 Sam. xxiii. 23, Micah v. 2, for a clan or sub-division of a tribe.

LXI.

(1) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me . . . —We have obviously a new poem in the form of a soliloquy, and we ask, “Who is the speaker?” The Jewish Targum and many modern critics hear only the voice of Isaiah. Guided by chaps. xl. 1, l. 4—9, we recognize here, as there, the utterance of the ideal Servant of Jehovah. That view, it needs scarcely be said, is the one suggested to all Christian minds by our Lord’s teaching and that of the Apostles. Claiming the promise as fulfilled in Himself, He became the great evangelist, and all who followed Him were called to the same office.

To bind up the broken-hearted . . . —The primary thought is that of a healing bandage applied to the heart’s wounds. (Comp. i. 6). The Servant of Jehovah is the great physician as well as the evangelist.

To proclaim liberty.—Phrase and thought are taken from the law of the Year of Jubilee (Lev. xxv. 10; Ezek. xlvii. 17; Jer. xxxiv. 8).

The opening of the prison.—The LXX., adopted in Luke iv. 18, gives “recovery of sight to the blind,” and as the verb is never used for the opening of a room or door, and is used in chaps. xxxv. 5, xiii. 7, for the opening of the eyes, that is probably its meaning here.

To proclaim the acceptable year . . . —The Year of Jubilee is still, perhaps, in the prophet’s mind. The Year of Jubilee is perhaps the “year” of favor, and the singular “day” of vengeance, reminding us of the like contrast in Exod. xx. 5, 6.

To appoint unto them that mourn . . . —The verb (literally, to set) has no object either in the Hebrew or English, and it would seem as if the prophet corrected himself in the act of writing or dictating, and substituted for a word which would have applied only to the coronet one which was better fitted for the whole context.

Beauty for ashes.—Literally, a diadem, or coronet, which is to take the place of the ashes that had been sprinkled on the head of the mourners or penitents (2 Sam. i. 23; Josh. vii. 6). The assurance of the two Hebrew words, epher, paer, deserves notice.

Oil of joy.—Same phrase as in Ps. xlv. 7.

The spirit of heaviness . . . —The second noun is that used for the “smoking” or “dimly burning” flax in chap. xiii. 3, and in its figurative sense in chap. xii. 4; Ezek. xxi. 7.

That they might be called trees of righteousness . . . —Strictly, terebinths, or oaks, as the symbols of perpetual verdure—the “righteousness” being thought of as the gift of the Spirit of Jehovah, and, therefore, life-giving and enduring—and in their beauty and strength manifesting His glory.

(4) They shall build the old wastes . . . —Literally the waste places of olden time: i.e., not merely
desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. (5) And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. (6) But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

(7) For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

(8) For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. (9) And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.

(10) I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bride-groom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. (11) For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so shall the Lord God cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

CHAPTER LXII.—(1) For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the spoliation which Israel had suffered at the hands of the Chaldeans.

I will direct their work in truth.—Better—the word for "work" standing, as in Lev. xix. 13, Ezek. xxix. 20, for its reward—I will appoint their recompense in faithfulness.

(2) Their seed shall be known—i.e., as in Prov. xxxi. 23, shall be "renowned," or "honourably recognised," even by the heathen, as the people whom Jehovah hath blessed. (Comp. chap. lxv. 23.)

(3) I will greatly rejoice.—The speaker is again, as in verse 1, the ideal Servant of Jehovah, who identifies himself with the people and slaves. The Targum, it may be noted, makes Jerusalem the speaker.

The garments of salvation.—The imagery is the same as that of chap. lix. 17 and verse 3, its entire spiritual significance being, perhaps, still more strongly accentuated.

As a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments.—Literally, wears a turban (or mitre), as a priest. It would appear from Song Sol. iii. 11 that bridegrooms wore a special head-dress on the day of their espousal, and this is here compared to the priestly "bonnet," or "mitre" (Exod. xxviii. 4, xxxix. 23; Ezek. xlv. 18). On the special occasion which may have suggested the image, see Note on chap. xlii. 4.

(4) As the earth bringeth forth her bud.—The passage is memorable as at least suggesting the leading thought of the parable of the sower, and the appropriation of that title to Himself by the Son of Man (Matt. xiii. 3—23, 37; Mark iv. 20—29).

LXII.

(1) For Zion's sake.—Opinions again differ as to the speaker. Is he the prophet, or the Servant of Jehovah, or Jehovah Himself? On the whole, the second view seems to be most in harmony with what follows. The true Servant will carry on what in the language of later theology may be called his mediatorial intercessory work, that there may be no delay in the fulfilment of the glorious promises, that have just been uttered.
righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. (2) And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. (3) Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. (4) a Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called 1Hephzi-bah, and thy land 2Beulah: for the Lord do­lighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. (5) For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and 3as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. (6) I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, (7) and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (8) The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: (9) but they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness. 

(10) Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. (11) Behold, the Lord hath pro-

As brightness.—Better, as the brightness of morning, the word being thus used in chap. ix. 3, Prov. iv. 18. 

(2) Thou shalt be called by a new name . . . —So in Jer. xxxiii. 16, the name of the restored city is Malachi, may be thought of as something which is to transcend all experience. His promises day and night, that He may hasten their fulfilment, never resting till the future Jerusalem is in very deed “a praise in the earth.” (Comp. Zech. i. 12) The Lord hath sworn . . . —The principle of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. vi. 13) is recognised here. Jehovah can swear by nothing less than that which is the symbol of His own greatness, identified with Himself.

I will no more give thy corn . . . —The words throw us back upon the early history of Israel, subject at any time to the desolating attacks of Midianites (Judges vi. 4, 11); Assyrians (Isa. xvi. 9); and Philistines (2 Chron. xxvii. 18). The new blessing stands in special contrast with the curse of Deut. xxviii. 33, 51.

(9) In the courts of my holiness.—Better, of my sanctuary. The harvest and the vintage festivals are to be kept, as of old, without interruption, the master of the house, with his family and the Levites and the poor (Deut. xiv. 22—27), eating of the first-fruits “before the Lord.”

(10) Go through . . . —Here, probably, we have the cry of the prophet himself (but, possibly, also that of the Servant of Jehovah) addressed to the heralds, who are to go forth and summon the exiles to return to the restored city. On the special phrases, see Notes on chaps. xl. 3, liv. 14.

Lift up a standard for the people.—Liturally, peoples, the plural indicating that the prophet thinks of the Gentile nations as escorting Israel. It follows from this that the command itself is addressed, like the previous clauses, to the returning exiles.

(11) The Lord hath proclaimed . . . —A partial fulfilment of the words is found in the decree of Cyrus.
Zion as a City not Forsaken.

ISAIAH, LXIII. The Conqueror with Dyed Garments.

claimed unto the end of the world, 4 Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. (12) And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

CHAPTER LXIII.—(1) Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

(2) Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the vinefat? (3) I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. (5) And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. (6) And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my

(Exx. i. 1, 2;) but they have also a wider range, and take in all the events by which history becomes as the voice of God, proclaiming His will. The end of the world has been restricted by some commentators to the western regions of the Mediterranean, but without sufficient reason.

Behold, his reward is with him.—Repeated from chap. xi. 10, where see Notes.

The redeemed of the Lord.—Literally, ransomed, as in chaps. xxxv. 10, ii. 10.

Sought out...—i.e., a city which men would seek after to honour, and promote its welfare. (Comp. the opposite, “Zion, which no man seeketh after,” in Jer. xxx. 17.)

A city not forsaken.—With special reference to the name “Azubah” in verse 4. (Comp. the change of names in Hosea ii. 1.)

LXIII.

(1) Who is this that cometh from Edom?...—There is no apparent connection between verses 1—6 and what precedes and follows. They must be as

all the nearer hereditary enemies of Israel, passes into an ecstasy of jubilation, and sees the conquering king returning from his work of vengeance. The form is that of a warrior coming from the Idumaean Bozrah (as distinct from that in the Hauran, Jer. xlviii. 24) in bright-red garments. And the colour (as in Rev. xix. 13) is not that of the scarlet dress worn by soldiers (Nahum ii. 3), but that of blood just shed.

Travelling.—The Hebrew verb (bending, or tossing the head) indicates the movement and gestures of a conqueror exulting in his victory.

I that speak...—The hero-avenger, the righteous king who represents Jehovah, hears the wondering question, and makes answer for himself. "Righteousness" and "salvation," which he claims as his attributes, show that he is none other than the ideal Servant of the Lord of Hosts, sharing His attributes.

(2) Wherefore art thou red...?—The wondering question shows that the colour is not that of the warrior’s usual dress. The Hebrew word for “red” (“alum”) connects itself with Edom (comp. Gen. xxxv. 30), as “balsam” (“vintage”) probably with Bozrah.

(3) I have trodden the winepress alone...—The "winepress" is here, as elsewhere (Joel iii. 13; Lam. i. 15; Rev. xiv. 18—20), the received symbol of the carnage of battle. What the hero-conqueror asserts is that the battle was fought by him single-handed. He had no human allies, but God was with him. A slight change in the vowel-points, adopted by some interpreters, turns the verbs into futures: “I will tread...will trample...” as in the second clause of the Authorised Version. It is better, perhaps to take the latter verb also as in the past. The work of slaughter is clearly thought of as accomplished before the warrior is seen.

(4) The day of vengeance is.—Better, in both clauses, was, as pointing to the motive of the action, of which the blood-stained garments were the result.

The year of my redeemed...—Better, the year of my redemption, still, the work of redeeming my people.

(5) I looked...—As in chap. 1. 2, the absolute isolation of the avenger and redeemer is emphasised again and again. Nothing but his own indomitable and righteous zeal against evil had sustained him.

(6) I will tread down...—Better, I trud; and so throughout the verse.
fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

(7) I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

(8) For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour.

(9) In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: *in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. (10) But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

(11) Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? (12) That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name? (13) That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, 

Make them drunk, implies a change of imagery from that of the battle to that of the cup of wrath, as in chap. lii. Ps. lxxvii. 8, Jer. xxv. 15. The section which thus closes has often been applied (as, e.g., in the Prayer-Book Epistle for the Monday before Easter) to the passion of our Lord. In that agony and death it has been said He was alone, and none was with Him. He trod the winepress of the wrath of God. It is obvious, however, that this, though we may legitimately apply some of Isaiah's phrases to it, is not an interpretation of this passage, which paints a victory, and not a passion. The true analogue in the New Testament is that of the victory of the triumphant Christ in Rev. xix. 11—13; but it may be conceded that, from one point of view, the agony and the cross were themselves a conflict with the powers of evil (John xii. 31, 32; Col. ii. 15), and that as He came out of that conflict as a conqueror, the words in which Isaiah paints the victory over Edom may, though in a much remoter analogy, be applicable to Him in that conflict also.

(7) I will mention . . . The words begin an entirely new section of the nature of a psalm of thanksgiving for redemption (verse 16). Possibly, in the arrangement of the book it was thought that such a psalm followed rightly on the great dramatic dialogue and by that act repents. (Comp. the tone and thoughts of Ps. lixvii., lixviii., cv., cvi.)

With the shepherd . . . Many MSS., as in the margin, give the plural, "shepherds," probably as including Aaron and Miriam as among the leaders and deliverers of the people. (Comp. Ps. lxvii. 20; Mic. vi. 4.)

Within him.—Not Moses only, but Israel collectively. Note the many instances of the gift of the Spirit, to Bezaleel (Exod. xxx. 31), to the Seventy Elders (Num. xi. 25), to Joshua (Dent. xxxiv. 9). (Comp. Neh. iv. 20.)

(12) Then he remembered . . . The readings vary, and the construction is difficult. Probably, the best rendering is, *His people remembered the ancient days of Moses. In any case, it is Israel that remembers, and by that act repents. (Comp. the tone and thoughts of Ps. lixvii., lixviii., cv., cvi.)

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(13) That led them . . . Each comparison is singularly appropriate. Israel passes through the sea as a horse through the wide grassy plain (not the sandy desert, as "wilderness" suggests). Then, when its wanderings are over, it passes into Canaan, as a herd
of cattle descends from the hills into the rich pasturage of the valleys, that guidance also coming from the Spirit of Jehovah.

(15) Look down from heaven . . .—The form of the prayer reminds us of 2 Chron. vi. 21. Perhaps there is a latent remonstrance, as though Jehovah, like an Eastern king, had withdrawn to the recesses of His palace, and had ceased to manifest His care and pity for His people, as He had done of old.

The sounding of thy bowels.—See Note on chap. xvi. 11. The words jar upon modern ears, but were to the Hebrew what “the sighs of thy heart” would be to us.

(16) Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham . . .—Better, For Abraham is ignorant of us. The passage is striking as being an anticipation of the New Testament thought, that the Fatherhood of God rests on something else than hereditary descent, and extends not to a single nation only, but to all mankind. Abraham might disclaim his degenerate descendants, but Jehovah would still recognise them. Implicitly, at least, the words contain the truth that “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matt. iii. 9). He is still their Redeemer. The words may possibly imply the thought that, as in the case of Jeremiah (2 Macc. xv. 13, 14), and Rachel (Jer. xxxi. 15), Abraham was thought of as watching over his posterity, and interceding for them. So, eventually, Abraham appears in the popular belief of Israel, as welcoming his children in the unseen world (Luke xvi. 22).

(17) Why hast thou made us to err . . .—The prophet identifies himself with his people, and speaks as in their name. Have their sins led God to abandon them, and to harden their hearts as He hardened Pharaoh’s? (Comp. Rom. ix. 17–22.) Are they given over as to a reprobate mind? Against that thought he finds refuge, where only men can find it, in prayer, and in pleading God’s promise and the “election of grace,” to which He at least remains faithful, though men are faithless. Conscious that they have no power without Him to return to Him, they can ask Him to return to them.

(18) The people of thy holiness . . .—Better, For a little while have they possessed thy sanctuary, or, with a various reading, thy holy mountain. The plea is addressed to Jehovah, on the ground of His promise that the inheritance was to be an everlasting one. Compared with that promise, the period of possession, from Joshua and David to the sanctuary, is not in the Hebrew, and its insertion distorts the meaning. Better, Our redeemer from everlasting is thy name.

CHAPTER LXIV.—(1) Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, (2) as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! (3) When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

(4) For since the beginning of the
world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye *seen*, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. (5) Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. (6) But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do *hide* as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (7) And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. (8) But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. (9) Be not *wroth* very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. (10) Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. (11) Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. (12) Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore? (13) Our holy and beautiful house . . . (14) The destruction of the Temple, which, on the assumption of Isaiah’s authorship, the prophet sees in vision, with all its historic memories, comes as the climax of Isaiah’s prophecies, and this is as elsewhere, rather open pasture-land than a sandy desert. (15) Our holy and our beautiful house . . . (16) The final appeal to the fatherly compassion of Jehovah reminds us of the scene when Joseph could not “refrain” (Gen. xlv. 1), and natural tenderness would find a vent. Could the God of Israel look on the scene of desolation, and not be moved to pity? 

CHAPTER LXV.—(1) I *am* sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I own use of it in chap. xxix. 16, we associate the idea of the potter with that of simple arbitrary sovereignty. Here, however (as in Jer. xviii. 6), another aspect is presented to us, and the power of the Great Potter is made the ground of prayer. The “clay” entertains Him to fashion it according to His will, and has faith in His readiness, as well as His power, to comply with that prayer. The thought of the “potter” becomes, in this aspect of it, one with that of the Fatherhood of God. (10) Thy holy cities . . .—There is no other instance of the plural, and this probably led the LXX. and Vulg. to substitute the singular. It probably rests on the thought that the whole land was holy (Zech. ii. 12), and that this attribute extended, therefore, to all its cities, especially to those which were connected with historical memories. Possibly, however, Zion and Jerusalem—the former identified with the Temple, the latter with the people of Jehovah—are thought of as two distinct cities, locally united. The “wilderness” is, as elsewhere, rather open pasture-land than a sandy desert. (11) Our holy and our beautiful house . . .—The destruction of the Temple, which, on the assumption of Isaiah’s authorship, the prophet sees in vision, with all its historic memories, comes as the climax of suffering, and, therefore, of the appeal to the compassion of Jehovah. All our pleasant things . . .—Probably, as in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19, the precincts, porticoes, and other “goodly buildings” of the Temple. (12) Wilt thou refrain . . .?—The final appeal to the fatherly compassion of Jehovah reminds us of the scene when Joseph could not “refrain” (Gen. xlv. 1), and natural tenderness would find a vent. Could the God of Israel look on the scene of desolation, and not be moved to pity? 

LXV. 

(1) I *am* sought of them . . .—Is this the answer to the previous prayer? Most commentators say “Yes;” but there is, at least, an apparent absence of continuous sequence. A more probable view is that it was written after an interval more or less considerable, and that the prophet utters what had been revealed to him as explaining why the plaintive appeal of chap.

Israel's Righteousnesses

ISIAH, LXV.

as Filthy Rags.

Ps. 31:19; 1 Cor. ii. 2

Or, see a God beside thee, which doth not look upon him for him.

Ps. 90:5, 6.

Heb., melted.

Ps. 79:8.

Rom. 9:24, 25; 11:25-26, 32.
The Mysteries of

ISAIAH, LXV.

The Idolaters.

1 Heb., upon bricks.
2 Or, pieces.
3 Or, anger.

lxiv. 12 did not meet at once with the answer that might have been looked for.

A further question meets us, which has received different answers. Do the opening words speak, as St. Paul implies they do, of the calling of the Gentiles, contrasting their faith with the unbelief of Israel (Rom. x. 20)? Taking the text as it stands, the most natural interpretation (there being no reference afterwards to the Gentiles) seems to be that Jehovah speaks to the same people in verses 1 and 2, and that both alike speak of indifference and hardness. On this view the words may be translated, "I was ready to answer those who did not inquire, was nigh at hand to be discovered by those who did not seek."

Such words were a true description of the state of Israel, as they have been of Christian Churches since, and are in close agreement with what follows. On this view St. Paul's free use of the LXX. rendering must be looked on as analogous to the like application of Hosea i. 10, ii. 1, by him (Rom. ix. 25, 26) and by St. Peter (1 Peter ii. 10), though in these instances it is beyond question that the words primarily referred to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles.

A nation that was not called by my name.

—Better, with the LXX., as in chaps. xiiii. 22, lxv. 7, that has not called on my name. The meaning, on either rendering, is that Israel has sunk to the level of their heathen.

(2) I have spread out my hands. . . .—Here, of course, the words were meant for Israel, as St. Paul applies them. It may be not without interest to note the fact that the words stand over the portal of the Church of Santa Maria, which stands at the entrance of the Ghetto at Rome. Of how many churches at Rome and elsewhere might it not be said, "Thou art the man. The beam is in thine own eye"?

(3) That sacrificeth in gardens.—It is without significance, as bearing on the date of the chapter, that the practice was common in Judah under Ahaz. (Comp. chaps. i. 29, lxvi. 5; Ezek. xx. 28.)

Burneth incense upon altars of brick.—Literally, on the bricks, and possibly, therefore, on the roofs of houses, as common in the idolatrous practices of Judah (2 Kings xxiii. 12; Jer. xix. 13). By some interpreters the words are referred, though with less probability, to the brick altars which the exiles are supposed to have used at Babylon, and were forbidden by the Law (Exod. xx. 24, 25).

Which remain among the graves. —Probably the rock graves of Palestine, which, although they were ceremonially unclean, were not unfrequently used as dwellings (Matt. viii. 28; Mark v. 3). The charge may be one merely of neglecting the precepts of the Law, but possibly also may imply that the graves were frequented, as in chaps. viii. 19, xxix. 4, for necromantic purposes.

And common among the heathen of the time. Jerome (in loc.) notes the fact that men went to sleep in the crypts of the Temple of Æsculapius, in the hope of gaining visions of the future, and translates in delubris idolorum.

(4) Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine’s flesh, and 2broth of abominable things is in their vessels; (5) which say, Stand by thyself, come near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. (6) Behold, it is written before me: I will not

But will recompense. —Literally, without recompensing, or, except I recompense. Men took the long-suffering of God as if it indicated forgetfulness.
The Chastisement

ISAIAH, LXV.

of the Idolaters.

keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, (7) your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

(8) Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

(9) And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. (10) And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place stretching along the coast from Joppa to the foot of Carmel. The LXX., Josephus, and Strabo render it by the plain, or the woodland. (Comp. chaps. xxxiii. 9, xxxv. 2.)

The valley of Achor.—The name, traditionally connected with the sin of Achan (Josh. vii. 21—26), belonged to a valley running into the plain of Jericho, and is here taken as the Eastern limit of the region bounded by the Sharon on the west. The whole district was to be as a "garden of the Lord" for the restored remnant. (Comp. the striking parallelism of Hos. ii. 15.)

(11) That forget my holy mountain . . .—The words imply, like verses 3—5, the abandonment of the worship of the Temple for a heathen ritual, but those that follow point, it will be seen, to Canaanite rather than Babylonian idolatry, and, so far, are in favour of the earlier date of the chapter. The same phrase occurs, however, as connected with the exiles in Ps. lxxvii. 5.

That prepare a table for that troop.—Hebrew, "for the Gad," probably the planet Jupiter, worshipped as the "greater fortune," the giver of good luck. The LXX. renders "for the demon" or "Genius. The name of Baal-Gad (Josh. xi. 17, xii. 17) indicates the early prevalence of the worship in Syria. Phoenician inscriptions have been found with the names Gad—Ashtoreth and Gad-Moloch. "The table" points to the lectisternium (or "feast"), which was a prominent feature in Assyrian and other forms of polytheism.

Unto that number.—Here, again, we have in the Heb. Men the proper name of a Syrian deity, probably of the planet Venus as the "lesser fortune." Some scholars have found a name Manu in Babylonian inscriptions; and Manat, one of the three deities invoked by the Arabs in the time of Mahomet, is probably connected with it (Cheyne). See Sacy, as in Note on verse 4.

(12) My servants shall eat . . .—The form of the punishment is apparently determined by that of the sin. That had been the orgy of an idol's feast; the penalty would be hunger and thirst, while joy and gladness would be the portion of those who had abstained from it. The words present a striking parallelism to Luke vi. 20—26.
shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. (15) And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name: (16) that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; and he that sweareth in a name: (17) for the Lord Gom shall slay and call his servants by another name: (18) the thought in each case being that the v., xi.). Life will not be prematurely cut off, but God will not be remembered, nor come into their name for a curse unto them; and the sinner, dying before an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. (21) And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. (22) They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. (23) They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. (24) And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. (25) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and and a deathless life as the return of the traditional longevity of the preluvian and patriarcal age (Gen. iv., 2). Life will not be prematurely cut off, as it had been, by pestilence and war. (Comp. Zech. viii. 4.) He who dies at the age of a hundred will be thought of as dying young; even the sinner, dying before his time as the penalty of his guilt, shall live out the measure of a century. The noticeable fact is that sin is thought of as not altogether extinct—as still appearing, though under altered conditions, even in the restored Jerusalem. (26) As the days of a tree . . . -We may think of the cedars of Lebanon or the oaks of Bashan as furnishing the prophet with the ideal standard of longevity. Commonly, as by Homer and other poets, the lives of men have been compared to that of the leaves of deciduous trees; here they are compared to the life of the tree itself. The prophet is still speaking, not of national, but of individual life. (27) Their offspring with them . . . -The picture presented is that of a patriarchal family, including many generations, fathers no longer outliving their children and mourning for their death, as Jacob did (Gen. xxxvii. 35, xlii. 38), and as men had often done in the times of war, famine, and pestilence, through which Isaiah had lived. (28) Before they call . . . -In man's experience of men, often, as things are now, in his relations with God, there is an interval between prayer and the answer. In the new Jerusalem the two would be simultaneous, or the answer would anticipate the prayer. (29) The wolf and the lamb . . . -The words point to what have been called the discords in the harmony of Nature, the pain and death involved, of necessity, in the relation of one whole class of animals
dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

CHAPTER LXVI.—(1) Thus saith the Lord, “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? (2) For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

(3) He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. (4) I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

(5) Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, “Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.” (6) A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to his enemies, from an Egyptian hymn to the Nile of the fourteenth century B.C., in which we find the writer saying of God, “His abode is not known... there is no building that can contain Him.” (Records of the Past, iv. 109.)

(2) All those things...—The sequence of thought runs thus:—God, the Maker of the universe, can need nothing that belongs to it. The most stately temple is to Him as the infinitely little. What He does delight in is something which is generically different, the spiritual life which answers to His own, the “contrite heart,” which is the true correlate of His own holiness. He who offers that is a true worshipper, with or without the ritual of worship; in its absence, all worship is an abomination to the Eternal. Here 1 and 2 Isaiah are essentially one in teaching. (Comp. chaps. i. 11—18, viii. 15.)

(3) He that killeth an ox...—The truth of the previous verse is emphasised by iteration, each clause presenting a distinct illustration of it. Chapter lv. 3—11 had pointed to tendencies, not yet extinct, which led to open apostasy. Now the prophet declares that there may be as real an apostasy beneath an orthodox creed and an irreproachable ritual. Each act of the hypocrite’s worship is as an idolatrous abomination.

(4) I also will choose their delusions...—The Hebrew noun conveys the thought of the turnings and windings of fortune—what has been called the irony of history. These are the instruments with which God, as it were, mocks and has in derision those who mock Him by their hypocrisy. Their choice did not delight Him; what He chooses will be far other than delightful to another. In St. Paul’s language, the “whole creation groaneth and travails together” (Rom. viii. 22). In the new heaven and the new earth of the prophet’s vision there would be no such discords. The flesh-eating beasts should change their nature; even the serpent, named, probably, with special reference to Gen. iii., as the starting-point of the discords, shall find food in the dust in which he crawls, and shall be no longer a destroyer. The condition of the ideal Paradise should stand on the same footing as the serpent’s. (5) All of his contentions are repeated in the words. (6) A voice of noise...—The form reminds us of chap. viii. 4. The words represent dramatically the wonder with which men will behold the great judgments of God, proceeding, as with the thunders of...
Better, joice for joy with her, all ye that mourn.

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for so as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

11 That ye may milk out, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may drink, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be born upon her sides, and be-dandled upon her knees. As whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

13 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.

14 For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

15 For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, shall be consumed: how much more at the end of the earth? shall they be left for a curse?

16 Will the Lord plead, &c. As in chap. xlv. 1, 2, his rebuke is as the whirlwind, to render his anger, &c.

17 They that sanctify themselves, &c. They are the initiates of the Gentile rites, and the worship of Baal or Ashtoreth, or, as the

Dis. (12) Or, hoped.

(13) One whom his mother comforteth.

(14) Your bones shall flourish. — Heart and bones stand respectively as symbols of the inner and outer life. The bones, the branches, so to speak, of the body, which had been dry and sere, should revive as with the sap of a new life, and be as the succulent herbage. His hand, i.e., His manifested power, will show itself in love to His people, in indignation to their enemies.

(15) With his chariots. — The storm-clouds sweeping on their way, while the lightnings and the winds do their work.

(16) Will the Lord plead? — Better, will the Lord hold judgment. The thoughts of the seer pass on to the retributive side of the Divine righteousness. Fire and sword have been used by the enemies of God against His people, and shall, in turn, be the instruments of His vengeance. The sword, may, however, be the symbol of the Divine judgment, apart from any reference to its human instrument (Deut. xxxii. 41; Rev. i. 16).

(17) They that sanctify themselves. — Better, they that consecrate themselves. As in chap. xlv. 3, 4, the prophet has in his thoughts the apostates, who gloried in mingling heathen rites with the worship of Jehovah. Such a blending of incompatible elements was, as we have seen, eminently characteristic of the reign of Manasseh. We have no trace of anything corresponding to it among the Babylonian exiles, either before or after their return. The "consecration" and "purification" are the initiatory rites of heathen mysteries, connected probably with the worship of Baal or Ashoreth, or, as the
tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

(20) For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.

(19) And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. (20) And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in 5 litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord.

(21) I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord.
For as the "new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. (22) And it shall come to pass, that one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.

(23) And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

of all Israel being eligible for the priesthood, as that which was in the prophet's mind. Like other such thoughts, however, it was capable of expansion, so as to include the whole Israel of God, who were by faith the children of Abraham. (Comp. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, with Exod. xix. 6.)

(22) As the new heavens and the new earth . . .—The transformation of chap. lxv. 17 is pre-supposed, but that future kingdom of God shall perpetuate the historical continuity of that which has preceded it. Israel (the prophet's range of vision seems limited to the outward Israel, while St. Paul extends it to the spiritual) shall still exist. The ideal represented by that name will have an indestructible vitality.

(23) From one new moon to another . . .—Under the Mosaic law Israelites were bound, at least in theory, to attend the temple at the three great feasts. In the new Jerusalem, as the prophet thought of it, the pilgrimages would be both more frequent and more universal. Every sabbath and new moon would witness not Israel only, but "all flesh," thronging into the courts of the temple. It lies in the nature of the case that the words never have received, and never can receive, a literal fulfilment. The true realisation is found in the new Jerusalem of Rev. xxi. 22-27, of the perpetual sabbatism of Heb. iv. 9, and even that glorious vision is but the symbol of spiritual realities.

And they shall go forth . . .—As at the close of chaps. xlviii., lix., each ending a great section of the volume, so here, the vision of restoration and blessedness is balanced by that of the righteous condemnation of the wicked. The outward imagery is suggested, as in Joel iii. 12; Zech. xiv. 12, by that of the great battle of the Lord (verses 15, 16). Those who are slain in that battle are thought of as filling the valleys round about Jerusalem, especially the valley of Jehoshaphat ("Jehovah judges"), devoured by worms, or given to the flames. Taken strictly, therefore, the words do not speak of the punishment of the souls of men after death, but of the defeat and destruction upon earth of the enemies of Jehovah. The words that tell us that "the worm shall not die" and that "the fire shall not be quenched" point, however, to something more than this, to be read between the lines. And so those words became the starting-point of the thoughts of later Judaism as to Gehenna (Ecclus. vii. 17; Judith xvi. 17, and the Targum on this passage), of the words in which our Lord Himself gave utterance to what, at least, seemed to express those thoughts (Mark ix. 44-48), of the dominant eschatology of Christendom. Even so taken, however, with this wider range, it is still a question whether the words are to be taken literally or figuratively (though this, perhaps, is hardly a question), whether the bodies, which represent souls, are thought of as not destroyed, but only tormented, or as consumed to nothing, by the fire and by the worm, whether those two agents represent sufferings of sense or spirit. The one aspect of the future life which they tend to exclude is that which presents the idea of a suffering that may be purifying. That idea is not without apparent support in other passages of Scripture (e.g., Rom. v. 17-21; xi. 32; 1 Pet. iii. 19, iv. 6); but we cannot say that it entered into the prophet's thoughts here. What he emphasises is the eternal antagonism between the righteousness of God and man's unrighteousness, and this involves the punishment of the latter as long as it exists. In any case there is a strange solemnity in this being the last word of the prophet's book of revelation, even as there is a like awfulness in the picture of the final judgment, which appears in Matt. xxx. 46, at all but the close of our Lord's public teaching. Cheyne quotes a singular rubric of the Jewish ritual, that when this chapter, or Eccles. xii., or Mal. iii., was read in the synagogue, the last verse but one should be repeated after the last, so that mercy might appear as in the end triumphant after and over judgment.