A Commentary on the Psalms from Primitive and Mediaeval Writers, volume 3 (Psalms 81–118) (part 1 of 2)

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Psalm 81

TITLE. To the Chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph. Chaldee Targum: For praise, upon the harp brought from Gath, by the hand of Asaph. LXX.: To the end, for the presses, A Psalm of Asaph. Vulgate: To the Conqueror, [on the fifth of the Sabbath] for the presses, A Psalm of Asaph. Syriac: Of Asaph, when David was making ready by him for the festivals.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That we ought to sing of CHRIST with all our mind on spiritual trumpets. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST to the people. Concerning the HOLY GHOST. This Psalm relates to Pentecost, and the answer of CHRIST. Further, the Voice of the Apostles to the people. The Voice of CHRIST touching judgment to come. The Voice of the Apostles. VEN. BEDE. The fifth of the Sabbath is the fifth day from the Sabbath, which is called Jove's Day by the Gentiles, and by us the fifth week-day; wherefore GOD said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven; mystically denoting that there should be born persons of various merit from the waters of Baptism. The intention, then, of the title is of this sort; To the end, is to signify CHRIST the LORD; For the presses, the Church tried by persecutors; Asaph, the congregation, the fifth of the Sabbath, Baptism. Whence we gather that the Psalm will speak of the regenerate congregation in the Church of the LORD. Hence too it is that Asaph is speaking historically to the Jews, but he is better understood spiritually by the Christian people.

In the first part of the Psalm Asaph speaketh to the faithful, that they may sound the praises of GOD on divers musical instruments for benefits many times received, Sing ye merrily to God our strength, &c. In the second part are the words of the LORD, threatening them against the worship of idols, that He alone may be adored Who is wont to repay: Hear, O My people. In the third part Asaph speaks again, rebuking unbelievers for being deceitful, though GOD's gifts have been abundantly bestowed on them. The haters of the Lord should have been found liars, &c. B EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The calling of the Gentiles, and instruction touching

the things which befell the former people. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of exhortation, and, to some extent, of command.

Various Uses.
Ambrosian. Tuesday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. [Circumcision: Matins.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Sing ye to GOD our strength. [Corpus Christi: The LORD fed us with the fatness of wheat, and with honey out of the rock did He satisfy us.] Monastic. As Gregorian. Parisian. Hear, * O My people, and I will testify unto thee, I am the LORD thy GOD. [Corpus Christi: He fed them with the fatness of wheat, and with honey out of the rock did He satisfy them.] Lyons. As Gregorian. Ambrosian. Be merciful * unto our sins, O LORD. [Circumcision: Thou shalt not worship any other god, I am the LORD thy GOD.] Mozarabic. As Gregorian. 1 Sing we merrily unto GOD our strength: make a cheerful noise unto the GOD of Jacob. A. The words are in the first instance addressed by Asaph, chief precentor of the Temple, to the musicians and singers, as directions for their guidance and encouragement on the occasion of a great festival, and then they apply to the whole body of the faithful, teaching them the duty of speaking to themselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the LORD. The Psalm itself forms the natural continuation of the preceding one, wherein the Church sends up her cry for the Advent of CHRIST. Now she, as it were, beholds Him coming, and making an end, and therefore calls on His true followers to abandon all worldly thoughts and cares, and to rejoice in the LORD alway. Ye, then, who heretofore have been exulting in the world your deceiver, and in the devil your deserter, and in the belly, your seducer, exult henceforth in GOD your strength. And even if your voice and powers should fail you in the loud singing which is GOD’s due, yet, as He may be praised in many ways, rejoice

There is a trifling error in the Prayer Book rendering of this verse, corrected by all the other translations; we should be ye. (Vulg. S. Hieron.) in your inward heart, and He will accept such service with equal readiness. Further, the God in Whom you are called to rejoice is the God of Jacob, of the wrestler, the God of those who will strive in prayer and struggle against sin, not of the sluggard and fainthearted. 2 Take the psalm, bring hither the tabret : the merry harp with the lute. S. Augustine, commenting on the contrast between the Words take and give, (albeit such an opposition barely exists in the Hebrew), explains the first clause of this verse as an allegory of the mutual relations between a Christian teacher and his flock. The hearers are to take the psalm, to receive the living, oral instruction from his mouth; and in their turn, they are to bring the tabret, or rather, kettle-drum, which, being made of the skin of a dead animal, denotes carnal things; that is, they are to minister to their teacher’s bodily needs, according to that saying of the Apostle: ”If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall

reap your carnal things?" S. Bruno works out this idea more deeply. Take from God Himself that psalm, which of yourselves you cannot have, the quickening spirit of innocence and holiness which comes of His mercy alone. Give Him the tabret, that is, mortification of your flesh by fasts and vigils, typified by the slain beast whose skin produces the sound. Cardinal Hugo sums up the reasons why the drum is a type of bodily mortification, in his usual fashion, with a distich:

A. Terret aves, tenuis, fragilis, cava, mortua, lenis, Tensa, cutis, lignis, verbere, sicca, sonans. Slender, frail, hollow, dead, smooth, scaring birds, Strained skin and wood, dry, sounding with a blow. They are more nearly agreed in explaining the latter clause; the pleasant psaltery with the harp. (Vulg. LXX.) The psaltery, observes S. Augustine, differs from the harp in having its sounding-board above the strings, which we strike from below; whereas the sounding-board of the harp is lower than the strings. The first, then, means the preaching of God's Word, and is thus described as pleasant, while the latter denotes our good works done on earth, necessary to fulfil that pleasantness. And in this wise the divinely quickened human spirit is, as it were, the psaltery made vocal with God's psalm, and thus pleasant to Him, while the lowliness wherewith He is obeyed is shadowed by the harp, sounding from below. Ayguan gives a slightly different turn to the thought, by pointing out that the psaltery or decachord, with its ten strings struck by the hand, is a type of the Ten Commandments carried out in action.

A.

3 Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon : even in the time appointed, and upon our solemn feast day.
Rev. i. 10.

There has been much discussion among modern critics, as to the special festival referred to here. Some, dwelling on the allusion, later in the Psalm, to the Exodus, will have it that the Passover is meant. But there seems no adequate reason for departing from the Chaldee, which expressly names the new moon of the month Tizri, the first day of the Jewish civil year, as it also was of the Sabbatical year, and of the year of jubilee, although occurring in the seventh month of the ordinary ecclesiastical computation. This day is particularly described in the Law as a "day of blowing the trumpets," a ceremony which formed no part of the Paschal feast, and the Jews, always singularly tenacious of ancient tradition, still actually use the present Psalm in the office of this day. The solemnities of the seventh month did not end, however, with the Feast of Trumpets. The tenth day was the great Day of Atonement, when the most august of the Mosaic sacrifices took place, and on the fifteenth day (that of the full moon [medio mense, S. Hieron. held by the best critics to be the true rendering of , not time appointed), came the chiefest festival of the Law, the Feast of Tabernacles, which is the solemn feast-day of the Psalm, and is described as the feast in more than one place in Scripture.

It was the greatest festival, because it denoted the perfect rest of the Land of Promise, (whereas the Passover indicated merely the escape from the house of bondage, and the first setting out in quest of Canaan,) thus typifying for Christians the eternal peace of Heaven, won by the bloodshedding of the Lamb of God. Reasons have been sought for the special significance of trumpets at the great festival, and two in particular are dwelt on by Jewish writers. One, that trumpets of horn were used in memory of the oblation of Isaac, when the substituted ram was caught by his horns in a thicket; the other, that the giving of the Law is commemorated, as we read, ”When the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. So again, the Divine utterance is similarly described in the Apocalypse: ”I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega. And thrice the trumpet-sound is mentioned, by the LORD Himself and His Apostle, as the signal of the second Advent to Judgment.

A favourite exposition, then, of this verse with the early It is to be noted that the word for trumpet in this verse is , the curving horn or κερατίνη, as S. Jerome explains it, distinguished from the straight tube or σάλπιγξ, , which is the term applied to the silver trumpets of the convocation.

commentators, is that it is a call to loud proclamation of the Gospel (according to the saying, ”Lift up thy voice like a trumpet”) in the new life which CHRIST has given us, a life not without its anxieties and changes here, and thus aptly denoted by the moon. Or, as another yet more beautifully takes it, the new moon is the Church, enlightened by CHRIST her true Sun. In this the trumpet-call of preachers began, on our solemn feast day of the Resurrection, the renewal of our creation, and yet again, still louder, when the fiery tongues of Pentecost came down. And then we may take it by anagoge, of that great rejoicing which shall be at the consummation of all things, when the Archangel himself will sound the trumpet, when a new heaven appears, when the Feasts of Tabernacles and of Dedication shall be united in one, what time the great Voice shall say, ”Behold, the tabernacle of GOD is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and GOD Himself shall be with them, and be their GOD.” And, coming to the individual soul, we are well reminded that the two silver trumpets of the Jewish camp called the people to banquets, to battles, and to sacred festivals, and that in like manner the preaching of the Gospel calls believers to the Holy Eucharist, to resistance against temptation and sin, and to the unending bliss of heaven. Not merely by the mouth of the priesthood, but by that of every believer who has seen a new light rest on his soul, who has kept the solemn feast-day of the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST within him, and who may well say, ”O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear GOD; and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.”

A. Alex. in 4 For this was made a statute for Israel : and a law of the GOD of Jacob. For the word , law, the LXX. and Vulgate more literally read judgment, which draws the following comment from S. Augustine: Where there is a statute, there is judgment. For they who sinned under the Law shall be judged by the Law. And the LORD CHRIST, WORD made flesh, is the Giver of the statute, ”For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.” Thus we are warned that the Lawgiver and the Judge are one, and that the commands He lays upon us are not merely subject of meditation for Israel, the contemplative saints, but for practical operation by Jacob, the saints of active life, and as the final test for all at the Doom. In the literal sense, the clause reminds the hearers that no new rule, nor one of human invention, is being laid down, but that a Divine and ancient precept is enforced, when all people are called on to make GOD’s promises known.

A. 5 This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony: when he came out of the land of Egypt, and had heard a strange language. A.

There is more than one difficulty in this verse, although its apparent meaning is obvious here and in all the principal versions. The sense on the surface, as taken by the majority of ancient commentators, and not a few modern ones, refers to the Exodus, and the intercourse with foreign nations which followed on it. But the Chaldee paraphrast, R. Kimchi, and the best recent critics, understand it otherwise. The first explains the whole passage of the patriarch Joseph, not of the Jewish nation (especially the powerful tribe of Ephraim, as represented by him); and paraphrases thus: ”He laid a testimony upon Joseph, that he should not draw nigh unto his master’s wife, in the day when he went out of the house of bondage, and ruled over the whole land of Egypt,” on the anniversary, as a Rabbinical tradition alleges, of Isaac’s deliverance. And this fits in with the words of Gen. xli. 45, ”Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. R. Kimchi, followed by some eminent moderns, takes the second clause thus: When God went out against the land of Egypt, for the slaughter of the first-born, as it is written, ”About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. Further, the last clause of the verse in the Hebrew is in the first person, not (as the previous one), in the third, and runs, I heard the voice of one unknown.

This would present no difficulty, were it not that in the immediately following verse the first person recurs, personifying God Himself, Who cannot be meant as the speaker of these particular words. The passage is thus a very difficult one, and is variously explained, either as spoken in the person of Israel dwelling amongst the alien Egyptians, for whom they needed an interpreter; or, again, as referring to the Divine voice made known in the plains of Egypt and afterwards heard from Sinai; or, lastly, that it is a sudden exclamation of the Psalmist, announcing his reception of the oracle of God, given in the succeeding verses, according to the analogy of the

vision of Eliphaz the Temanite. Turning now to the mystical exposition, let us hear S. Augustine: Joseph is interpreted increase. And as Joseph was sold into Egypt, so CHRIST cometh to the Gentiles. Joseph was exalted there after his troubles, and CHRIST is glorified with us after the passion of the Martyrs. The Gentiles, then, belong to our true Joseph, and are fitly styled increase, because ”the children of the desolate are many more than of her which hath an husband. The testimony of Joseph coming out of Egypt, means the vow of those who pass through the Red sea of Baptism, ruddy with the Blood of CHRIST, and are thus freed from those sins, their enemies, which would soon destroy them.

On the other side of that flood, the Catechumens will learn mysteries now hidden from them, and will hear a tongue which they know not, the precepts of the New Testament, delivered, literally, in a language differing from that of the Law. Cardinal Hugo most beautifully reminds us that Joseph himself never left Egypt alive, but that only his bones were carried up into the Land of Promise, whence this verse may well be taken of the Martyrs, who despise the life of this world, and dying to it, pass to their true country, there to learn the Unknown Song. Yet another reminds us of the great increase of the Church on that first Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were heard speaking in unknown tongues, according to the exact dialect of each hearer in the crowd.

6 I eased his shoulder from the burden : and his hands were delivered from making the pots.

Here the Voice of God Himself declares His benefits towards His people. But this direct address is lost in the LXX. and Vulgate, which read, He removed his back from the burdens. The sense is the same, and we are well reminded by the Doctor of Grace that none can do this thing save He Who saith, ”Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; Who alone takes the grievous load of sin away from those who seek His aid. In the second clause the LXX. and Vulgate read, His hands served in the basket; doubtless the baskets of osier or of palm-leaves still used in Egypt for carrying loads, and employed like the hod of European bricklayers, and also for carrying manure to the fields. The term thus embraces all servile labour, from which CHRIST sets us free. And the basket will then be an emblem of the despised and lowly in this world, whom the LORD nevertheless fills with the fragments of His Flesh; and when He chose His twelve humble Apostles, He then filled twelve baskets with good things from His own table. Further, as baskets are used for carrying away the accumulated dust and filth of houses, so those who are still living in sin are said to have their hands toiling in baskets, which toil ends when CHRIST delivers them from that bondage.

And if we keep to the idea of the building labour imposed on the Hebrews, we shall remember that sinners, while in the darkness of Egypt, are busily engaged in rearing up the walls of the mystical Babylon, contrary to that prayer of the Church,

”Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem. There are some who take the latter clause of the verse in a good sense, as the occupation to which the ransomed slaves voluntarily turned, and thus one reminds us that spiritual persons, busied in hearing confession, toil in the baskets, by cleansing the hearts of sinners from defilement: while another will have it that the basket is a type of charity, because

A. A. it contains and embraces many things, and those whom God sets free must needs toil therein to please Him. But these interpretations will not stand with the literal sense of the passage. More to the point is the remark that this verse gives the reason for the sounding of trumpets, the warrior instrument, forbidden to slaves. As freemen and warriors, the Hebrews were at liberty to sound it, and its notes therefore fitly ushered in the year of Jubilee, when all debts were cancelled and all bondmen were released. 7 Thou calledst upon me in troubles, and I delivered thee : and heard thee what time as the storm fell upon thee. In Ps. xxii. A. Haymo. Observe how troubles are the necessary forerunners of deliverance, for, as a great Saint teaches us, a grain of wheat shut up in the husk, cannot come out till it is ground, and so man can scarcely be set free from worldly difficulties, which, like husks, entangle him, unless he be chastened with some trouble. Not a light one either, for, as S. Augustine says very well, When you are under medical treatment, and feel the fire and steel, you cry out, but the surgeon does not listen to your wishes, he heeds only your cure. It is thus, then, that God hears us in trouble and delivers us, for He Himself sends the trouble as the very means to make us call on Him and thus gain our safety. And in this sense one, at whose feet tens of thousands have been glad to sit, tells us, ”When any tribulation comes on thee, then CHRIST meets thee with His Cross, and shows thee the way to the kingdom of heaven, whither thou oughtest to go.” Therefore the time of trouble is the time of life, according to the pithy Jewish proverb, ”When Israel is in the brick-kiln, then comes Moses.”

What time as the storm fell on thee. The A. V. correctly, and nearly in accord with the LXX. and Vulgate, reads, I answered thee in the secret place of thunder. That is, as they diversely take it, either in the actual passage of the Red Sea, when God looked out of the pillar of cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, or when He spoke to Israel out of the thick darkness amidst thunders from Sinai. And this latter is the Chaldee view, for the paraphrase runs, ”I heard thee in the hidden place of the house of My majesty, when the fiery wheels sounded before Me.” God hears us too in the secret place of tempest, when storms of temptation and trial are raging within our hearts, and the waves of sin appear likely to wash over us. Some take the clause as though it meant in a place hidden from the storm, and then tell us of the calm which reigned in the souls of the Martyrs, while the fiercest whirlwinds of heathen rage broke upon their bodies.

This is the sense of the word in Isaiah xxxii. 2, , ”a covert from the tempest.” 8 I proved thee also : at the waters of strife. The literal reference is to the murmuring of the people in Kadesh, when Moses had to bring water for them out of the rock, and in the double name given to the scene we find the two members of the verse, Massa telling that Israel was proved, and Meribah that the test ended in strife. For strife, the LXX. and Vulgate read contradiction or gainsaying. And this is mystically explained in three ways. It is taken of the waters of Baptism, in which Christians are called on to renounce and gainsay all evil, and thereby to be in their turn contradicted by unbelievers; of the trials of the Church by the gainsaying of heathen persecutors without or heretical teachers within, necessary for the proving of the Saints; or, most deeply of all, that it is uttered of Him Who was a sign to be spoken against, Who stretched out His hands all day upon the Cross to a disobedient and gainsaying people, Who suffered the stream of water and blood to flow from His pierced side when He proved His nation, and was answered with strife. And yet again, as another teaches us, the billows of passion and bitter thoughts which well in our hearts, are waters of strife, which only CHRIST can lull and calm, by treading them under His feet, as He comes to us in the darkness.

A. S. Ambros. præf. in Ps. xiv. 9 Hear, O my people, and I will assure thee, O Israel : if thou wilt hearken unto me, 10 There shall no strange god be in thee : neither shalt thou worship any other god. Lorinus dwells at some length on the prominence which even Pagan religions gave to this precept, by discouraging the worship of alien deities, and aptly cites, amidst a crowd of other testimonies, that Law of the Twelve Tables: ”Let them not worship foreign gods. Let no one have gods apart, nor new ones. Let them not even privately worship gods brought from abroad, unless invited by the State; and let them worship those which have always been held celestial.” But the particular turn given by the LXX., Vulgate, and Arabic versions to the word , strange, which they render new, recent, (a sense which the word does admit in Isaiah xxviii. 21.) gives occasion to much comment, justified in its scope by the parallel passage in the Song of Moses: ”They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.” A new god, notes S. Augustine, is one made in time; but our God is not new, for He is from eternity to eternity. And our CHRIST may be new as Man, but everlasting as God. For what is there before the beginning?

A.

S. John i. 1. And yet ”in the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with GOD, and the WORD was GOD. And He, our CHRIST, is the WORD made flesh, that He might dwell amongst us. Heathen idols are costly, are of silver and gold, precious and shining, but they are new, fresh out of a workshop. The Arian Christ is new, for he exists only in time, and is posterior to the FATHER. The god of the Manichees is new, for he is an unsuccessful struggler against the powers of dark-

ness and corruption, and not the Almighty, the Uncreated Light, the perfectly Holy. Christians, too, may err in the same spirit, though not in the same way, by making idols of their appetites, their sins, or even of any of God's temporal gifts. And as none of these, for the most part, holds its worshipper long faithful, so the act of change from one to another sets up a new god on the deposition of the old. Yet again, it may be fitly taken of new heresies, alien from the Catholic faith, which result, sooner or later, in leading their followers away from GOD. And it is in warning of the deep spiritual blessing of cleaving to Him, that He says I will assure thee, or as the A. V. more forcibly and exactly, with LXX. and Vulgate, turns it, I will testify unto thee: that is, I will solemnly pledge the fulfilment of My promises, swearing by Myself.

And so runs a similar passage of Holy Writ: "The Angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house. And what that means, we may learn from yet another place: "Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

11 I am the LORD thy GOD, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt : open thy mouth wide, and I shall fill it. Literally, it is spoken of the miraculous food for those who had left behind them the flesh-pots of Egypt and gone out into the wilderness at the voice of GOD. Spiritually, they tell us that it is spoken of the soul rather than of the body. I Myself, thy LORD and GOD, have brought thee out of the darkness and bondage of thy sins, open thou thy mouth wide, as the young of a bird open their beaks to receive the food their parents bring them, and I shall fill it with good things. Open it wide, by breaking down the vain idols within thine heart, which cramp and narrow thee, and give thyself room to love and praise Me. Open it wide, by preaching the Gospel loudly and clearly, by warning sinners plainly, by praising GOD worthily, and I will fill thee with all spiritual

A.

grace. And thus we see the meaning of those words of the Apostle, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. . . . Be ye also enlarged, be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. I will fill it, not merely with grace, but with Myself. For, as S. Augustine most deeply says, "A soul which is capable of containing God, nothing less than God can fill. Wherefore He gives Himself as our Food in the Holy Sacrament, and truly is it said of the Christian mouth which has fed upon such dainties, "Full of grace are thy lips, because God hath blessed thee for ever. He bids us open our mouths wide in yet another way, by asking boldly in prayer for whatever we need, assuring us that the greater and more aspiring

are our petitions, the more abundantly shall they be fulfilled. We have, further, in this verse, two things to note particularly. First, the easiness of God's conditions; for there is nothing less troublesome than opening the mouth. He does not say, "Stretch out thy hands to labour, and I will fill them," but only, Open thy mouth wide. Next, the lavishness of God's promise. He does not say, "Open thy mouth, and I will put somewhat therein, and will not suffer it to be empty," but I will fill it, however widely thou mayest open it, doing far beyond all thou canst ever hope for.

And so the Apostle confesses, saying, "Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, unto Him be glory in the Church by CHRIST JESUS throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. What, then, asks Richard of S. Victor, is this mouth of the inner man, save the heart's longing? But all the dainties of Egypt cannot fill this mouth, for all the riches of the world are not enough to content carnal desire. See how small a part of the human body the fleshly mouth is, and what a narrow opening. Who can fail to see that it is so small that one morsel of bread is enough to fill it? But the whole world is not so much to the desire of the heart, as the morsel of bread is to the bodily mouth, for the one does fill, but the other does not. And thus we come back to that saying of S. Augustine, that nothing save God Himself can satisfy our craving. So it is quaintly expressed by an old writer:

In Ps. cxviii. The whole round world is not enough to fill The heart's three corners, but it craveth still; Only the Trinity, that made it, can Suffice the vast triangled heart of man. Francis Quarles. School of the Heart. Epigr. 10. But observe, that the words are spoken only to those who have come out of the land of Egypt. While they remain in darkness, they cannot see the food offered to their lips, till they hearken to the Wise Man, "Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread." While we continue in sin, we 1 Sam. ii. 1. cannot avail ourselves of the promise, but when we once fight against the foes of our souls, we can say with Hannah, "My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in Thy salvation." 12 But my people would not hear my voice : and Israel would not obey me. 13 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts : and let them follow their own imaginations.

It is not only disobedience, but ingratitude which God charges on His rebellious people. Servants and slaves count it an honour when their masters deign to converse familiarly with them, but Israel, mere dust and ashes, stops his ears against the voice of the God of all gods. Not once only, as the Rabbins point out, but in the wilderness, in the days of the Judges, in the times of the kings after David and Solomon, until they were driven into exile and their temples burnt, they would not hear. Observe, too, that as the charge seems brought especially against the house of Joseph, so it was the tribe of Ephraim which formed the mainstay of the idolatrous northern kingdom, after the rebellion against Rehoboam. But the words

are still more forcibly applied to the rejection of CHRIST by the Jews. Beforetime, they had stopped their ears against the voices of the Prophets, they had beaten and slain the messengers of the LORD of the vineyard, but now their cry was, ”This is the heir, come, let us kill Him.” Nor are they alone in their sin. Again and again He is rejected still by His people, those whom He purchased with His own Blood. He stands at the door and knocks, saying, ”Open, O man, recognize the voice of the LORD thy GOD; I will that thou open for Me to enter, and thou wilt not. Evil is that servant who will not shelter his Master.”

A. So I gave them up to their own hearts’ lusts. The apertures of the ”press” are now opened, to let the dregs and lees fall out, that they may be cast away. For I gave them up, the LXX. and Vulgate, with little difference of meaning, read I sent them away, loosing, as it were, the reins which held them in check, and suffering them to run riot at their will. And this appears more than once in Holy Writ as the sternest of GOD’s earthly judgments. ”I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery,” is the warning spoken by the Prophet, and the Apostle confirms him, adding ”Even as they did not like to retain GOD in their knowledge, GOD gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” Wherefore is added, I let them follow their own imaginations, or, as the LXX. and Vulgate read, They will go in their own inventions or desires; thereby heaping up fresh indignation for themselves, by adding sin upon sin to their previous wickedness.

14 O that my people would have hearkened unto me: for if Israel had walked in my ways, 15 I should soon have put down their enemies: and turned my hand against their adversaries. Lorinus points out how the wording of these verses asserts the freedom of the human will, as the only other explanation possible is to charge God with ignorance of the future, and although his argument is to a great extent based on the word perhaps, which the Vulgate inserts in verse 15, yet the meaning he enforces is sufficiently borne out by the actual text. And S. Augustine wisely teaches us that the words also make against false excuses. Israel might say, I sin, it is true, but not willingly, rather by reason of compulsion from the devil it is that I follow my own imaginations. But if Israel would but hear the voice of the LORD, He would soon put down all such spiritual enemies, and give us the victory. Observe further, that the two clauses of the former verse are not mere repetition, but denote two distinct stages of obedience. Hearing the word, without walking in its ways, is of no use. Herod listened gladly to John Baptist, but obeyed the daughter of Herodias rather than him. Felix communed often with Paul during two years, but though trembling at the Apostle’s reasoning as to righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, yet took not on him at last the Gospel yoke.

I should soon have put down their enemies. For soon, the LXX. reads, In the nothing, the Vulgate, not very differently, for nothing (pro nihilo). That is, as they

variously explain it, (and first rightly) as a very easy thing; or else, unto nothing, by utterly destroying them; or yet again, freely, that is, without any merit or price on the part of Israel as a reason for having God as its champion, in contrast, as is well pointed out, to the great trouble and outlay in hiring allies and buying off invaders, which the Jews were compelled to be at when left to their own devices on several occasions in their history. And turned My hand against their adversaries. They take the Hand of God, for the most part, as denoting merely His power. One special force is, however, given to it, by interpreting it of the LORD JESUS. The words will then point to His offer to the Jews of the headship over the nations, not only during His own three years of preaching, but by the voice of His Apostles for nearly forty more; until, on their final refusal to hear, the Romans were suffered to take away their place and nation, and the kingdom of the Church was transferred to the Gentiles.

16 The haters of the LORD should have been found liars: but their time should have endured for ever. A. A. The first clause ought to run, The haters of the Lord should have lied unto him, that is, unto Israel; crouching before the chosen people with unwilling and hypocritical submission, and denying all intention of war or resistance. But the LXX. and Vulgate reading, The enemies of the Lord have lied unto Him, is explained differently from this. It is, writes one of the earlier commentators, spoken of false believers, not of the heathen, who cannot be said to lie to God, inasmuch as they have given Him no pledges, but the unfaithful, who have broken their promises, shall be cast into hell, where their time shall endure for ever. And that because they take up again those things which they renounced in baptism; the world, the flesh, and the devil, so that their last end is worse than the first. This interpretation squares in the latter clause with the view of some Rabbins and modern critics that the whole verse refers to God's enemies, and that the time of their punishment is unending, in that no restoration will be vouchsafed them. But others take it as the Prayer Book version, and as contrasting the enduring prosperity of God's people with the sufferings of their adversaries. And then we may explain it, as not a few do, of the lying of the Jews in promising obedience to the Messiah, and yet denying Him when He came, so as to be rejected, and their dispensation brought to a close, while that of the Gospel endures for ever, not only to the end of the world, but through the ages of eternity.

17 He should have fed them also with the finest wheat-flour: and with honey out of the stony rock should I have satisfied thee. A. The literal reference is to the produce of Canaan, to its rich harvests of corn, and to the honey made by the wild bees in the clefts of the rocks, which serve them as hives; though some are found to refer the words as they run in the LXX. and Vulgate, He fed them with the fat of wheat and satisfied them with honey out of the rock, to the manna in the wilderness and the sweet water brought forth by the stroke of Moses' rod. But, save for a glance at one meaning of honey as denoting the sweetness of Divine wisdom, the

expositors all agree in taking this verse mystically of the Blessed Sacrament, the fine wheat-offering and sweet banquet of all believing souls, springing in both kinds from the Rock, which is CHRIST. So the Angelic Doctor: "As the Rock signifieth the incorruptible Body of CHRIST, so the honey from the Rock is the sweet Blood of CHRIST, which the faithful suck in from CHRIST's Body."

Glory be to the FATHER, our Strength; glory be to the SON, Who feeds us with the fatness of wheat; Glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who fills our mouth with a merry song unto the GOD of Jacob. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Open, O LORD, the mouths of Thy humble servants to show Ludolph. forth Thy praise, that leaving the works of Egypt behind, we may rejoice in the confession of Thy Name. (1.) Unto Thee, O LORD, our Strength, we pray with the cheer-Mozarabic. ful noise of faith and hope, that our petition, poured forth in trouble, may draw nigh unto Thine ears: that Thou mayest in Thy goodness be present with the prayers of each one of us to deliver us; and when Thou hast rescued us, grant us a burning desire to attain unto Thee, and with harmonious devotion to sing aloud to the Unity of the threefold Majesty, so that, alway busied in Thy praise, and following the paths of Thy commandments, we may obtain in Thee the adornments of exultation, the comforts of life, and the crown of faith. (11.) Let us sing merrily unto Thee, O LORD, Whom we acknow-Mozarabic. ledge and confess to be our Strength; for which cause we take a cheerful noise unto Thee in our longings, a psalm in our teaching, we give back a drum in our mortification; for in praising Thee we keep festival and take delight in making mention of Thy wondrous works. Grant, therefore, O LORD, that we who tell of Thy bounties may also win Thy rewards. (11.)

O LORD, cause Thy people to hear Thy voice, open our D. C. mouth, and fill it with the praise of Thy grace, that in the trouble of this present life Thou mayest hearken when we call upon Thee, and Thou mayest deliver us from every assault of our enemies and from the storm which endeth not. (1.)

Psalm 82

TITLE. A Psalm of Asaph. Syriac: Of Asaph, an invective against the ungodly Jews.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is to be acknowledged as alone Almighty in the midst of the Gods. The Voice of the Church to the Jews. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST by the Prophet to the princes. And the Voice of the Church concerning the Jews and her own evil rulers. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST to the people. They are blamed who turn aside to evil and feign themselves judges among disputants. When he goeth in unto the strangers. VEN. BEDE. Asaph denotes the Synagogue, which attained to behold the LORD the SAVIOUR in bodily presence. Asaph speaks throughout the Psalm against the Jews, concerning the Advent of CHRIST; in the first portion, warning them that the LORD had taken His stand in the midst of them; and therefore that they ought not to admit the fellowship of sinners. God standeth in the congregation of princes. In the second part, he warns them to understand that He, Who in the flesh He took on Him seemed poor and needy, is very CHRIST. Defend the poor and fatherless. In the third part he says, that they were honoured so as to become sons of GOD, but that by their own sin they had fallen into the snares of death. I said, Ye are Gods, &c.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. A rebuke of the princes of the Jewish nation, and a prophecy concerning the Gentiles. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm inflicting shame.

Various Uses.
Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. As preceding Psalm. Monastic. Thou only * art the most Highest over all the earth. Parisian. The LORD is my refuge * and my GOD is the strength of my confidence. Ambrosian. Thou shalt inherit * among all nations. Mozarabic. Judge the poor and fatherless, * justify the lowly and needy. 1 GOD standeth in the congregation of princes: he is a Judge among gods. 28. Margin, Judges. A. Of princes. The literal Hebrew, followed by all the principal versions (except the Syriac, which has of Angels, and Aquila, who agrees with this and A. V., reading ἰσχύρων) is of

gods. And hereupon is a division of opinion. One view, mainly confined to a few modern critics, follows the Syriac, identifies Gods with Angels, and supposes the object of the Psalm to be a rebuke for negligence of duty administered in heaven to those ministering spirits who, as we read in the Book of Daniel, are set over kingdoms and nations. The other, which is that of the Chaldee Targum, the Fathers in general, and most critics, sees a reference to earthly officers alone, (as we find in another place, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people,") and, as S. Augustine points out, primarily to the synagogue of gods, (LXX. and Vulgate)

or whole people of Israel, as God's Son and chosen nation, and therefore higher than other tribes of the earth; and then to the Christian Church as the successor to the privileges of Jacob. And God the Son did in truth stand incarnate amidst the Jewish synagogue and the Christian Church, according to that saying of the Baptist, "There standeth One among you, Whom ye know not. He is said to stand, because of His immutability, His power, His abiding presence, and also because of His promptness in act, to decide for the right, and to help the poor, as He did S. Stephen. But one commentator draws a yet deeper lesson from the word stand. He reminds us that it is for the judge to sit, and for the litigants or accused to stand; as it is written, "Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning until the evening. It is then a solemn warning for judges to remember, that whatever cause is before them is God's cause, since right and wrong are at stake in it, and that by acquitting the guilty, or condemning the innocent, they pass sentence against God Himself. And the synagogue of the Chief Priests, scribes, and Pharisees did in very deed so condemn God Himself, when He stood in the midst of them in human form. He is a judge among gods. Or, as the LXX. and Vulgate read, He judgeth the gods in the midst.

That is, in the literal sense, He reviews the sentences of inferior judges, who are but His vicars, and will openly condemn them at the Doom for any false judgment they may have given on earth. But the version which S. Augustine and Cassiodorus had before them reads, He discerneth the Gods in the midst. That is, as one will have it, CHRIST stands between the Prophets of the Old Testament, who foreshowed Him, and the Apostles of the New, who preached Him, being Himself the dividing and yet uniting link betwixt them. Or again, He discerns, by selecting, His Apostles and Evangelists and all His Saints, from a guilty world, and leading them to the kingdom of heaven. In heaven itself He discerns too, by distributing rewards to each Saint according to his merit, appointing them their several grades of blessedness. There is another rendering of the first clause, adopted by some, God standeth in the congregation of God. And then we may fitly take it as no pleonasm, nor yet as denoting the presence of the Most High among His people on earth, but the exaltation of the Man CHRIST JESUS, as God in heaven, in the presence of the Eternal FATHER, in the midst of the assembly of the Saints triumphant, for "lo, in

the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain."

A striking illustration of the whole verse is afforded by that custom of the ancient Councils, still adhered to by the Holy Eastern Church in all solemn assemblies, of placing the Book of the Gospels in their midst, as a symbol of the unseen presence of CHRIST. And when accusations against some Bishops S. John i. 26. were offered to Constantine the Great at the Council of Nice, he tore them up, saying, "Ye have been given as gods to us by God, and it is not fitting that a man should judge gods, but only He of Whom it is written, God standeth in the synagogue of the gods, He is a judge among gods." 2 How long will ye give wrong judgment : and accept the persons of the ungodly? A. The Gloss.

How long. For already, throughout your history, ye have resisted, outraged, and slain the servants of the LORD of the vineyard, the prophets of GOD. Will you carry on your rebellion and false judgment against His SON, and lay murderous hands upon the Heir, though He be very GOD? And accept the persons of the ungodly, saying, on the one hand, "Not this Man, but Barabbas," and on the other, "We have no king but Cæsar." Several of the Latin commentators dwell on the wording of the Vulgate in the latter clause of the verse, take the faces of sinners, and explain it as a rebuke for imitating the wicked, whether the evil Jews of old time who slew the prophets, or the yet more evil chief priests who conspired against CHRIST. In this sense they urge that the first half of the verse refers to those rulers who actually condemned the LORD, and the latter to the multitude which might easily have rescued Him, but preferred to follow the lead of His powerful enemies. Cardinal Hugo dwells on the application of the words to unfaithful prelates in the Christian Church, who fall into that old worst sin of the house of Levi, and "have been partial in the law," not bearing in mind the Wise Man's counsel: "Seek not to be judge, being not able to take away iniquity; lest at any time thou fear the person of the mighty, and lay a stumbling-block in the way of thine uprightness."

3 Defend the poor and fatherless : see that such as are in need and necessity have right. 4 Deliver the out-cast and poor : save them from the hand of the ungodly. A.

These words are, they tell us, an appeal to the Jewish people to deliver Him Who became poor and needy for their sakes out of the hands of His cruel enemies, and to save Him from a painful and unmerited death. But a few hours before, and "the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him; for they feared the people," and now that the crisis had come, the people proved to be "dumb dogs, that cannot bark," when the wolves are gathering around the Lamb of GOD; when "the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart." He was not only poor for our sakes, but an orphan, (LXX.) one with no father on earth, with no mother in heaven; and who left Himself not merely destitute of all earthly succour, but endured that last mysterious pang, when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast

Thou forsaken Me?" Outcast, (LXX. and Vulg. poor.) There is a pathetic variant here in some Æthiopic copies, which read the lonely one, fitly spoken of Him Who trod the winepress of His Passion alone, when all the disciples forsook Him and fled. Observe, moreover, that it is not enough for a judge to be inflexibly upright in his mere sentence. It is his duty to see that it be carried out, and not set aside by favour or violence. He is to see that such as are in need and necessity have right, and not merely a claim to be righted, he is to deliver them out of the hand of the ungodly. Pilate achieved the first part of the counsel; he defended the Poor and Needy seven times against the chief priests and the mob; he gave right judgment, saying, "I find no fault in Him;" but he did not see that He had right; he did not deliver Him out of the power of His enemies.

5 They will not be learned nor understand, but walk on still in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. Will not be learned. A. V. more exactly, with the old versions, They know not. "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the LORD of Glory." And because they walked on still in darkness, they chose Barabbas in His stead, but that "blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Whence is added, all the foundations of the earth are moved (A. V. marg.) because thereupon began that great stirring among the nations, whereof the earthquake which rent the rocks at the Crucifixion was the forewarning and type. And those foundations still will be moved (LXX. and Vulg.) the shaking will never end till the gathering in of the nations is accomplished by the Church. There are two other mystical explanations of the latter clause, one that it refers to earthly potentates and men of merely secular desires, who shall be moved, either with wonder at lowliness, poverty, and sorrow being voluntarily chosen by the LORD as His own lot, or with terror at the judgment to come upon them, because when the Light shone in the darkness, they refused to comprehend it; the other, that it is a prophecy of the terrible devastation of the Holy City and the entire land of Israel at the hand of the Romans, as a punishment for rejecting the SAVIOUR. The literal sense makes a distinction between the ignorance and the dulness charged on the false judges, the first accusation, They know not, having reference to their neglect of studying the law they have to administer, while nor understand implies haste, inconsiderateness, and negligence in the investigation of any particular cause; the just decision of which might be arrived at by honest diligence of inquiry, without

A. A. any great legal information. But when haste and ignorance unite, then all the foundations of the earth are out of course, because the basis of society and all confidence in authority is rudely shaken. And so a heathen poet sings in like case: Back flow the sacred rivers to their source, And right and all things veer around their course, Crafty are men in counsel, and no more God-plighted faith abides as once of yore. 6 I have said, Ye are gods: and ye are all the children of the most Highest. 7 But ye shall die like men: and fall like one of the princes. A.

There is a divergence of opinion as to these two verses, whether they are to be taken as addressed to the same persons, or to two different companies. S. Augustine, who mentions both views, inclines to the second, alleging that the earlier verse is spoken to the elect, whom CHRIST welcomes to the kingdom of His FATHER; the latter to the reprobate, commanded to depart into everlasting fire. If addressed to the same persons, the sense will not be very different, but will run thus: "I have given you the choice of everlasting blessedness, and have granted you the adoption of sons, but ye have rejected My salvation, and shall perish in your sins." Herein ye shall die like men, because of your human frailty, and fall like one of the princes, because of your haughty pride, which will bring you down as it did Satan, who fell like lightning from heaven, where he had been one of the princes. One commentator subdivides the second verse, and sees in it a distinction of judgment between the less guilty Jewish multitude, who acquiesced in CHRIST's condemnation, and are therefore adjudged to die like men, while the more guilty chief priests are to fall like one of the princes, into the more terrible punishment of the devil.

We must bear in mind the use the LORD Himself made of this verse in defending Himself from the charge of blasphemy, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, Ye are gods?' If he called them gods, unto whom the word of GOD came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him Whom the FATHER hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the SON of GOD?" And so doing, we shall see the fitness of that other explanation, which takes the whole passage of the election and subsequent casting off of Israel. The chosen people were gods, as the one nation which knew good and evil; even the children of the most Highest, as being named by Him thus: "Israel is My son, even My first-born," but they died like men, either like their own father Adam (Heb. S. Hieron.) through disobedience, or like the Gentiles around them, falling too like one of the princes of the various empires which had risen and set on the world's horizon during the progress of their own history. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, had come and gone, and now Israel's national existence was to be swept away also, deservedly, in its turn.

8 Arise, O GOD, and judge thou the earth : for thou shalt take all heathen to thine inheritance. Arise then, O Sole-begotten SON of GOD, slain by ungodly men, and buried in the grave, arise on the third day from the dead, and sending Thy judgment on the wicked land, the sordid and earthly hearts which rejected Thee: take to Thy-self all nations for an inheritance, in the stead of that one rebellious people which would not have Thee to reign over it. Arise also now from Thy slumber in the tempest-tossed bark of Thy Church, in judgment against her worldly foes, and cause her to preach Thee among all nations; arise to final judgment, coming with all Thy Saints, gathered from east and west, from north and south, out of all kindreds and tongues, and nations, and peoples, now militant here in earth, then to be triumphant and blessed in heaven.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is a Judge among gods; glory be to the SON, Who shall arise to judge the earth; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who hath said to the faithful by the mouth of His prophet, "Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the most Highest." As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Grant us, O LORD, according to Thy precept, to abstain from wrong judgment; and to minister to the needs of the poor, that we may attain to be joined unto the number of Thy children. (1.) O CHRIST, our GOD, make us ever ready to aid the poor and needy, and to keep Thy law, that abounding in works of mercy, we may become the fellows of the heavenly citizens. Through. (11.) Arise, O LORD, Who judgest the earth, and as Thou dwell-est in loving ownership of the faith of all nations, suffer us not to abide in darkness, but cause us to see the light of Thy truth, that we may build the foundations of our faith not upon the sand, which the whirlwind may cast down, but on the rock, whose strength Thou art. Through. (11.) Arise, O God, and judge the earth, that Thou Who rulest over all the Gentiles mayest be believed by those who crucified Thee, to have risen again, that the two nations may unite in love, when Thou bindest the circumcision and the uncircumcision together in the bond of Christian faith. Through. (11.)

Arise, O God, Who judgest the earth, and rule with Thine arm of might those whom Thou hast vouchsafed to purchase by the victory of the Cross, and let the devout thanksgiving of them for whom the shedding of Thy precious Blood serves as redemption be offered unto Thee. And let us, who believe in Thy Passion for our redemption, who confess Thy glorious Resurrection, and proclaim Thine Ascension to the heavens, and await in awe Thy coming in terrible return, hasten joyfully to Thine Advent when the trumpet shall sound. And Thou, O most merciful LORD, deliver from the burnings of hell those whom Thou seest thus celebrating Thy holy rites, and grant that we may be partakers of a glorious resurrection. Through Thy mercy. (11.) O God, from Whom every good work proceedeth and is strong, justify us with the spirit of righteousness and strength, that never giving wrong judgment, nor accepting the persons of the ungodly, we may alway strive to do that which is right and pleasing unto Thee. Through. (1.)

Psalm 83

TITLE. A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is the most High dweller over all the earth. The Voice of the Church to the LORD concerning the Jews, and of sons, and of all persecutors. The Voice of the Church to the LORD concerning the Jews and the sons of men. The Prophet, concerning CHRIST, showeth that He reigneth over all nations here and in the judgment to come. Concerning persecutors. VEN. BEDE. A Song of a Psalm is when, after a prelude on an instrument, the sound of a singing voice is heard, following and keeping time with the instrument, imitating the strains of the psaltery with the tones of the voice. And because a Song mystically signifies contemplation of Divine wisdom; but a Psalm, which is produced by the hands, means the fulfilling of action, that is rightly called A Song of a Psalm wherein knowledge and instruction are united with effectiveness in good works, according to that saying, "If thou desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the LORD shall give her unto thee;" a wonderful token whereof was manifest in Cornelius the centurion. As to what a Psalm of a Song is and means, has been already said in the twenty-ninth (xxx.) Psalm.

Asaph, inasmuch as he had already foretold many things touching the LORD'S Incarnation, is now in the first portion about to speak of His second Advent; beseeching Him, that as His enemies are to be greatly uplifted by means of Antichrist at the end of the world, His judgment ought to come quickly, lest the prolonged licence of that most grievous foe should avail to lay the whole Church waste. O God, who shall be like unto Thee? keep not still silence, &c. In the second portion he intreats, under the similitude of certain names, that vengeance may be taken upon them, through a desire for their correction, not with eagerness to curse them. Do Thou to them as unto the Madianites. EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. A supplication for the people which had suffered heavy things, and a prophecy touching the end of GOD'S enemies. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, and prayer, and supplication.

Various Uses.
Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. } Thou only * art the most Highest over all the Monastic. } earth. Parisian. For the thought of man * will give thanks to Thee, and the remains of thought will keep holiday unto Thee. Ambrosian. As preceding Psalm. Mozarabic. Let the nations know that Thy Name is the LORD* and that Thou art only the most Highest over all the earth. 1 Hold not thy tongue, O GOD, keep not still silence: refrain not thyself, O GOD. The first clause of this verse runs in most of the older translations, (LXX., Vulg., Æthiop., Syr., Arab.,) O God, who shall be like unto Thee? Likeness, comments a Greek Father, is of two kinds, according to substance, which is identity; and according to quality, which is merely resemblance. In the first sense, no one can be like GOD save He Who is consubstantial with GOD, but in the other manner all saints made perfect can be like Him; for the LORD Himself has counselled us, ”Be ye perfect, even as your FATHER

Taking as though = , and the negative as an interrogative. A.

which is in heaven is perfect. And we are assured that this can come to pass, for the Beloved Disciple tells us that ”when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Like Him then, of Whom is said, ”Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom, Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, wherefore, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness. Like Him then, precisely because He willed to be like us, and like the meanest of us here, taking on Him the form of a slave, crucified along with thieves. Yet, although we may attain thus to the likeness of His glorified Manhood, none can be like Him in the glory of the FATHER. None can be like Him when He returns in His divine majesty, as it is written, ”Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Least of all can that Wicked One, the Antichrist, attain to such resemblance, albeit he hath said, ”I will be like the Most High,” for he shall be smitten when the LORD comes again to judgment, when He will keep not still silence, but will utter His terrible voice so that all creation shall hear. And observe that He kept silence and refrained Himself here on earth in threefold fashion.

There was His silence of speech before Pilate, when ”as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. There was His silence of act in the garden, when He said unto Peter, ”Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My FATHER, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? There was His silence of will in His voluntary acceptance and endurance of death for us. But now His Church is sore troubled by her enemies, and would fain hear His voice bidding waves and winds be still, and commanding the evil spirits to depart into the abyss.

2 For lo, thine enemies make a murmuring : and they that hate thee have lift up their head. A murmuring, or rather, with S. Jerome and the A. V., a tumult, a loud, vague noise, as the roaring of the sea, such as an advancing army makes with the clashing of its weapons, the braying of its instruments, and the shouts of its soldiers. And accordingly the LXX. and Vulgate agree in translating the passage have sounded (ἠχησαν, sonuerunt.) Sounded, not spoken, observes S. Augustine, because it is the voice of irrational passion, not of intelligent, articulate reason, which the enemies of God utter. At first they are secret in their whisperings and incitements to error and iniquity, but when they think themselves strong enough for open war against the Faith, then they sound and preach their falsehood loudly. And this His enemies, the chief priests, did, when after secretly inciting the multitude against Him, they caused it to break forth with the cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Have lift up their head. That is, they have assumed a posture of bold attack, rising up from their former depression or obscurity, and this either by setting their head, that is, their mere human reason and faculties, against Almighty power and wisdom, or by choosing themselves a captain, which is Antichrist.

R. D. C. A. 3 They have imagined craftily against thy people : and taken counsel against thy secret ones. They note here two degrees of enmity, that directed by unbelievers against the Faith in general, and that more particular hostility with which the chief saints of God are pursued, those secret ones whom He hides under the shadow of His wings, whom He guards in peril as He did Noah in the ark, David in the cave, Elisha in Dothan, Athanasius in the very ship which bore his pursuers; whom He compasses about with His own majesty to save them, as Alexander Severus folded Ulpian in the imperial purple when the Prætorians sought his life. Yet again, the words apply with especial force to those rulers of the Jews who imagined craftily against their own people, by leading them away from their Teacher, poisoning their minds towards Him, and took counsel ofttimes against the Hidden Wisdom of God, till they put Him to death.

4 They have said, Come and let us root them out, that they be no more a people : and that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. Here is the sound of which the second verse told us; the inner hatred breaking out into outward speech. And observe the bitterness of that hatred. The Egyptian tyrant did not go so far as this, at any rate in his first plottings against the children of Israel. He was content to prevent their rapid multiplication, lest they should be too strong for their taskmasters, and was willing that they should live, albeit as bondslaves. But the enmity of ungodliness against the Faith can be satisfied with nothing less than the total extirpation of believers, either through martyrdom or apostasy. They ask how the Church, which is gathered out of all nations, can fitly be here spoken of as but one people, and they answer their own inquiry by reminding us that Christians are the true spiritual descendants of Abraham, are born again alike in the one font of baptism, have one will and one King, and are citizens of one heavenly country.

Their enemies would even, were it possible, abolish the very memory of the past, and cause men to forget that Israel, the "Prince with God," the

Hugo Card. Exod. i. 16. C LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself, once walked on earth, or that the people which takes its name from Him ever had a place amongst mankind. So it was in the great Tenth Persecution, so in the overthrow of the Church of Japan, so in France under the Terror. And to each and all the true children of Israel re-echo Tertullian's noble saying, "The more we are mowed down, the more numerous we become, blood is the seed of Christians." 5 For they have cast their heads together with one consent : and are confederate against thee ; 6 The tabernacles of the Edomites, and the Ismaelites : the Moabites, and Hagarens ; 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek : the Philistines, with them that dwell at Tyre. 8 Assur also is joined with them : and have holpen the children of Lot.

The enumeration of the peoples engaged in this confederacy against Israel has given rise to much discussion as to the date and occasion of the Psalm. A very few, with no good reason, include it amongst the Davidic portion of the Psalter. R. Kimchi, followed by several of the earlier critics, assigns it to the reign of Jehoshaphat, when Ammon, Moab, and the Edomites of Mount Seir did unite against Judah, others to Sennacherib's raid in Hezekiah's time, while several of the Fathers, followed by some eminent moderns, take it of the league made by Sanballat, with the Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites, against the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Nehemiah. And others bring it lower down, taking it to be a Maccabee Psalm. The mention of Assyria, and indeed of Amalek, makes this last conjecture quite untenable, for the Assyrian empire (here apparently only growing into strength) had been succeeded by the Babylonian, Persian, and Macedonian dynasties long before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, while the Amalekites, a very feeble remnant after Saul's great victory, were totally extirpated by the children of Simeon in the days of Hezekiah, which excludes the post-Captivity view also. But whatever be the historical and literal sense of the passage, there is little diversity in the mystical explanation of it, as denoting the various classes of God's enemies, who would fain lay waste and destroy His Church. Following in the track of S. Augustine, they seek for special lessons in the meaning of the proper names, though often erring as to their true signification. They remind us that the tabernacles of the Edomites point to the unstable and transitory aims of men of earthly and cruel minds, typified by the "red clay" which Adam or Edom denotes. The Ishmaelites are expounded as signifying those who obey

A. C.

themselves only, and not God. But the name Ishmael means "heard of God," and we may therefore better take the sense to be those false Christians brought near to God in His ordinances, as was Ishmael by the rite of circumcision, but who nevertheless mock at the deeper mysteries of His promise, and therefore lose their share

of His inheritance. Moab, too, meaning seed of the father, is a type of such as have illicitly entered into the fold of the Church, claiming to be lawful members of the Christian family, but who have climbed over the wall of the sheepfold, and not come in by the door. If the Hagarenes be named after Hagar, they will rank in the same class as the Ishmaelites, with, however, the special mark of flight attached to them, shunning, like Jonah, the call of God, going out, like their ancestress, from the trials of God's house to the sorer cross of self-chosen suffering in the desert of unbelief. The interpretation S. Augustine gives to this name, for an uncertain reason, is that it denotes strangers and proselytes, who do not heartily submit to the laws of their new country, but retain an alien mind. Gebal, which is very diversely explained by the ancient commentators, seems to signify a boundary, and may then well denote those who busy themselves altogether with finite and temporal things, to the exclusion of such as are eternal and infinite.

Ammon and Amalek, two of the earliest and most inveterate foes of Israel, are fitly grouped together, and once more signify for us revolted kin, not original aliens, for the one, springing like Moab from Lot, was of the race of Terah, Abraham's father; and the other, derived from a grandson of Esau, had the blood of both Abraham and Isaac in its veins. Ammon, a name derived from a root , "to gather together," is a type of the multitude in all ages, averse to any check on its pleasures and caprices, fickle, and often cruel, and most opposed to such as set before it a lofty standard of principle and action. Amalek, "the strangler of the people," an apt name for that nation of which the LORD said: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and feared not God; is the type of all crafty and treacherous foes of the Church or of the soul, and in particular of those evil thoughts which attack us in seasons of languor and depression, when there is little vigour of mind or body to resist them. All these alienated kindred of the spiritual Israel league themselves with the Philistines, "strangers" or "wanderers," open and original foes of the chosen people, types of the heathen and of undisguised and open sin. They combine with them that dwell at Tyre;

those hard and "rocky" souls which have no soil wherein the seed of the Word can take root.

A. Perhaps his informant read , instead of . 8 Assur also is joined with them : and have holpen the children of Lot.

Assyria, like Egypt at an earlier period of Jewish history, is put for the idolatrous world-power in rebellion against God, for the organisation of human strength and self-will ungoverned by religious principles, for the unbelieving State, and it consistently lends its help and is an arm (Heb. S. Hieron.) not to the children of light, but to the children of Lot, that is, of "darkness," because Lot signifies a "veil" or

”covering.” The Latin commentators, for the most part following S. Augustine, by interpreting Assur as ”elated” or ”oppressing,” and Lot as ”backsliding,” see in this place the devil and his angels, the allies of heathen and of false brethren. As to the literal meaning, it is enough to observe that if Assur here means, as is most probable, the empire of Nineveh, it is the earliest appearance of that state in Western Asia. But Theodoret takes it to mean the Samaritan colonists under Sanballat, who joined with Tobiah the Ammonite, and the Philistines of Ashdod, and the Edomite and Ishmaelite Arabians under Geshem, to prevent the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The total number of the confederates named is eleven, the mystical type of sin, because it is just one more than ten, the number of the precepts in the Decalogue, and thus denotes transgression of the moral law. Each battalion has its own especial banner and device as it marches to war against the Saints. The heretics bear a wolf; schismatics a screech-owl, hated of all the birds; the proud display a unicorn; the slothful a dormouse; hypocrites a scorpion, stinging with its tail; the wrathful have a lion; the covetous a mole, which ceases not to grub beneath the earth; the gluttonous bear a swine; the envious a tiger; the impure an ass; the desperate a man hanging by a cord.

9 But do thou to them as unto the Madianites: unto Sisera, and unto Jabin at the brook of Kison; 10 Who perished at Endor: and became as the dung of the earth. Here the tone of the Psalm changes, and the prophet calls on God to renew His old loving-kindness, and to fight the battles of Israel. How memorable the overthrow of the Midianites was, may be gathered from the reference to it in Isaiah’s great prophecy of the Incarnation: ”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 Midian.” It is to be remembered that the special kind of suffering inflicted upon Israel by Midian was not a permanent military tyranny, A. Pseudo-Hieron.

like that of the Philistines, but famine, caused by sudden raids made upon the crops by overwhelming forces. And hereupon the greatest mystical divine of the ancient Church reminds us that Israel suffered such things because, being carnally minded, it was as ”he that soweth to his flesh, [who] shall of his flesh reap corruption,” whereas they who aim higher receive the blessing, ”He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” These are the fields which the Midianites cannot destroy, nor so much as reach. And in Gideon’s great battle against Midian in the valley of Moreh, he had to fight with Amalek also, and with the children of the East, the Ishmaelite allies of his foe; that the odds might be so overwhelming as to prove the divine origin of the deliverance wrought by the three hundred with their pitchers and lamps; fit precursors of the little band of disciples who under Him of Whom Gideon, ”the hewer down” of idols, was but a type, stormed the intrenchments and routed the forces of Paganism, after the shattered clay of the Sacred Humanity displayed the Light of Light to the darkened world. And observe that Midian, which means ”strife,” aptly denotes a world lying in anarchy, and

capable of being brought into order by none save the Prince of Peace. Origen, who explains the word to mean ”outside judgment,” takes it as denoting all who live without the Law.

From the rout of Midian the Psalmist passes to the earlier defeat of the Canaanites in their last great stand against Israel. Here too the proper names employed give a mystical signification. Sisera denotes ”battle-array,” Jabin is the ”wise” or ”understanding,” Kishon the ”winding” or ”crooked” stream. Power and organization, craft and skill, artifice and stratagem are in vain against the LORD. He conquered Sisera, and that by the ”hand of a woman,” first, when the Maiden at Nazareth reversed the curse of Eve’s disobedience, in saying, ”Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word;” and next, when the mystical Bride of the Lamb overcame the world through suffering. Jabin is the type of the carnal understanding, into whose power we are delivered, when we refuse to learn a higher wisdom. And so speaks the Apostle: ”Even as they did not like to retain GOD in their knowledge, GOD gave them up to a mind void of judgment, to do those things which are not convenient.” But this wisdom, which ”descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish,” CHRIST, Who is the Power of GOD and the Wisdom of GOD, destroys; ”For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” And this He did at Kishon, meeting the tortuous craft, the ”thousand meanderings,” of the old serpent, with Divine and superior intelligence. So, in the great Passiontide hymn, we read:

Judg. vi. 3. Origen. Hom. vii. in Jud. Gal. vi. 8. Origen. A. S. Luke i. 38. Origen. Hom. iv. in Jud. Rom. i. 28. S. James iii. 15. 1 Cor. i. 19. Prudentius. S. Venant. Fortunat. The Hymn, Pange lingua. For the work of our salvation Needs would have his order so, And the multiform deceiver’s Art by art would overthrow, And from thence would bring the medicine Whence the insult of the foe. Haymo. S. Bruno Carth. A. Wherefore it aptly follows, Who perished at En-dor. For En-dor means the ”well of the dwelling,” the very source and habitation of the powers of evil, the grave and hell, which were spoiled and made a show of openly, after they had admitted their Conqueror in the guise of a captive; since which time they have become as the dung of the earth, not merely in that Christians can afford to contemn powers invested with unspeakable dread to others, but that as dung is profitable to fertilise the ground, so the very temptations of the evil one and the pains of death are used by God as means for the growth and perfection of the Saints. Evil men, too, perish at Endor, when they abide by their own springs alone, when they say, like Naaman, ”Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?” refuse the waters of regeneration, which alone can cleanse the leprosy of their souls; and become as the dung of the earth by persevering in coarse and degrading sin.

11 Make them and their princes like Oreb and Zeb: yea, make all their princes like as Zeba and Salmana; 12 Who say, Let us take to ourselves: the houses of God in possession. The details of Gideon's great victory, resulting not only in the rout of the armies of Midian, but in the slaughter of four princes of that nation, are recalled, in prayer that God may work equal deliverance for His people again. Oreb, the "raven," and Zeeb, the "wolf," are types of the unclean and rapacious powers of evil. Zebah is a "victim" or "sacrifice," but not in honour of God, rather such as is condemned by the Wise Man, "Whoso bringeth an offering of the goods of the poor, doeth as one who killeth a son before his father's eyes." Salmana or Zalmunna, the "shadowless" or "shelter forbidden," is that evil one who is the enemy

Some unnecessary difficulty has been raised about this reference, as though it were the only record of a battle not elsewhere named. But Joshua xvii. 11, names En-dor as lying in the portion of Manasseh together with Taanach and Me- giddo, which two are coupled by Deborah in her song as the scene of the victory over Jabin. There is thus no need to imagine a second battle, as the rout may very well have spread over all three districts.

and the opposite of the Man Who is "as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land," a "shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." All these, gathering themselves together against the people of God, desire to drive them from their heritage. What, then, are these especial houses of God which they would fain seize? The first answer given is that the words apply to the whole land of Israel, comparing the language of Jehoshaphat, "And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab, and Mount Seir . . . come to cast us out of Thy possession, which Thou hast given us to inherit." Others take it of the city of Jerusalem, and more particularly of the Temple, with which agree the LXX. reading, the altar, and the Vulgate, the sanctuary. The Chaldee paraphrast and S. Jerome extend the meaning somewhat further, by rendering severally every pure thing of God, and the beauty of God. But the words have a yet deeper import for us, when we remember that saying of the Apostle, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temples of the living God," as we shall then recognise the attempt of the evil spirits and their wicked allies on earth to bring the bodies and souls of CHRIST'S people into subjection to sin. But the sanctuary which we possess having the sacramental mysteries stored within it, the sacred Flesh and precious Blood, the graces of the SPIRIT'S might, the perennial fountain, and the light Divine, is too strong for them to take, unless it is betrayed from within.

13 O my God, make them like unto a wheel : and as the stubble before the wind.

Like unto a wheel. So all the older versions, while modern critics, translating, some whirlwind, and others chaff or thistledown, with reference to Isaiah xvii. 13, do not practically affect the inner meaning. The wheel is explained as an emblem of short-

lived and unstable earthly prosperity, followed by spiritual destruction, because the hinder part of the wheel rises, and yet leaves behind what it has just A. S. Bruno Carth. Two Cardinals of mediæval times (Joannes Vitalis and Hugo of S. Cher) interpret this text of the nepotism of great nobles, ecclesiastic and lay, making the dignities, benefices, and goods of the Church the hereditary feoffs of their families, the apanages of their children; and the latter of them applies his censure more particularly to the greed of the Roman Court of his day, aver- ring that the Romans not only kept the Popedom in their own hands, but nominated some of themselves to every vacant pre-bend in Christendom, to the injury of episcopal rights, and the ruin of the Church. Lorinus hints at this passage, but is too discreet to quote it, recommending his readers to peruse it for themselves.

touched, while the fore-part, typical of the future, is always sinking, and as being circular and having no end, denotes the worm that dieth not. And whereas there is something of solidity in the wheel: the stubble, on the other hand, is light, feeble, and incapable of offering any resistance to the storm. Others, again, instead of wheel, translate the LXX. τροχός as a child's top, which is made to revolve quickly by lashing it, an emblem of sinners under the scourge of God. But there is no reason to depart from the usual rendering. The idea is a common-place amongst heathen writers, and occurs also in Ecclesiasticus, "The heart of the foolish is like a cart-wheel, and his thoughts are like a rolling axle-tree." 14 Like as the fire that burneth up the wood : and as the flame that consumeth the mountains. 15 Persecute them even so with thy tempest : and make them afraid with thy storm.

Ezck. i. 15. This is the true connection of these verses, not taking the fourteenth with the preceding one, according to the Prayer Book punctuation. The fire and flame are ascribed to the Judgment-day in particular, as denoting the terrible wrath of God against sin, but are not thereby excluded from all reference to temporal punishment. The wood is taken by some to mean all savage, uncultured, and obstinate heathens, and the mountains as denoting the haughty and exalted. And observe that the latter clause of the verse intensifies the meaning, because the freer play of the winds upon lofty heights makes a fire among the timber fiercer and more destructive than it can be on the level. Cardinal Hugo, agreeing in the latter explanation, prefers to take the wood as the opposite idea to an orchard, and as denoting wealthy persons who bear no fruit, and are barren in good works. Some have seen a reference to volcanoes in the flame that burneth up the mountains, but there is no reason to suppose a Hebrew poet of so distant a day familiar with such an idea. The storm and tempest are taken universally by the old commentators to denote the irresistible wrath of God against impenitent sinners, and as denoting the terrors of the Doom. But the wording of the very next verse might well have induced some of them to add a milder explanation. The whole series of petitions may be taken in a good sense as praying for the conversion of sinners, whom God can make like unto those wheels which were guided by the spirit of the Living

This, he observes, is specially true of the Romans, as every one who has much to do with the Curia knows well. And he points his observations by meekly quoting the words of Eliphaz the Temanite: ”For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.” (Job xv. 34.) Creatures in Ezekiel’s vision, bearing upon them the likeness of a sapphire throne, whereon sitteth the Man. They may be caught away by the wind, to speed on God’s errand, as Philip was when borne away from his Ethiopian convert to the city of Azotus, and the fire which lighted on the Apostles in fiery tongues may so baptize them with its purifying flame as to kindle them with burning love, destroying the wood, hay, stubble, but causing the fine gold to come out bright and clean from all dross. Wherefore is added: 16 Make their faces ashamed, O LORD : that they may seek thy Name.

More exactly, with A.V., LXX., and Vulgate, Fill their faces with shame. That is, in the literal sense, that they may lose all confidence in their idols, and acknowledge the God of the Jews to be mightier than their gods, ”because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.” And one reminds us wisely that it is sometimes better for a Christian to fall, that he may be ashamed, and so seek the Name of JESUS as his one hope and stay, rather than stand, and be filled with spiritual pride in his own strength. It is therefore spoken by the Prophet, ”O daughter of Zion, thou shalt go even to Babylon, there shalt thou be delivered.” And this, too, is the aim and purpose of spiritual penalties and excommunications, such as that which shut Miriam out of the camp for seven days, as also of that shame which attends confession of sin, a ”shame which is glory and grace,” not like the false shame of concealment, which is more sin. And on this a Saint observes, ”In this way one can arm his soul with the weapons of shame, for whoso indicts himself by open mention of his secret faults, hath the memory of his shame as a guide for the future conduct of his life.” But as only some of these evil-doers will be softened and turned to God by His chastisements in this world, while others will be the more hardened, it follows:

S. Greg. Nyas. Hom. 3 in Eccles. 17 Let them be confounded and vexed ever more and more : let them be put to shame, and perish. 18 And they shall know that thou, whose Name is JEHOVAH : art only the most Highest over all the earth. We have in these words set before us the doom of the finally impenitent, who will see the overthrow of their king Antichrist, and the dominion of the Son of Man established over all creation, and who will then pass from His judgment-seat to their place of punishment. But, as before, a milder interpretation is not wanting nor unfit, and we shall perhaps A. C. S. Bruno Carth. A.

better construe the whole passage in connection with the sixteenth verse. Here we see shadowed out one great difference between the Old and the New Covenant, the severance made between earthly and spiritual well-being. To the Jew, so long as he

was obedient to the Law, came victory and ease, while foreign tyranny, heavy exactions, and incessant suffering were the penalties for backsliding. But the Gospel offers itself to the mourner, the hungry, and the outcast, rather than to those who rejoice and are full of bread. And thus it has been usually a time of sorrow and distress in a nation when it has received the Faith. So it was with Judæa itself, so with the Roman empire, so with England, when the heathen Penda warred against the Cross. Let them then be confounded, when they reflect upon their guilt, and that more and more, by increasing sensitiveness of conscience, and a gradually higher standard of holiness; or for ever and ever (A.V., LXX., and Vulg.,) by never again returning to their wickedness, and so let them perish, by dying to sin and to themselves, that they may live to CHRIST, and know that He Whose Name is JEHOVAH, is only the Most Highest over all the earth; and especially that none save He, no earthly potentate whatever, may dare to claim the Headship of His Church. His Name is Jehovah, for He is Very GOD of Very GOD;

He is the Most Highest, for GOD hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name. But it may be asked, Why Highest over all the earth, rather than over all the heavens? And the answer is, to quell the pride of man, who is earth, and will return to earth. "Why is earth and ashes proud? Not justly for itself, but because GOD stooped to that earth and ashes, and taking it to Himself, crowned man, heretofore lower than the angels, with glory and worship, and set Him over all the works of creation.

And therefore: Glory be to the FATHER, Whose Name is JEHOVAH; glory be to the SON, the King of Israel, Who only is Highest over all the earth; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Flame which burnt up with love those mountains of GOD, the Apostles and Martyrs. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Take away from us, O LORD, all superfluity of error, that leaving the tribes of sin behind us, we may fear Thee only, Who dwellest most Highest over all the earth. Through. (1.) Let the Gentiles, for whom Thou didst hang upon the rood of the Cross, know, O CHRIST, that Thy Name is the LORD, and let knowledge bring them back to their Maker, as ignorance gave them up to sloth, that they may be converted through knowledge of the faith, and rejoice in the hope of glory. (11.) Arise, O GOD, keep not still silence, refrain not Thyself; but as they who hate Thee have lift up their head, fill their faces with shame, that being confounded, they may seek Thy Name; and save Thy people, that they may know the testimony of Thy might; be gracious unto Thine inheritance, Who art only the most Highest over all the earth. (11.)

O GOD, who is like unto Thee in goodness or in might? Thou Who teachest Thy Saints with Thy goodness, and defendest them with Thy might, Who bridlest the

foaming mouths of their enemies, and hearkenest to the prayers of Thy servants. Grant us, who trust in Thy goodness, some small share of good works, to keep us safe from the counsel of our enemies, to wash us from sin, and make us well-pleasing unto Thee, that Thou mayest bring us to everlasting glory, Who art only the most Highest over all the earth. (11.) O LORD our Redeemer, make Thine enemies as a wheel, them to whom the mystery of Thy Cross is foolishness, that they may be scattered as stubble before the face of the wind, and that an abiding-place for ever may be granted unto them that believe, or shall hereafter believe in Thee. (11.) Look, O LORD, upon Thy people, and be exalted in Thy majesty above them that hate Thee, and drive into headlong ruin those who hasten to attack Thy faithful ones, that confounded and put to shame, they may know that Thou only art most Highest over all the earth. (11.)

O GOD of celestial majesty, unto Whom none is like, destroy us not out of the nation of the elect, by reason of the multitude of our sins, but, of Thy merciful goodness, cause our names to be counted amongst Israel for evermore. Through. (1.)

Psalm 84

TITLE. To the Chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. LXX. and Vulgate: To the end, for the presses, a Psalm for the sons of Kore. Chaldee Targum: For praise, upon the harp brought from Gath, by the hands of the sons of Korah, a hymn.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST opens the kingdom of the heavenly house. Concerning them who have attained the Faith. To them who shall attain a dwelling in the house of the LORD. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER on behalf of the Church. A Psalm to be read along with the Gospel of S. Matthew. Unto them who have attained the Faith. The Advent of CHRIST in Manhood, and concerning the Churches. A prayer over the field.

VEN. BEDE. Three Psalms, viii., lxxx. (81) and lxxxiii. (84) are entitled for the presses, that is, for the sufferings of the Holy Church. And therein the numbers eight and eighty denote the hope of future resurrection, with the number ten, signifying the penny (denarius) of everlasting life, which the Church shall receive after her afflictions, like a wine-cellar after the press. And this is that most blessed end, which is included in all the titles which are worded for the presses. And in that lxxxiii. is the last Psalm which is named for the presses, this shows that the resurrection of the Church is hallowed in the vision of the Holy Trinity, when the God of gods shall be seen in Sion. The sons of Korah are the sons of the Cross, as has been already said; or as Arnobius expounds it. Whereas in the previous psalm they who desired to seize on the sanctuary of GOD were confounded and perished, and excited loathing and produced hindrances to charity and other virtues, now, on the other hand, that the LORD reigns in us, who once were sons of Korah the rebel, we became sons of GOD, our evil fathers having been swallowed up by the earth; and we, who aforetime thought to bear the fire of lust and avarice, strange to GOD, now kindled with the fire of divine love, say, O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts.

This explanation of Arnobius is supported by the fact, that in the first, second, and third places wherein the sons of Korah are named in the title, Understanding is

added at the same time; but in the third place, as though these sons of Korah had been rebuked on stricter inquiry, it is thus written: For them who shall be changed, the sons of Korah, for understanding. These sons of Korah, in the first part of the psalm, declare their unutterable longing for the Church. O how amiable are Thy dwellings, O Lord! In the second clause, they confess that he is happy, to whom the LORD gives help, and whom He causes to attain to the grace of Confession. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee. In the third place, they say that it is far better to dwell obscure in the House of the LORD than to enter the tabernacle of sinners with any worldly honours. For one day in Thy courts, &c.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of the sons of Korah, which David composed when he was going forth of Sion to worship in the House of the LORD. It is said also to be a prophecy of CHRIST and of His Church. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A prophecy of CHRIST and of His Church. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of glorifying in the LORD.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Friday: Matins. [Corpus Christi: III. Nocturn. Dedication of a Church: II. Nocturn. Sacred Heart: III. Nocturn.] Monastic. Thursday: II. Nocturn. [Corpus Christi: II. Nocturn. Dedication of Church: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Ferial: As preceding Psalm. [Corpus Christi: From Thine Altar O LORD, we receive CHRIST, in Whom our heart and flesh rejoice. Dedication: This is none other than the House of GOD, and the gate of Heaven. Sacred Heart: GOD loveth mercy and truth * the LORD will give grace and worship.] Monastic. Ferial: Thou hast blessed * O LORD, Thy land. [Corpus Christi: As Gregorian. Dedication: The temple of GOD is holy, it is GOD’s husbandry, it is GOD’s building.] Parisian. I believe * verily to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Ambrosian. As Psalm lxxxii. Mozarabic. My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living GOD. 1 O how amiable are thy dwellings: thou Lord of hosts! 2 My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

For dwellings, the A. V. more exactly, with LXX. and Vulgate, reads tabernacles, and thus suggests a contrast between these moveable tents and the permanent courts of the second verse. ”There are,” observes S. Bernard, commenting on this passage, ”three conditions of holy souls; to wit, first in the corruptible body; secondly, without the body; thirdly, in the glorified body. First in warfare, next in rest, thirdly in perfect blessedness; first, that is to say, in tabernacles, secondly, in courts, thirdly in the House of the LORD. O how amiable are Thy tabernacles, Thou Lord of Hosts! But His courts are much more desirable, so that he adds, My soul hath a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord. Yet as even in these courts there is some imperfection, altogether blessed are they who dwell in Thy House,

O LORD." Some, however, reading the whole of the first verse in close connection, see in the tabernacles the abiding place of the armies of heaven, for we read in another psalm, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Heaven is like a camp, for it is strong and secure from the enemy, and because there, as in an earthly army in time of warfare, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. And this is the view most dwelt upon by the earlier commentators. As the Jews in their captivity at Babylon longed for a sight of the Holy City, for its feast of tabernacles, and its solemn rites in the Temple; so the saints, exiles here on earth from their country, long to flee thither and be at rest. Hence it is that this Psalm has been so often

Serm. in fest. Omn. SS. 3. Titelman. Ps. xxxiv. 7, A. V. R. Apollina-rius. S. Cyprian. de Mortalitate. S. Hieron. in Zach. xiv. A. 2 Cor. v. 1.

on the lips of dying Christians, eager to depart and be with CHRIST, for they "know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of GOD, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Accordingly, these verses were recited by S. Paula as she lay on her death-bed, and they form still a part of the Burial Office for Priests in the Western Church. Note too that the plural tabernacles points to the "many mansions" in our FATHER's House, while the word courts, implying size and spaciousness, assures us that there will be room there for all who desire to enter in. Wherefore it is written of Solomon's house, that "the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones," because the circular form is the most capacious of all. There are other senses, too, in which we may take the words. The tabernacles may well denote the Churches of GOD; the outer courts here on earth of His great temple in the heavens, plural, as locally separate, just as were the various detached portions of the great House in Sion, and yet one, as belonging and united to it only. Again; just as Gentiles who are struck with the beauty of the Gospel, and desire to enter into the Church of GOD, so devout Christians look with admiration and love upon the Religious life, the warrior tents of the active Orders, the peaceful courts of the contemplative ones;

exclaiming with Balaam, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. Yet again, as GOD is pleased to dwell within His Saints, all those who have made their souls a fitting habitation for Him, are tabernacles which excite the love, the longing, and the emulation of less perfect followers of the Lamb. Finally, the words may be taken by us in that primary sense which they bore for the Jews, love for the house wherein we worship GOD, and desire not only to seek Him therein, but to show our zeal by costly adornment and sedulous decoration of His shrines.

Give all thou canst, high heaven rejects the lore Of nicely-calculated less or more; So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells, Where light and

shade repose, where music dwells Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die; Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof That they were born for immortality.

My soul hath a desire and longing. Here once more the Prayer Book version is too weak. The A. V. rightly translates, with all the old versions, instead of longing, My soul faints. Not from weakness doth she faint, observes an early writer, but because of passionate love, for this is the wont of lovers parted from those they love. We may desire heavenly things, and yet not faint for them, comments S. Gregory the Great, so long as we are held back by earthly pleasures, but we both desire and faint when our eagerness for the highest blessings causes us to die to ourselves. And this fainting, which causes us to lose our own strength, is the true means for acquiring the strength of God. We fail, and cease to be what we were before, but become something better and stronger, as the grape, forced out of its form and nature in the presses of which the title speaks, becomes rich wine fit for storage in the cellars. They remind us how often in Holy Writ we read of the bodily suffering which great spiritual visions entail, how the Queen of Sheba had ”no more spirit in her,” when she beheld Solomon in all his glory, how ”Daniel fainted and was sick certain days” after Gabriel’s revelation to him; how Peter ”knew not what he said,” as he looked on his transfigured LORD; how Paul could not tell whether his trance were in the body or out of the body. They count up seven reasons for this eager longing after the heavenly Jerusalem, namely, its freedom, its pure and perfect joy, its bestowal of wishes, its endless and unbroken peace, its complete security, its unvarying health, its glorious companionship. Many a divine and many a poet has endeavoured to give some faint expression to this craving of the soul, and perhaps none more effectively than the Cluniac monk:

S. Greg. M. Mor. in Job. v. 39. A. Jerusalem the glorious! The glory of the elect! O dear and future vision That eager hearts expect: Even now by faith I see thee: Even here thy walls discern: To thee my thoughts are kindled, And pant, and strive, and yearn. Jerusalem the only, That lookest from heaven below, In thee is all my glory, In me is all my woe; And though my body may not, My spirit seeks thee fain, Till flesh and earth return me To earth and flesh again. My heart and my flesh. That is, my soul and my body. Hugo Card. And the words prove the grade of saintliness which the true disciple may reach even here, that the flesh can be so subdued to the spirit as not to rebel, but to obey its higher impulses. Rejoice, but how, if desire and fainting precede? The Apostle will tell us, ”Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer.” Yet again, the Wise Man teaches us that ”hope deferred maketh the heart sick.” How can we then justly use the word rejoice? The reply is twofold, or rather but one. First, that God gives His faithful ones, A.

who are patient in tribulation, a foretaste of future glory, enough to sustain and gladden them, that they may continue in prayer. Next, as a great Saint observes,

the soul ”doth not rejoice in this world, in riches, in honour, in luxury, in drunkenness, in dead vanities, nor in vanities which will quickly die, together with the love of them, but in the living God. Why did he not say simply ’in GOD,’ instead of adding, ’in the living GOD?’ In order to show that everything which belongs not to the worship of GOD we ought to account as dead.” And, finally, we may take these verses as spoken in the person of CHRIST Himself, eaten up with zeal for the House of GOD, and Whose unstained Body coincided with every volition of His perfect soul, while both were inseparably joined to the Godhead of the WORD in hypostatic union.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young: even thy altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my GOD.

There is some variation of the readings here, as regards the particular birds named. The Targum explains them as the dove and the turtle, and interprets the reference to the altar as merely denoting the use of these in sacrifice. The other ancient versions agree with the English as regards the first word, but translate the second as turtle, like the Chaldee. S. Augustine allegorizes the verse, not without beauty, as follows: He has been speaking of two things which rejoice, his heart and his flesh, and he has set over against these, two parables drawn from birds, the sparrow and the turtle; the one denoting the heart, and the other the flesh. The sparrow hath found her an house; my heart hath found her an house. She plies her wings with the virtues of her life, faith, hope, and charity, wherewith she may fly to her house; and when she comes thither, she will abide there, and the complaining note of the sparrow which is here, will not be there. For the sparrow is a complaining bird, of which is said in another Psalm, ”As a sparrow that sitteth alone upon the house-top. She flieth from the house-top to the house. Only let her be on the top, and spurn her carnal dwelling, she will then have a heavenly, an eternal house, and there will end her moan. He ascribes young to the turtle, that is, to the flesh. The turtle hath found a nest where she may lay her young.

The house is for ever, the nest but for a while; and that nest is the Church militant on earth, the true faith, the Catholic faith, wherein Christians bring forth the fruit of good works. Again; some explain the sparrow of the Saints of active life, reminding us that it leaves the barren wood to dwell close to the houses of men, and that it is the bird, , used in the rite of atonement for leprosy, and thus a type of the abandonment of sin and pursuit of holiness; while the turtle, as the constant emblem of chaste love and yet of mournfulness, denotes the penitent Saints of the contemplative life. Cardinal Hugo, according to his wont, sums up the qualities which make the sparrow a fit type of devout souls, in a distich, thus:

Prole potens, hominum vicinus, et hostia lepræ, Callidus, et cantans, hyemans, cibus est, volat, ignit. Fruitful, a friend of man, the leper’s sacrifice, Wise, tuneful, migrates not, is food, flies, fires. One other interpretation sees in the sparrow, with

its lofty flight, CHRIST Himself, seeking, at the Ascension, His house in the highest heavens, while His faithful spouse, the Church, sighing for Him in her exile here, lovingly brings up her young in the nest of peaceful meditation. And with the former of these two notions agrees that old hymn addressed to Our LORD. Ave passer salutaris, Qui frequenter immolaris Super tuis sacris aris, Nunquam tamen consummaris. Hail, O sparrow of salvation, Thou which oft art made oblation At Thine holy altar's station, Rite which hath no termination. S. Augustine gives another reason than this, taking, as he does in another place, both sparrow and turtle as types of CHRIST. Our SAVIOUR, observes he, is compared to a sparrow, because it is a very insignificant bird, as He first taught us humility, and as the turtle is the chastest of birds, so He first taught us purity.

If we translate the word meaning "freedom," as swallow, which seems the most exact rendering, we then get a mystical contrast of another kind. The sparrow, keeping close at all times to the houses, denotes the faithful soul abiding steadfastly in the Church on earth; the swallow, a migrating bird, and the swift, a variety of it, which is in perpetual motion, and rarely touches the ground, will serve as the type of ransomed pilgrim souls which seek a better country, and seldom come in contact with earthly and carnal thoughts. Thine altars. The altar, as the most sacred part of the temple, is put for the whole building, around and about which the sparrows and swallows made their nests and fluttered in security. We are told how even heathens looked on the birds which so trusted themselves, as it were, to diÆlian. Var. Hist. v. 17. Herod. i. 159.

S. Bern. Serm. in Cant. lxi. vine protection as sacred and inviolate; how one man was slain for harming a sparrow which had sheltered itself in a temple of Æsculapius; how another drove out the sparrows from a sacred fane as a parable in action to shame those who proposed to deliver up a suppliant to his enemies; and we may well believe that not less reverence was exhibited by the Jews. Interpreting the two birds of Christian souls, we may take the altars here in the most literal sense, with a true and deep meaning, as referring to the tables whence the heavenly banquet is dispensed for our refreshment, whereon lies that Body which gathers the eagles together. Or we may take the altars as denoting the human Soul and Body of CHRIST, on which the sacrifices of the faithful are daily offered, and wherein we shall have our eternal mansions, as we shelter in His side. And so the last of the Fathers exclaims: "O happy clefts, which build up faith in the Resurrection and in the Divinity of CHRIST! 'My LORD,' saith Thomas, 'and my GOD:' Whence came this oracle, save out of the clefts of the Rock? Herein the sparrow hath found her an house, and the turtle a nest where she may lay her young. Herein the dove guards herself, and fearlessly looks on the wheeling hawk."

As there were two principal altars in the Temple, that of burnt-offering and of incense, so CHRIST represents both to us, inasmuch as we offer up in Him our active

works and the sacrifice of our animal passion, as well as the perfume of meditation and prayer. Or we may extend the word to denote all the sacraments and holy rites of the Church, which are the nest wherein devout souls abide, and where they raise their young. And as CHRIST suffered on the altar of the Cross, so all those who take up that Cross, and offer on it their affections and lusts, being crucified to the world, and imitating His Passion, make it their nest, where they shelter under His outspreading wings. Yet again; when they pass from the sufferings of this world, their souls await their consummation and final bliss under the golden altar of GOD in heaven, their safe haven after a stormy ocean. But if CHRIST be the speaker, and we are to look for His abiding-place, more than one interpretation is open to us. His altars will be, first, the will of His FATHER, on which He offered up His own will and His life; next, they will be His Saints, whose life is a daily sacrifice, and in whom He is pleased to dwell; and finally, we may take the altars, as in the case of His people, of the heavenly country itself. Note, then, the various epithets by which it is described in the psalm. It is styled tabernacles, because of the indwelling; courts, by reason of spaciousness; house, as a place of quiet; nest, because of security; altars, by reason of the perfect oblation. And the delightsomeness of this happy land consists not even in all these, but because there is the palace of my King and my God, in Whose presence is the fulness of joy.

Yes, GOD my King and portion, In fulness of His grace, We there shall see for ever, And worship face to face. 4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house : they will be alway praising thee. In the literal sense, this expresses the longing of the exiles in a heathen land for the solemn rites of the Temple, and contrasts the happiness of those Priests and Levites who served in the sanctuary with the misery of such as are cut off from all participation in the daily service of GOD. The words may then fitly be applied by us to the happiness of those who are faithful members of the Church on earth, and especially, as some will have it, to the inmates of Religious houses, whose special task is the continual offering of the sacrifice of praise. But the highest sense is that which sees in the house that heavenly dwelling which is for all time, vast, spacious, and unshaken ; not like the frail and narrow nest in which we make our abode here on earth. And observe, remarks S. Augustine, that all earthly happiness springs out of action or possession. Necessity is the mother of all inventions, and we are unable to imagine any riches or any felicity which does not depend on our doing or obtaining something. What then does heaven offer us? The possession of GOD, and the unceasing task of praising Him. Our business there will be the unending Alleluia. Nor let any one fear that weariness and satiety must come of this ; for praise can only cease when love ceases, or when wonder ceases. But as our love and knowledge of GOD will grow to all eternity, inasmuch as the subject matter is infinite, the praise will be always new, always ardent, always delightful.

5 Blessed is the man, whose strength is in thee : in whose heart are thy ways.

As the preceding verse taught us the blessedness of fruition, so this one teaches the blessedness of hope. They are blessed who need no more help, who have attained their crown and rest, but he is blessed too in his degree, who is toiling onwards, leaning on the everlasting Arm, towards his home. In whose heart are Thy ways. The word Thy is not in the Hebrew, and though giving a very true sense, adopted by many, limits unnecessarily the scope of the meaning here. The literal rendering is, Highways are in their heart. The highway, a paved and solid road, contrasted with a mere path, miry, uneven, and short, is taken by the Chaldee paraphrast as denoting confidence in GOD. But a somewhat wider meaning is given by comparing the words of the two great Prophets: of whom the one, speaking of CHRIST's kingdom, says: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. 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. Jeremiah, calling on his nation to repent, cries aloud, "Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart towards the highway, even the way which thou wentest; turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

It is thus the way of salvation, the whole course of obedience to the will of GOD in self-denial and holiness of life; the chart of which must be indelibly printed in the pilgrim's heart, that he may not stray from the one track which leads to the heavenly city. And with this squares very well that literalist interpretation, not without its fitness and beauty, which sees here a reference to the Jews in distant places, setting their faces towards Jerusalem as the three great festivals drew on, and making their preparations to take the road which led thither. And remembering what is in truth the King's highway, Who it is that hath said, "I am the Way," we come to the truest and deepest sense of all, for blessed are they who have Him in their hearts. But the LXX. and Vulgate turn the latter clause of the verse, He hath appointed goings-up (ἀναβάσεις, ascensiones) in his heart. Here too we have a literal meaning assigned, not very different in its force from that already cited, that these goings-up, instead of applying to the elevated roadways, mean here the "terraces" or "stairs" which Solomon made for the temple with the algumtrees, for which the same word is used. But what these goings-up may mean for us, let us hear. One tells us that we ascend by love, and love only; another that each sin repented and conquered is a fresh step on which we tread as we leave it behind in mounting;

while a third specifies three great terraces of ascent, to wit, humility, works of mercy, and contemplation, which have severally ten, six, (according to the older computation of the works of mercy,) and seven grades. There are various other interpretations given of these steps, but they differ only by indicating divers virtues and good works as specially intended, and may well be summed up under the three

heads of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways of salvation. And man can appoint in his heart such a going-up by the co-operation of grace and free-will. He can appoint it, that is, set his resolve towards it, but he cannot accomplish it of himself. No one can do so, save He Who hath said, ”No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven. And He too is that Blessed One, Whose strength was in His FATHER, and Who, even here in the valley of weeping, had already ordained His going-up on high to reign.

6 Who going through the vale of misery, use it for a well : and the pools are filled with water.

The LXX. and Vulgate are at variance here with the English version. Both agree in coupling the first part of the verse with the preceding one, as explaining the place of going-up, and read In the valley of weeping. That is, in this present life of humiliation and suffering; the press wherein the grapes must be crushed into wine, the depth whence we must commence to climb to the mountain’s summit. Then follows, in the place which he appointed. That is, as they severally take it, in the place which man, by his sin, has made what it now is, a place of sorrow and pain; or if we take he to mean God, then this world is the place which He has appointed for our education and cleansing. They take also a further and more beautiful view, by turning the phrase, into the place which He appointed. That is, we are going through the valley of weeping, as mere passing travellers, not to abide there, but we are going into the kingdom prepared for us from the beginning of the world, there to dwell for evermore. The true sense of the passage seems to point to the zeal and resolution which overcame all obstacles in the way. The valley through which the pilgrims journey to Jerusalem is arid and waterless, and there is therefore no use in sinking wells. But cisterns or tanks can be formed on the surface by diligent toil, so as of the whole valley to make a well, and the early rain (Heb.

then covers with blessing (Heb. this valley with its pools and fills them. And this holds especially of those who are set in some place where there is a dearth of the Word and Sacraments of the Church, but who set themselves at all costs to obtain the water of salvation to quench the thirst of their souls. It is not on earth, so far as they are concerned, but must come to them from heaven; all they can do is to make ready in faith for its reception, and trust to God so to bless them with His rain, that they who have gone forth weeping, and bearing good seed, may come again with joy, and bring their sheaves with them. With this agree the words that follow in the Vulgate and LXX. which, instead of the pools are filled with water, read for the lawgiver will bestow blessing. He Who gave the Law as a press and a burden to afflict us, will give us grace and blessing in its stead, that after our trouble we may have joy. There is a curious Jewish interpretation of the whole passage to the

effect, that sinners, when beginning to repent, as they pass through the valley, will weep so copiously as to make the whole place a well of water, and will then break out into blessings upon the LORD Who taught them the way by which

A. A. they refused to go, and hath now afflicted them for their correction. 7 They will go from strength to strength : and unto the GOD of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion. C. R. A. Hugo Card. Z.

From strength to strength. These words have been frequently translated troop to troop, and explained of the zeal of the new pilgrims, who hasten on so fast along the way, as to overtake and pass company after company of their predecessors, who at first had left them far behind. Thus the publicans and harlots pressed before the priests and lawyers into the kingdom of heaven; thus weak women, like S. Faith, advanced into the noble army of Martyrs when men shrank back afraid; thus too, the great array of the Saints grows ever larger, according to that saying, ”At that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of GOD; until the number of the elect is complete, and all appear together in Sion. But a more usual interpretation of the passage is to see here a special blessing promised to the pilgrims, that whereas in other journeys men became weaker and weaker as they drew near the close, those who seek Jerusalem will grow in vigour as they march, and will reach the Holy City in perfected strength. They will go from the strength of the Law to that of Grace; they will ascend the ladder of holiness, adding one virtue to another; they will pass from the strength of action to that of contemplation;

they will pass from humility to grief for sin, and so to full repentance and amendment, from the strength of conflict in this world to the strength of sinlessness in the world to come. So again, we may pass from the lower stages of holiness, from the commoner virtues, necessary for all men to salvation, to the higher practice of those Evangelical counsels addressed to but a few; we are to go on ”growing up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even CHRIST. And observe that it is said They will go, showing that not the will and affection alone, but the actions of our life must co-operate with GOD’s grace in this ascent of the soul. Wherefore the LORD saith in one place, ”If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, . . . and come, and follow Me; and again in another, ”Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And the immediate goal of such progress is the vision of GOD. Even here, in Sion, the place of expectation, we can spiritually contemplate Him, and still more perfectly in the open vision of the heavenly Sion, where we may see Him face to face.

To those under the Law the words telling of the God of gods in Sion, were a prophecy of the visible appearance of the Incarnate SAVIOUR in the earthly Jerusalem, to those under Grace they are no less clear in promising His presence in Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all, to see Him Who is God of gods

on earth, that is, of those true Saints of His, who are gods in their likeness unto Him; Who is God of gods in heaven, Eternal above the seraphim.

In a glass, through types and riddles, Dwelling here, we see alone: Then serenely, purely, clearly, We shall know as we are known, Fixing our enlightened vision On the glory of the Throne. The Hymn Quisquis valet. There the Trinity of Persons Unbeclouded shall we see; There the Unity of Essence Perfectly revealed shall be: While we hail the Threefold Godhead, And the simple Unity. And therefore, in his eagerness for this full enjoyment of the Beatifie Vision, the singer bursts into a rapture of prayer: S. Bruno Carth. 8 O LORD GOD of hosts, hear my prayer: hearken, O GOD of Jacob. 9 Behold, O GOD our defender: and look upon the face of thine Anointed.

The words of this verse have been taken to signify that the Anointed himself is the speaker in the Psalm, and this, in connection with the possible Babylonian date, on which the Greek Fathers dwell, has suggested the idea that the imprisoned Jehoiachin may be the author. But the Jewish commentators, for the most part, look on it as a mere appeal to the memory of David, and a prayer for help, for his sake, perhaps especially to his descendant, Zerubbabel, Prince of the Captivity, and thus, in a sense, the Anointed of the LORD. My prayer, my one longing, is for Thee; hearken then, O GOD of Jacob, GOD of the wrestling, struggling soul which strives after Thee, and turn Jacob into Israel, prevalent with Thee, a prince of Thy kingdom, a spectator of Thy glory. Be our Defender in our contests with the enemy who would fain keep us back from Thee; and if we be unworthy to make our petition, look upon the face of Thine Anointed, as He stands, our great High Priest, before the mercy-seat, and for His dear merits, grant the longing of our hearts. And while some dwell on the word face in this verse as especially denoting the Manhood of CHRIST, by which He became known to His brethren, others, especially of the Eastern Fathers, apply the words to Christians, who are the body of the LORD, members of Him, flesh of His Flesh, and who have put on Him at Baptism; and thus interpret the A.

words of a prayer that the FATHER will behold His SON in us, and be gracious to us for His sake. Or, as the FATHER always looks upon CHRIST the SON, CHRIST desires us to pray that He may so look on Him as to cause Him to be looked upon by others, to be known, believed, and worshipped by them, so that men may go from strength to strength, till they at last see the GOD of gods in Sion. So again, we may take the words as our own prayer to our dear Master Himself, Who hath made us His Anointed, with regal and sacerdotal unction, true kings and priests, and then the cry is that He, Who hath given us so much, may give us more. Thus, one of His truest servants exclaims: S. Thomas Aquin. The Rhythm, Adoro Te. JESU, Whom thus veiled I must see below, When shall that be granted which I long for so; That

at last beholding Thine uncovered face, Thou wouldst satisfy me with Thy fullest grace?

10 For one day in thy courts : is better than a thousand. 11 I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my GOD : than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness. Better, because the one day of Heaven hath neither yesterday nor to-morrow, because no night dims its brightness, no end overtakes it. Observe too, that the words may not be merely applied in general fashion to the attractions of GOD's service in His Church here on earth, to the Jew of old, or the Christian now, but they may be taken in a special way as looking to CHRIST's first Advent. The number a thousand not only stands often in Scripture to denote totality and perfection, and thus a dispensation of GOD, but it almost precisely marks the number of years which elapsed from the completion of Solomon's Temple till the Nativity of the LORD; only one day in the sight of GOD. But the single day on which the heavenly hosts chanted their anthem over the manger in Bethlehem was better than all the festivals and rejoicings of the Mosaic code in its fourteen centuries of previous existence. A door-keeper. Literally, I had rather stand on the threshold. But the Prayer Book version gives the true sense. This is a Korhite Psalm, and the descendants of Korah were, in fact, porters, and "keepers of the gates of the tabernacle, and keepers of the entry," as well as being permitted to swell the chorus of the inspired singers of Israel. On the love which the Saints have shown for the lowliest tasks in GOD's house, let us hear S. Paulinus of Nola:

In Natali S. Felicis. Illic dulce jugum, leve onus, blandumque feremus Servitium sub te Domine, etsi justus iniquis Non eges servis : tamen et patiere et amabis Qualescunque tibi, Christo donante, dicatos, Et foribus servire tuis, tua limina mane Mundicie curare sines, et nocte vicissim Excubiis servire piis et munere in isto Claudere promeritam, defesso corpore, vitam. There easy yokes, light burden, service soft We shall have with Thee, LORD, although no need Hast Thou, the Righteous, of ungodly slaves; But Thou wilt suffer and wilt love all those Vowed to Thee by CHRIST's gift to serve at morn, Cleansing Thy gates and thresholds, and at night Keeping pure watch by turns, and in this charge Closing a holy life with worn-out frame. Even heathens were not insensible to this kind of happiness. The Greek poet makes his hero sing, as he sweeps the threshold of Apollo's temple: A pleasant task, O Phœbus, I discharge Before thine house, in reverence of thy seat Of prophecy, an honoured task to me, To give my hand in service of the gods, Not unto mortals, but immortal ones, And labouring in such blessed tasks as these I weary not.

And in the humility of this saying of the Korhites, which contrasts so forcibly with the grasping ambition of their forefather, we have a type of Christian holiness, repentant for Adam's transgression, and eager to yield the humblest obedience to GOD. The LXX. and Vulgate, looking rather to the spirit than the letter, translate, I

had rather be cast down in the house of the Lord. And hence they draw the lesson that this can be spoken only of suffering in the Church Militant on earth, because no one can be cast down in the Church Triumphant. But this applies only to the Vulgate reading. The Hebrew verity does not exclude the notion of content with the humblest station in heaven, beside the warders of its gate, far below the seats of the loftier powers, for "one star differeth from another star in glory." Amidst the happy chorus A place, however low, Shall show us Him, and showing Shall satiate evermo.

D Than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness. That is, than to hold any station, however high, in the mere transitory and unsettled dignities of the world; tents, because of their fragility and temporary nature; of ungodliness, by reason of the vices of courts. Hence they take occasion to remind us of those persons of lofty rank and great power, now numbered among the Saints, who descended the steps of thrones and quitted the chambers of palaces, to serve the LORD in the bare cell of a cloister, in the coarse garb of a Religious. It is a glorious catalogue, from the many royal English Saints, Kenred and Ethelred of Mercia, Ina and Sigebert, Etheldred, Eanswith and Sexburga, Edith and Ethelfled, and the memory of S. Radegund and S. Jane in France, of S. Elizabeth in Germany, down to the later records of the great Emperor Charles V., and two centuries further on, Louise de Valois, who fled from the most luxurious court in Europe to the stern discipline of the Carmelites.

18 For the LORD GOD is a light and defence : the LORD will give grace and worship, and no good thing shall he withhold from them that live a godly life. A. 1 Tim. i. 13, 16.

The first clause here is more truly and vigorously turned by the A.V. as also by Aquila and Symmachus, The Lord God is a sun and a shield, for in His dealing with His Saints, it is evermore according to His true promise that "upon all the glory shall be a defence. But the LXX. and Vulgate translate, God loveth mercy and truth. This comes mystically to the same thing, as an old commentator says very well, for GOD, in that He is our sun, is full of mercy, as it is written, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good: in that He is our shield, He is truth, for it is written in another place, "His faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thus His mercy enlightens us in the illuminative way, and His truth crowns us in the unitive. Because He loveth mercy, He comes to our aid; because He loveth truth, He will give us what He promises; as He showed in His dealings with His great Apostle, "who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," that in him "JESUS CHRIST might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting. He gave him grace, for it is written, "By the grace of GOD I am what I am. He gave him glory, for he saith "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day.

When it is said He will withhold no good thing from them that live a godly life, we are to bear in mind that only spiritual good things are intended. Temporal good things, which may be evils in disguise, are by no means either always promised or bestowed. Earthly riches may be seen abundantly with robbers, with ungodly sinners, with men steeped in the worst crimes of profligacy and violence, but these have no real wealth. As the world calls no man poor who has a chest full of gold, so Saints call no man poor who has a heart full of innocence, and to whom God has given the Death of His Son. From such He will withhold no good thing, for it is written by the Apostle, ”He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? A godly life. The Vulgate reads innocence, and the commentators dwell on its various tokens and attributes. But one, pointing to S. Jerome’s rendering, perfection (which is also that of Aquila and Symmachus, and the Targum) seasonably reminds us that innocence by itself is but one imperfect virtue, and needs prudence as its complement, according to that saying of the LORD, ”Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

A. 13 O LORD GOD of hosts : blessed is the man that putteth his trust in thee. And that by fully-formed hope, as Isaiah confesseth, ”For the LORD is a GOD of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for Him.” So too it is written in another place, ”Did any ever trust in the LORD, and was confounded? or did any abide in His fear, and was forsaken? or whom did He ever despise, that called upon Him?” Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of Hosts; glory be to the SON, His Anointed, on Whose Face He ever looketh; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the light and defence of the Saints. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O Everlasting GOD, builder of the heavenly tabernacles, appoint, we beseech Thee, goings-up in our hearts, whereby we may without falling back into sin ascend to Thy tabernacles. Through. (1.) O GOD, the defender of them that trust in Thee, save us who abide in Thy service, that separated from the tents of the ungodly, we may be fitted to dwell in Thy holy house. Through. (1.) O GOD of Hosts, whose tabernacles are amiable, and whose courts are beauteous, within the circuit whereof holiness walketh, and godliness rejoiceth; grant that our souls may long after them more eagerly, wherein one day is known to shine better than a thousand; let us, we pray Thee, be brought in thither, however lowly, that we be not utterly cast out; that in our new bodies our pure hearts may rejoice with perpetual gladness in Thee the living God; and gladly through ages after ages offer praise to Thee in sweet strains and loving service. (11.)

D. C. O God, our strong Helper, we pray Thee that Thy might may be with us in the valley of weeping; teach us so to appoint goings-up in our hearts, that going

from strength to strength, Thou mayest vouchsafe us gladly to see Thee, the God of Gods, in the heavenly Sion. Through. (1.)

Psalm 85

TITLE. To the Chief Musician; A Psalm for the sons of Korah. LXX. and Vulgate: To the end; for the sons of Kore, a Psalm.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST vouchsafed to show us His mercy by His coming in the body. The Voice of the Prophet to the Son. Then the Apostolic Voice of the LORD concerning the new people, who are redeemed by the LORD. The Apostolic Voice to the new people. VEN. BEDE. This Psalm, about to speak of the first coming of the SAVIOUR, is suited to the person of them who have believed in Him with sincere mind. In the first part of the Psalm the Prophet briefly gives thanks to the LORD, because from that old time of the Jewish nation, the people have come to the worship of the LORD the SAVIOUR. Lord, Thou hast become gracious unto Thy land. The second narrates how the LORD vouchsafed to allay His wrath against the Jewish people, and desires the coming of CHRIST, wherein human blessedness hath received the light of faith. Thou hast taken away all Thy displeasure, &c. In the third part he turns his words to himself, and in the spirit of prophecy foretells the coming of the WORD made flesh. I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me, &c.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of the sons of Korah. Concerning the reward and salvation given to them by the LORD, and a prophecy of CHRIST. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A prophecy of CHRIST, and of those redeemed by Him. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of thanksgiving.

Various Uses.
Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: I. Nocturn. Eastern Church. Second Psalm of Nones.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Thou hast blessed, * O LORD, Thy land. [Christmas Day: Truth hath sprung up out of the earth, and righteousness hath looked down from heaven. So in all the other uses. Sacred Heart: The LORD will show loving-kindness, and He shall speak peace unto His people.] Monastic. The same. Ambrosian. As Psalm

82. Parisian. I will hearken * what the LORD GOD will say concerning me: for He shall speak peace unto His people and to His Saints. Mozarabic. LORD, Thou wilt turn again and quicken us, * and Thy people shall rejoice in Thee. 1 LORD, thou art become gracious unto thy land: thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.

Whereas it was aforetime said to the first man, ”Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return,” and also, ”Cursed is the ground for thy sake;” and a certain Prophet hath said, ”There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of GOD in the land: cursing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery are poured forth upon the earth, and blood toucheth blood;” now, on the other hand, that the SON of GOD hath shone upon us by His Incarnation, He hath mended all things, and filled the earth with blessing instead of cursing, seeing that temples of GOD are erected in all parts of the earth, and the fertilising waters of Baptism are poured over its arid soil. The LORD hath blessed the earth, that is, the whole of mankind, by taking earth to Himself, and making of it His holy Flesh, and He hath especially blessed one part of it, that garden inclosed, His own most blessed Virgin Mother, who brought forth the fruit of salvation. He is gracious also and gives blessing to every faithful soul which yields itself to His husbandry, ”for the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from GOD.” Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob. That captivity is the bondage of original sin, whereby man lay fettered in the chains of the devil, but now, saith the LORD of Hosts, ”He shall let go My captives, but not for price or reward,” for CHRIST hath turned away the captivity. Not, however, of all, but only of Jacob; that is, of the younger people, of all who are by true faith descendants, spiritual or lineal, of Abraham, of all who do not remain in slumber, but rise and wrestle against their sins.

Hugo Card. Isa. xlv. 13. A. 2 Thou hast forgiven the offence of thy people: and covered all their sins. A. C. S. Bruno Carth. Hugo Card. Didymus. S. Albertus Magnus. S. Luke xii. 49. Lam. iv. 8. 1 S. Pet. iv. 8. Hugo Card. L. This, then, is the true explanation of the previous verse, teaching us what is the hardest of all captivity, what the most perfect of all freedom. And observe that the word forgiven denotes the bounty of God’s grace. He is not spoken of as accepting payment of our debt, but as remitting it freely. And covered all their sins, by plunging them beneath the waters of baptism, so that our guilt, original and actual, lies hidden beneath those waves, as the Egyptian foes of Israel did under the waters of the Red Sea. He does not merely cover them, leaving them still there, albeit hidden, but takes them away altogether. As, remarks a great teacher, fire covers the blackness of coal, when it has once made its way into the substance of the coal, and destroys it in the very act of so doing, so the fire which the LORD came to send on the earth takes away that sin which causes it to be said of the fallen, ”Their visage is blacker than a coal.” This, then, is His tender love, that ”charity which shall cover the multitude of sins.” Others will have it that forgiven refers to the general remission

in baptism, covered to the subsequent pardon in confession, or, once more, that the former term applies to grave and deliberate guilt, the latter to casual and venial sins.

3 Thou hast taken away all thy displeasure : and turned thyself from thy wrathful indignation. For taken away, the Vulgate reads mitigated, and from this some of the Latin commentators take occasion to remark that God does still punish us for our sins, but gently, and not beyond our endurance; and that He does not give us everything here, so that we may have somewhat better to look for hereafter. And whereas it is said all Thy displeasure, we are to understand on the one hand God's wrath against both original and actual sin; and on the other His temporal and eternal punishments. Observe that in these three verses we have six blessings of God set forth in six words. Thou hast blessed the land, LORD JESU, by Thy birth; Thou hast turned the captivity by Thy preaching; Thou hast forgiven our offence by Thy dying; Thou hast covered all our sins by Thy Resurrection; Thou hast taken away Thy displeasure by sending the HOLY SPIRIT, Thou hast turned Thyself from wrathful indignation, by leading us to heaven, and averting from us the terrors of the Doom. And that because the offering of the immaculate Lamb is sufficient ransom for the whole world, so that no penalty will remain to be exacted from such as accept the salvation which He offers to all. For He stands before His FATHER as our High Priest, and pleads on our behalf with prevalent intercession, as He spake Himself in the person of His Prophet: "Remember that I stood before Thee to speak good for them, and to turn away Thy wrath from them."

4 Turn us then, O GOD our SAVIOUR : and let thine anger cease from us. Here we learn that this Psalm is not altogether one of rejoicing, but that troubles and distresses force Israel to cry to their LORD, by the memory of His former and His recent bounties, to complete His work of salvation, and grant a final deliverance to His people. Wherefore it seems most probable that the Psalm belongs to that period, just after the first return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem, when they were sorely harassed by the neighbouring tribes, and foresaw a fresh series of Divine chastisements. Cassiodorus will have it that the Prophet here, after giving thanks to GOD for the promised Incarnation of the SAVIOUR, looking onward into the future, sees the rejection and crucifixion of Him by the Jews, and prays that these new sins may be pardoned also, and that the blasphemers may be turned, like Saul of Tarsus, into saints. Turn us, too, who have so ill requited Thy great bounty, from cursing to blessing, from captivity to freedom, from a bent towards sin to forgiveness, from continuance in sins to their covering and overwhelming. Make us, too, defenders of Thy Church which we have persecuted, preachers of the Word we have blasphemed, disciples instead of gainsayers.

5 Wilt thou be displeased at us for ever : and wilt thou stretch out thy wrath from one generation to another ? Not for ever, as GOD's displeasure means the punish-

ment He inflicts on us for our sins. He made us, therefore, mortal and passible in Adam, but by renewing us in CHRIST, and giving us a promise of sharing His immortality and impassibility, He has shown us that His displeasure will pass away ; ”for as in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive.” From one generation to another. GOD might appear to the Jewish exiles to do this by delaying to send the Messiah as their Deliverer, by allowing a fresh generation to pass away without beholding the King in His beauty. We, too, may feel a doubt as to His entire good-will towards us, and fear lest He should visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, but we have His own word, ”The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.” Again, we may take the two generations to refer to the two great eras of man’s spiritual history, that which dates from Adam to CHRIST, including the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, and that from the Nativity of CHRIST, the Gospel dispensation, under which we live. We therefore beseech GOD not to be wroth with us as He was with that former generation, because we, though liable

A. to fall into sin, desire to wash away its stains in baptism and confession, and to be reconciled to Him. 6 Wilt thou not turn again, and quicken us : that thy people may rejoice in thee? Ay. S. John i. 18. S. Luke xxii. 61. Hugo Card. S. Bruno Carth. Honorius. The LXX. and Vulgate do not read this verse as a question, but state it as a prophecy. Thou wilt turn again, and Thy people shall rejoice in Thee. When a man is turned from us, we do not see his face, and cannot surely recognise him, but when he turns round and shows his face, we know him at once. So, before the Incarnation of CHRIST, GOD was, as it were, turned away from man, ”for no man hath seen GOD at any time;” but He turned His face towards us in the Incarnation, which is the cause of our justification and spiritual life, whereby we are quickened. Thus, when Peter fell, he continued in his denial till the LORD turned and looked on him, and that one look quickened his dead heart, and brought a flood of penitential tears from the hard rock. And thus too He deals with all other sinners who do not obstinately keep their faces averted from Him, so that they rejoice at last in Him, no longer in the world or in their sins. He does not confine His mercy to this, but He will turn again and show Himself to us in glory at the last day, quicken us in the Resurrection, and make us rejoice in immortality and blessedness.

7 Show us thy mercy, O LORD : and grant us thy salvation. A. These words, so familiar in the daily office of the English Church, which applies them to ferial use instead of their former employment in the festival preces of the Sarum rite, are interpreted universally by the Fathers as a prayer for the manifestation of CHRIST. And our Anglican use in this particular carries out a precept here laid down by the Ecstatic Doctor, who observes : We also ought suitably to use this verse daily in prayer to this effect : Show us, O LORD, Thy mercy, that is, show forth clearly and plenteously in us the working of Thy loving-kindness ; and grant us Thy salvation, that is, Thy healing redemption, or even CHRIST Himself, by giving Him to us daily

in the Sacrament of the Altar, and by His spiritual coming unto us to dwell in us, as is written of Him under the name of Wisdom, ”Give me Wisdom, that sitteth by Thy throne.” Give Him to us, cries S. Augustine, after a burst of rejoicing comment, ”Give us Thy CHRIST, let us know Thy CHRIST, let us behold Thy CHRIST, not as the Jews beheld Him, and crucified Him, but as the Angels behold Him, and rejoice.” We may also very fitly explain the verse literally of that perfect salvation which shall be in the Resurrection, for then GOD will most exactly show us His mercy, so that we may see it, and as it were, touch it, when He shall crown us with His mercy and loving-kindness, and heal all our infirmities, and satisfy our desire with good things, and renew our youth as the eagle. And He will then give us His salvation for an everlasting possession, when He shall manifest Himself to us.

8 I will hearken what the LORD GOD will say concerning me : for he shall speak peace unto his people, and to his saints, that they turn not again.

The words concerning me, or in me, as the LXX. and Vulgate have them, are not in the Hebrew, nor in any way essential to bring out its meaning; which is that the Psalmist, ceasing from his prayer, keeps silence for a time to wait GOD’s answer by the Spirit, well assured that the answer will be one of peace. The Prophet is here, observes a Greek Father, acting as a herald, proclaiming silence as the King is about to speak, and to make a declaration of peace. So Habakkuk saith: ”I will watch to see what He will say in me,” and again the Apostle Paul, ”Since ye seek a proof of CHRIST speaking in me. Where observe that when CHRIST speaks in a man, He speaks to him, and what He speaks on this occasion is that peace which passeth all understanding, which is from GOD the FATHER and His SON JESUS CHRIST, bestowed on all those who render unto GOD that which is GOD’s, and who are truly His saints, because they are converted to Him, not feignedly, but from the depths of their heart. He says, I will hearken, because the roar and tumult of the world is all around him, and he must stop his ears to it, in order that he may commune secretly with GOD, and hear the still, small voice. When evil thoughts arise within us, we speak ourselves; when good ones do so, it is GOD Who speaketh in us, our heart uttereth the first and hearkeneth to the second.

The Peace which GOD speaks, the Word He utters, is the LORD JESUS Himself, the Prince of peace, the Eternal WORD of the FATHER, thus sent unto mankind. He spake Him to His people and to His saints, that is, alike to those who served Him, believed in Him, and looked for Him under the old dispensation, and who at last heard the Voice in peace when He preached to their spirits in prison, and bore them from Hades unto Paradise; to the whole Jewish multitude; and to those who are more strictly His saints, who listened to Him on earth, and loved the Gospel which He taught. So, on the one hand, at His Nativity, the Angels proclaimed ”peace on earth to men of good will,” embracing all His people, Jew and Gentile

alike, while He Himself, arisen from the dead, hailed His own chosen disciples with the greeting, ”Peace be unto you. That they turn not again. Here the

A. Col. i. 19, 20. S. Fulbert, The Hymn, Chorus novæ Hierusalem.

A. V. rightly adds, to folly. The intention of the LORD in speaking peace, is that His people may fall no more into vain idolatry, into worldliness and self-will; but may, as they walk in His footsteps, and look to JESUS, the Author and Finisher of their new being, always have their eyes fastened on Eternal Wisdom. But the LXX. reads, He will speak . . . to them who turn their heart unto Him, and the Vulgate, nearly alike, unto them who are converted at heart. And of these they make a third class, to wit, the Gentiles, who were converted to Him in heart, and abandoning their idols, served Him thenceforward. Cardinal Hugo, applying the whole verse to Christians, observes that the people here may well denote the laity, the saints, the clergy, and those converted at heart, the members of Religious communities. He remarks also that the blessing of peace spoken to the Church is likewise threefold, peace with GOD, of which is written, ”He shall make peace with me; peace within one’s own heart, whereof the LORD saith, ”These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace; peace with one’s neighbour, as the Apostle teacheth, ”As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. The first of these is necessary to salvation, and is therefore, while addressed to all, specially fitted to the laity;

the second, implying freedom from worldly cares and anxieties, befits the clergy, who are provided with ecclesiastical revenues precisely that they may not be mixed up in secular affairs in order to get their living; while the third agrees with the quiet contemplation of the cloister, and the brotherly love which should prevail amongst its inmates. How effectual that speaking of peace was in the first fervour of the Bride’s love we easily learn, for we read that ”the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; and we find a yet further result, in that CHRIST has knit together in one the saints of earth and those of heaven in one common fellowship, as it is written, ”It pleased the FATHER by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. So runs the old Easter hymn:

He, worthily enthroned as King, In splendour now is triumphing, The earth below, the sky above, He makes one country in His love. 9 For his salvation is nigh them that fear him : that glory may dwell in our land. A.

Therefore He appeared first among the Jews, where there were some at least to fear Him, whereas the Gentile world was still given over to idolatry. Yet even the fear was a carnal one, a dread of temporal chastisements and loss, of exile, captivity, famine, or sterility. The Jew asked for just the same things in prayer as did the Pagan, the one difference was that he asked of the one true GOD. Nevertheless, even this imperfect knowledge and service was so far rewarded that glory should

dwell in the land. For there were the Patriarchs and Prophets, there the first temple, there the sacrifices to GOD, there dwelt the Virgin who bore her LORD, there He Himself was born and manifested in our earthly nature, dwelling in it gloriously, there He walked and wrought His miracles; there He taught His Apostles and founded His Church, and showed such honour to His people that He said of them to the Canaanitish woman, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. His salvation is also nigh them that fear Him, in that they are careful to watch lest they should fall, even when they stand, that at the end of their trial, glory, the glory of immortality, may be in that earth of their now mortal bodies. He makes another glory, that of a good conscience, dwell within His true servants, as the Apostle saith, "For our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience.

Some of the Jewish commentators, alleging that the Shechinah, or mysterious presence of GOD, which was the chief glory of the first temple, was not to be found in the second, but is again to fill the third, which Messiah shall erect, point to a deeper meaning than their own, in the second manifestation in glory of Him on Whom the Apostles looked, with Whom they talked face to face, but Who is now hidden from our eyes till such time as the temple of living stones is completed in the heavens. And yet even here and now, His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, His glory dwells in our land, in that He gives Himself to the faithful to abide within them sacramentally, as He feeds them from His altar with His own Body and Blood. Wherefore it is written, "The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. And finally, the glory of holiness and good works done by the saints dwells in the Church, in our land, and shines so before men that they glorify our FATHER which is in heaven.

2 Cor. i. 12, Vulg. R. Kimchi. De Muis. 10 Mercy and truth are met together : righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

"This," comments the great Abbat of Clairvaux, "is a deep mystery, and deserves to be diligently examined, unless understanding fail to cope with the secret, and words fail even the understanding. I fancy, beloved, that I see man in the first beginning of his creation, clothed with these four virtues, and, as the Prophet saith, clad in the garment of salvation. For the entirety of salvation lies in these four, nor can there be salvation without them, especially as they are not even virtues if they be parted from one another. . . . But man, to his own great hurt, and of his folly, went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, by whom, as we read first of all, he was stripped of his garments. Nor could he be clad again, or recover his stolen garments, until CHRIST should lose His. See then, if it be not on account of these four parts of the garment which the first and old man lost, that the garments of the Second and new Man were divided into as many. . . . Man lost righteousness when Eve obeyed the serpent's voice, and Adam the woman's, rather than the Divine one. He lost mercy, in that Eve, to satisfy her desire, spared

neither herself, nor her husband, nor her children, but bound all alike under the terrible curse and necessity of death. And Adam himself exposed the woman, for whom he had sinned, to the Divine wrath, trying to shun the arrow as it were behind her back.

Woman and man lost truth, the first by perverting the warning she had heard, from 'Thou shalt surely die' into the milder 'Lest ye die,' and so to the serpent's 'Ye shall not surely die;' while Adam offered a vain and false excuse. And, lastly, they lost peace, for there is no peace to the wicked, saith the LORD. Hence, after the fall, there was, as it were, a serious conflict between the four virtues, for truth and justice were for punishing the wretched sinner, while peace and mercy, less jealous, were for sparing him; and as the two former persevered in avenging, in scourging the rebel, and in aggravating present troubles with the threat of future punishment, the two latter withdrew into the FATHER'S Heart, returning to the LORD Who gave them. For He alone thought thoughts of peace, when all things seemed full of affliction. And hence mercy kept not silence within Him, but in loving whisper addressed His Fatherly tenderness, saying, 'Will the LORD absent Himself for ever, and will He be no more intreated? Is His mercy clean gone for ever; and is His promise come utterly to an end for evermore?' And although the FATHER long and in manifold ways appeared to hide His compassion, that He might meanwhile satisfy the jealousy of truth and righteousness, yet the importunity of the pleaders was not fruitless, but was heard at the fitting time.

Then the Saint continues, representing the pleadings and counterpleadings of the opposing virtues, and the final decision of the Judge, that the rights of all could be secured only in one way, by a perfectly holy death, suffered for love's sake, and without any fault in the victim, so that the meeting and the kiss took place on Calvary at the Cross. How the four virtues, parted in the first man, met again in the Second, we may readily learn. For CHRIST showed mercy in healing the sick, truth in teaching and speaking. The justice of CHRIST appeared in His righteous judgment, when He reproved the wicked, and praised men endued with holiness; and peace in His meekness and gentleness. Further, the Divine nature of CHRIST, which hath the power of forgiving sins and healing infirmities, may be called mercy; and His human nature truth, because there was no guile found in His mouth, and because He alone truly preserved that dignity and likeness of man whereby he was made after the image of GOD, and because He was Very Man, and no mere vision. And the phrase met together means, were blended in one, that is, united in one Person. Righteousness also is taken to be the Divine nature, for GOD alone is the righteous Judge. Peace, on the other hand, stands for the human nature, on account of CHRIST's noble and innate meekness.

Again, mercy and truth met together in the Incarnation, because it was mercy which drew the LORD down to His creatures, that the truth of the promises made

to the Fathers of the old Covenant might be fulfilled, that the claims of justice might be satisfied by the obedience of the SON, and that He might make peace between GOD and man, giving man again that righteousness and peace with GOD which he had lost by his sin; and might, moreover, blend in one dispensation the strictness of the Law and the gentleness of Grace.

11 Truth shall flourish out of the earth : and righteousness hath looked down from heaven. This is the verse which, in its Vulgate form of the past tense, supplies the Antiphon for the Psalm in its use throughout the Western Church on Christmas Day. Truth, the Very Truth, the SON of GOD, hath sprung out of the earth, hath been born of His Virgin Mother; Righteousness looked down from heaven when the Eternal WORD stooped from His throne of glory and united Himself in hypostatic union to the nature of man. Thus was fulfilled that prophetic prayer, ”Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation.” That earth, that Virgin soil, is lowly, stable, fertile, and thirsting for the showers of Divine grace. A. For GOD in earth she is the royal throne, The chosen cloth to make His mortal weed; The quarry to cut out our Corner-stone, Soil full of, yet free from, all mortal seed; For heavenly Flower she is the Jesse Rod, The child of Man, the parent of a GOD.

And an ancient Rabbinical gloss on this verse, dwelling on the word flourish or spring, and interpreting the passage of the coming of Messiah, gives as the reason why the term born is not here used, that Messiah’s birth will be miraculous, and out of the usual course of human generation. There is yet another sense in which the words hold good. Now that man has been brought near to GOD, he is moved to confession of his sins, so that the truth springs up in frank acknowledgment of transgressions from the sinner who is but A. earth, and righteousness then looks down from heaven to pardon and wash away his offences. 12 Yea, the LORD shall show loving-kindness : and our land shall give her increase.

The Psalmist proceeds to explain the mystery of the Incarnation, and shows that Truth will spring out of the earth, not in the manner that fruits spring out of ground ploughed and sown by the labour of man, but as flowers spring up in open plains without human culture, by the rain from heaven and the sunbeams which fall upon them. For, saith he, the Lord shall show loving-kindness, that is, shall send His HOLY GHOST from heaven, to overshadow the Virgin, and so our land, untilled, unsown, and altogether virgin undefiled, shall give her increase. Wherefore He saith Himself in the Canticles, ”I am the Flower of the plain, and the Lily of the valley.” Or again, the Divine nature of CHRIST is the loving-kindness of GOD, the human nature is the fruit of our land. But many of the early commentators are content to see here the result of CHRIST’s coming, in the fruits of penitence and good works put forth by men under the genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness, when the rain of tears poured forth in sorrow for sin has caused the good seed

sown in their hearts by the Sower to spring up and yield increase. It is to be noted that the literal sense of the verse has caused the use of this Psalm in the Western Office for the Benediction of Crops.

A. C. 13 Righteousness shall go before him : and he shall direct his going in the way.

The meaning of the latter clause of this verse comes out more clearly in the LXX., shall make His steps into a way, that is, shall go behind Him as well as before, deepening, as it were, His track, that they who follow may not miss it. Observe, that where righteousness goes first, GOD steadily follows, and therefore most fitly did John Baptist, a type of righteousness, act as the forerunner of CHRIST, and prepare a way for Him in the wilderness of man's sin by preaching the baptism of repentance. Others take it that when righteousness hath so prepared the way for CHRIST, then He will Himself set His feet upon the road, and come to visit those who have thus made ready for His coming, as they clear the ground of all stones and thorns, and strew their garments and palm-branches in His path, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David. He makes this road thenceforward a way for all those who would follow Him; and even in the works of penitence, He who did no sin was not content to be preacher only, but He gave us an example by His vigils, fasts, journeyings and other bodily toils. However, not a few suppose that righteousness is spoken of here not as going before CHRIST, but before His people, or any who have turned to Him, to show them the way to Him, and to set their feet in it, that they may not err.

And thus it is said by the Prophet of those who keep the true spiritual fast of charity, "Thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Yet once more, a mean interpretation between these two is found by taking righteousness here to mean CHRIST Himself, Who went before His people as Leader and Example, and set His feet first in the way of sorrow and of holiness, of death and resurrection, that His disciples might follow confidently, in the Way, in likeness to Him, in union with Him, from Egypt through the Red Sea, traversing the wilderness, crossing Jordan, till at last they reach their Country.

Where our banner leads us, We may safely go; Where our Chief precedes us, We may face the foe. His right Arm is o'er us, He will guide us through; CHRIST hath gone before us, Christians, follow you. And therefore: Glory be to the FATHER, Who speaketh peace unto His Saints; glory be to the SON, in Whom mercy and truth are met together; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Loving-kindness of the LORD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Forgive, O LORD, the offences of Thy people, and show us Thy mercy, to lead us,

with righteousness going before, in the way of peace. Through. (1.) Turn us, O GOD of our salvation, and take away Thy wrath from us, and grant Thy people that peace which Thou speakest, that they may rejoice in Thee, and understanding Thy salvation by Thy safe-keeping, may learn Thy mercy in prosperous seasons and receive Thy loving-kindness in the plenteousness of fruits. (11.) Turn Thy face, O LORD, from our sins, and put away all Thy wrath and anger from us; grant peace unto Thy Church, and mercifully blot out all our iniquities, put away the guilt of our pleasures from before Thine eyes, and graciously lend Thine ear to our confessions, and grant us the medicine of pardon. (11.) Show us Thy mercy, O LORD, and fill Thy people with gladness as it waits for Thee, that Thou mayest do away the offence of Thy servants, and assuaged from Thine indignation mayest cover our sins. (11.)

D. C. O LORD GOD, we humbly intreat Thy mercy, do away the offence of Thy people, put from us the wrath of Thine indignation, quicken us with Thy loving power and Thy strong right hand, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee with peace both now and evermore. Through. (1.)

Psalm 86

TITLE. A Prayer of David. ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, good and gracious, may hear the desires of them that beseech Him. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER. During the Fast. A Prophecy concerning CHRIST, and counsel always to pour forth prayer to GOD. Concerning laudable prayer. VEN. BEDE. David, signifies the LORD the SAVIOUR: either because the interpretation thereof is held to be, strong of hand and desirable, or because He Who is GOD over all, blessed for ever, derived from David's stem. Throughout the whole Psalm the LORD JESUS CHRIST makes His prayer: in the first portion uttering words which can clearly be applied to Him only, Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, &c. In the second part, He prays yet more humbly for His members, whose Head He is: Teach Me Thy way, O Lord. In the third portion, He utters again in His own person what specially belongs to Himself: O God, the proud are risen against Me.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when he built a house unto the LORD, and a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles. Further, a special prayer of a righteous man. EUSEBIUS OF CESARRA. A Prayer of David, and a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, of prayer, and supplication. Monastic. Friday: I. Nocturn. [Epiphany: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: II. Nocturn. Eastern Church. Third Psalm at Nones. Gregorian. As preceding Psalm. [Epiphany: All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship Thee, O LORD. So in all the other uses. Sacred Heart: Thou art good and gracious. O LORD * and of great mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.] Monastic. Bow down * Thine ear, O LORD, and hear me. Parisian. Be merciful unto me * O LORD, for I have called to Thee all the day long. Ambrosian. Preserve Thou my soul, O LORD * for I am holy.

Mozarabic. For Thou, LORD, art good and gracious * and of great mercy unto all them that call upon Thee. 1 Bow down thine ear, O LORD, and hear me: for I am poor, and in misery.

This Psalm, though bearing the name of David in the superscription, is held by the Greek Fathers, S. Basil and Theodoret, to be of a much later day, and to be probably the composition of Hezekiah. There are two circumstances on the face

of the matter which lend weight to this adjudication of it away from David. First, the Psalm, if Davidic, stands alone in this third book of the Psalter, with no companion. Secondly, it is in a considerable degree a cento from earlier Psalms, or at any rate borrows many of its thoughts and phrases from them, and at least three passages are derived from the Pentateuch, and thus it is structurally unlike the original Psalms of the Prophet King. Yet it is a King of Israel who speaks throughout, whether as author of the Psalm, or as having it put in his mouth by one of the Korhite poets, and therefore we may truly say with S. Augustine, that it is our LORD JESUS CHRIST Who prays for us, Who prays in us, and is to be prayed to by us. He prays for us, as our High Priest; He prays in us, as our Head; He is prayed to by us, as our GOD. Let us then recognize our own words in Him, and His words in us. He saith, then, in the form of a servant, and thou, O servant, in the form of thy LORD, sayest, Bow down Thine ear, O Lord. He boweth down the ear, if thou lift not up thy neck.

For He draweth nigh to the holy, but departeth far from the uplifted, save those humble, whom He hath Himself lifted up. It is not to the rich, but to the poor and needy, (Vulg. to the humble penitent, confessing his sin, and needing mercy, not to him who is full and haughty, who boasteth, as in want of nothing, and saith, ”I thank Thee, that I am not as this publican. Bow down Thine ear, then, as a kind physician stoops over the couch of a sick man, too feeble to raise himself or to speak aloud, and hear me, pouring my griefs out. It is spoken in the Person of CHRIST. Who asks to be heard, first because of His voluntary humility, so that His FATHER needs to bow down to Him; and next, because of His voluntary poverty, poor, in having no help from friends; needy, as lacking all earthly riches.

2 Preserve thou my soul, for I am holy: my GOD, save thy servant, that putteth his trust in thee. A.

L. Taking these words as the prayer of CHRIST on behalf of His human soul and life, that He might not be slain untimely by His enemies, before He had fulfilled His work; there is no difficulty in the words I am holy, for in Him, the Holy One of GOD, was no sin at all. But how can guilty man take these words upon his lips, and make such a plea to GOD? Because CHRIST, our Head, is not only Holy in Himself, but is the cause of holiness in others. He hath given us the grace of Baptism and remission of sins, so that, as the Apostle saith, when after speaking of many kinds of sinners, he adds, ”Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD. Each of the faithful may therefore say, I am holy. It is not the pride of conceit, but the confession of gratitude, and the acknowledgment that we have been solemnly dedicated to GOD’s service, and are therefore holy in at least the same sense that the utensils of Divine worship are so. And then, so far from expressing self-confidence, it is an acknowledgment of the increased peril of the

Saint, of his greater need of a SAVIOUR, because his very holiness exposes him to more malignant attacks from his spiritual foes.

"The enemy," observes one of the most eloquent of early preachers, "aims at the general rather than at the soldier; nor does he beset the dead, but the living; so too the devil seeks not to ensnare sinners, whom he holds already as his subjects, but toils to ensnare the righteous. Save Thy servant. He asks for salvation, as he had just before asked for preservation and safe-keeping, lest he should lose the gift when bestowed, and then he adds the reason, by saying, that putteth his trust in Thee, because when GOD saves His servant, He is saving His own property; and when He saves a servant that trusteth in Him, He proves Himself faithful and just in that He fulfils His promises. And observe how precisely, in this sense, the words agree with Hezekiah's prayer in his sickness: "Remember me, 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 this reference further points the fitness of the Psalm for its use in the Visitation of the Sick, as prescribed by the Latin Church.

3 Be merciful unto me, O LORD: for I will call daily upon thee. C. It is one and the same GOD and Man JESUS CHRIST, Who asks mercy, and Who bestows it; teaching us that GOD's loving-kindness must be earnestly intreated by perseverance in prayer; as He saith Himself in the Gospel, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Daily, (Symmachus) or with LXX., Vulgate, and margin of A. V., All the day. That is, for each of us, prayer at all periods of our lives, in the dawn of youth, in the noon of maturity, in the evening of old age; and again, as all the day embraces darkness and light, so our prayer should ascend in adversity and prosperity alike. We may pray with the whole day in yet another sense, with clear and enlightened minds, which have cast away the works of darkness. And though each of us cries to GOD in his own time, and passes away to be succeeded by another, yet each of us, as a member of CHRIST, does but swell the petition that goes up unceasingly from CHRIST's Body, which is, as it were, but one man on earth, crying through all the day of this world till the night of the doom cometh, while our Head is, yet more unceasingly, pleading for us in the eternal day of heaven to the FATHER.

4 Comfort the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. It is He Who was forced to say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," that utters this petition, that His FATHER may rejoice (A. V., LXX., Vulg.) His soul by the deliverance of the Patriarchs from Hades, by His own Resurrection, and by the justification of His people through that means. For us, the first and last clause have a close, yet contrasted connection. Rejoice the soul which Thou didst first sadden, by leaving it to its own miserable liberty, free to descend into the depths of sin and sorrow, abandoning Thy glorious and happy service; rejoice it, because I have lifted it up from the earth, where is nought but grief and bitterness, to Thee,

where there is pleasure for evermore. Lift up your heart, then, from the earth, as you would your wheat, storing it high up, lest it should rot on the ground. How can I? asks a sinner. What cords, what engines, what ladders do I need? The steps are thine affections, the path is thy will. Thou ascendest by loving, thou descendest by neglect. Standing on earth, thou art in heaven, if thou love GOD. Note, too, the going-up in these verses, how the ascent is made by prayer. The petitioner is first described as poor, then holy, next trusting, after that calling, finally, lifted up to God. And each epithet has its fitting verb; bow down to the poor, preserve the holy, save the trusting, be merciful to the caller, rejoice the lifted-up. It is the whole gamut of love from the Incarnation to the Ascension, it tells us that CHRIST's humiliation will be our glory and joy.

5 For thou, LORD, art good and gracious: and of great mercy unto all them that call upon thee. This is what gave him courage to lift up his soul to receive consolation, for as S. John saith, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," so we may say, God is sweet, (Vulg.) and in Him is no bitterness at all; while on the other hand, there is little sweetness and much bitterness in fleshly conso- A. A. i. 5. A. A. Prov. i. 28.

lations. And God is not only sweet, but gentle (Vulg. so that He does not repel those who approach Him, but endures their imperfection. For He listens to our prayers, however unskilfully worded, and broken by wandering thoughts; nay, receives them graciously, and hearkens to them; whereas a human friend, if he saw his acquaintance, after accosting him, turn away without awaiting reply to his questions, and address some one else; and still more a judge, who found the very man who had appealed to him, turning to gossip with others in court, would never tolerate such discourtesy. Again, God is good, in that He deals lovingly with His servants, laying few and easy commands upon them, and helping them by His grace to obey these commands; while He is gracious, in that He does not exact the full rigour of just penalty from repentant sinners, but receives them readily back into grace and favour, which is the force of the A. V. ready to forgive. And these same attributes are those of which the Apostle makes mention, beseeching his Corinthian disciples "by the meekness and gentleness of CHRIST. Of great mercy. His mercy is great and plenteous, (A.V. Vulg. because it is sufficient for all sin and all sinners. But copious though it be, He will not waste it, for He reserves it for all them that call upon Him.

Hence we gather, first the advantage of perseverance in prayer, for we shall be continually heard, and receive mercy if we enrol ourselves in that number, as there is no respect of persons, nor any stinting, with God; and next, what it is we ought to call for. Upon Thee, the Psalmist says, and this shows us the meaning of that other saying, "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer," that there may be a calling in prayer which is no true calling upon God. For you call on the thing

you love, for which you are inwardly crying out, which you wish to come to you; it may be money, rank, the death of an enemy; but in that case you are calling on them, not on God, and are making of Him merely an instrument for your appetites, not a hearkener to your better longings. Call on God, then, as loving Him, and as desiring Himself, and He will be of great mercy unto you.

6 Give ear, LORD, unto my prayer: and ponder the voice of my humble desires. 7 In the time of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou hearest me. D. C. A. The Psalmist asks that God may not only give ear, that is, mercifully permit the supplicant to approach Him in prayer, and listen to him, but that He will ponder or attend, that His wisdom may come into operation as well as His mercy, and the two may jointly fulfil the petition to the uttermost. In the time of my trouble, as respects CHRIST, is spoken of His suffering life, and especially of His Passion; and as regards Christians it means the whole time of their sorrowful exile and pilgrimage here on earth, far from their Country, for the more they love and long for that country, the sorer is the daily trouble of the pilgrimage. It is also true of any special persecution, distress, or even of inward temptation, according to that saying of a Saint, Prosperity closes the mouth, adversity opens it. For Thou hearest me. The Carmelite reminds us in this place of the prevenient grace of GOD, which hears our prayers before we utter them, nay, which has heard them from all eternity, foreseeing that they would be offered, and has inspired us with the will and desire of uttering them. Observe, finally, that all the Psalm, down to this point, may be taken as the prayer of CHRIST in His Passion on behalf of His whole Church, for He saith Himself, ”I knew that Thou hearest Me always;” but especially ”when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard for His piety.”

8 Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O LORD : there is not one that can do as thou doest.

If we take this Psalm as the utterance of Hezekiah, these words will form the fitting reply to the insulting message of Rab-shakeh: ”Let not thy GOD in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly, and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed?” The verse, if applied to the FATHER, refutes the Semi-Arians, who asserted that the SON was not Consubstantial with Him, but only a Being of similar substance and nature to GOD, that is, like Him; whereas confession of the co-equality of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST in the Undivided Trinity removes this difficulty at once. We have here, moreover, the reason for taking refuge with GOD, and for calling upon Him only, because there is none like unto Him, in essence, in power, in wisdom,

in goodness; whether amongst men of exalted rank and power, as kings or judges, or amongst the purest saints and loftiest angels. Yet, we are told, ”Ye are Gods;” and again, that ”we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” There is no contradiction, for though we shall reflect His glory, as a pool reflects the sun, we shall not be like Him in essence, for He is eternally and self-existently Almighty, all-wise, all-good, whereas we are but His creatures, deriving our faculties and graces from Him as their source. Even the SON, as speaker in this Psalm, fitly addresses these words to the Everlasting FATHER, because He utters them in the nature of His Manhood, whereby He is inferior to the FATHER, albeit co-equal with Him in Godhead.

There is not one that can do as Thou doest. It is the voice of the Church concerning CHRIST. For His created works are not intended only, nor His providence over all His creatures, visible and invisible, but His restoration of His creation, His destruction of the tyrant, His slaying of death, which He effected by His own death, and that successful fishing of the whole world which He wrought by a few mean fishers, not to cite His deeds of miraculous power. Not one. And yet He promised His disciples, ”He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.” But He clears up the difficulty later, saying, ”Without Me ye can do nothing.” He wrought miracles of His own inherent power, they by derived and commissioned authority. Accordingly, the Prince of the Apostles saith, ”Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The GOD of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the GOD of our fathers, hath glorified His SON JESUS; and His Name, through faith in His Name, hath made this man strong.”

9 All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship thee, O LORD: and shall glorify thy Name. A. Ps. cii. 18, A. V. S. James i. 18.

This, in its literal sense, seems to be looking forward to the effect on the nations around of Sennacherib’s overthrow, fulfilled when ”many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth. But it has a deeper significance in foretelling the ingathering of the Gentiles, whence it is used as the Epiphany antiphon to the whole Psalm. The words were uttered, remarks S. Augustine, when but a few, in the one Hebrew nation, worshipped GOD, and were believed in defiance of sight, and yet now that they are in process of fulfilment, men doubt them. He applies the verse himself to refutation of the Donatists, who held that the true faith of the Catholic Church was limited to one corner of Africa. All nations, not only as typified by the Wise Men from the East, but further, by the converts of many peoples and languages, made on the Day of Pentecost; the first fruits of the commission, ”Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. Whom Thou hast made. That is, not merely some out of every nation under heaven,

but men once more appearing as GOD made them, in His own image and likeness, now restored and renewed by CHRIST's redeeming grace, not as defaced by the devil and by their own free-will abused to sin.

So it is written in another Psalm, "The people which shall be created, shall praise the LORD," created, that is, anew by the supernatural and regenerating grace of CHRIST, for "of His own will begat He us with the word of truth. Shall come and worship Thee. Not necessarily by bodily motion from one place to another, but by believing, in whatsoever places they are, as is spoken by the Prophet: "Men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen. And glorify Thy Name. It is true of the Saints now, who obey the Apostle's precept, "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. It will be true of all nations at the last day, when, willing or unwilling, they must adore Christ sitting on His throne, worshipping Him, some in love and some in fear, but all glorifying His Name, according to the prophecy in the Song of Moses and of the Lamb chanted by the Saints on the sea of glass, saying, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments are made manifest."

10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone. This is the reason why the worship of false gods must cease, and why all nations shall come and glorify the Lord, especially in the Day of Judgment, when His marvellous power shall be fully displayed, so that the Apostle dwells particularly on the word great, as betokening His manifestation then, saying, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." There is, besides, a confession of the Trinity in Unity in the verse. Thou art great, applies peculiarly to the Everlasting FATHER, the LORD and Source of all; and doest wondrous things, tells us of the Son, by Whom the worlds were created, the mystery of redemption effected, the miracles of the Gospel wrought; Thou art God, teaches us that the HOLY GHOST is a Divine Person, not a mere influence or manifestation, while alone joins the Three together in One indivisible Godhead.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD, and I will walk in thy truth: O knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy Name. The LXX. and Vulgate translate, Lead me in Thy way, but as Lorinus truly observes, with no variation of meaning from the original, which does not signify the communication of a bare speculative knowledge, but practical instruction, and actual guidance in the paths of God's commandments. Thy way, Thy truth, is CHRIST. Therefore the Body goes to Him, and comes from Him. He saith, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." It is one thing for God to lead us to the way, and another to lead us in the way. They who are A.

out of the way are not Christians, or at any rate not Catholics, but are being led towards the way. But when that is done, and they have become Catholics in CHRIST,

they are led by Himself in the way itself, that they fall not. And I will walk in Thy truth. Some, especially of the Greek Fathers, take these words as contrasted to some extent with the preceding ones, and interpret the way as denoting action, and truth as signifying contemplation. But it is better to take it as denoting progress in holiness, or as covering the entire ground of a devout life. The prayer is like that of the penitent sinner, asking GOD to put out His hand to guide him, as a blind and sickly child asks for the help of a wayfarer to put him in the straight road. It is asked, How can words such as these be put into the mouth of CHRIST? They answer, for the most part, that the Head is speaking here for His members, not for Himself, just as He spoke to Saul in the vision near Damascus. But the Carthusian will have it that this is the prayer of the SAVIOUR that His human soul might be led in that way of GOD which brought it down to the Patriarchs in Hades, thence into Paradise, next to be reunited with His Body in the Resurrection, and finally to be exalted together with it to heaven at the Ascension. O knit my heart unto Thee. This version, albeit giving a very deep and beautiful meaning, does not exactly express the original, in which the words unto Thee are not found. It is true that the heart may be so knit to GOD as to be interpenetrated with His fear, as an old poet tells us:

Quarles' Schoole of the Heart, 46. No, self-deceiving heart, lest thou shouldst cast Thy cords away, and burst the bands at last Of Thy Redeemer's tender love, I'll try What further fastness in His fear doth lie. The cords of love soaked in lust may rot, And bands of bounty are too oft forgot: But holy filial fear, like to a nail Fastened in a sure place, will never fail. This, driven home, will take Fast hold, and make Thee that thou darest not thy GOD forsake.

But the A. V., with S. Jerome and Symmachus, gives the correct rendering: Unite my heart, make it so whole and undivided that it may entirely love and fear Thee, not partly fear Thee and partly fear the world; nor divide its worship between Thee and other gods; and further, that whereas it is now disturbed and broken up with the waves and storms of passion, trouble, and sin, GOD may still it, and bring it to a perfect quiet, presenting an unruffled and tranquil surface, like the sea in a great calm. He unites the heart of the whole Church too, by granting it unity of faith towards GOD and of love towards brethren. But the LXX. and Vulgate read, Let my heart rejoice, that it may fear Thy Name. It is lest we should be ensnared by over-confidence, the Doctor of Grace warns us, that this is written, lest the excitement of unrestrained joy, even in spiritual things, should cause us to stray from the road. Or, as another great Western Doctor comments, although the Saints are certain, even here, of their hope, yet they have reason to dread temptation, so that joy and fear are mingled in their spiritual experience.

So we are to take heed that we do not find written in this place, Let my heart rejoice that it may feel secure, but that it may fear, in order that between the rejoicing of

hope, and the fear of temptation we may be tried and chastened, and feel gladness in God's pardon, yet so as never to forget that we may fall again. We need, as has been well said, to be glad in our victory, but to fear because of the conflict. Yet the Greek Fathers take it in a deeper and more spiritual sense, alleging that the fear of God is itself a source of true and pure delight to His Saints. And thus one of themselves has truly said, "The fear of the LORD is a paradise of delights, but where the fear of the LORD is not, there will the foxes dwell. Only it must not be a servile fear lest God should punish us, which is an impure feeling; but a loving fear, lest He should leave us, which is pure. And with this latter fear even the LORD JESUS, in His Manhood, was filled, so that we may take the words of Him, and explain them in the light of His bitterest cry upon the Cross.

12 I will thank thee, O LORD my GOD, with all my heart: and will praise thy Name for evermore. The Vulgate word here for give thanks is, as usual, confess, that is, make grateful acknowledgment of bounties. But the Latin commentators constantly take it of confession of sin, and therefore one of them, dwelling here upon that duty, tells us to lay particular stress on the words with my whole heart. For the heart, that is, the intellectual part of man's being, is made up of four things, thought or imagination, memory, understanding, and will. Each of these should play its part in a good confession. There ought to be thought, in careful preparation for the Sacrament of penance; memory, in duly recalling former offences; understanding, in a full recognition of the enormity of sin, and the grievousness of one's own faults; will, in the firm resolution to amend. But, taking the words in their more literal signification, we may note that the whole heart here is the result of the prayer in the verse before, that GOD may unite the heart. Henceforth it gives thanks to Him under all circumstances, in adversity as well as in prosperity, and puts its entire trust in Him, not confiding partly in temporal successes, and yielding Him but a divided confidence. And as CHRIST, in His human nature, gave us the most perfect example of entire devotion to GOD the FATHER; these words apply to Him

E A. as well as to His Saints, who plead for blessings to come in the best of all ways, by showing themselves mindful and grateful in respect of past favours. And will praise Thy Name for evermore. This evermore is threefold. It is the whole life of the pardoned sinner, thenceforth devoted to God's glory and service; it is the continuous life of the Church Militant on earth, wherein, throughout succeeding ages, the praise of God never ceases, so that our Head can speak of this act of His Body as His own; it is, finally, the everlasting Alleluia of heaven, which awaits the Saints who have conquered. 13 For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell. A. S. Bern. Serm. in Assumpt. 2.

Here is the special cause for gratitude. And taking it of the Head, as so many do, we see in it a prophetic thanksgiving for the Resurrection. S. Augustine, dwelling

on the word nethermost, and arguing fairly that the word implies the existence of at least two hells, urges, that when we take the whole verse of CHRIST, we must interpret the first hell to be this earth, so called from lying so far beneath heaven, and from being so defiled with sin, and harassed with trouble. Into this first hell the LORD came by His Nativity; into the second or nethermost, the grave and place of departed spirits, He came by His death, and was delivered thence by the Resurrection. But if the words are to be put in the mouth of one of His members, then it is a thanksgiving for being rescued from that part of Hades where the rich man lay in torments, parted by a great gulf from that happier place where Abraham carried Lazarus in his bosom. In that nethermost hell no one gives thanks to God, nor can any come forth thence, wherefore deliverance from it is truly great mercy, seeing that it confers everlasting blessings. And Euthymius, who ascribes the Psalm to David, in taking the nethermost hell to mean the double guilt of adultery and murder into which the king fell, so that deliverance from it means pardon of mortal sin, and may be thus applied to every penitent similarly rescued, has warrant from the Proverbs on his side, wherein the sin of lust is more than once so described. For the Wise Man saith of a strange woman that "her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death; and again, her guests are in the depths of hell."

14 O God, the proud are risen against me: and the congregations of naughty men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before their eyes. Here is the anticipation of the Passion, of the secret council of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, followed by the cries of the multitude for the Crucifixion of the LORD. And then, spoken of His Body the Church, it is a cry for protection against heathen persecutors, seeking the lives of Christians, and still more against heretics and false brethren, plotting against that faith which is the very soul of the Church's being. And the individual believer prays in these words to be delivered from the principalities and powers of evil, those ghostly enemies which wage unceasing war against the soul. 15 But thou, O LORD GOD, art full of compassion and mercy : long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth. Here he showeth the cause of this suffering, why GOD permitted them so to rise against CHRIST, and to deliver Him over to death. And he saith that this was of GOD's great mercy, Who spared not His own SON, but delivered Him up for us all, so that the Passion of CHRIST was a work of great compassion and mercy. And the SON also is here referred to, as voluntarily giving Himself as a sacrifice for us, according to His most true promise; He Who was long-suffering, in that He bore so much for ourselves, plenteous in goodness, because He came to save, plenteous in truth, because He ever taught the truth, as even His enemies acknowledged, saying, "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of GOD in truth." And therefore He is styled in the Apocalypse, "Faithful and True."

Note, further, that there are seven names of GOD set down here, answering to seven of His energies, and as many classes of men with whom He is in certain

relations. He is LORD to them who serve Him, and He demands service from all; as it is written, ”The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish.” He is GOD, to them that worship Him, for ”the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation.” He is full of compassion, for ”His mercies are over all His works;” He is full of mercy, in that He helpeth the unhappy. He is longsuffering with sinners: ”Therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you.” Plenteous in goodness, in bestowing His eternal rewards, for ”eye hath not seen, O GOD, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.” And truth, in punishing the guilty, for ”let GOD be true, but every man a liar.”

16 O turn thee then unto me, and have mercy upon me : give thy strength unto thy servant, and help the son of thine handmaid. Because of all the attributes of GOD enumerated in the previous verse, He is now called on to show His saving power. And the commentators, with almost one voice, agree in explaining this passage of the prayer of CHRIST for His Resurrection. In saying, Turn Thee unto Me, or as LXX. and Vulgate have it, Look again upon Me, He asks for His A. S. Luke i. 38. A. FATHER’s protection, for ”the eyes of the LORD are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers.” In saying, Have mercy upon Me, He asks for deliverance from misery; in adding, Give Thy strength (or with Vulg. empire) unto Thy servant, He asks for judicial power over the world, and that because of His perfect obedience. This He foretold, earlier than His Passion, saying, ”The FATHER judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the SON;” and He confirmed it after His rising again, when He said to His disciples, ”All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth.” In saying, Help the Son of Thine handmaid, He asks for the Resurrection, and that in His character as the offspring of that pure Virgin who answered the Angel’s message with the words, ”Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word.” Several of the Latins dwell on the ambiguous word puero, meaning child as well as servant, here found in the Vulgate, and remind us that it is spoken of Him touching Whom, by reason of His innocence, the Prophet saith: ”Unto us a child is born,” Who was like a child in His poverty, His holiness, His placability, and His obedience.

Each of His members, too, can utter this prayer, who is GOD’s servant and child because of adoption and obedience, who is the son of His handmaid, the Church, who may look for a share in that empire of which the LORD said to His Apostles, ”In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” For the promise is not limited to them, inasmuch as He saith in another place, ”To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne.” And although all Christian men are proud to bear the title of servant of GOD, as all Christian women, like S. Agatha before the prefect, rejoice to call themselves by the name of handmaid, yet none is so exactly the son of a handmaid as a convert from the bondage of Paganism, who has entered into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD, and acquired in

Baptism the strength of the HOLY GHOST, strength sufficient to overcome all the spiritual enemies of the soul. Note, moreover, the deep humility of the double expression, servant, and son of Thine handmaid. They are no mere repetition, for a man may be reduced into a state of servitude from one of freedom, as a captive in war, albeit sprung of noble ancestry; but if he be the son of a handmaid, he is born a slave, and has had no time of liberty to look back upon. And in this sense the children born of the Church, GOD's faithful handmaid, are His from the first moment of their spiritual creation.

17 Show some token upon me for good: that they who hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

Hitherto he has asked for internal consolation, for secret bestowal of help; but now he asks for an external sign of favour, to the dismay of his enemies. And, still applying the Psalm literally to Hezekiah, we may bear in mind two such proofs of Divine favour towards him; the destruction of Sennacherib's army, and the going back of the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz. The Chaldee, ascribing the Psalm to David, represents this as a prayer for a miracle, that of the spontaneous opening of the gates of Solomon's temple, to be vouchsafed him for David's sake, when bringing up the ark into its new sanctuary. Applied to CHRIST, the Greek Fathers prefer to take the sign here of the Virgin-birth of the LORD, according to that saying in Isaiah, "The LORD Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel; a sign which was truly for good, and made the spiritual foes of man ashamed. But the Latins take it of the Resurrection, looking to that other saying, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

That they who hate Me may see it, and be ashamed, with that wholesome confusion which leadeth to repentance, that they may be converted and live; or, if they resist obstinately, with the final shame which awaits them at the doom, when the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven, for the good of His servants, and the destruction of His foes. Applying the verse to the Christian soul, they remind us, on the one hand, of that sign of the Cross which fortifies us against evil, and affrays our enemies; and on the other, yet more deeply, that we have been "sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise. And both these meanings appear in that victory of the Church through the sign which Constantine is said to have beheld in heaven, on the eve of his decisive triumph over his Pagan opponent. Thou, Lord, hast holpen Me, and comforted Me. Thou hast holpen Me in the battle, comforted Me amidst the sorrows of the Passion; holpen Me when I was in the grave, comforted Me in the joy of the Resurrection. And in like manner, the LORD shows a sign upon us for good, whenever He converts sinners by the example of Saints, or works any

great deliverance for His people, whom He helps in their life-long struggle here, and comforts with the everlasting blessedness of heaven.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is great, and GOD alone; glory be to the SON, Who is full of compassion and mercy; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who giveth His strength unto His servants. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen. A. A. Eph. I. 13. Make glad, O LORD, the countenance of Thine household; and deliver our souls from the nethermost hell, that protected by looking upon Thy countenance, we may with spiritual power tread fleshly desires under foot. Through. (1.) Lead us, O LORD, in the way of Thy truth: that we may rejoice in fearing Thee, and give thanks to Thy holy Name, that we may be sealed with good works, and our enemies may be ashamed. Through. (1.) O good and gracious GOD, of great mercy to them that call upon Thee, bow down Thine ears to our prayer, and of the abundance of Thy mercy do away our transgressions, and that we creep not prostrate on the ground, set us upright to look on Thee. (11.)

Have mercy on us, O LORD, who cry to Thee all the day long; and be gracious to them that call on Thee in trouble, that when we praise and worship Thy majesty, Thou mayest favourably accept us, and when we fear Thee because of our doings, Thou mayest graciously pardon. Make glad, then, our hearts with obedient fear of Thee, and comfort our doubting minds with the sweetness of Thy consolation. But as Thou art sweet and gracious, let us drink in sweetness from Thine indulgence; and find Thee loving and gracious in bestowing reward. (11.) O SAVIOUR and LORD, Whom the unrighteous wickedness of them that rose against Thee smote; Whom the congregation of the ungodly, raging with its tongues, crucified; Grant that we may ever follow Thee in the deep mystery of Thy loving-kindness, that, as Thou didst for us bear the Cross and grave, we triumphing therein over a conquered world, may go our way into heaven. (11.)

O LORD our GOD, save Thy servants, who put their trust in Thee, for Thou art good and gracious, and of great mercy; look upon us, and have mercy on us, that our heart may rejoice in the greatness of Thy Name, may fear Thee so as to be glad; lead us in Thy way, and as we walk in Thy truth, comfort us with Thy help, and help us with Thy consolation. (11.) We pray Thee, O LORD, that guarded by the sign of Thy Cross, and kept safe under its guard, we may be delivered from all the snares of the devil. For Thine. O LORD, lead us Thy servants in Thy way, that we may walk in Thy truth, so that Thy great mercy may bedew us, and Thou mayest deliver our soul from the nethermost hell, and make us to share in everlasting glory. (1.)

Psalm 87

TITLE. A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah. Chaldee Targum: A hymn uttered at the hands of the sons of Korah, and a song stablished in the mouth of the ancient fathers.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST loves the gates of His Church, set upon the holy hills, more than all the tabernacles of Jacob. The Voice of the Apostles touching the Church. The Voice of the Prophet, in the HOLY GHOST, to the Apostles, or their Voice touching the Church. The Voice of the Prophet touching the Heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the Church of CHRIST. The Voice of CHRIST the Holy One to the Apostles touching the Church, and the merits of the Saints. VEN. BEDE. The sons of Korah signify Christians; to whom the Prophet proclaims the City of GOD; to increase their yearning for such glory. Otherwise: Nearly all the Psalms which are inscribed For the sons of Korah, are full of rejoicing, for they do not imitate the sins of their fathers, and take to themselves the fire of lust, strange to the LORD, but loving that which the LORD desireth, speak glorious things concerning the City of GOD.

In the first part, the Prophet speaketh to the faithful, proclaiming the Heavenly City. Her foundations are upon the holy hills. In the second part, the LORD the SAVIOUR declares her future belief by referring to various names, and reproacheth the Synagogue because she knew not GOD, in Whom the devout faith of the Gentiles believed. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know Me, Behold the Philistines, &c. The third part in one verse toucheth on the blessedness of the world to come, and these parts are divided from each other by the interposition of pauses. As the dwelling of all rejoicing is in thee. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. The Incarnation of CHRIST, and the exalting of the Gentiles. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of narration.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Friday: Matins. [Circumcision: II. Nocturn. In the Octave of Epiphany: III. Nocturn. Feasts of B.V.M.: II. Nocturn. Dedication of a Church: II. Nocturn.] Parisian. Saturday: Sexts. [Festivals as Gregorian.] Lyons.

Thursday: Sexts. [Dedication of Church: III. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: II. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Her foundations are upon the holy hills. [Circumcision and Epiphany: A Man was born in her, and the Most High founded her. Feast of B.V.M.: The habitation of all us rejoicing ones is as in thee, O holy Mother of GOD. Dedication: Jacob beheld a ladder,* and the top of it reached to heaven, and he beheld the angels descending, and said, Truly this place is holy.] Monastic. As preceding Psalm. [Corpus Christi: CHRIST the LORD, thinking upon them that know Him, stablished them with corn and wine. Comm. Virg.: Draw me, we will run after the perfume of Thine ointments, Thy Name is as oil poured forth. Dedication: This is none other* than the house of GOD, and this is the gate of heaven.] Parisian. GOD is our help,* therefore will we not fear. [Dedication: He that dwelleth in heaven hath His eye on that place, and defendeth it; and He beateth and destroyeth them that come to hurt it.]

Mozarabic. The LORD loveth the gates of Sion * more than the tabernacles of Jacob. 1 Her foundations are upon the holy hills: the LORD loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. A. Adam. Vict. The Sequence, Stola regni laureatus, in Comm. Apost. The LXX. and A.V., more correctly, His foundation. The ”city that is set on a hill” is ”God’s building,” not man’s. And so we read in another place, ”The LORD hath founded Zion.” The scope of the Psalm is the spread of the knowledge of JEHOVAH amongst the heathen nations around, and from the names specified, it may be most probably ascribed, like the preceding one, to the reign of Hezekiah, after the destruction of Sennacherib’s army. Assyria, then the great enemy of Judah, is omitted altogether; but we find Ethiopia (the Morians) and Egypt (Rahab) which were allies of Hezekiah, in Tirhakah’s army; Babylon, from which an embassy of congratulation was sent to the Jewish king; and the Philistines, whom he had finally subdued; all included in the list, with a special fitness inapplicable to any other date in the history of the southern kingdom, though some have tried to find in it a reference to the foundation of the Second Temple. The abruptness of the opening verse, remarks S. Augustine, suggests that something must have preceded, not of necessity uttered aloud, but pondered in the mind of the tuneful citizen, who filled with the HOLY GHOST, and thinking with love and desire of the City, breaks out in this wise, in which he begins to tell us of that heavenly Jerusalem, whose foundation is upon the holy hills, the Apostles and Prophets, whose Cornerstone is CHRIST, none other foundation than Whom can any man lay.

These, the Temple’s sure foundations, These are they that bind the nations Into GOD’s great house above: These the City’s pearly portal, Knitting faith with work immortal, Jew and Gentile into love. The word holy is not superfluous, but distinguishes the hills of the mystical Jerusalem from those of the mystical Babylon,

which are worldly power and ungodly wisdom. But Babylon has at any rate a solidity and grandeur of its own; not so the frail and temporary dwellings of careless frivolity, shunned by "the heirs of the promise," who even while dwelling in tabernacles, look, as Abraham did, "for a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD." There are six properties of a foundation, whereby we may see how it is a type of CHRIST. It props with rocks, is free from wind, light, fall; Shuns water, feels not weight, is strong, hid, firm.

He, too, props the whole spiritual building, "On this Rock I will build My Church;" and that with rocks, the unpolished stones of doctrine, like the altars of unhewn stones under the Law, for the Apostle tells us, "My speech and my teaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom." The wind of vain-glory comes not near Him, for He "shall be as a hiding-place from the wind," and saith of Himself, "I receive not honour from men." He needs not light, for though we see through a glass darkly, He ever hath open vision, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach to." He knows no fall, for His humility has searched the lowest depths, as it is written, "I am a worm, and no man, a very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people." He shunneth the waters of pleasure or riches, and saith of Himself, "My throat is dry." He feels not weight, in that He counts toil on our behalf as nothing, for "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." He is strong, for He is GOD; yea, as holy Job saith, "If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong." He is hidden, "Verily, Thou art a GOD that hidest Thyself, O GOD of Israel, the SAVIOUR." He is firm, "for He shall never be moved."

The Lord loveth the gates of Sion. These gates are twofold, the Apostles and other preachers of the word, by whose agency men enter into the Church, and the Sacraments which the converts receive in order to their full entrance into heavenly citizenship. GOD loves them more than all the dwellings of Jacob, because the Gospel Saints and Sacraments are higher than those of the Law, the Gospel Church nobler than the tabernacles of Moses and David, than the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel. So it is written on the one hand, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he;" and on the other, that the Law hath only "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things." There are, observes one commentator, four principal gates to the Holy City;

Baptism, to enter in; Penance, to return by; Orders, to ascend by; and Extreme Unction, whereat we go out; while the twelve articles of the Creed are at once, like the Apostles, foundations and gates, each a single pearl of great price; fairer and more blessed than those tents of Jacob which Balam, wondering, saw and blessed. Rev. xxi. 21. Numb. xxiv. 5. Hugo Card. Again, the verse may be applied to the Blessed Virgin, herself sprung from the holy and lofty race of Hebrew saints, prophets, and kings, and loved by God more than all other virgin souls, dwelling

in the tabernacles of pure bodies which wrestle, as Jacob, against all sin. L. Isn. ii. 2. There is a curious Rabbinical belief that in the days of Messiah, Mount Sion will be exalted by the heaping up of Sinai, Tabor, and Carmel, as a base beneath it, while restored Jerusalem crowns the height. And this they take as the sense of that prophecy: "The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills."

2 Very excellent things are spoken of thee: thou city of GOD. How excellent, how glorious, (A.V., LXX., and Vulg.,) does not appear till we reach the glowing language of the Apocalypse, and that of the many Christian hymns on the joys of the Heavenly City which have drawn their inspiration thence, for in this Psalm the Church Militant and Triumphant are so blended in idea into one, that it is impossible to sever them, or contemplate them independently of each other. "O blessed land of Paradise," exclaims one whose eyes have for centuries gazed on those delights for which they once longed, "O blessed land of gladness, for which I sigh in this valley of weeping; where wisdom without ignorance, memory without oblivion, understanding without error, reason without obscurity, will shine! Blessed are they who dwell there, and who will praise GOD for ever and ever. Amen." So, too, are very excellent things spoken of her, the mystical city of GOD, wherein the Great King deigned to tarry. There are many reasons for giving her this title, which may be thus summed up: S. Bernard. S. Proclus. Hugo Card.

Rex, præsul, populus, defensio, templa, domus, lex, Fons, schola, ludus, opes, commercia, pax, cibus, arma. King, pontiff, people, guard, shrine, home, and law, Fount, school, sport, riches, trade, peace, weapons, food, S. Germanus Constantinop. all which are interpreted either of the sojourning of the LORD within her, or of the graces which made her a fitting abode for Him. Note, moreover, that every holy soul is, in its degree, a city of GOD, placed high on the holy mountains of contemplation, founded on the Rock which is CHRIST, and having the gates of mind and body ever ready to open to the LORD when He knocketh, but barred closely against His foes. Of such a one shall glorious things be spoken, even, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy LORD;" and again, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the City of My God, which is New Jerusalem."

Finally, the Church is called in this Psalm by six titles: S. Bonaventura. foundation, mountain, Sion, holy, gates, city; the first because of her firmness, the second by reason of her exaltation, the third because of her looking for her God, the fourth from her graces, the fifth to denote her security, and yet her readiness to admit, and the last epithet tells us of the gathering together of the multitude within her. 3 I will think upon Rahab and Babylon: with them that know me. This rendering does not express the meaning of the original, nor is the A.V., though in part more correct,

accurate either. The whole verse should run, I will record Rahab and Babylon amongst those that know Me, that is, amongst My worshippers. Rahab, ”pride,” (S. Hieron.) or ”the haughty one,” means Egypt, which is so styled by Isaiah, ”Art not Thou it that hath cut Rahab?” Accordingly, we have a prophecy of the same seer, to the like effect: ”And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day.” How gloriously this promise was fulfilled, the long list of the great Saints of the Church of Alexandria and of the Thebaid may tell us for Egypt, while the roll of the martyrs under the fierce persecution of Sapor, who ruled where the King of Babylon once had sway, is not less eloquent for Mesopotamia. But nearly all the old commentators suppose that Rahab the harlot of Jericho is here named, and frame their glosses accordingly. Seeing, rightly enough, that the calling of the Gentiles is here foretold, they point out how Rahab was a type of all converted sinners, bearing on their foreheads the red line traced with CHRIST’S

A. In this sense of CHRIST claiming the Church, or the faithful soul, as His Bride, there is a special force in the Hebrew , which is the Pual form, found only in one other place, Cant. viii. 8, where, as with the Piel of 1 Sam. xxv. 39, it means ”to ask a woman in marriage.” The words are not quite alike in Hebrew. That found here is , (LXX., ’Paàβ.) ”proud,” from a root meaning ”to be angry or insolent.” The harlot’s name is , (LXX., ’Paχàβ.) ”spacious,” from another root meaning ”to be wide.” The commentators have mixed up these meanings as well as the names themselves. A.

precious Blood, thronging amidst the publicans and harlots into the kingdom of heaven, while Scribes and Pharisees remained without, still in that fated Jericho, whence our true Joshua delivers them that trust in Him. Rahab, too, meaning ”spaciousness,” is a type of those that once walked along the broad way of destruction, but, receiving and hearkening to the Apostles, messengers of the Conqueror, entered on the narrow way, and shall be saved when the world sinks in ruin at the sound of the Archangel’s trumpet. And Babylon, the city of ”confusion,” is named too, because from it there is a steady tide of emigration, of sinners justified by grace, and drawn into the fellowship of Jerusalem. With them that know Me. There are two readings of the Latin here, both differing from this. One, the Vulgate, and more usually received, is, Of Rahab and Babylon, that know Me (scientium Me.) That is, as some explain it, God treats the future as present, and speaks of those whose conversion He foresees, as already knowing Him. But most of them take the words as meaning the same as the other reading, that of LXX. and Gallican Psalter, to them that know Me, (scientibus Me.) that is, I will put the desire of preaching to Rahab and Babylon into the hearts of My Apostles and missionaries, that they may bring them to the knowledge of Me.

4 Behold ye the Philistines also : and they of Tyre, with the Morians; lo, there was he born. The LXX. and Vulgate rendering, as usual, strangers or aliens for

Philistines (ἀλλόφυλοι, alienigenæ) give the key to the interpretations here, which see in the widest expression the Gentiles, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," while Tyre denotes, as they will have it, those in the "strait" of penitential sorrow (it rather denotes those hard and stony with worldly prosperity,) and the Morians or Ethiopians, such as are black with sin, and long in spiritual darkness. There was he born. The LXX. and Vulgate read severally These were from there, and These were there. That is, they were admitted by the new birth of regeneration into that city whose deadliest foes they had been. Ayguan, observing that the Hebrew reads the clause in the singular, takes "this" to mean each of the specified nations taken singly. Others, seeing that it applies to one person, have applied it to a single Ethiopian, the eunuch of Queen Candace, but a truer sense is that the citizens of the new Jerusalem above are not ennobled as nations or communities, but each one separately, in the cleansing waters of Baptism. There is yet another meaning, that most obviously suggested by the Prayer Book Version, to which the Chaldee paraphrase lends weight. It reads, Where that king was born, or, as another rendering takes it, anointed. Because of the fame of Solomon, strangers from distant countries crowded to Jerusalem to see him, or at least the place of his abode; because of a greater than Solomon, the Gentiles throng into the Church to kneel at His foot-stool.

5 And of Sion it shall be reported that he was born in her : and the most High shall stablish her.

This version harmonizes so exactly with the last cited meaning of the previous clause, that it is hard to forego it; but although it nearly agrees with some of the Latin comments, it does not give the sense of the passage, which is rightly translated by the A. V., This man and that was born there, which is, save for the first clause, not dissimilar to the LXX., Mother Sion will say, Man and man was born in her. That is, the population of Sion will become vast from the natural increase of the alien immigrants, yet so that each new citizen is separately recognized, separately ennobled, admitted by a separate act, that the individual shall never be lost sight of in the mass. S. Augustine, following the LXX. rendering, but pointing it differently, takes it thus: A Man will say, Mother Sion, and a Man was made in her. And he explains it of CHRIST, Himself the Most High Who founded Sion, choosing her for His earthly Mother, and condescending to be born within her, words which another aptly takes of the Virgin Mother. But Euthymius, admitting this same text, interprets the words of every Gentile convert who will recognize Sion as his true Mother, because she has lovingly fed him with the nourishment of holy doctrine. Yet again, they turn it very ingeniously thus: The Mother of Sion, that is, the Synagogue, will say, A man, meaning thereby that CHRIST is only a mere human being. But Sion will say, He is Most Highest.

The Vulgate reads, Shall Sion say, A man, and a man was born in her, and the Most High founded her. And it is explained to be a cry of wonder on the Psalmist's part, as though he were saying, I know that glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of GOD, but is it possible that thou canst ever declare that the Man has been born in thee, that the Highest has deigned to become Incarnate? Or, as others, with but little difference of meaning, take it; Will any man say to Sion, can any merely human understanding assert or comprehend the mystery of the Man's birth Who is the Most High? There is yet a third exposition, which alleges that one particular man is meant here as the herald of the SAVIOUR's birth, and he, of course, John Baptist, the Fore-runner, the "man sent from GOD," who did tell these good tidings to Zion.

A. S. John i. 6. a misreading of μὴ τῇ Σιών. Aquila and Symmachus agree with A.V. 6 The LORD shall rehearse it when he writeth up the people : that he was born there.

That is, the LORD, when registering the nations in the Book of Life, will alone be able to compute the innumerable myriads of His redeemed, and shall say of every alien who has sought Jerusalem and submitted to her laws, This man was born there; meaning thereby that the acquired citizenship of the Gentiles is as perfect and indisputable as that of the descendants of Abraham, inheriting by right of birth. And that precisely because it is by means of the new birth in Holy Baptism that the franchise is conferred. Of this Isaiah spake in prophecy, saying, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem. But the Vulgate and LXX. read The Lord shall narrate in the Scriptures of the people and of the rulers that were [LXX. born] in her. This, as a Greek commentator urges, has reference to the use made of the Old Testament by CHRIST Himself, to prove His mission and authority. For S. Luke tells us how "there was delivered unto Him the book of the Prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.

This sort of Scripture of the Prophets He calls the Scripture of the peoples, or of the princes, because they were given to the nations and rulers of the Jews, and were thus the peculiar possession of them that were born in Sion. The Latins, on the other hand, will have it that the Scriptures of the peoples here mean the New Testament, intended for the unlearned and simple, not merely for scholars and philosophers, but which are, nevertheless, the Scriptures of the princes too, of the Apostles, Evangelists, and great Doctors of the Church, for these are they of whom it is written, "The princes of the people are joined unto the people of the GOD of Abraham. Another lays stress on the phrase peoples, as the technical term opposed to that of the one nation of the Jews, and argues that the Gentile

Scriptures are thereby denoted in contrast to the Jewish ones, not, as above, to the secular writings of philosophy. But a still more ingenious exposition is that which finds here a prophecy of the hallowing of the Gentile languages by their becoming channels for the narrative of CHRIST's life on earth, whereas they had previously contained only idolatrous blasphemies. Lastly, some have seen here a reference to that census of the Roman empire taken by order of Augustus at the time of the Redeemer's birth, wherein He caused Himself to be enrolled among the princes of the people, as the lineal descendant of David's royal house.

And Tertullian informs us that this record was in his day still preserved in the archives at Rome, and could be appealed to in disproof of those who cast doubts on the fact of CHRIST'S nativity.

7 The singers also and trumpeters shall he rehearse : All my fresh springs shall be in thee. The true force of this verse is found by comparing the versions of Aquila and Symmachus, who, coinciding with S. Jerome, give us this result : The singers, as in dances, will say in praise, All my springs are in thee. That is, for the Church Militant, that the singers and dancers of the world shall dedicate their once abused powers to the worship of GOD, and that gladly. The fountains then will be the sources of divine song, nay, the songs and hymns themselves, into which they will break forth, according that saying of the Prophet, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation ; and in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon His Name, sing unto the LORD." Their songs are streams of rejoicing, all derived from that one primal fount that issued from the side of JESUS.

Cujus de gurgite vivo Omnis posteritas latices in carmina duxit Amnemque in tenues ausa est deducere rivos, Unius fecunda bonis. From whose living flood, All later time, enriched by one alone, Bore from its waters chalices of song, And boldly drew its stream in slender rills. And the blessed ones, rejoicing in the gladness of the heavenly Jerusalem, shall, drinking of its pleasures as out of a river, fix all their happiness there, and regard it as the source and well-head of felicity. Another permissible rendering is not without a beauty of its own ; All my springs in thee shall sing like those that lead the dance ; for whereas many of GOD'S springs in the Church below are waters of affliction and of penitential tears, in our Country above there will be no streams save those of perennial joy. A living stream, as crystal clear, Welling from out the throne Of GOD and of the Lamb on high, The LORD to man hath shown. This stream doth water Paradise, It makes the Angels sing ; One precious drop within the heart, Is of all joy the spring, Joy past all speech, of glory full, But stored where none may know, As manna hid in dewy heaven, As pearls in ocean low.

John Mason, 1683, altered in H. A. M. A. Yet again, it may be, the singers and dancers, yea, all the springs of gladness, all expressions of joy, are in thee alone, But the LXX. and Vulgate, following a different reading of the Hebrew text, which

affects the previous verse also, translate, As of all rejoicing ones the dwelling is in thee. What does this As mean? asks S. Augustine. It tells us that our earthly joys are only a faint image of those delights which as yet we know not, and that the words our ignorance forces us to employ are quite inadequate to describe the gladness of heaven. The dwelling, too, is there, not the mere tabernacles of Jacob, shifting and uncertain in their place, but eternally unshaken, on the lofty hills of the Golden City. And, lastly, they take the verse of the Blessed Virgin, as the holy place within which abode our true Isaac, our mystic "laughter," and in whom therefore the joy of the whole earth was for a time contained.

Glory be to the FATHER, the Most High Founder of Sion; glory be to the SON, the Man Who was born in her; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, from Whom flow all the fresh streams which water the Paradise of GOD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD, the foundation of our faith, Who settest up the gates of eternity with the strong wall of righteousness in holy minds as upon lofty mountains; grant that we may believe gloriously in Thee, and confess by preaching that Thou wast made Man for our redemption. Who livest. O GOD, the founder of all good things, grant us to become fit to attain fellowship in light everlasting with all them that rejoice in Thee. Through. (1.) Quicken us, O LORD, from dead works, and lay in us the foundations of faith unfeigned and of active goodness, that our souls may build thereupon the fruit of virtues, and journeying to Thee, may be received with welcome by Thy glorious city. Through. (1.)

Psalm 88

TITLE. A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the Chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite. Or, A Song or Psalm of the sons of Korah, to the Chief Musician, for the flute (?) as a choir-song [or, as a lament, cf. 2 Sam. vii. 10,] an Instruction of Heman the Ezrahite. LXX. and Vulgate: A Song of a Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the end, for Maheleth responsively, of understanding of Eman the Ezrahite. S. Jerome: A Song of a hymn of the sons of Korah, to the Conqueror, by the chorus for singing, of instruction of Eman the Ezrahite.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, who vouchsafed to die for us, may be glorified by early Resurrection. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER touching the Passion, or of His sons to Him. The Prophet, touching the death of CHRIST and His Resurrection. VEN. BEDE. Maheleth is interpreted a choir singing Divine words; and that which is added, responsively, denotes that the musical instruments came first, and that the choir responded solemnly; mystically implying that the Church should harmoniously imitate the LORD's Passion, which is sung of in the Psalm. For Eman the Israelite which is interpreted His brother, and the man that seeth God, denotes the same faithful people, whereof is said, "Go, tell My brethren." Eman, moreover, is the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel, of the family of Kohath, son of Levi, one of the singers whom David set over the others for the singing when he brought up the Ark. Jerome hath explained this title thus: This Psalm refers to faith, and the whole choir responds in unison to the sons of Korah who precent, and it is composed by the understanding and prudence of Eman the Israelite or Ezrahite. Arnobius, in this wise: In the title of this Psalm certain sons of Korah are named; but the Psalm directs its song for Amalech, and ascribes understanding to Eman the Israelite. The Hebrews call Amalech the "destitute," and Eman the "poor." Therefore the discourse is addressed to the destitute and poor, I believe, Him whom the disciples forsook alone and fled: Who, when He was rich, became poor for us.

Throughout the Psalm the LORD speaketh. In the first part He maketh petition for help; describing by various similes the contempt which He was to suffer at the hands of the Jews. O Lord God of My salvation, &c. In the second part He

counts up what He was to suffer, declaring that the dead cannot be raised up by physicians so as to give thanks to GOD. Thou hast put away Mine acquaintance far from Me. Thirdly, He saith that the buried cannot proclaim the mercy of GOD, nor the land sound His praises, and therefore He prayeth that His Resurrection may come very swiftly. Persevering in this prayer, He speaketh on behalf of His members, mentioning the various sufferings which as well He as His devout people hath endured, Shall Thy lovingkindness be shown in the grave? 1 These etyma are erroneous. But a similar result may be obtained from the correct ones, , Mahalath, the true reading here, comes from the root , to ”pierce” or ”perforate;” , Heman, means ”faithful,”

from , ”to be true,” while Ezrahite is from , Ezra, whose root is , ”to help,” and the singer appears as the Faithful and True Whom they pierced, the SON of GOD, our Helper. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. He prophesieth the death of CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, and prayer, and supplication.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Friday: Matins. Monastic. Thursday: Lauds. [Good Friday: III. Nocturn. Easter Eve: III. Nocturn. Seven Dolours B.V.M.: III. Nocturn. Dedication of Church: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: II. Nocturn. [Easter Eve: Matins.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian. As preceding Psalm. [Good Friday: Thou hast put away Mine acquaintance far away from Me, I was delivered up, and I came not forth. Easter Eve, and Seven Dolours: I have been even as a man that hath no strength, free among the dead. Dedication: Jacob set up a stone for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.] Monastic. Let my prayer enter * into Thy presence, O LORD. [Good Friday, &c., as Gregorian.] Mozarabic. Unto Thee have I cried, O LORD,* and early shall my prayer come before Thee. This Psalm stands alone in all the Psalter for the unrelieved gloom, the hopeless sorrow of its tone. Even the very saddest of the others, and the Lamentations themselves, admit some variation of key, some strains of hopefulness; here only all is darkness to the close. Hence it is clear that only some most overwhelming disaster, national or personal, could have given birth to it, and this fact sets aside at once any such literal acceptance of the title as would refer the Psalm to that Heman the Kohathite whom David set along with Asaph in the first place of the Temple-singers. Nor is there any internal evidence for a date which shall be more than conjectural. But it seems most reasonable to take it, with the Hebrew and early Christian commentators, as written during the first shock of the Captivity, and before the exiles had in any degree formed a polity or established a worship among themselves to preserve their national existence amidst their heathen masters.

1 O LORD GOD of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: O let my prayer enter into thy presence, incline thine ear unto my calling. It is the cry of the SON of GOD in the bitterest hour of His Passion. As Man, He calls on His FATHER as His LORD and GOD; as the GOD, further, of His salvation, of His perfect The Monastic, by a very peculiar use, employs this Psalm at the Matins of Easter Day also.

pureness of body and soul, and reminds Him of the persevering prayers offered up with strong crying and tears throughout His life, and especially in the day of His Crucifixion and the night of His Agony in the garden. And as He speaks on behalf of His people Israel, He uses epithets suited to God's care for them: He calls Him LORD, as King and Ruler; GOD, as Creator; of salvation, because of the deliverance out of Egypt, the greater deliverance which He desires for them from the Babylonian captivity of sin. O let my prayer enter into Thy presence. Here we may see the mighty force of earnest prayer, in that its utterances are not dissipated in the winds, but it enters, like a living person, into the actual presence of GOD, and discharges there that office for us which the body cannot do, since it is unable to penetrate thither. As, then, a good messenger is swift, and goes at once by the straightest road to his goal, that he appear not robbed and naked before him to whom he bears a missive; as he must have a thorough understanding of the message, so as to deal fitly with him to whom its execution belongs, and with all those who have influence with that person; as he should not ask what should not be asked, nor be foolish in his asking, nor yet apply to any one who has no power to do the thing wanted;

as he should know who are his opponents, and should have some method of resisting or conciliating them; as he should not contradict himself, nor speak with wandering thoughts or averted face, and should utter what he says with a distinct and clear voice; even such should be the qualities of a prayer which is to enter into GOD's presence, and find acceptance with Him. Here, then, the Christian may see how, following the Master's example, he may prevail with the Most High. He must pray devoutly, acknowledging Him to Whom he prays as LORD and GOD; he must pray wisely, asking for salvation; he must pray personally for himself, asking for my salvation; he must do it perseveringly, day and night, in prosperity and adversity alike; he must do it fervently, before GOD; he must do it with such purity of intention that the prayer may enter into the presence of GOD, whither nothing defiled can make its way; he must do it with such trustfulness, that GOD, the Great Physician, may bow down His ear to the sick man who cries to Him from the death-bed of sin.

2 For my soul is full of trouble: and my life draweth nigh unto hell. The soul of CHRIST was full of trouble, though there was no fault in Him, because He bore not only the betrayal, the reproaches, the stripes, the cross, and all other details of

personal suffering, but still more, the sins and sorrows of all mankind, especially of those very Jews who had conspired against Him, so that His life drew nigh unto hell, as the A. L. death which they had plotted came hourly nearer. Herein we may see the reality of CHRIST'S Passion, as against those early sectaries who maintained that He merely seemed in outward show to suffer, but that His Divine impassibility extended to His human nature; whereas He saith Himself, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And He declares Himself to be nigh unto hell, not merely nigh unto death, because Hades, not Paradise, was the dwelling of the departed Patriarchs till He, by entering their prison, released them. His members may take these words as their own, when their soul is full of trouble, not only by reason of the sorrows of this world, but when they think on their own sins, and fear the wrath to come, knowing that by reason of those sins, their life draweth nigh unto hell. But by descending thither in thought and in devout meditation while living, we may be wise in time, and escape from it when dead.

3 I am counted as one of them that go down into the pit : and I have been even as a man that hath no strength. A. S. Hieron. in Esa. That is, literally, I am so near death, that I am counted as already dead, so that men are even now making ready for my burial, although I be alive. And applied to CHRIST, the words denote not only the set purpose of His enemies to slay Him, but their belief that He would thenceforth vanish, like all other dead men, and be without help or power to return, or to nerve His disciples to further resistance; nay, that He would even undergo punishment in the place of torment, because by His blasphemies He had on earth gone down amongst sinners into the pit and depth of iniquity. He was counted as without help in another sense, because all His disciples forsook Him and fled, for His enemies knew not of that which He said to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray unto My FATHER, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of Angels." They counted Him as without that FATHER'S help, when they said, "He trusted in GOD, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him." And as with the King of Martyrs, so with His soldiers. The tyrants who slew them, thought to destroy them and their faith by so doing, and counted them amongst the worst of malefactors, according to their LORD'S own saying, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake." And finally, it may be taken of any tempted one over whom the spiritual enemy is confident of victory, counting him as already dead in trespasses and sin, and with no help for him in his GOD.

4 Free among the dead, like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave : who are out of remembrance and are cut away from thy hand.

Free among the dead. The LORD was free from corruption, and free, too, in that He was not led by Angels, but went down Himself alone into the grave. He was free too from sin, the cause, near or remote, of death to all other men. He was free, because while others die unwillingly, and on compulsion, He died of His own

accord and willingly. ”I,” S. John x. saith He, ”lay down My life. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. He was free, yet again, because He was not bound by the fetters of death, but descended thither with authority and dignity, and burst the chains of others. He was free, because inseparably united unto the Manhood which descended was the Godhead which is not subject unto death. But though this is the higher sense of the phrase as applied to CHRIST by His servants, it is plain that it cannot be the meaning as intended by His enemies. The word is found also in 2 Kings xv. 5, applied to the leper’s house to which King Uzziah was confined, and it is there translated ”several,” that is ”isolated. Free among the dead, then, means turned adrift, homeless, free from the organic bonds of life and of society, loosed and therefore lost; nay, as He hung upon the Cross, free for every one to insult and wound at pleasure, being out of the pale and fence of the law’s protection.

In both senses the words hold good of the members as well as of the Head. That man is free among the dead, who walks in newness of life in a wicked world, amidst those who are dead in their sins; free, because he is subject to Him Whose service is perfect freedom, because he has ”not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the Spirit of adoption,” because he is ”no more a servant, but a son; and yet the ungodly think him free among the dead, as cut off from all the pleasures of life, and turned adrift from all social ties and amenities into a hard and mortified existence, which is but a living death; the view commonly taken of the Religious Life by those who know not its enjoyments. Like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave. That is, not merely cut off by a sudden and violent death, but executed by the officers of justice in punishment for crime, because ”He was wounded for our transgressions and numbered with the transgressors,” and most literally wounded with nails and spear; and like too to those wounded by the darts of the enemy, by the smitings of sin, who lie, persisting in wickedness, in the grave of dead works, and are not alive to GOD. Once again, the words hold good in a favourable sense of those whom the wicked hate; for they, wounded with the love of GOD, sleep (Vulg.

and LXX.), in that they close their eyes to vanities and evil desires, and are buried, because they withdraw into retirement, and hide their works from the praise of men. Who are out of remembrance, or rather, with A.V., LXX., and Vulg., whom Thou rememberest no more. As GOD cannot

A. A. S. Bruno Carth. A. forget, most of the commentators agree with S. Augustine’s reading, whom Thou hast not yet remembered; that is, those who must wait till the general resurrection before rising again, instead of doing so on the third day. Some, however, take it as expressing those sinners whom God delivers over to their own evil will, never chastising them, but as it were forgetting their offences and their very existence. And are cut away from Thy hand. That is, who no longer need

God's providential care, as having lost those bodies which He provided with food, shelter, and clothing, and other visible proofs of His care and governance, which do not appear in the case of the dead; or again, that the thread of their life has been as it were cut off from the hand of God, and thus separated from the web of life. This figure of speech is not peculiar to the Pagan fable of the Parcæ, for Hezekiah exclaims, "I have cut off, like a weaver, my life." But in their special reference to CHRIST, the words obviously point to the Jewish belief in His rejection by God as a sinner, whereas, instead of being cut off from Him, the heavenly voice had declared Him to be the beloved Son, in Whom the FATHER was well pleased. It was to those who slew Him that the words in this sense apply, for God no more remembers the obstinately impenitent, but cuts them off from His hand, even from fellowship and part in His Only-Begotten.

5 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit : in a place of darkness, and in the deep. Origen. Bellarmine. S. Chrysost. Z. P. Pseudo-Hieron. A. Hugo Card. This verse does not refer to the entombment of CHRIST, as some would take it, for the grave has already been named in the preceding clause, and though it may well be called a place of darkness, yet it is not the lowest pit. That may better be explained of the descent into Hades, although there is no reason to reject absolutely the various steps of that descent which they enumerate; the bitter sorrow and misery, the prison along with the thieves, the Cross itself; the abyss of sin which the Jews in their false accusations charged Him with plunging into, all made part of the descent into that depth, all made yet rougher His sharp passage to the grave. And this interpretation squares well with the LXX. and Vulgate versions, which read, They have put me, &c. But there is a truer beauty in the Hebrew text, which tells us that all the Passion was the act of God the FATHER, Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us. For in the deep they read In the shadow of death. And they teach that this phrase has a threefold sense; oblivion, sin, and bodily death. The Jews strove to put our LORD into the shadow of death in these three ways: first, by attempting to destroy His teaching and very memory; next by coupling Him with malefactors, and loading Him with false accusations; lastly, by the Crucifixion itself. Yet for Him, as S.

Gregory observes, it was but the shadow of death, the bare suffering of the body, and that suffering did away for ever with the reality of death, the spiritual destruction of the soul, for all who believe in Him. And God permits His servants to be similarly tried in their degree, when He puts them into the midst of sore trouble, of darkness and doubt, and above all, of false accusation, to test their endurance. The literal sense found here by some early commentators is by no means improbable, that it has special reference to the Captivity, and perhaps to the blinding and imprisonment of the unhappy Zedekiah, the last king of the line of David.

6 Thine indignation lieth hard upon me : and thou hast vexed me with all thy storms.

And that because CHRIST bore in His own person the sins of the whole world, which are under the just indignation of Almighty God; as it is written by the Prophet, ”The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. And while this metaphor of a solid crushing weight is employed when speaking of God’s share in bringing about the Passion; on the other hand, the raging winds and waves are used as the type of human passion and the ill-will of evil spirits loosed against the Most Holy; yet called Thy storms, because even so they were but the ministers accomplishing the Divine will. The quaint mediæval legend of S. Christopher brings this double idea of the verse very forcibly before the mind. After narrating how the Child’s voice summoned the giant to carry him over the river, the story continues: ”Christopher, therefore, lifting the Child on his shoulders, and taking his staff, entered the river to cross it. And, lo, the water of the river began to swell little by little, and the Child weighed most heavily, as it were of lead; and the further he proceeded, the waves waxed the higher, and the Child pressed more and more on the shoulders of Christopher with weight unbearable, so that Christopher was in a sore strait, and dreaded that he was in peril.

But when he had now just come forth and had crossed the river, he set down the Child on the bank, and said unto Him: ’Child, Thou hast set me in sore peril, and didst weigh so grievously that if I had the whole world upon me, I could scarce have felt it heavier.’ And the Child answered him: ’Marvel not, Christopher, for thou hast had upon thee not the whole world only, but thou hast borne upon thy shoulders Him Who created it, for I am CHRIST thy King.’” And thus we have the trials of the Church and of every faithful soul set before us in the double type. The hard pressure from above stamps on the patient believer, who has melted like wax in the fire of God’s tenderness, the Image of the Only-begotten, sealed with the HOLY SPIRIT of promise, the waves below wash away the defiling stains of sin, and turn the brief sorrow into everlasting joy.

7 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me : and made me to be abhorred of them. S. Irenæus. They dwell on the various fulfilments of this saying, reminding us of the rejection of the LORD by the whole Jewish nation, His kinsmen according to the flesh; of the flight of His disciples, when they all forsook Him; of the suffering at the place of Crucifixion itself, when His bitterest enemies crowded round Him to accomplish their evil deed, and to jeer Him, whereas ”all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.” And made Me to be abhorred of them, as even His chief Apostle denied Him with curses; as the Name of CHRIST is still loathed and blasphemed by His unhappy and blinded kinsmen. How exactly the same trial was accomplished in His members we may read again and again in the story of His early martyrs, abandoned, denounced, slaughtered, by their own near relatives and acquaintance, and abhorred as guilty

of the vilest secret crimes. Cardinal Hugo applies the verse to those who, abandoning the world, sought the religious life at the call of GOD, but against the will of their secular friends. And observe, that the whole verse, as well as that which follows, aptly depicts the position of a leper, cut off from human companionship, an object of disgust and reviling, and thus a fit type of Him Who was despised and rejected of men. The leper was not merely an exile, but a prisoner, unfettered indeed to the eye, but limited to a narrow boundary, to pass which was forbidden under severe penalties, amounting, in later ages, sometimes to death. It follows, therefore:

8 I am so fast in prison : that I cannot get forth.

In the literal sense, they explain it either of an actual dungeon, such as that into which Zedekiah was thrust, and then of calamities hedging a man round like walls from which there is no escape; or again, of such shame and confusion as to prevent the sufferer from daring to show his face in public. Interpreting the place of CHRIST, they say, and rightly, that the sufferings of the Passion, laid on Him by the eternal desire of the FATHER, and by His own free will, formed that narrow prison whence His tender love to man would not permit Him to come forth till He had borne all to the very uttermost. And S. Gregory the Great, commenting on the kindred passage in Job, ”I kept silence, and went not out of the door,” observes, ”He kept silence and went not out of the door, Who just before the hour of His Passion, when He was suffering the weaknesses of humanity, would not exercise the power of Deity. And when He was despised, because He seemed mere man, He could have gone forth, had He willed to disclose His hidden majesty, but as He showed His weakness, and concealed His power, He went not out to His persecutors, in that He remained unknown to them. The LXX.

and Vulgate read, however, in the first clause, I was delivered up, or, as it may be turned, betrayed, whence many of the commentators explain the words to refer to Judas Iscariot, and to the Jews who delivered the LORD up to Pilate. They also give other interpretations of the closing words, I came not forth: namely, that He made no attempt to escape out of the garden from the soldiers, nor to avoid His FATHER’S will, nor yet to show the actual power of the CHRIST, nor, once more, to hasten His own Resurrection, but abode in the grave long enough to leave no doubt as to the fact of His death. The Carmelite gives a somewhat forced explanation of the phrase, taking it of the concealment and silence which CHRIST observed as to the name of the traitor, until such time as he had accomplished his guilt, giving him full room for repentance, and shielding him from the indignation of the other Apostles. They give another meaning of the whole passage when spoken of the faithful soul, which GOD has been pleased to call to affliction in this world. In the prison of repentance for all, in the prison of the religious life for a few, there is no coming forth, at least here. So it is written, ”None of you shall go out at the door

of his house until the morning; and again, ”Whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be on his head.

All thenight of this life must, then, be spent in constant repentance for past sins, until the morning breaks of the everlasting day.

9 My sight faileth for very trouble: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched forth my hands unto thee. The first clause seems literally to mean the soreness and dimness of sight caused by excessive weeping, and is so taken by many of the commentators, and Lorinus aptly quotes a Latin poet in illustration—Nor my sad eyes to pine with constant tears Could cease. The Carthusian adds, however, other reasons, such as the blindfolding of the LORD’S Face, the buffets He received, the spitting on His countenance, the droppings of blood from the crown of thorns, as all working to the same end, and still more when to all was added the agony of the Cross. The LXX. and Vulgate reading, Mine eyes languish because of poverty, has led to a mystical interpretation, for, as S. Augustine observes, it cannot be taken literally of CHRIST’S bodily eyes, since His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion took place in quick succession immediately after the Paschal

F A. A. Theodoret. Cajetanus. S. Bruno Carth. Pseudo-Hieron. Hugo Card. D. C. S. Cyprian. Isa. lxv. 2. Rom. x. 21. Supper, so that famine had no opportunity of wasting His physical faculties, and the metaphorical sense is excluded also, because the inner eyes of His mind were filled with unwaning light. Wherefore it is necessary to find a different meaning from these two, and to apply the words mystically to His Body the Church, whose eyes are the Apostles, His seers, and the ”light of the world,” made faint and weak in the time of the Passion by the withdrawal of the true Light, the Bread of heaven, from them. But I have called daily [or, all day] upon Thee, in the seven voices from the Cross, and in the prayer for Resurrection, and because the perpetual intercession of CHRIST ascends for His people, even when the Church becomes weak in faith and slack in prayer. I have stretched forth My hands unto Thee, is said in that CHRIST ceased not to perform His acts of power and mercy, symbolized by the hands, throughout His earthly ministry, in that He continued fervent in prayer, in that He spread out His loving-kindness to embrace man as though with His arms, and finally, in that His sacred hands were literally strained upon the bitter Cross, stretched out all the day long, through the weary hours of that sad Good Friday, to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

10 Dost thou show wonders among the dead : or shall the dead rise up again, and praise thee? 11 Shall thy loving-kindness be showed in the grave : or thy faithfulness in destruction ? 12 Shall thy wondrous works be known in the dark : and thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten? A.

The object of this passionate cry is not so much the private advantage of the petitioner, as the vindication of GOD’s might, glory, and goodness, that He may so

disclose them by His dealing with the suppliant, as to draw others to His worship; and thus it resembles the prayer of Moses on behalf of the rebellious Israelites, lest their destruction should further harden the Egyptians in their unbelief. And therefore the verses are most fitly applied to Him of Whom the great Jewish lawgiver was but a type and forerunner, and depict Him as expressing the fear of death entertained by His human nature, and also the necessity of His Resurrection, foreseen by His divine nature to be required, in order that the Apostles might have power to work miracles and preach His Name amidst the deadness and darkness of heathenism. For the most part, the expositors pass very lightly over the literal interpretation of these three verses, and prefer to follow S. Augustine in taking them allegorically of those who lie in the grave of sin, and asking what may be GOD's purpose towards them, whether He have provided any means of reaching and delivering them. In the tenth verse, the second clause in LXX. and Vulgate runs, Shall the physician raise [thee] up? which is mystically explained to be a reference to the Apostles and other holy preachers, physicians of the soul, sent to proclaim the Gospel to sinners. S. Jerome reads in this clause, Shall the giants arise? said by S.

Augustine to imply that no skill or might of physicians, however gigantic, is enough; and by others, that the words refer to the antediluvian giants or any other, and thus they are explained of peculiarly grievous and obstinate sinners, respecting whose capability of repentance the question is asked. They remind us, too, that the loving-kindness and faithfulness of GOD are only titles of the LORD JESUS, and that He did make His way into the very heart of the grave and of destruction, to show His wondrous work of salvation in the dark of Hades; though there are some found to suggest that the grave here means the "open sepulchre" of the tongue of the Pharisees and Chief Priests, and the land where all things are forgotten, not merely the abode of the finally lost, but that ungrateful Judæa which kept not in mind either the testimonies of the Prophets or the marvellous works of the Redeemer Himself, when it cried aloud for His crucifixion. And, spoken of one sinful soul, it is true that a man of earthly mind, who pays no regard to spiritual things, is himself a land, a mere piece of earth, where all things divine are forgotten, and where even GOD Himself can do no mighty works, because of its unbelief.

A. 13 Unto thee have I cried, O LORD: and early shall my prayer come before thee. This is the third time in the Psalm that the suppliant declares that he has cried to the LORD, doing so first, day and night; next, all the day; and now, early; and, as is usual in such triple repetitions, there is a peculiar stress to be looked for here. This is alleged by several very early commentators to be the petition of CHRIST, at the early beginning of the Passion, for His Resurrection, so that they who saw Him stretching out His hands all day long upon the Cross, may now behold Him in the morning glory of His arising, according to that universal tradition of the Church that He rose immediately after midnight. But many of the Latins, having regard to

the words that follow, urge that though CHRIST is the speaker, yet He is speaking in the person and on behalf of His Church, crying to the FATHER, Who alone is a physician strong enough to deliver the dead, for salvation in the morning of the Gospel revelation which followed the clouds and darkness of idolatry; that when the blazing noon-

A. These various renderings depend on the pointing and interpretation of the word . tide of the Judgment comes, when the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, a noontide compared with which even the morning itself is as night, His suppliants may find grace with Him. In the morning of this life, the morning promise of good works, Christians must make their prayer to God. We are reminded, too, how often in Holy Writ the early morning is the time when God bestowed some great favour on His people; how then the Egyptians were drowned, the Law was given, the manna rained down, the Ammonites vanquished by Saul, and how even in the lower creation, the birds begin their song of praise, and the wild beasts flee to their coverts. We have then the literal sense that the first-fruits of the day should be hallowed to the service of God, for it is a shame, observes S. Augustine, that the sun's rays should find a Christian slothful in his bed. And so one of our own poets:

Henry Vaughan, Rules and Lessons. When first thine eyes unveil, give thy soul leave To do the like; our bodies but forerun The spirit's duty. True hearts spread and heave Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun. Give Him thy first thoughts then, so shalt thou keep Him company all day, and in Him sleep. Yet never sleep the sun up. Prayer should Dawn with the day. There are set, awful hours Twixt heaven and us. The manna was not good After sun-rising; far-day sullies flowers. Rise to prevent the sun; sleep doth sins glut, And heaven's gate opens when this world's is shut. Come before Thee. The LXX., Vulgate, and A. V., prevent, that is, anticipate. Yet how? for as S. Bernard observes, God may be sought, and may be found, but He cannot be prevented, and a prayer which He has not Himself inspired must needs be cold and poor. We cannot prevent His grace or His blessings, but we may prevent His judgments and His rewards, by making our prayer in this life, by confessing our sins before He chastises, by giving Him praise and honour before He bestows gifts, nay, even when He sends chastisements.

14 LORD, why abhorrest thou my soul: and hidest thou thy face from me? Here we may find the foretaste of that supreme hour on the Cross, when it seemed to the human nature of CHRIST as though that soul which He was making an offering for sin was rejected by the FATHER, and not received as an oblation of a sweet-smelling savour; nay, that God, instead of showing His Face in benign acceptance of the Sacrifice, hid Himself, and forced out the lamentable cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

But the LXX. and Vulgate read, Why rejectest Thou My prayer? and this is explained of that petition, "O My FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. They raise, in order to answer, the question of how the FATHER can be said to reject the prayer of the Son, seeing that CHRIST Himself saith, "I know that Thou hearest Me always. And they reply that it is spoken of delay on God's part, not of denial; and also that CHRIST's absolute prayer, that for the redemption of mankind, was heard, but the cry of His lower will, for escape from death, was not. Spoken of His members, many reasons are assigned for God's delay in granting prayers. It is to make them more ardent, like the breeze which seeming to extinguish a flame, only fans it. It is sometimes because the thing we ignorantly ask for is dangerous, and God purposes to give us something better. It is often for our fault, in various ways. Either the prayer is too late, like that of the foolish virgins; or false, like that of those who content themselves with crying, "LORD, LORD," but do not the will of their FATHER in heaven; or that of obstinate sinners, of whom is written, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination; or cruel, like the desire of James and John to bring down fire on the guilty village: or lacking in perseverance, as when Abraham ceased to petition for Sodom;

or because it lacks the wings of almsgiving and fasting, for "prayer is good with fasting, and alms, and righteousness; or because it is made for an undeserving person, for the LORD saith, "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me, for I will not hear thee," or because it is idle, for "Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it. But we may well bear in mind the loving-kindness rather than the judgments of God in this hiding of His face, and remember how He delayed that Incarnation for which the Fathers of the Old Covenant looked so yearningly, and lengthened out the pangs of the Martyrs of the New Covenant in order to increase their reward.

15 I am in misery, and like unto him that is at the point to die: even from my youth up thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind. The words, from my youth up, belong to the first clause, as the A. V., not to the second, as here. Lest we should fancy that the Passion of CHRIST was but of three hours, or of a single day, the HOLY GHOST reveals to us here that CHRIST never lived without suffering in the days of His flesh. For besides the cup of His most bitter death, which He had ever before His mind's eye, He was throughout His life in toils and troubles. I, saith He, am poor and in labours from My youth, (LXX. Vulg.) for though I was blessed and rich in the form of GOD, I became needy for the sake of you men, and that from Mine infancy, as the manger, and the cave of Bethlehem, and the flight into Egypt testify. Wherefore the sorrows of His nativity are fitly commemorated in the great Passiontide hymn of the Western Church as the beginning of His woes in the glorious battle against sin.

S. Venant. Fortunat. The Hymn, Pange lingua. Laid an Infant in the manger, In the stable poor and dim, Wrapped in swaddling-clothes enfolding Every helpless infant limb, Thus the Blessed Virgin Mother, Mother's care bestowed on Him. A.

Whence we too may take pattern not to put off austerity and self-denial till mature age, remembering that the Prophet hath said, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. The words fitly betoken also the sufferings of the Church from Abel under the Old Covenant and Stephen under the New, through all the trials, vicissitudes, and struggles against her enemies, ghostly and bodily. As her LORD was poor, in that He had no place to lay His head, so she is poor also, in hunger and thirst, here in exile, for the good things of her country, and her Saints are poor in voluntary poverty and in their humble estate in this world. Thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind. And this we may most fitly take first of the Agony in the garden, when the LORD said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. But the LXX. and Vulgate, following a different sense of the text here, read, Being exalted, I was humbled, and troubled. He was exalted by His FATHER in miraculous power, humbled in human weakness and mortality, exalted on the Cross, as on the throne of His kingdom, having over His head a title written, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," He was humbled even unto death, and troubled because of the blindness of His people, and their coming ruin.

He was exalted by the people when they cried aloud, "Blessed is the King Who cometh in the Name of the LORD," and humbled before His judges, doomed to the scourge and the Cross. It may not only be taken of the vicissitudes of the Church, which has always had to undergo troubles and persecutions after any great spiritual victory, but it may well be applied to the history of the workings of grace in each soul, which is exalted in pride while puffed up with earthly thoughts, then humbled to confession by the sense of sin, and troubled or confounded at the thought of judgment to come.

The nephews and kindred of Popes and Cardinals cannot apply this verse to themselves, caustically remarks Cardinal Hugo, for they are rich, and get benefices from their cradles. 16 Thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me : and the fear of thee hath undone me. 17 They came round about me daily like water : and compassed me together on every side. Because the wrath of GOD against the countless and varied sins of all mankind passed over them on to the head of CHRIST, Who was smitten for the transgressions of His people, He was exalted on the Cross, and humbled unto death. The terrors (A. V., LXX., Vulg.) of GOD, whether in the form of the anticipation of the Passion during the Agony, or the permitted attacks of evil spirits, or the plots of the chief priests and angry cries of the multitude, encompassed the LORD; and that like water, not merely because it drowns, but because it searches every crevice, goes to the very bottom, and makes its way on all sides once it can obtain any entrance, thus fitly denoting the penetrating force of temp-

tation and trouble. They remind us, too, that the words aptly tell us of the awe which the terrible thought of judgment to come brings upon the souls of even righteous men; but take comfort from the phrase goeth over, (διῆλθον, transierunt) as implying that GOD's chastisements do not abide permanently upon His people, but pass away from and over them when their work is accomplished. The curses and terrors of the Law encompassed in like manner the Jews of old, and it was only the same SAVIOUR Who can deliver us from the judgment that could free them from its sore bondage.

18 My lovers and friends hast thou put away from me : and hid mine acquaintance out of my sight. Herein, so far as our LORD was Man, was the crown of His sorrows, that He had to drink His bitter cup alone, with no fellow and partner to share His grief. Lover and friend, (A. V., Vulg.) GOD put from Him when Judas became a traitor and an enemy, and when His nearest acquaintance, the Apostles themselves, forsook Him and fled, so that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled to the letter: "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Me." Out of my sight. The LXX. and Vulgate read from misery, that is, that the reason why His acquaintance fled was to avoid sharing in the troubles which He endured. But the true rendering is My acquaintance are darkness. This may be taken, literally, as equivalent to the Prayer Book version, implying that they had concealed themselves, so as to be unseen; or again, as referring to the darkness on Calvary, the only thing which, while it lasted, met the dying eyes of JESUS; or yet again, that the only friend left, the only intimate who would hold to Him, was—the grave; as His martyrs and confessors have found many a time in the midst of a hostile and blaspheming world.

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of our salvation; glory be to the SON, Who was free among the dead, and showed His loving-kindness in the grave; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Whose wondrous works are known in enlightening the dark hearts of sinners. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD, Redeemer of all, and ineffable Giver of our salvation, Who passing into hell for us, wast free among the dead, hear the morning prayer of Thy servants, and deliver us from the grievous bondage of the crafty foe. Who livest. O LORD JESU CHRIST, Who foreknowing him that should deliver Thee unto death, didst foretell it before Thy death, and dying didst go down thither where is the appointed house of all living, to wit, into hell; Grant us that when the time of our summons shall arrive, we may not go down thither to be held in punishment, whither Thou camest dying to be a deliverer through pardon, but stretching out Thine hand, save us by Thy manifest power from the depth of hell, Who alone didst vouchsafe to lay down Thy life for sinners. (11.) O GOOD CHRIST, consider our need and poverty, lest

Thou shouldst hide Thy face from us and cast off our soul, that we who are poor and afflicted from our youth up, may at length be refreshed with heavenly delights, and rejoice in being clothed with everlasting immortality. (11.)

Come quickly, O CHRIST, to Thy Church, to comfort her, poor and in troubles, that Thou, Who becamest poor and needy for her sake, mayest reward her with heavenly gifts in the world to come. (11.) O CHRIST, SON of GOD the FATHER, Who bearest the vision of the Cross, when Thine acquaintance, the disciples, stood afar off in Thy Passion, suffer not Thyself, we pray Thee, to go far from us, but make known unto us the paths of Thy sweetness, and as Thou didst not come forth when Thou wast delivered up, in that Thou didst not disclose Thyself as GOD to the inner sight of men, grant us a true knowledge of Thy Godhead, that after our passage hence we may enjoy Thee in that substance, Who with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST abidest One in Unity and in glory everlasting. (11.) O LORD GOD of our salvation, graciously have mercy upon us, and by the abundance of Thy propitiation call back our soul, which is full of troubles, and our life which, through sin, draweth nigh unto hell; put us far from all sorrow now and for evermore, that through Thy bountiful mercy, we may evermore pay Thee our debt of praise. (1.)

We humbly beseech Thee, O CHRIST, to strengthen with Thy might Thy servants delivered by Thy Passion from the snare of hell, and vouchsafe to loose them from the toils of the second death, that disburdened and free, we may be united unto Thy kingdom.

Psalm 89

TITLE. Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite. Chaldee Targum: A good understanding, spoken at the hand of Abraham, who came from the East. LXX. and Vulg.: Understanding of Ethan the Israelite (LXX.) or Ezrahite (Vulg.)

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST rules in equal power with the FATHER and the Comforter. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER touching the Jews. The Voice of the Prophet, touching CHRIST, to the FATHER, or the Voice of the SON or of the Church to the FATHER touching the Jews. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER. The story is sung of the time when the people were numbered.

VEN. BEDE. Ethan is interpreted the Strong, and as this Psalm is about to tell of the praises and promises of the LORD, the unchangeable firmness of its faithful words is indicated by the name Strong. And here Understanding is necessarily prefixed, no doubt because an everlasting throne is promised to David, which meanwhile we can see was destroyed long ago historically. This Ethan, like Heman, was either one of the singers of David the king, whom the Words of Days mention, to wit, the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, of the family of Merari, son of Levi: or one of those wise men to whom the wisdom of Solomon is preferred in the Book of Kings, "Wiser," it saith, "than Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman. This song is of such wisdom that it deserves to be ascribed to the name of that very wise man. This Ethan the Strong, who was filled with such mental enlightenment that he is most truly styled an Israelite, at the first outset of the Psalm declares that he will sing of the mercies of the LORD, because He hath promised many things that will profit the faithful people. My song shall be alway of the lovingkindness of the Lord. In the second part he describes in various ways the praises and power of the LORD. O Lord, the very heavens shall praise Thy wondrous works. Thirdly, he counts up the promises of the FATHER to CHRIST, Thou spakest sometime in vision unto Thy saints.

In the fourth place, the LORD Himself declares, by reason of the Passion which He endured, that He was delivered up to His enemies. But Thou hast abhorred. Fifthly, he prays for help for human weakness, because GOD hath not made the children of men for nought: Lord, how long wilt Thou hide Thyself, for ever? Sixthly, he

asks the LORD to fulfil His promises, which He declares that He made to David His servant, and to remember what reproaches His servants bore from the ungodly. Lord, where are Thy old lovingkindnesses?

SYRIAC PSALTER. Concerning the people which was in Babylon. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARRA. He teacheth the Kingdom of CHRIST from the seed of David. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of narration.

Various Uses.
Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. [Christmas Day: II. Nocturn. Epiphany (ver. 27 to end:) I. Nocturn.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. Praised* be the LORD for evermore. [Christmas Day: He shall call Me. Alleluia. Thou art My FATHER. Alleluia. Transfiguration: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name,* Thou hast a mighty arm.] Ambrosian. Thy truth shalt Thou stablish in the heavens. [Christmas Day: I will make Him My firstborn higher than the kings of the earth. Epiphany: I will set His hand in the sea, and his right hand in the floods.] Parisian. O LORD,* they shall walk in the light of Thy countenance, their delight shall be daily in Thy Name: and in Thy righteousness shall they make their boast. Lyons. As Gregorian. [Christmas Day: First section: Righteousness and equity, Alleluia, are the habitation of Thy seat, Alleluia. Second section: He shall call Me, Alleluia, Thou art My FATHER, Alleluia. Third section: His seat is like as the sun before Me, Alleluia,* and as the moon perfect for ever, Alleluia.]

Mozarabic. Thy truth shalt Thou stablish in the heavens, O LORD. 1 My song shall be alway of the loving-kindness of the LORD: with my mouth will I ever be showing thy truth from one generation to another. This noble Psalm, contrasting forcibly in much of its hopefulness with its sad predecessor, nevertheless implies distinctly the visitation of the House of David with severe chastisement, and the author is clearly the King of Judah himself, or some one speaking in his name, and putting words into his mouth. It has thus been conjectured, not without much plausibility, that it refers to the captivity of Manasseh, or, more probably still, from the mixture of thanksgiving and hope, to the release of King Jehoiachin from his prison, after a captivity of seven and thirty years, and his restoration to royal precedence and honours at the court of Evil-Mero-dach, King of Babylon.

The opening of the Psalm, observes the Carthusian, is truly most sweet, and far, far pleasanter than any worldly, carnal, or idle pleasure. He does not say the mercy of the LORD, but His mercies (Heb., LXX., Vulg., A.V.,) for according to the multitude of our miseries the mercies of the LORD are multiplied upon us. And that sevenfold; first, in that He guards us from sinning, as it is written, ”I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall;” secondly, that He awaits the penitence of the sinner,

”Thou winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend;” thirdly, He calls after waiting, because ”GOD is patient with them,” and then ”poureth forth His mercy upon them;” fourthly, because He is so swift and tender in welcoming the penitent, for ”He hath mercy upon them that receive discipline;” fifthly, that He corrects us for our sins, and amends our lives, ”Thou, because Thou art gracious, have mercy upon us, or punish our iniquities with Thy scourge;” sixthly, comes the bestowal of grace for the attainment of everlasting life, for, ”He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them;” and seventhly, He inspires us with hope of obtaining eternal blessedness whereof the Psalm itself speaks.

The Psalmist saith, I will sing (Vulg., A.V.,) whence we may gather the joy that is in his heart. They who seek the LORD here in the Church Militant, and they who have found and hold Him fast in the Church Triumphant, alike raise in His honour the song of Holy, Holy, Holy. Alway, or as it is in LXX. and Vulg., for ever. Bellarmine, following several of the earlier commentators, attaches these words to mercies, not to sing, for the somewhat jejune reason that the Psalmist, as a mortal, must cease his singing, but that the LORD’s mercies are for ever. But there is no question as to the collocation of the words in the Hebrew, nor will the succeeding clause allow us to explain alway as only to the end of the singer’s earthly life. We may rather take it, on the one hand, as a prophecy of the continual use of this Psalm in the public worship of GOD, from one generation to another, from the generation of the Jews to that of the Gentiles, throughout the long ages that have elapsed since its notes were first heard, so that the Psalmist, ”being dead, yet speaketh;” while, on the other hand, it may denote the hope of joining, after death has silenced the voice here for a time, in the unceasing melodies of heaven; where the generation of man joins in fellowship with the generation of angels.

Judith vii. 20, Vulg.; om. LXX. and A.V. Isa. xlix. 10. When this poor lisping, stammering tongue Lies silent in the grave, Then, in a nobler, sweeter song I’ll sing Thy power to save. S. Gregory the Great raises the question here as to how a perpetual singing of the mercies of God is compatible with unalloyed bliss in heaven, inasmuch as the thought of mercy connotes the memory of sin and sorrow, which needed mercy, whereas Isaiah saith that ”the former troubles are forgotten,” and ”the former things shall not be remembered, nor come upon the heart.” And he replies that it will be like the memory of past sickness in time of health, without stain, without grief, and serving only to heighten the felicity of the redeemed, by the contrast with the past, and to increase their love and gratitude towards God. And so sings the Cluniac: Their breasts are filled with gladness, Their mouths are tuned to praise, What time, now safe for ever, On former sins they gaze: The fouler was the error, The sadder was the fall, The ampler are the praises Of Him who pardoned all.

Note, too, that he says, with my mouth, not with that of any deputy; I will be showing, not secretly or timidly, not in a whisper, but boldly preach, Thy truth, not my own opinion, far less my own falsehood, but Thy Truth, which is Thine Only-begotten Son. 2 For I have said, Mercy shall be set up for ever: thy truth wilt thou stablish in the heavens.

The LXX. and Vulgate read, For Thou hast said. There is no practical difference, for the I is here God Himself, Whose words are given directly by the Psalmist just as in lxxxi. 6, and Job xlii. 1-5. It is God's answer to the first verse, as though He were saying, The reason, O man, why thou promisest to show forth My praise for ever, is because I, for My part, have said that the mercy, which I will stablish, shall be for ever. And if we read the clause in the second person, then the Prophet declares himself to be merely God's instrument, and that he will show forth what God has spoken and dictated to him. I will be showing forth, I speak for this reason, observes the Doctor of Grace, because Thou hast spoken first; I, a man, may safely say what Thou, O God, hast said, for even should I waver in mine own word, I shall be stablished by Thine. Mercy shall be set up for ever. More exactly, with A.V., and the early renderings, built up. For not only will this mercy of God be strong and unshaken by any earthly vicissitudes or any counsel of man, but the Incarnation and Passion of CHRIST, in the act of redeeming mankind, will repair the wastes and build up anew the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem with living stones, so as to make good the breaches caused by the fall of the rebel Angels; a view of this verse common to some Rabbinical authorities.

For ever, not merely because God's mercy proceeds from an everlasting decree, and because its effects have no end, but because throughout all time it is poured out upon fresh objects, and daily swells the ranks of penitents and saints. There are not wanting some to remind us that this mercy so eternally built up is none other than the LORD JESUS Himself, Whose Sacred Body was compacted of the holy flesh of Mary, whereof is written, "Wisdom hath builded her house. Thy truth shalt Thou stablish in the heavens. Whether these words be those of the Psalmist to God, or of God the FATHER to His Son, we may draw the same lesson from them, that He Who is very Truth had His throne set up above the heavens at the Ascension, and that He hath established His Word and Gospel in the mouths of His holy Apostles, of whom is written, "The heavens declare the glory of God. For stablished the Vulgate reads prepared, whence they draw the lesson that God makes ready the foundations of His mercy by first destroying those of sin, and builds up His temple on the very site of an idol shrine. So He enjoined His Prophet "to throw down, and build."

A. Jer. i. 10. 3 I have made a covenant with my chosen : I have sworn unto David my servant ; 4 Thy seed will I stablish for ever : and set up thy throne from one generation to another. S. Augustine, leaving the literal sense here as too obvious

to need discussion, turns at once to the mystical meaning. What covenant is this that God has made, save the New Covenant or Testament, which brings us into our new heritage, which we welcome with the new song? And they point out further that the double promise here cannot possibly be interpreted literally. There is, on the one hand, a promise of an unbroken line of descendants, and on the other, the maintenance of the royal dignity in that line. It is, to say the very least, supremely improbable that any lineal descendants of the House of David now survive, after the measures taken by Domitian and Trajan to root them out for political reasons, and the long break in the genealogical records ; it is certain that the last Davidic prince who exercised even a titular sovereignty over the chosen people was Zerubbabel, as the power after his death lay between the Persian satraps of Syria and the High Priests. And we are therefore compelled here, as in Psalm lxxii., to seek for a deeper meaning, a more glorious promise than the temporal prosperity of a single race. Most truly then shall we see here not merely the everlasting Kingdom of CHRIST, but the aspect of that Kingdom upon earth, the great company of the faithful who are the spiritual seed of Abraham, who, united to their kingly

A. A. Head, as members of the body, are kings in and through Him, palaces wherein His throne as LORD and Master is set up even in the generation of our mortal life, and much more in that other generation of resurrection and immortality. It is to be noted that the word chosen, though singular in the Hebrew text, is translated as plural by LXX. and Vulgate, and may thus be referred literally to the whole Jewish nation, or to David and his sons, while mystically these elect will denote the whole company of the redeemed, and especially the Apostles and Doctors of the Church. A Greek Father points out very well how the final settlement of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy City under David, after its prolonged wanderings from one place to another, forms an apt type of the firmness and universality of the Catholic Church set up by CHRIST in the terms of this promise of the FATHER. And we may take the whole promise as referring to each righteous soul, which is like David, the friend and beloved of GOD, which is strong in the battle of good works against sin, and comely in aspect by reason of inward holiness, and for which an everlasting crown is laid up in heaven.

5 O LORD, the very heavens shall praise thy wondrous works : and thy truth in the congregation of the saints. A. S. Albertus Magnus. We here on earth, tied and bound with the chains of our sin, feeble through our mortal frailty, cannot praise Thee aright; but the glorious skies with their bright constellations, lifted far above us, the shining hosts of the Angels, will do what we cannot. And we may bear in mind how often the heavens bore their witness to CHRIST, how a new Star announced His birth, how the Angels sang carols over His cradle, how the heavens were opened above Him at His Baptism, when the Voice of the FATHER was heard; how the sun was darkened as He hung upon the Cross, how an Angel sate upon the empty sepulchre to declare the glad tidings of His Resurrection. There are no

works of GOD more wondrous than the Incarnation of His SON, and His marvellous conversion of sinners by His grace, making the heavens to praise Him; and so those especial heavens, the holy Apostles and other great preachers of the Gospel, pour down the refreshing rains of doctrine on the thirsty and eager soil of the Church of the Saints, which alone lies so beneath those clouds as to drink in their showers freely. Such preachers are likened to the heavens, because they are raised high above the earth, are starry with virtues, shining with the lights of grace, honoured by the indwelling of GOD, and compassed with the circle of perfection.

6 For who is he among the clouds : that shall be compared unto the LORD? 7 And what is he among the gods : that shall be like unto the LORD?

Here the Psalmist gives the reason why the heavens will take up the song of praise which is too great a theme for human lips. They will not refuse the office, for they are themselves, however high above men, unspeakably below the throne of GOD, are His servants and ministers, not His equals, nor even like to Him. And though He Who is the LORD became man, and took upon Him the form of a servant, yet even in His utter humiliation, in His lowest estate, no Angel might be compared to Him in majesty, in wisdom, or in love. Observe that whereas the heavens were named in the fifth verse, we have the clouds in the sixth. And what the mystical force of this term is, we may learn from the Prophet, when speaking of the judgments on the vineyard of GOD he says, ”I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.” And as the ”vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,” we understand by this threat the turning of the Apostles to the Gentiles, after their message had been rejected by the Jews. The Apostles were clouds in their human weakness, in their passiveness, as they were heaven in the mightiness of truth; but they were also clouds in that they were charged with that Gospel whereof GOD spake by Moses: ”My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass.” They are clouds, too, because their holiness is veiled by their flesh, as a cloud, so that we cannot see that which lies within. We see what comes from the cloud, but not what happens in the cloud, so we receive the rain of Divine teaching from the Apostles, but cannot observe the process of Divine revelation within them. So runs the hymn for Apostles in the Paris Breviary:

A. Like clouds are they borne To do Thy great will, And swift as the winds About the world go; All full of Thy Godhead While earth lieth still, They thunder, they lighten, The waters o’erflow. Santol. Victorin. The Hymn, Supreme, quales, Arbiter. Yet, with all their gifts and graces, there is none of them, none of any of those eminent for holiness, those gods, or sons of God (LXX., Vulg.) that can be compared to the LORD JESUS; for He is SON of GOD by eternal generation, and naturally; they are sons of GOD only by adoption and grace. 8 GOD is very greatly to be feared in the

council of the saints : and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him. A.

In the literal sense, the council of the Saints may most probably denote the Jewish nation, which from its small numbers, and from being alone possessed of the secret oracles of God, is fitly styled His council, while those that are round about are the Gentile nations encompassing the Hebrews on every side. Or, if the reference be to the heavenly service, the words depict for us that scene of the Apocalypse: ”And all the Angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God. They raise the question as to how the Angels can be said to be round about God, seeing that He is infinite and omnipresent, filling all the universe. Cardinal Bellarmine answers that it is because God gives Himself to the view of His Angels, in such wise that they all behold Him simultaneously, as though they did in fact encircle Him; but the great Bishop of Hippo reminds us that He, when made man, was in truth circumscribed by a body and local boundaries, to be born, to dwell, to be crucified, buried, and to rise again within the limits of one narrow territory, and yet to be so preached by His Apostles as to be had in reverence of all those nations which lay round about it. The word council is, they say, emphatic, as denoting in the case of the Angels, not that they give advice to God, for as Isaiah and S.

Paul alike ask, ”Who hath been His counsellor? but that He reveals His measures to them, and sends them as messengers to execute them; while the phrase, as applied to the Saints on earth, denotes the reason, thoughtfulness, and deliberate nature of their service and devotion. And whereas he that has a retinue round about him, must have some before, some behind, some on his right hand, some on his left; so the LORD JESUS is followed behind by those who attempt to imitate His actions by the pursuit of holiness, they are on His left hand who turn secular learning and natural philosophy to spiritual purposes and the vindication of religion; they are on the right who busy themselves in pure meditation on divine things only; while those who have been made perfect in love of God’s beauty, are suffered to have full enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, and see Him face to face.

9 O LORD GOD of hosts, who is like unto thee : thy truth, most mighty LORD, is on every side.

The Psalmist has been hitherto directing his words to human listeners, but fired with love and wonder at the thought of God’s marvels, he suddenly breaks into an apostrophe to Him. Who is like unto Thee? he exclaims, for there is no ratio between the finite and the infinite, and though His truth and power are already exerted and manifested in His works of nature and of grace, yet His mightiness is not exhausted thereby, for ”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? And thus His truth is

on every side, because He is the centre of all creation, and His divine power and truth pour their rays on all His works, that we may behold them and worship Him, for, as the Wise Man saith, ”by the greatness and beauty of the creatures proportionably the Maker of them is seen. His truth is round about Him also, because He has it perfectly and of Himself as His attribute, and does not derive it from any other source.

It clothes Him as a garment, for ”righteousness is the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins,” for as the girdle binds the garments closely round the body, so the truth of CHRIST binds the words of His promises, so that they cannot be changed, but must be fulfilled, and that too with speed and readiness, as a man who is girt up is able to run swiftly. These promises of CHRIST are round about Him, in that Church of which He is the centre, as it is the creation of grace whose midmost part He is. On every side, too, because this Church is spread all over the earth, and even in it He is specially confessed by His Saints, the chosen guard closest about their Monarch, as the tents of the great encampment of Israel once compassed the Tabernacle round about. And note that when the truth of the LORD, the Gospel of the Kingdom, at first hidden in the central shrine of Judæa, began to be made known amidst the Gentiles round about, then the rage of the powers of evil and of this world broke out in fierce storms of persecution; wherefore is added:

10 Thou rulest the raging of the sea : thou stillest the waves thereof when they arise. 11 Thou hast subdued Egypt, and destroyed it : thou hast scattered thine enemies abroad with thy mighty arm. Here the literal sense recalls the passage of the Red Sea, and its reflux upon the horsemen and chariots of Pharaoh. The word here rendered Egypt is Rahab, the ”proud one,” of whom we read in Psalm lxxxvii. 3, and it is so translated by LXX. and Vulgate, which agree in reading Thou hast humbled the haughty as wounded, which closely agrees with a similar apostrophe in Isaiah, ”Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art not Thou it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art Thou not it which A.

A. 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?” And S. Augustine, preaching on the festival of certain Martyrs, observes that when the Gentiles came to the knowledge of the Truth, the enemy rushed upon them like a raging lion, but was overcome by the LORD, who rent him as Samson did his type. ”What,” he asks, ”did the sea effect by its raging, save to bring about the holy day which we are keeping? It slew the Martyrs, it sowed the seed of blood, and the crops of the Church shot up abundantly.” That mighty Arm of God, the Only-Begotten Son, Who wounded the proud one, as Jael did Sisera, with the nail which fastened Himself to the Cross, scattered His enemies, the Jewish nation which rejected Him, abroad in the terrible

captivity and dispersion that followed on the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. He, by humbling Himself, hath wounded and humbled the pride of man, and made him lowly, so that we, wounded in turn by love of Him, are scattered abroad, and parted from our native errors and sins, as well as from the fellowship of the ungodly, so as to be made no longer the enemies, but the servants of GOD, and citizens of the heavenly country, when He has stilled the wild passions of our stormy and unstable hearts, and made in them a great calm, on whose surface the rays of His glory may be eternally mirrored.

Haymo. Pseudo-Hieron. C. A. S. Bruno Earth. R. Hugo Card. 12 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: thou hast laid the foundation of the round world, and all that therein is. A. CHRIST is LORD of the teaching Church of the Apostles, those heavens which send down the dews of holy doctrine, and also of the Church which is taught, the earth which drinks in the rain and dew, and in its humility brings forth abundant fruit. The contemplative Saints are His, busied as they are with divine things, of which He is the source and goal; the active Saints are His no less, for He inspires and guides their good works. The heavens and the earth are His, for by the WORD of the LORD were the heavens made, and without Him was not anything made that was made. He laid not only the foundation of the round world of visible nature, but also of that Church Universal which embraces all nations, founded on the Rock, stablished in Him alone, and He claims as His own not the mere space, but all living things therein, the entire body of His elect, rooted and founded in love, destined to enter into the fulness of the Saints. And note that the phrase round world is suitably typical of the Church, because the circle alone of linear figures is equidistant at all points from the centre of the space it encloses, and is thus a type of the perfect life, be-A. Ay. Hugo Card. R. Honorius. Hugo Card. Pseudo-Hieron. S. Bruno Earth.

cause, according to the old philosophic definition, ”Virtue is the equality of a life which converges towards reason on every side.” And thus CHRIST, as the Supreme Wisdom, is the centre of the Church, and the rays of His divine love and grace touch on all sides the circumference of the Church with equal radii, infinite in number.

13 Thou hast made the north and the south : Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy Name.

As Tabor and Hermon lie east and west of each other in the Lebanon chain, this verse is the assertion of God’s creative and governing power over the four quarters of the earth. But the LXX. and Vulgate read the north and the sea. Mystically, the North in Holy Writ is usually taken as the symbol of evil, because on the one hand we read of Lucifer, ”I will sit also in the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; and in Jeremiah we find the threat, ”I will bring evil from the north, and great destruction,” and as a literal fact, the great empire of Assyria and much of that of Babylon, by which the Jewish nation were so grievously chastised, lay to the

north of the Holy Land. And as the north wind is cold and biting, so they will have it that it is an apt type of Satan or of Antichrist himself, lacking the fire of divine love, and nipping with his sharp frosts the blossoms and fruits of holiness in the hearts of men; while the sea, bitter, barren, and stormy, is taken of Satan's instruments in the world, the restless and cruel persecutors of the Church, of whom is written, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice.

The former of these mountains, noted in early Jewish history as the scene of Barak's victory over Sisera, and believed to be the special mountain from whose summit it was the wont of the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar to give notice of the Paschal moon, had a greater claim to rejoice in the latter days, for from its heights, nestling in the plain but a few miles off, Nazareth is still to be seen. And Christian legend, albeit with no sufficient warrant, has named it as the scene of the Transfiguration; while Hermon, less famous, nevertheless so rises up above the plain of Esdraelon as to have within sight the part of Jordan made renowned first by the passage of Joshua, and then by the baptisms of John, including the greatest of all, and Nain,

It should be observed that this sense can be drawn only from the Vulgate and the Prayer Book. The Hebrew does not include the idea of sphericality, any more than the LXX. οἰκουμένη. The reason is that the Hebrew word for south is here "right hand," spoken of the direction as one looks east. This has been read by the LXX. as , "seas," with the change of the final letter. A.

the scene of one of CHRIST's greatest miracles, so that both mountains had full right to rejoice in His Name. S. Augustine, supposing Tabor to mean coming light, explains it as mystically denoting CHRIST, the true Light that cometh into the world; while Hermon, which he interprets his cursing, implies the overthrow and punishment of Satan as the result of that coming. Others, accepting this etymology, will yet have it that Tabor denotes the Jews, illuminated with the light of the law and of grace, and Hermon the Gentiles, aliens from GOD and buried in the sin of idolatry, which it learns to curse and abandon when the light from Tabor reaches it. But in truth no such meaning can be extracted at all from the first or certainly from the second of these names. Tabor is "lofty," and Hermon "desolate," so named from its barren and snow-clad summit. We may therefore see here types of two classes of the righteous, both pleasing to GOD, and rejoicing in His Name, but differing in vocation and dignity. Tabor, a mere hill, with its gentle slope and rounded summit, whence the name is sometimes conjectured to mean "heaped like a navel") studded with trees, and green with shade and sward to its very summit, on which once stood a little town, fitly typifies the Saints of secular life, fruitful in good works, gracious and gentle, pleasant to GOD and man. But Hermon, the desolate, soars above Tabor with yet greater beauty and far more striking grandeur. The lonely summit, pure and cool with snow, when all the plain beneath is parched with the

blazing sun of a Syrian autumn, denotes the contemplative Saints of the Religious Life, towering upward to GOD in chastity and lovely contemplation, rejoicing not less, but more than Tabor, in spite of their seeming ruggedness and austerity of life.

14 Thou hast a mighty arm : strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. That mighty arm of GOD is CHRIST the SAVIOUR; mighty, because with Him being and power are identical, and His strength never wanes, inasmuch as He doth whatsoever He pleases in heaven and earth. Limited to Himself, the mighty arm of CHRIST is that Humanity which He took of Blessed Mary, and wherein He wrought such marvellous works, so that, as she herself exclaims, "He hath showed strength with His arm," and was manifested to be the SON of GOD with power. Strong is Thy hand, comments the Chaldee paraphrase, to redeem Thy people; high is Thy right hand, to 1 The roots are "to be high," and "to be desolate," though no doubt Hermon may, like Hormah, come from , and mean an "accursed" place. I can offer no conjecture as to the proposed meaning of Tabor, unless it be from desideravit (or else , of Chald. rediit) and lux.

build up the house of Thy sanctuary. This thought is worked out further by the Christian expositors, who point out that the hand, by itself, denotes mere power and efficacy, but the right hand implies favour, grace, and protection. Hence the explanation that the hand of CHRIST is His power exerted against His enemies, to repress their persecution of His members, while His right hand is the justifying grace wherewith He strengthens and lifts up His elect, that He may set them at His right hand in the Judgment, when He will indeed be exalted and high in majesty. And this comes back to the deepest spiritual meaning of the Targum, inasmuch as these elect are the living stones wherewith Messiah builds the temple of GOD in the heavens. Lorinus, accepting the less beautiful interpretation of several commentators, who see here two degrees of divine strength exerted to punish, ingeniously suggests that the strength of the left hand is exerted in holding a vanquished enemy in a firm grasp, while the right hand is lifted on high to deliver the fatal blow with sword or axe. But nearly all agree that the Judgment is referred to as the special manifestation of GOD's right hand, whether in punishment or reward, and therefore follows:

15 Righteousness and equity are the habitation of thy seat: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. For habitation, LXX. and Vulgate read preparation, but the true rendering is basis. (Aquila.) Righteousness, as more than one commentator points out, often appears in Scripture as a term including kindness, while equity, or rather judgment, bears a sterner sense, and thus the two bases of CHRIST's throne are reward and punishment. These connote in us fear and hope, to begin our justification, to inspire our devotion. And therefore S. Bernard says very well, "Which of you is there, brethren, who desires to make ready a throne for CHRIST in his soul?

Lo, what silks or carpets, what cushions, ought to be prepared? Righteousness and equity are the preparation of His seat. Righteousness is that virtue which giveth every man his own. Give, then, to each what is his, pay your superior, pay your inferior, pay your equal, pay every one that which you owe, and thus you fittingly celebrate the Advent of CHRIST, preparing for Him a seat in righteousness." But lest the thought of the strict judgment of GOD should overwhelm and crush us with its terror, we are comforted by the next clause, Mercy and truth shall go before Thy face. These are the heralds through whom the LORD announces His coming: mercy, whereby He blots out our sins, truth, whereby He performs His promise of saving to the uttermost those who trust in Him. These are the two disciples whom CHRIST sends before His face into every city and place whither He Himself will come; yea, into every heart in which He offers to take up His abode, to each of

A. The Gloss. A. which, before it can rise to pure contemplation of Him, He sends pardon and grace. And because our King is preceded by such messengers, His true subjects have no cause to dread His coming, for 16 Blessed is the people, O LORD, that can rejoice in thee : they shall walk in the light of thy countenance. A. That can rejoice in Thee. The A.V., far more forcibly, and closer to the ancient renderings, that know the joyful sound. Literally, that is, the blowing of the trumpets of the Jubilee on the evening of the Great Day of Atonement, when ushering in the year of release, when all debts were cancelled, all Hebrew bondsmen set free, and every man returned to his own family, and to the enjoyment of his inheritance and possession. So the Christian, knowing the saving grace of CHRIST, rejoices in that, and cannot rejoice unless he knows it, and understands the source of that joy which is too deep for him to express in words. Thus we sing of that first coming of His, when He ransomed man from the bondage of sin,

Hark the glad sound, the SAVIOUR comes, The SAVIOUR promised long, Let every heart prepare a throne, And every voice a song. He comes the prisoners to release In Satan's bondage held, The gates of brass before Him burst, The iron fetters yield. And they who do so rejoice in the Incarnation of their LORD, in having Him for brother and friend, walk in His ways, Who is the True Light of the world, the countenance and express image of the FATHER, and that they will do, guided by the illumination of the HOLY SPIRIT. Progressively, moreover, not resting in the one grade of holiness, but going on towards perfection, as the word walk denotes. And so it is written, "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths." But there is another year of release more perfect in its bounty and restoration than even the first Advent of CHRIST, and unspeakably blessed are the people who will know the sound of the Archangel's trumpet to be indeed a joyful sound, to whom it will be the note of victory, before which the walls of the spiritual Jericho fall down for ever, the summons to the marriage banquet of the Lamb, for they

The word , here rendered by A.V., ”joyful sound,” is the same that appears as ”jubilee” in Lev. xxv. 9. shall then learn the Unknown Song of gladness ineffable, and walk for evermore in rapt contemplation of the adorable Trinity, in the full light of the Beatific Vision. 17 Their delight shall be daily in thy Name : and in thy righteousness shall they make their boast. And that because the Name of CHRIST has been their salvation, because the glory is not theirs, but is given to Him. This delight shall be daily, or all the day of this mortal life, and much more in the unending noontide of heaven. In Thy righteousness, because of Thy merits, they who here have been humbled for their sins, and who have cast themselves down in penitence, shall be exalted, (A.V., Vulg., &c.) In Thy righteousness, when Thou comest to judgment, they shall be exalted to Thy right hand in glory. They shall be exalted, even before that time, by gradual ascent in holiness, by conquering the world, the flesh, and the devil, and treading them under foot; they shall be exalted ever afterwards by the continual growth of the spiritual capacity and blessedness of the soul in heaven itself, a growth that hath no end, since it is a continual striving unto Him Who is infinite. And note the progress indicated by the terms used, walk being spoken of the body, naturally sluggish, delight, of the soul grasping at bliss, exalted of soul and body rejoined to reign with CHRIST and in CHRIST, ”Who of GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;” wherefore, ”according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD.”

S. Athanasius. 1 Cor. i. 36, 31. 18 For thou art the glory of their strength : and in thy loving-kindness thou shalt lift up our horns. CHRIST is the glory of their strength not merely because He bestows the grace and power by which they shun evil and effect good, but because that strength itself, or virtue (Vulg.) which they exercise, is put forth for His honour by His saints, and not for the sake of any worldly praise or favour. They have it from Him, and they give it to Him, since not of their own free-will or personal holiness, but of His loving-kindness and mercy, He, by humbling Himself to us, and bearing a ”horn of salvation in the house of His servant David,” hath by that Incarnation of His, lifted up the horn of our human nature, and exalted it, in bodily substance and in spiritual might, to the heavens above. Wherefore the Holy Eastern Church breaks out in song:

S. Luke i. 69. Z. Slaves are set free, and captives ransomed : The Nature that He made at first He now presenteth to the FATHER, The chains of her damnation burst : S. Joseph. Hymnograph. Canon for Ascension. Ode viii. This the cause that He was born, Adam’s race restored, Thou that liftest up our horn, Holy art Thou, LORD! S. Bernard. Serm. i. de S. Victore. And note how glory and virtue are here united in one phrase. On this S. Bernard teaches us, ”The glory which is without virtue comes, surely, without being due, is too hastily desired, is perilously grasped. Virtue is the step to glory, virtue is the mother of glory. Glory is deceitful and beauty is vain, when she has not given them birth, it is she alone to whom glory

is justly due and may be safely paid." And with this we may compare the wise saying of a heathen writer: "Glory is the shadow of virtue, and will accompany even those that desire it not. But as our shadow sometimes precedes and sometimes follows us, so glory is sometimes in front of it, and suffers itself to be seen, and sometimes is behind us, and greater, because later, when envy has passed away."

19 For the LORD is our defence: the Holy One of Israel is our King.
Our defence. More exactly, our shield. And that because the Only-begotten SON protected us with His Body as with a shield, and drew the darts of the enemy away from us upon Himself, procuring our salvation by His death. And the FATHER is our defence too, in that He gives us this Holy One of Israel to be our King, after the carnal Israel had rejected Him, gives Him to us, Whom we did not choose and appoint of our will. The Vulgate wording, Our taking-up (assumptio) is of the Lord, has given rise to various comments. Some will have it that the word specially points to the assumption of human nature by CHRIST; others of our being taken up out of mortality and passibility unto salvation; a third view is that it denotes the choosing out the elect from the mass of sinners. And in remembering that the Holy One is our King, we may be taught even by Pagan writers what are His qualifications for His office, what our hopes from His exercise of it. "To be strong, just, severe, grave, high-souled, bounteous, beneficent, liberal, these virtues befit a king." "He is no real king," observes the greatest of ancient philosophers, "for whom his own possessions are not enough, and who does not surpass others in the abundance of all good things. For he who is of this kind, desires nothing further, and will look to, and set before himself, not his own interest, but that of those over whom he rules. . . . The friendship of a king consists in the excellence of his well-doing towards his subjects, for he bestows benefits upon them, at any rate if he be a good king, and has a care for them, that they may prosper, as a shepherd has for his sheep."

20 Thou spakest sometime in visions unto thy saints, and saidst : I have laid help upon one that is mighty ; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.

In the part of the Psalm which opens with this verse, type and antitype are presented with such close fitness of expression for each, that a dispute has arisen amongst the commentators, whether to take the whole in the bare literal sense, as spoken of David son of Jesse, or the wholly mystical sense, as referring to CHRIST alone, as S. Augustine will have it, or yet again, as referring in one part to David, and in another to CHRIST. But the truest explanation seems to be that which admits the full validity of both methods, for here, unlike the partially similar cases of Psalms xlv. and lxxii., it is possible to accommodate each phrase to David or to CHRIST, according as we are looking at the type or the fulfilment. And in this very outset of the narrative an example is given, for the prophecies which foretold the mighty kingdom of David and his house were not the utterance of one seer, but of three, Samuel, Gad, and Nathan, Saints to whom God spake in visions, while it is no

less true of CHRIST, that ”to Him give all the Prophets witness,” a truth which He enforced when, on the way to Emmaus, ”beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

I have laid help, that is, not only I have given help and strength to one that is mighty, but I have laid on Him the office and duty of helping them that are weak, and of saving them out of the hand of the enemy. And as David was so helped that he might deliver Israel from Goliath first, and then, as King, from all the enemies round about, and was therefore chosen out of the people, from his humble rank as a shepherd, and exalted to a throne ; so CHRIST, the Mighty One of God, mighty even in His weakness and humility, was chosen by the FATHER out of His people Israel, born of a poor woman, to fulfil the promise made to Abraham and his seed, and was exalted first upon the Cross, then in the Resurrection, and finally in His Ascension.

21 I have found David my servant : with my holy oil have I anointed him. Found implies seeking, and it may be asked how the All-seeing can need to look for anything as though ignorant of its whereabouts. They answer diversely, that the word denotes the care and providence of God in the matter, in that He knew fully what He desired to have, as a man does when A.

G he seeks eagerly after aught; or again, that it signifies the approval with which God regarded His choice, as we say, ”I have found something,” when we light on an object of value in the midst of trifles of no worth. But the truest interpretation sees here that same tender, seeking love which drew down the Good Shepherd to seek and find the sheep which had gone astray, a word which paints to us His diligent care, without hinting that He did not know the precise spot where the wanderer lay. With My holy oil have I anointed Him. And as the literal David was thrice anointed king, once by Samuel in Jesse’s house at Bethlehem, once at Hebron after the death of Saul, as king over Judah; and again at seven years’ end as ruler over all Israel: so also ”God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power” in His Nativity at Bethlehem; a second time over His Church at His Resurrection, when the tyrant who sought His life was overcome, and then only over the small ”confederation” (which Hebron means) of His Jewish disciples, but a third time in His Ascension to the heavenly Jerusalem, the Vision of Peace, where He, now crowned as King of Glory, was anointed over all heaven and earth, supreme over the Princes of God. He was thrice anointed in another sense also, once as Prophet, once as Priest, and once as King.

Observe, the unction is called by God My holy oil, by reason of the set directions given to Moses in the Law for its composition and hallowing. But as this oil was strictly limited, under pain of utter destruction, to the consecration of Aaron and his descendants for the Priesthood, and there is no other oil which can be understood by these words, the Rabbins allege that by special revelation and permission

Samuel and the other prophets were suffered to anoint David and his posterity therewith, but no other kings. That the fact was so is plain enough, for ”Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. Next, whereas kings had the unction applied in the form of a crown, priests received it in that of an X, or decussate cross. And in these two traditions we may see, first, the Priestly character foreshadowed which a King sprung out of Juda, and not of the tribe of Levi (as the Asmonæan princes were), should exercise; while we may note in the second place, that His earthly inauguration as Monarch was with a crown of thorns, His earthly consecration as a Priest with the bloodshedding on the Cross.

22 My hand shall hold him fast: and my arm shall strengthen him. They take these words, when applied to our LORD, of the hypostatic union of the Eternal WORD with the humanity of CHRIST JESUS, whereby it was impossible for Him, as man, to fall into any sin. And after pointing out how God’s favour caused David’s one tribe to draw over to itself the eleven tribes which had ranged themselves under the banner of the house of Saul, albeit the chances seemed overwhelmingly against the weaker party; they remark that the prophecy was not the less fulfilled in CHRIST because He was persecuted to the death, because His whole intention of gathering and establishing His Church was amply fulfilled. And if we take the David of the Psalm, as we may well do, tropologically of any faithful soul, or of GOD’s friends and people in general, we shall then see here the promise of help to all such through and from CHRIST, ”for in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.”

And then the Carmelite goes on with a quaint minuteness of detail to tell us how He is fitly called the Hand of GOD, for as the hand has five fingers, so He has five especial attributes answering to the special qualities of each finger. He has power, denoted by the thumb, the strongest and most muscular of the digits. He is our guide, directing our judgment, and pointing us the way, as the index, or forefinger is used by men. By the middle finger, the longest of all, is typified His patience and long-suffering. The third finger is that on which rests the wedding-ring, unending, unbroken, the token of abiding love, that love which caused Him to lay down His life to save His enemies. And the little finger, shorter and weaker than the rest, betokens His humility and His suffering for us, when He stretched out His hands upon the Cross.

23 The enemy shall not be able to do him violence: the son of wickedness shall not hurt him.
Historically, we may note that, on the one hand, David never lost a battle, even to such a mere skirmish as that in which Asahel was slain; and on the other that the attempts made against his life and throne by single agents of evil, Goliath, Saul, Doeg, Ahithophel, Absalom, Sheba, all ended in failure, though in two cases he was driven into temporary exile. This sense agrees with the address of Nathan to

David when foretelling the reign of Solomon and the building of the temple. But the force of the Hebrew seems more fully brought out in the A.V. The enemy shall not exact upon him, that is, shall not deal with him as a creditor deals with a defaulting debtor, reduce him to poverty, and bring him into bondage. So runs that conditional promise to Israel, "Thou shalt lend unto many nations, but shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee." But in the highest spiritual sense we cannot take the verse as true of David, in view of his terrible fall in the matter of Bathsheba, and must needs turn to CHRIST in order to find its fulfilment. Accordingly, Origen, exS. Greg. M. Mor. xxviii. 28. S. Pet. Chrysol. Serm. 12. Summa ii. 6, Q. 2, A. 5.

plaining the first clause (with LXX. and Vulg. The enemy shall get no help out of Him, comments, "We help our enemies when we sin, and thus it is that CHRIST helped them in no respect. . . . For although they said, Come, let us kill Him, and have His inheritance to ourselves, yet this counsel was useless to Satan and the Jews, and their effort fell vainly to the ground, for the SAVIOUR rose again the third day, and trampling upon death, spoiled hell. And whereas, by reason of our sins, the devil can prove some claims against each of us, CHRIST alone, on the other hand, saith truly, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. Wherefore, neither Judas, nor the false witnesses before the Sanhedrim, nor the chief priests before Pilate, were able to bring any charge of guilt home to Him, but were forced to acknowledge His innocence; for "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. They lay stress, moreover, on the LXX. and Vulgate phrase here, "The son of wickedness shall not add to hurt Him," pointing out that David's enemies were often given one chance, so to speak, against him, and a temporary measure of success, as in the case of Absalom, but they could never repeat it.

Applying this to CHRIST, they remind us that similarly an apparent victory was granted to His enemies against Him, in that they did succeed in compassing His death, but that His Resurrection put Him finally out of the reach of harming. So, too, one reminds us seasonably, in the interpretation of this Psalm of any righteous soul, that when any one has overcome the devil in a spiritual conflict, by resisting temptation to some particular sin, he thereby weakens the devil's power for all time as regards that special weapon, not only as regards himself, but as regards others also. They will not be totally freed from all trial and temptation thereby, but they will be encouraged, and the devil disheartened by the victories of the Saints, so that they cannot be fatally hurt without their own consent, as it is written, "I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime. Not that the malice of the enemy is lessened by such triumphs of the Saints, for it is rather increased, and his desire to overcome his conqueror is whetted; so that, as S. Thomas warns us, he will return again and

again to the attack as long as he sees any remains of sin within us, yet that he grows feebler, and we stronger, after each repulse he suffers.

24 I will smite down his foes before his face : and plague them that hate him. This holds literally of David, especially where we read that ”he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive.” But it holds much more perfectly of David’s Son, before Whose face His tempters so often retreated in confusion, baffled by His wisdom, as though driven away with swords, before Whom the soldiers in the garden on the night of betrayal, ”went backward, and fell to the ground,” Who triumphed over His spiritual enemies upon the Cross, and Whose terrible judgments fell upon the sinful nation that rejected Him, albeit He saved alive with one full line the Apostles and other disciples who believed on Him. These too He smote down at first, as He did Saul of Tarsus, as He does still with sinners whom He desires to bring to repentance, and to separate from their transgression, and to *put to flight* from their former sinful life, that they may take refuge with Him.

25 My truth and my mercy shall be with him : and in my Name shall his horn be exalted. This prophecy cannot be in its fulness taken of David, albeit in a lower sense it is true of him also, but it is perfectly accomplished in CHRIST, for the mercy which was with Him is that hypostatic union of the Godhead with the Manhood, which cannot be disjoined, while the truth is the fulfilment of the promise to His Mother by the angel, ”He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Wherefore His *horn was exalted in the Name* of GOD, because His power is such that in His Name every knee must bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth. And this Name is the Name of GOD, for the glory of JESUS is as of the Onlybegotten of the FATHER, so that He is worshipped by all as the SON of that eternal FATHER, in Whose Name He comes, so that GOD the FATHER ”hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name,” which would not be true if the Name of GOD were still above Himself. And observe, that as ”all the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth,” so CHRIST is mercy and truth to us, by His pardoning grace, and His faithfulness to His word; and we therefore, if we are desirous of showing our gratitude, and of being conformed to His likeness, are bound to give Him the same, by showing mercy to those in distress, by being true and just in all our dealings.

S. Luke i. 33. A. Ps. xxv. 9. 26 I will set his dominion also in the sea : and his right hand in the floods.

His dominion. It should be simply, his hand, (A.V., Vulg., &c.,) that is, the left hand, as distinguished from the right hand of the next clause. The prophecy was fulfilled Agellius. so far as David is concerned, by his victories over the Philistines, four of whose five principal cities, namely, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gaza, were

actually on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, while his victory over Hadadezer, king of Zobah, extended the Hebrew monarchy to the river Euphrates on the other side. It is fitly said his right hand, because the eastern conquests were more conspicuous and extensive than the western, to which, accordingly, only the left hand is attributed. Mystically, they explain the salt stormy sea as the Gentile nations, or the world in general, bitter and turbulent, and the rivers as those persons who, greedy of the world's pleasures and gain, rush eagerly on in search of them, as the rivers pour into the sea. Another interpretation sees in the rivers, because of their powerful currents, a type of the kings and princes of the world, who require more forcible constraint than the multitude. On the other hand, a contrary explanation is suggested by the facts that the rivers are of sweet water, that they are not stormy like the sea, that they run in fixed and narrow channels, and that they admit of bridges being built over them for the passage of men; whence they may be taken as types of the righteous and meek, to be set at God's right hand.

But the Greek Fathers prefer to explain the river as the mystical Jordan, the type of Holy Baptism, where the right hand of CHRIST is placed, either because, as one will have it, only those regenerated in Baptism have the promise of being set on His right in the Judgment; or, as a Latin expositor takes it, because His propitiatory and pardoning might, which is a higher and nobler attribute than His coercive and punitive authority, is exercised in the remission of sins. Not unlike this is that other view which finds in the sea and rivers types of secular and spiritual things, and reminds us that God gives us greater power of operation in the latter, in that we can achieve higher things therein. And thus a famous preacher tells us that Religious, who have put themselves within the river banks of claustral obedience, in the sweet, calmly flowing life of the convent, keep their right hand there, not in the sea of worldly habits, and receive a special blessing from God. --- --- 2 Sam. viii. 3. A. S. Bruno Carth. S. Albertus Magnus. Diodorus. Eusebius. Haymo. Hugo Card. Philip de la Grève, Serm. 189.

27 He shall call me, Thou art my Father : my God, and my strong salvation. Here they bid us note the singular fact that David nowhere, in all the variety of epithets he applies to God throughout his portion of the Psalter, ever does call Him Father, albeit the title occurs once or twice elsewhere in Holy Writ. But when we turn to the sayings of CHRIST, a remarkable difference at once strikes us. The name of Father is given by CHRIST to the Almighty about one hundred and forty times, of which fifty-four have the emphatic word My prefixed. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He said also that S. John v. God was His FATHER, making Himself equal with God." 18. This first part of the verse, then, He speaks according to His Deity; but the latter part, according to His manhood, S. Albertus whereby He is inferior to the FATHER. My strong salvation. More literally the Rock of my salvation, (A.V.) But LXX. and Vulgate read the taker-up (ἀντιλήπτωρ, susceptor) of My salvation. And that, they say, refers to those two Hugo Card.

takings-up of CHRIST by His FATHER, the Resurrection and Ascension; or else to the taking-up of human nature in His act of mercy unto salvation.

28 And I will make him my first-born : higher than the kings of the earth. This type was, it is true, partly fulfilled in David, in that he, the youngest of seven sons, was set over not only his brethren, but the whole of Israel, and in that he was victorious over all the adjacent countries, ”of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.” But the very fact that the promises here seemingly made to David only, are transferred to Solomon in the prophecy of Nathan, teaches us to look further, to Him of whom David the conqueror and Solomon the Wise were but types. He is the first-born of the FATHER in four ways. First, as the Eternal Wisdom of God; begotten and predestined before the worlds were made; secondly, as the one only child of His Mother, and therefore called her ”first-born Son;” thirdly, because of the Resurrection, whereby He is ”the first-born from the dead;” fourthly, because He is ”appointed Heir of all things,” ”that He might be the first-born among many brethren,” nay, ”the first-born of every creature.”

Higher than the kings of the earth. Bellarmine remarks truly enough that even in the widest estimate of the power of David and Solomon, they could not rank in puissance with the Assyrian monarchs, albeit the petty kinglets around were tributary to them, ”from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and the border of Egypt,” and that we must therefore apply these words to Him only Who is ”Prince of the kings of the earth,” and Who ”hath on His vesture and on His thigh a Name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS,” before Whom the mightiest sovereigns now bow their heads, Whose Cross surmounts their royal crowns. Wherefore in the First Vespers of the Nativity, the Antiphon runs, ”The Peaceful King is magnified, over all the kings of the whole earth.” The word higher is noteworthy, for the Hebrew is , which, in all other places where it stands alone, or is used of a person in Scripture, is applied

Eph. i. 4. S. Matt. i. 25. Coloss. i. 18. Rev. i. 5. Heb. i. 2. Col. i. 15. Rev. i. 5; xix. 16. A. to GOD only, and is usually translated Most High in the A. V. And thus as He, being GOD, is Most Holy, as well as Most High, He is Chief of all those kings and priests, those saints who have conquered and ruled their own passions and have overcome the world, who exercise in the Church of GOD the double position of priesthood and authority committed to the first-born under the patriarchal dispensation. 29 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore : and my covenant shall stand fast with him. S. John i. 17. A. The mercy of GOD was kept for CHRIST, that is, it was held over until His coming, and was not given under the elder dispensation, ”for the LAW was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST.” And because this mercy in the remission of sins is permanent, and cannot be set aside, it is added, My covenant, My new covenant,

shall stand fast, in contradistinction to the old covenant, which decayed, waxed old, and vanished away, because "the LAW made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." And it is for His sake that this new covenant does stand fast, for it was concluded through and in Him. He mediated it, He signed it, He is its surety, its witness, Himself the inheritance bestowed by it, and therewith its co-heir. Others, less forcibly, take the faithful covenant to be the fulfilment of the prophetic promises in the person of CHRIST.

30 His seed also will I make to endure for ever : and His throne as the days of heaven. A. It was urged as an objection to the Messiahship of the LORD JESUS by some of the Jews, that He had no earthly progeny, and did not leave descendants, but the answer was easy, that according to high Rabbinical authority, the title of sons or seed is given to the disciples of a great teacher, as, for example, those of R. Hillel. And accordingly, the favourite explanation of this passage with Christian commentators is that it denotes the perpetual duration of the Church. The seed of CHRIST are those who are like unto Him, and follow in His footsteps, who are His throne, inasmuch as they yield themselves to His sovereignty, who are as the days of heaven by reason of the brightness, clearness, warmth, and purity of their lives. The throne of CHRIST, a Saint tells us, is fourfold : the Church Militant, the Church Triumphant, the faithful soul, and the Blessed Virgin Mother. If we take the verse literally as referring to David, we shall come to the same result, as CHRIST was of his seed according to the flesh, and as the earthly Jewish throne disappeared with Jehoia-chin or with Zedekiah, there is no other save the Messiah, to whom the words may be fully said to refer.

31 But if his children forsake my law: and walk not in my judgments; 32 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.

Here they raise the question as to how the promises, the gifts and calling, of God can be without repentance, how they can be justly said to be firm and irrevocable, if they can be affected in this wise by the error, folly, or sin, of so unstable a creature as man. And first, the Doctor of Grace most truly answers that God proves His Fatherhood, not abdicates it, by the act of punishment. "For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? Our fear should be not lest we should be scourged, but lest we should be disinherited. And God scourges, precisely that He may give us back the heritage we have forfeited. Next, they point out that God does not go back from His promises. What He undertakes to give, that He does give, as the Incarnation of CHRIST, promised to the sinners Adam and Ahaz, establishes. In this manner His fulfilment is absolute. But the enjoyment and benefit to be derived from the thing promised and given is conditional. Thus the literal kingdom over Israel passed

from the tribe of Judah to that of Levi, and the spiritual kingdom of the Church, after being first offered to the Jews, was handed over to the Gentiles.

The refusal of the chosen people to accept the proffered mercies did not cause withdrawal of them, but only a change in the recipients, as in the case of the marriage-supper of the king's son. Hence we gather that here we have set before us that lesson which is inculcated by so many parables, the mixture of good and bad Christians within the Church, and the double truth that the fall of a part does not involve the ruin of the whole; but that even the fall itself is capable of recovery. There are four modes of transgression named here, against the law, the judgments, the statutes, and the commandments of God. Of these, the law is the generic term, including the others under it, or if taken specifically, it denotes the Decalogue; the judgments have to do with the decision of causes, the assignment of rights, and the meting out rewards and punishments; the statutes are the negative or prohibitory rules, laying down certain actions as forbidden; the commandments are the affirmative part of the code, enjoining certain modes of conduct; and of the third of these it is to be noticed that for break My statutes, the margin of A. V., rightly agreeing with the Vulgate, reads profane My statutes, whereby we learn the greater heinousness of sins of commission, especially such as involve irreverence in things

A. Ay. sacred, than of any others. And the Carmelite hereupon justly points out that the sin of profanity, especially in the form of idolatry and foreign rites, was that especial one into which several of the descendants of David fell, notably Solomon himself, Ahaz, and Manasseh. There are two degrees of punishment threatened, the rod, for the smaller and lighter offences, the scourges, for graver and more persistent sin. In the corresponding passage of the Book of Samuel, the warning runs thus, "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men," that is, with punishments such as earthly fathers inflict upon their children, and not too severe for human nature to bear. And by the rod, in Holy Writ, fatherly correction is usually signified; whereas the punishment of a judge is with the sword. So, we read of the former, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son;" of the latter, "If a man will not turn, He will whet His sword." Wherefore also He saith Himself, "Repent, or else I will come to thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of My mouth." But the rod and staff of the LORD comfort the wayfarer in the valley of the shadow of death, knowing that the chastisement is given in love. He will take even the scourges patiently, because with them too GOD visits, as a firm but gentle surgeon who needs to use steel and cautery upon a patient for his healing, and instead of lamenting or resisting, the sick man will say, "Thou hast granted me life and favour, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit."

33 Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him : nor suffer my truth to fail. 34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the Ps. xxiii. 4. 35 Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him : nor suffer my truth to fail. 34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips : I have sworn once by my holiness, that I will not fail David. A. S. Augustine explains these verses in the manner already stated above, that the sin of man cannot make void the promise of GOD, since His purpose by predestination will stand, and be fulfilled in one, if not in another. It is also an encouragement to hope and to repentance, if we once take in the thought that GOD's will to pardon never fails, and that our sins are to His mercy what a cobweb is to the storm, a spark to the ocean, sure to be swept away by the might of the one, to be quenched in the abyss of the other. They raise in this place the question as to the repentance and salvation of Solomon, answering it, as do SS. Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory, in the affirmative; alleging that he was punished by the revolt of the ten tribes from his son, but pardoned himself, granted repentance, and delivered from hell. And S. Jerome mentions a curious Hebrew legend to the effect that the penitent king, entering the Temple, put rods into the hands of cer-

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and furthermore, that he who punishes according to the full rigour of justice, hurts too. And another reminds us that although the enemies of the Son were suffered to work their will upon Him, yet in the truth of the FATHER He was unhurt, inasmuch as His glorious Passion wrought salvation for the world; while a third exposition, practically coinciding with the latter part of S. Augustine's gloss, sees here a promise of final salvation in the day of Judgment, because GOD's scourges will heal, not injure us. My lips. This refers especially, they say, to the utterances of the Prophets, who are the lips wherewith GOD spake to His people. He will not alter the thing which they have spoken, for the LORD Himself saith, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. I have sworn once. Some Hebrew expositors have interpreted this as meaning that GOD used the formula here given on this occasion only, a theory refuted by its appearance in Amos iv. 2, for the true force of the word is to mark the firmness and irrevocability of the Divine pledge. In My holiness, that is, as they variously explain it, by My holy Name;

or by My holy place, whether heaven (as it is written, "For I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever,") or the Holy of holies in the temple; or in My secret counsel; or, finally, by My Holy One, that is, CHRIST Himself, which agrees with that other saying, "The LORD hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength. I will not fail David. The A. V. more exactly, with the ancient versions, I will not lie unto David. Therefore it is said, I have sworn once. How often, asks S. Augustine, would GOD have to swear, if He had once lied in swearing? He uttered one oath on behalf of our life, when He sent His Only Son to death for us.

35 His seed shall endure for ever : and his seat is like as the sun before me. 36 He shall stand fast for evermore as the moon : and as the faithful witness in heaven. Here, as in the thirtieth verse, we have the assertion of CHRIST's eternity, and the promise of the indefectibility of A. A. the Church. So we read in Jeremiah, who thus gives us the literal sense: "Thus saith the LORD, If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne." And similarly a heathen poet, writing of the dynasty founded by Vespasian: Manebit altum Flaviæ decus gentis Cum sole et astris, cumque luce Romana, Invicta quicquid condidit manus, cælum est.

The Flavian race shall last in high renown, With sun and stars, and light that shines on Rome, That which a conqueror's hand has raised, is heaven. A. A.

His seat is like as the sun. That is, as the Chaldee will have it, radiant and glorious as the sun, or else, as other expositors take it, enduring as the sun, a phrase equivalent to the "days of heaven" in the earlier passage. And taking the seat or

throne (LXX., Vulg. to mean the Church in which He dwells, we shall note its continuous visibility, and its office of enlightening the world, as both signified hereby. Or if we take the seat to be the righteous soul, wherein CHRIST reigns, we then have His own saying to confirm this one, for He tells us that when He hath ended the judgment, ”then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their FATHER. As the moon. The Rabbinical interpretation of this clause is, that it declares how the house of David should be treated if it fell away from GOD. Even then it would not be cast off, but would remain as the moon in comparison with the sun, feebler in light and warmth, and suffering decrease almost to extinction, but, nevertheless, returning in due time to the full. S. Augustine, dwelling on the same qualities of the moon, interprets them of our mortal flesh, which here passes through many phases, but will be a perfect moon (Vulg. in the Resurrection, no longer subject to any change. So too the moon may fitly be the Church Militant here on earth, waxing and waning, and deriving all her light from the Sun of Righteousness.

A curious Rabbinical gloss is, that as the sun and moon were created on the fourth day, so they foretold the perpetual kingdom of Messiah, sprung from Judah, the fourth of Jacob’s sons. Another commentator, accepting the sun and moon as types of the souls and bodies of the elect, points out four attributes of the sun which correspond to faculties of the soul in bliss: to wit, brightness; swiftness, in that its rays pass instantaneously from east to west; subtilty, in that it penetrates glass without leaving any trace of its passage; and impassibility, because it is not defiled by being brought in contact with any substance that stains. If true of any holy soul, the words must hold good especially of that undefiled one of whom we read, ”Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners? whom the Holy Eastern Church styles the ”throne of Cherubim. This is the great throne of ivory overlaid with gold, which our Solomon made for Himself; ivory, by reason of her pureness; great, because of humility; a throne, because of her fruitfulness,

Ligna, sedile, manus, ebur, aurum, brachia, scamnum, Argentum, leo, Rex, purpura, prævia, gradus. Wood, seat, hands, ivory, gold, with arms, a stool, Silver, king, lion, purple, platform, steps. That is, firm and incorruptible as the cedars, her charity is the seat which admits repose; the hands, on which the arms rest, her works of lowliness and devotion; the ivory, her purity; the gold, her wisdom; the arms, reminding us of those infant arms so often clasped about her, the embracing tenderness of her nature; the footstool, earthly riches and wisdom which she trod under foot; silver, her tuneful and pure speech; the fourteen lions of the throne, her virtues and gifts (or, as we might rather take them, her seven joyful and seven sorrowful mysteries); the King, that only One Who lay in her bosom, (”the Prince, He shall sit in it”); the purple, her martyrdom of soul at the Cross; the platform, her uplifted perfection, raising her above the level of the earth; the steps, the six

grades of holy veneration: namely, reverence, devotion, salutation, good words, obedience, and active compliance.

As a faithful witness in heaven. The word as does not occur in the Hebrew, and some doubt has thus arisen as to the precise meaning of the clause. A very common interpretation is, that the parallelism requires us to understand the moon to be the witness meant, as it is the arbiter of seasons and festivals; but another, which has met with many supporters, interprets the passage of the rainbow, that witness of God's covenant with Noah; the like of which is round about the throne, and upon the head of the mighty Angel of the Covenant. But the best explanation of all and that most followed by the early commentators, taking the clause, There is a faithful witness in heaven, sees in the faithful witness CHRIST our God Himself. So holy Job speaks, "Behold, my witness is in heaven;" and the LORD saith by Jeremiah, "I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD;" and further, the epithet is twice directly applied to CHRIST in the Apocalypse, wherein He is styled, the "faithful and true witness." He then, of Whom Isaiah said in old time, "Behold, I have given Him as a Witness to the people;" Who saith of Himself, "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," is rightly compared to sun and

Cant. vi. 10. S. Cosmas. Canon for Christmas Day. Hugo Card. Rev. i. 5; iii. 14. moon, which rule the day and night, for whereas each of these luminaries is hid for a time, and does as it were shut its eyes to the world, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep," but beholds all things at all times alike clearly, and therefore will know all things, needing not other witnesses, when He sits in judgment. 37 But thou hast abhorred and forsaken thine Anointed : and art displeased at him. A. S. Ambros. in Ps. xliv. S. August. de Civ. Dei, xvii. 10. A. S. Ambros. in Ps. xliv. Vit. Zutcolius. Hom. 6 in Marc.

Here the whole tone of the Psalm changes, and instead of looking on the glorious picture of stable prosperity, we hear the lament for the overthrow of all the splendours of the Hebrew polity, the total eclipse of its brilliant day. And whether we take this lament as referring especially to Absalom's successful rebellion, to Solomon's own fall, to the revolt under his son, to the Babylonish captivity, or to the yet more disastrous ruin of the second Temple, bringing with it the disappearance of the Aaronic worship as well as that of the Davidic throne, we see in each and all the working out of a divine and providential purpose. For had there been no such reversal experienced, the spiritual growth of the Messianic idea would have been checked in its very bud, and men would have looked to the peaceful splendour of Solomon's reign as fulfilling all the promises of a King and Deliverer, and would thus have never risen out of this material notion into the higher spiritual truth. Thou hast forsaken Thine Anointed. It is the cry, they tell us, first of the exiled Jews, seeing the captivity of their two last kings, discrowned and imprisoned. And thus, having regard to the Vulgate reading distulisti, which is Thou hast put off, S.

Augustine explains it of God's continued delay in sending the Messiah to deliver His people; but S.

Ambrose more truly expounds the passage as the words of CHRIST Himself, declaring what He has endured, the shame and reproach and suffering of the Cross, and the mysterious abandonment thereon, for the ransom of mankind. A curious view which has been suggested is that the speaker in this verse is God Himself, accusing the Synagogue of its rejection of its King. But the more usual interpretation is sounder, and must be understood, as a Greek Father points out, not of complaint against God's will, far less as any charge of unfaithfulness, but as a prayer for mercy and restoration.

38 Thou hast broken the covenant of thy servant : and cast his crown to the ground. A. This verse may be taken in any of three meanings. The covenant may here imply the entire Old Testament polity, in which case the servant is the Jewish nation, and the crown its spiritual pre-eminence, a view which gains consistency amongst the Fathers from the general explanation of the word (ἁγίασμα, sanctuarium) as the sanctuary or temple, instead of the royal diadem, as S. Jerome rightly translates it. The fuller rendering of the A.V., nearly identical, save for this one word, with the Vulgate, strengthens the notion, by saying, Thou hast profaned his crown, as the verb fits in so well with the notion of defiling a shrine. The second view makes the reference more personal, and confines it to the non-fulfilment of the pledge given to David and his house, as proved by the dethronement of his family. And the third, which is also the fullest, sees here the rejection of CHRIST, and the apparent annulling of the promise spoken by Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth, whereby her Son was promised perpetual sovereignty over the house of Jacob. What then was this crown of his which was so cast to the ground? One tells us that it is the Sacred Humanity which He took of His dear Mother, wearing which He conquered and destroyed the empire of death, though it was cast to the ground indeed in the Agony, in the nailing to the Rood, in the laying in the tomb. And another takes the verse as referring less to CHRIST Himself than to His Body the Church, and will have us see in this place the sufferings of the Martyrs, the crown of glory, the royal diadem, which He, their King, wears upon His brow.

Cassiod. in Cant. iii. 11. Isa. lxii. 3. S. Ambros. in Ps. cxix. 39 Thou hast overthrown all his hedges : and broken down his strong holds. 40 All they that go by spoil him : and he is become a reproach to his neighbours. Here comes in the metaphor of the vineyard of Israel, whereof Isaiah says, "I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down." And this hedge may well be explained of the Mosaic Law, with all its minute and thorny provisions for separating the Jewish people from the heathen nations around; although several take it to mean literally the battlements and walls of the lesser cities of Palestine; attributing the latter clause of the verse

to the fortifications of Jerusalem alone, or even to the citadel of Sion. The LXX. and Vulgate read the last half of the verse, Thou hast made his strong place a terror. That is, as they variously explain it, brought terror and dismay amongst the defenders of the last fortresses, so as to lead to their surrender, or else put the stronghold itself into the possession of the enemy, so as to turn it into a means of overawing the native population. Spoken of CHRIST, we may take the words either of the breaking down in the popular mind of that 1 Cor. i. 23.

”divinity which doth hedge a king,” so that the reverence in which He was held for a time gave way before the slander of the Chief Priests; or again, that the multitude of His disciples who once compassed Him about, forsook Him and fled, and that even His strong one, the bold and zealous Peter, was filled with terror, and failed Him in His need. The whole passage, as well as the next verse, applies more strictly to the people than to the king, and deals with him as their representative; whence the transition is easy to the sufferings of the Church in times of persecution, when the prelates, who are the hedge of her solemn usages, and her great teachers, her surest strongholds, fall away or are cut off. For the faithful soul, the hedge, rough with thorns, is penitence, a fence through which Satan cannot force his way, nor yet the allurements of the senses; but where there is no such hedge, entrance is easy; and all the passers by spoil and strip the vines bare of their grapes. They that go by. That is, as they tell us, all transgressors, all who pass over the fixed boundaries of the moral law, or those who pass by and neglect Him Who is the Way, Who was seized and bound in the garden, stripped of His raiment, crucified, and reviled by ”all them that passed by.

Literally the words tell us of the weakness and contempt into which the Jews had sunk, when every petty tribe around was able to insult, plunder, and wrong them with impunity after their power had been broken by the resistless force of Babylon. The lion had made them his prey first, and then they became a ”portion for foxes,” scattered abroad in many a land, and a reproach to their neighbours. Of CHRIST it was true that He was stripped in His Passion, and that He was made a reproach, not only by His citizens, who would not have Him to reign over them, but by His neighbours, the foreign tyrant Herod, and the Roman soldiers, who mocked and insulted Him. Nay, more, even after His Ascension, the prophecy held good, for the preaching of the Cross, which was to the Jews a stumbling-block, was to the Greeks foolishness, and therefore received with jeers and derision. And, moreover, the soul which has given way to the enemy, and suffered spoiling when its hedge is broken down, is made the subject of more bitter reproach for its fall, when once it has yielded, than it was before, for refusing to yield in guilty compliance with sinners.

41 Thou hast set up the right hand of his enemies: and made all his adversaries to rejoice. 42 Thou hast taken away the edge of his sword: and givest him not victory in the battle.

The Psalmist proceeds to dwell on the increasing severity of GOD's judgments, in that He not merely withdraws His aid from His Anointed, leaving him thus weak and undefended, but joins the side of his enemies. And the commentators bid us note the contrast here exhibited to the successes of the scanty forces of Gideon, or of the Maccabees, against enormous odds, whereas under Zedekiah "all the men of war fled by night. In dwelling on the power given to CHRIST's enemies against Him in the Passion, and their rejoicing over His death, they remind us not only how Peter was forced to return his sword into its sheath, but that the help of the Eternal WORD of GOD, that sharp and "two-edged sword," was taken from the Manhood of the Redeemer, so that He had no comfort or support therefrom, nor any aid from those legions of Angels whom the FATHER would have sent Him. We are reminded, too, when the interpretation is transferred to the sufferings of His mystical Body, how, in literal fact, the heathen persecutors used to rejoice, and make festival of the torture and passions of the Martyrs;

while Cardinal Hugo, who explains these and the previous verses of scandals in the Church of a later day, whereby it is stripped and plundered, and its discipline broken down by its own evil ministers, so as to make it a reproach to heretics, schismatics, and even to possible converts, declares that an evil prelate, sent as a chastisement to the Church, is the very right hand of her enemies, and his promotion a subject of hearty rejoicing to them, because he bears in vain the sword of temporal and spiritual authority. And another, not dissimilarly, warns preachers that their gift of sacred eloquence, albeit the sword of the Word, is of no avail to themselves in the battle of personal temptations, if they venture to dispense themselves from self-denial and prayer, not bearing in mind that saying of the Apostle: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

43 Thou hast put out his glory : and cast his throne down to the ground. His glory. That is, as Cardinal Bellarmine rightly explains the passage, albeit following the unlike Vulgate reading, all the pomp and splendour of royal attire and surroundings, the external tokens of dignity, as well as the substantial enjoyment of power, denoted by the throne of the latter clause. Applied to the nation, rather than to the king, the words will denote the stately ritual of the Temple, which was made to cease (A.V.) first for seventy years, and then for ever. The LXX. and Vulgate read, Thou hast loosed (LXX., destroyed Vulg.) from purification, partly misapprehending the meaning of the last word, and this has given rise to various comments. One practically agrees with that just cited, and takes the phrase of the fall of the Temple, because seeing in purification (καθαρισμοῦ, emundatione) a reA.

ference to the ceremonial washings and lustrations of the Law; while S. Augustine will have it that it means the spiritual rejection of the Jews, who could not, because they would not, be cleansed from their sins by faith; and therefore they were punished by their throne, their Holy City, and the whole land which they inhabited, being overwhelmed in total ruin.

Spoken of the Church in times of laxity, we note that God's punishments at times harden instead of purifying sinners, and overthrow that throne in their hearts on which CHRIST should reign. So exclaims the Prophet: "O LORD, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." While in days of fervour and zeal, the Martyrs are slain either because of their very purity, or because slanderous tales of their crimes have been spread abroad in order to make public morality an excuse for persecution, so that the bodies of those Saints who are CHRIST's throne are tortured, slain, and cast to the ground. And in that awful time of the Passion, when the divine glory of the LORD was most of all hidden in His supreme humiliation, when not only the throne offered Him on Palm Sunday was dashed down by the choice of Caesar as king and Barabbas as leader, but that surer one in the hearts of His chosen disciples seemed shaken to its very foundations; then He was destroyed from purification so far as His enemies could effect it, by being numbered with transgressors and felons, and by Himself too, because, all-pure as He was, He took upon Him our sins, and was in a sense defiled thereby, according to His own saying by His Prophet, "Their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment."

44 The days of his youth hast thou shortened: and covered him with dishonour. It is obvious that these words cannot be taken literally either of David or of Solomon, each of whom died in full age, after a reign of forty years. But they may apply exactly enough either to the very brief reigns of the later kings of the house of David, especially Jehoahaz, who occupied the throne for only three months in the twenty-third year of his age, and Jehoiakim, who was deposed when but eighteen, after the same brief possession of the crown, while even the two remaining sovereigns, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, were deprived in the prime of their life. Or else the words may point to the entire duration of the dynasty, so much briefer than was to be looked for from the terms of the divine promise, inasmuch as the national life of the Jews was violently interrupted before it reached maturity. And the phrase covered him with dishonour will apply not only to the whole nation, but especially to the disgrace and imprisonment of three of the last monarchs at the hands of Pharaoh-Necho and Nebuchadnezzar, as also to the still more fatal overthrow of the Jewish polity by Vespasian and Titus. But the obvious application to the LORD JESUS, cut off in the flower of His days, and that amidst every mark of shame and insult, has not been neglected by the Fathers. Further, it is explained of the

sufferings of the Church, and of the martyrdom and sudden deaths of her noblest and most devout children, while those were spared who were neither eminent nor useful, whose evil living covered their Mother with confusion.

45 LORD, how long wilt thou hide thyself, for ever : and shall thy wrath burn like fire?

Here the Psalmist, after pouring out his lamentations, betakes himself to prayer, and implores GOD to send the Deliverer. And the words not only befit the Jews in their first prostration of the Babylonian captivity, but even after their return and the rebuilding of the Temple, for that event did nothing for the restoration of the Davidic throne; rather, in truth, the sacerdotal kingdom of the Maccabees was an additional obstacle to the replacement of the old dynasty. GOD is said here to hide Himself; not that He does change towards us, for with Him there is ”no shadow of turning,” but that He suffers us to avert ourselves from Him, so that the light of His countenance no longer shines on us. And He is then compared to a monarch who, after condemning a criminal, shuts himself up, lest any one should approach him with a petition for pardon. For ever? The LXX. and Vulgate, as usual, translate this unto the end, whereon the commentators observe that the question is whether GOD will continue to hide His face from the Jewish people till the consummation of all things. And they answer, No: because the Apostle saith, ”Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved. How long then shall His wrath burn like fire? So long, exactly, as there is any fuel of sin for the fire to feed upon.

And observe that GOD’s wrath is compared to fire, by reason of four properties, according to the various substances on which fire acts. Fire reduces some to ashes, like wood, which is the manner in which obstinate sinners are dealt with by GOD. It softens others, like lead, which represents the moving to repentance and tears. Others, again, as gold, it purges from dross, denoting change and perfection through suffering. And finally it hardens earthenware, that is, the flame of divine love gives strength and fortitude to what was before weak and yielding, as in the case of the Martyrs. The verse may be taken also as the opening part of a prayer, either of CHRIST Himself, or of His Body the Church, preceding His Resurrection after the terrible woes of the Passion; and finally, as the petition of a penitent soul seeking reconciliation and peace with GOD.

46 O remember how short my time is : wherefore hast thou made all men for nought? S. Isid. His-pal. Sentent. i. 10. The Hymn, Christe, re-demptor gentium. Seeing, he would say, how soon my life shall end, and that I cannot look forward to a prolonged existence, let me, whilst I still live, see that which Thou hast promised, and behold Thy salvation, the Redeeming King of the seed of David. It cannot be that Thou hast made man, with all his passionate yearnings after beauty, life, and holiness, for the mere nought of this world, full of sorrows and trouble, grief and

sin. Send us therefore One who may be our guide to a happier dwelling, our teacher for higher things; send us CHRIST the LORD. The Vulgate, instead of how short my time is, reads what my substance is, and some of the commentators explain it in a manner practically the same. Because my nature is weak and sinful, because Thou wilt not wantonly destroy Thine own creature, send the Deliverer. But another interpretation, making the words the address of CHRIST to the FATHER, takes them as His appeal on behalf of mankind because He is their Brother, their own flesh and blood, and at the same time He Who has full right to ask what He will, because He is also Consubstantial with the FATHER Himself. And then they may be used of our own prayer to GOD, reminding Him that we are made in His image, and therefore have a special claim on His mercy, while we call on the SON in the words of the old hymn for Christmas:

Salvation's Author, call to mind, Thou took'st the form of humankind When of the Virgin undefiled Thou, in man's flesh, becam'st a Child. 47 What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death : and shall he deliver his soul from the hand of hell? This is the cry of the previous verse put in another form. Not only I, the Psalmist would say, have no hope of seeing the Deliverer unless Thou hasten His coming, but there is no man whose expectation in the matter can be any surer than mine. All are frail and short-lived, wherefore, unless Thy mercy be speedy, all will pass away without beholding the desire of their eyes. A. They answer the question by saying that no man ever lived who did not or else will not see death, including even CHRIST Himself; and the constant tradition of the Church is that Enoch and Elijah, still believed to live, will reappear and die in the days of Antichrist. But while all ransomed souls will live again in the Resurrection, and see death no more, of none can it be said, save of CHRIST, that they delivered their own souls from the hand of hell. He raised up Himself by His own divine and inherent power, all His Saints are raised by Him too, by His sustaining grace, and not by any strength or holiness of their own. And therefore He only can say, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."

48 LORD, where are thy old loving-kindnesses: which thou swarest unto David in thy truth? He calls them old, not merely because they dated from the beginning of David's reign, but because they were but the repetition of promises made to the Patriarchs; and they were old even in their time, because established by GOD'S predestination before the beginning of the world, in His truth, that is, in His Only-Begotten SON. 49 Remember, LORD, the rebuke that thy servants have: and how I do bear in my bosom the rebukes of many people; 50 Wherewith thine enemies have blasphemed thee; and slandered the footsteps of thine Anointed:

The most usual interpretation of the former of these verses is in agreement with the Prayer Book rendering; that the people of GOD were a mock for all the hea-

then round about; whether we take the said people as the Jews, in opposition to Gentiles, Christians as contrasted with Pagans, or holy persons in distinction from the worldly and frivolous. These rebukes the whole chosen nation, or the Anointed as its representative, bears in the bosom, feeling its wound deeply, but giving no outward token of pain by complaint. But the LXX. and Vulgate are nearer to the original in their reading, for they do not attempt to fill in the ellipse (if it be such) of the second clause: and they read, which I have borne in my bosom, of many peoples. The literal Hebrew is, I have borne in my bosom all many peoples. And this phrase, to "bear in the bosom," implies elsewhere fostering tenderness, as of a mother, not secret repression, as it must do here if we repeat the word rebuke. A different rendering, somewhat more satisfactory, makes the many people the same as the servants, but although this is truer to the spiritual meaning of the passage, it yet overlooks the contrast obviously intended between the one nation which serves GOD and the many na-

tions which do not. Hence, a modern critic has suggested that the words may fairly be taken as a complaint of the Jewish nation at the intrusion of a number of foreign invaders, settling on the sacred soil of the Holy Land, whom she was thus forced to bear in her bosom. But this again loses sight of the loving sense of that phrase. The truest meaning, that which at once seems to agree most fully with the Hebrew text and with the mystical purport, is half guessed at by one mediæval expositor, who points out that the rebuke, the special charge of the Jews against the Anointed One and His servants the Apostles, was precisely that He did not confine His teaching and the divine promises to the children of Israel alone, but that in His embracing love He bore in His bosom all the peoples, the whole multitude of the Gentiles, converting them to the Faith, and co-opting them into the commonwealth of the true Israel. With this rebuke they slandered the footsteps of the Anointed, because He bent His way to "bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. And so we read that the Pharisees and chief priests, when they sent officers to take Him, said, as the worst calumny they could frame against Him, "Will He go to the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? But the Rabbinical comment on the verse is different, and very ingenious. It is that the Gentiles rebuke the footsteps of Messiah, because of His delay;

that is, they mock and jeer at the Hebrews for looking to the coming of a Deliverer who is so tardy that there is little reason to suppose that He will ever appear. And the same interpretation applies to those unbelievers now who reject the doctrine of CHRIST's second Advent, as the Apostle teaches us: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. But the LXX. and Vulgate, instead of the footsteps, read

the changing of Thine Anointed. And for the most part they explain this to mean the passage of CHRIST from life to death, the fatal change which thereby, as the Jews thought, came upon the fortunes of the new teaching, so that they reproached the disciples for worshipping a dead man, just as the Assyrian conquerors mocked at the changed prospects of the Davidic kings, after the overthrow of their realm. Yet that change which CHRIST's enemies mocked at was widely different from what they supposed; for He was changed from temporal to everlasting life, from Jews to Gentiles, from earth to heaven; and thereby He changed the old man by calling him unto the new grace of regeneration, and out of the darkness of sin into the light of faith, from mortality to immortality.

And this change of life, wrought by repentance through grace, inducing men to abandon pleasure and accept hardship, to care little for life, and to welcome death, is precisely the thing most jeered at and reviled by unbelievers. S. Albert counts up for us the principal changes of CHRIST; namely, the Incarnation, whereby the Creator became a creature; the Transfiguration, which glorified His humility; the Holy Eucharist, wherein He changes bread and wine into His Flesh and Blood (the chief of all reproaches levelled at the Catholic Faith; the Passion, wherein He was changed into the pallor of death; the Resurrection, which brought Him back to life. Yet, again, change may be taken in the sense of price, or equivalent, a meaning often borne by the LXX. ἀντάλλαγμα, and the force will then be the ridicule levelled against the Jews by idolaters, for the poor thanks their GOD gave them for serving Him; a reproach still cast by unbelievers on the doctrine of our ransom through the Blood of CHRIST. Some commentators, however, give an explanation which brings us back to the truest sense, telling us that the wrath of the Jews was mainly excited by those words of the LORD, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate," whereby He implied what was said later in express terms by His Apostles, "It was necessary that the Word of GOD should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

Praised be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.
With this doxology ends the Third Book of the Psalter, just as a similar one closed the first book at the end of Psalm xli., and the second at the end of Psalm lxxii., and it is supposed by many writers to belong to the book collectively, and not to be an integral part of this particular Psalm. It reminds us, observes S. Augustine, that the power of injury exercised by the adversary against the Anointed of the LORD is fleeting, but the power and goodness of the LORD is everlasting. It teaches us also that our own sorrows and troubles are no reason for omitting the praises of GOD, but rather a reason for doubling them, as is here done by the forcible repetition of Amen, wherewith we welcome our returning LORD, as He comes victorious from the battle, with recovered crown and firmly established throne. Praised be the LORD JESUS by His twofold Church of Jew and Gentile, Amen, Amen; with the

double service of soul and body, Amen, Amen; by all His saints in the hour of grace and in the time of glory in this world and the world to come, Amen, Amen.

A. And therefore: Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of Hosts; glory be to the SON, His First-born and Anointed, higher than the kings of the earth; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Light of the Countenance of GOD and the holy oil of His elect. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Deliver our souls, O LORD, from the hand of hell; Who for us didst mightily break hell in pieces, that we, singing Thy mercies, may be delivered from the shame of our sins and from everlasting death. (1.) CHRIST JESU, Wondrous SON of GOD, unto Whom there is none equal nor like amongst the sons of GOD; unto Thee, O LORD, we direct our prayer, that Thou mayest vouchsafe to bestow on penitents that mercy which Thou hast promised to keep for the saints; and we therefore beseech Thee to correct us with forbearing discipline, not taking away Thy mercy in Thy wrath, that Thy covenant may not be profaned by reason of the offence we have committed, but Thy chastisement may be assuaged with heavenly pity, and Thou mayest wash away all that displeaseth Thee. And Thou, Who justifiest and glorifiest sinners who return to Thee, and Who didst will that we should be, out of nothing, what we are, grant us to be fitted for the kingdom of heaven and to dwell with Thee for evermore. (11.)

O GOD, the glory of the strength of the saints, grant us ever to walk in the light of Thy countenance, and to rejoice in Thy Name, that Thy mercy may ever go before our face, and we, when we have run the race of righteousness to the end, may be enabled to attain unto Thee. (1.)

Psalm 90

TITLE. A Prayer of Moses, the man of GOD. Chaldee Targum: A Prayer wherewith Moses the Prophet of GOD prayed when the people, the house of Israel, sinned in the wilderness; he spoke and said thus:

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, become the refuge of the people, satisfies us early with His mercy. The Voice of the Apostles to the FATHER. The Apostolic Voice to the LORD. Here the Prophet showeth that man can hope little from this life. VEN. BEDE. There can be no doubt that such names are attached to the titles as serve to clear up the text of the Psalms by their interpretation. For this reason the name of Moses is fitly prefixed to show the force of this supplication, for he ofttimes appeased the LORD's wrath by his prayer, and he was also a minister of the Old Testament, and a Prophet of the New. And because this Psalm united both these, it is entitled by his name: which is itself radiant with a twofold mystery. For Moses is interpreted Taken up, because he was lifted out of the waters by Pharaoh's daughter; which thing, by reason of the Red Sea, denotes the Israelites, and by reason of Baptism, the Christians. Otherwise: Because the Psalmist was about to speak of GOD, eternal before the ages, Creator and Ruler of the world, and of mankind as subject to death by reason of sins; all which things he had learned from the sayings of Moses, he consecrated by his name, not undeservedly, what he had obtained knowledge of from him.

Moses in the first part begins with praise of the Judge: briefly commemorating His benefits and power: LORD, Thou hast been our refuge. Then he beseeches Him to help our infirmity, which he describes in many ways: Turn not man, &c. Thirdly: He asks that the Advent of the SAVIOUR may quickly appear; Who, as he knew, would bestow blessings on mankind: Make Thy right hand so known. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The rejection of the Jews. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of narrative and prayer.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Thursday: Lauds. Ambrosian. Wednesday of Second Week: III. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. LORD,* Thou hast been our refuge. Ambrosian. As preceding Psalm. Mozarabic. The glorious majesty of the LORD our GOD be upon us. It is to be observed, before entering on the exposition of this glorious Psalm, the opening one of the Fourth Book of the Psalter, that the ancient and mediæval Christian commentators, with almost one voice, adjudge it away from Moses, and decline to accept the title as any authority in the matter. S. Athanasius, S. Augustine, S. Jerome, Beda, Euthymius Zigabenus (who usually follows S. Basil and Theodoret) are agreed on this head with Cardinal Bellarmine, Grotius, and the great majority of modern critics. Bellarmine, after citing S. Augustine's remark, that if the title were genuine, we should find the Psalm in the Pentateuch along with the other songs of Moses, and not in the Psalter; adds another objection, that the verse fixing the age of man at eighty years for its extreme limit is incompatible with the history of Moses himself,

SS. Athanasius and Jerome do indeed call the Psalm by the name of Moses in some parts of their writings, but this appears to be merely a conventional acceptance of the title to identify it, for elsewhere they cite it as David's. H who, if he wrote the Psalm at all, did so at the close of the forty years' wandering in the desert, when he was a hundred and twenty years old, yet hale and vigorous, and perfectly competent for the conduct of affairs. Nor is it probable that he would have been chosen as leader at eighty years of age, or Aaron as High Priest at eighty-three, if such seniority then implied decrepitude. Further, it may be noted that the Rabbinical tradition, which lays down a canon that uninscribed Psalms are to be taken as the composition of the last person named in the titles, assigns the nine following Psalms to Moses also; a position at once refuted by the mention of Samuel in xcix.6. And we shall thus most fitly take the title to be merely a personification of Moses by the Psalmist, who speaks in his character.

1 LORD, thou hast been our refuge : from one generation to another.

Our refuge. The A. V. more exactly, with Syriac and S. Jerome, our habitation. The word refuge, then, here signifies a house well fortified and set on a high place, in which such as take refuge are most secure from all harm of enemies, wild beasts, rain, or winds. And truly they who take refuge with GOD, and who dwell by faith, hope, and charity in Him, as in a fenced citadel, through steadfast meditation and continual desire, are very safe from all attacks of evil, since all things work together for their good. The whole Psalm is a prayer of the Church to the Eternal SON, for His Incarnation, that He may deliver man from the condition of mortality. In the person of Moses the Psalmist recalls GOD's mercies to him when he was drawn out of the water, when he overcame Pharaoh and his magicians, bringing the children of Israel out of the Red Sea, and when he strove with the rebellious people in the wilderness. Also, as a prayer of the whole Jewish nation to GOD, it reminds Him of

His deliverances wrought in the time of Pharaoh, then under Joshua and the Judges; and lastly, in the return from Babylon. And we, in applying the Psalm to our dear LORD, are confessing Him to be our defence from all eternity, in contradiction to those Jews who said to Him, ”Thou art not yet fifty years old.

He is our refuge from one generation to another, because He is shadowed in type and prophecy under the Old Testament, and is revealed in flesh under the New; because He lifts us out of the carnal generation into the spiritual; because He is not only the Creator of heaven and earth, the providential Ruler of man from his first origin, but the Creator of the new heaven and earth of grace, of the new man born again in virtue of the Incarnation. He is our refuge from the world, the flesh, and the devil; He is the refuge of penitents, who flee from sin; of advancing Christians, who flee from the face of temptation; and of the perfect, who flee from the anxieties and bustle of the world. And this is said relatively of Him, not that any change is wrought in His nature, but that we, being changed, seek shelter with Him, and know Him to be that refuge which He always was. He is our city of refuge, wherein we are safe from the avenger of blood; He is our tower, for ”the Name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe; He is that Captain of the host, Who saith, ”If the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. He is the Teacher, to Whom we cry, ”I flee unto Thee to hide me, teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee.

He is the dove-cot, to Whom pure souls fly, ”as the doves to their windows. He is that tender parent Who exclaimed, ”How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. And all this not in type alone, but in very deed; in His stooping to us by the humility of His Incarnation, by His endurance of temptation for us, by His prayers, especially in the Agony, and by His Cross, all which are a sure refuge for us from the destructive sin of pride. And on this a Spanish writer says very well, that the one remarkable prayer of Moses to GOD includes three petitions: first, that GOD would come in person to lead His people into the land of promise; secondly, that His presence might be a visible one; thirdly, that He would show His glory to His chosen; all which requests are made anew in this psalm, and granted in the coming of the LORD JESUS.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made: thou art GOD from everlasting, and world without end. Besides the obvious literal meaning of these words, whence S. Athanasius and other Fathers draw an argument for the Eternal Godhead of the SON, begotten before all worlds; there are mystical senses indicated, as that the mountains denote the exalted angelic powers, and the earth the lowliness of man, teaching us thereby that CHRIST was anterior to both. And in the second creation, that of the Church, He was before the Apostles, those great mountains of His, and the whole body of the faithful. His eternity is marked by the threefold form of the latter clause; time past, in that He

was from everlasting; time present, for we say, Thou art GOD; time future, world without end. And when we say from everlasting, we do not thereby imply that He had a beginning, nor in using the word end, do we hint at a close of His existence, but we signify only His changelessness, that He is eternally the same, and therefore we do not here say Thou wast GOD from everlasting, nor Thou wilt be GOD world without end, but Thou art GOD, the same, past, present, and to come. Wherefore CHRIST saith, ”Before Abraham was, I am.” Bellarmine points out a certain fitness in the reference to mountains in this verse, after the phrase refuge in the

A. Diodorus. A. preceding one, inasmuch as they are not only the strongest and most prominent objects on earth, but also are refuges in many ways; the first places to be left dry after deluges, the most difficult for enemies to attack with success. And thus, as they are often used as types of the Saints in Holy Writ, we learn that God’s love and protection are older, stronger, and higher than even theirs. 3 Thou turnest man to destruction: again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men.

Here is the curse pronounced against Adam for his sin, and the removal of that curse by CHRIST; the doom of death, and the promise of resurrection. It would be of little avail to us that God is our habitation, if He were not an everlasting one, sufficient for the generation of the world to come, as well as for that of this mortal life; but herein we are taught that He is our eternal Home, for He unites us to Himself, saying, Come again, and that from the destruction and dissolution of sin, to the restoration of penitence and the renewal of the defaced Image of God. And, here too we see how God, as He causes each generation to pass away into dust, calls a new one into being. But the LXX. and Vulgate read, Turn not man away to humiliation. In this we are not to understand the virtue of lowliness, but either the punishment of dissolution or the sin of earthly and carnal thoughts. S. Augustine, taking the latter sense, interprets the verse as a prayer that God will not suffer man to turn away from eternal and lofty things to base and fleeting desires, but may give him grace to glory in God alone. And He saith yet in another place, lest we should doubt His meaning: ”Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” What answer can we make then save that which follows? ”Behold, we come unto Thee, for Thou art the LORD our God;” a stronger refuge than the mountains, for it continues: ”Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.”

A. 4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday: seeing that is past as a watch in the night. The Apostle S. Peter supplies us with a gloss on this passage, telling us that its meaning is that God does not really The cause of this variant is simple. The Name of God, , is the last word in the Hebrew of the second verse. The LXX. reading it with a different point- ing, , not, made it the first word of the

third verse. And the Vulgate, though supplying Deus in the former verse, yet gives a second time as a negative.

delay when He seems to us so to do, but is exhibiting His patience towards mankind: "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The LORD is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. S. Augustine bids us note that the thousand years are compared to yesterday, not to to-morrow, albeit of equal length, in order to impress upon us the lesson of forgetting things that are behind, and counting them as done with for ever, but that we should "reach forth unto those things which are before," where it is always to-day. And a mediæval commentator observes that the whole life of a sinner (typified, as so often, by the symbolical number a thousand,) is as yesterday, however long he may live. For if you ask a worldly man, How will you spend to-morrow? he will answer, in word or in fact, As I did yesterday. And how was that? I ate, I drank, I talked, I amused myself, I slept. And so it would be with him, were his life prolonged a thousand years. Thus Isaiah speaks of the blind watchmen, who keep not a good watch in the night, "We will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

But if man persist in sinning, GOD is no less persistent in mercy, and therefore the Greek Fathers remind us that if a man will but hear GOD's voice saying, Come again, and will repent, then, although his life may have been so crowded with sins as to seem as if a thousand years had been needed for their commission, yet they will be nought in His sight, and be blotted out as yesterday is. Eusebius goes into a calculation here, from the literalist point of view, noting that from the building of Solomon's temple to the overthrow of Ezra's second erection, is in round numbers a thousand years, the for ever past yesterday of the Mosaic dispensation. If he had said that a thousand years elapsed from the dedication of the first Temple to the Nativity, he would have been more precise; and a similar cycle embraces the time between the conquests of Joshua and the return of Nehemiah. The life of mankind is here said to be as a watch in the night, for three reasons: its briefness, for there were four night watches, of but three hours each; its toilsome anxiety, fitly signifying the perpetual warfare of this mortal state; and its darkness.

A. 5 As soon as thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep: and fade away suddenly like the grass. 6 In the morning it is green, and groweth up: but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered. S. Bern. Serm. in Cant. 18. A.

The first half of the fifth verse runs quite differently in LXX. and Vulgate, and is, with little variance, Their years shall be nothingness. The clause is for the most part taken with the preceding verse, and the first interpretation which calls for notice is that of Diodorus, who enforces from the words the lesson of the completeness of

God's pardon for repented sins, so that all the years which have been spent in them shall be utterly blotted out of His records. Another observes that we live by only infinitesimal parts of time. Our past life is non-existent, for its days and years are dead; our future life is non-existent, for its hours are not yet born, and therefore we can count only the present instant, which slips from us as we try to grasp it, and is nothing. But the truer sense is given by the A. V. agreeing with Symmachus, Thou carriest them away as with a flood, they are as a sleep. And the first of these clauses may be taken in two ways, either that the comparison is of life to a river, hurrying resistlessly into the ocean, and unable to stay for an instant in its course, or else that the idea is that of a sudden storm of rain, washing the sky free of clouds, and the ground of light and unfixed objects lying casually about, which are borne away in the torrent, while the word sleep reminds us of the manner in which our senses and reason are bound in slumber here on earth, so that we take fictions for truth, and have no power to undeceive ourselves, as well as of the manner in which these visions of the night vanish with our awakening. And so Pindar moralizes—

We are creatures of a day. What is any one? what is he not? The dream of a shadow, man. But of the Saints we may remember that it is spoken, "Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures as out of the river;" and again, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;" and yet further, "He giveth His beloved sleep," so that they are hurried away in rapt delight at the thought of God, and sleep, with waking heart, in that contemplation wherein they dream of Him. Like the grass. Here they take the morning and evening to be youth and old age, or, with little difference of meaning, life and death. We are cut down in death, dried up as corpses, withered into dust. And this is more awfully true of those lives which merely flourish and pass (Vulg.) without ever bringing forth actual fruit, for after the morning of this world, when the night of judgment is come, they shall be cut down and cast into hell, suffered to harden (Vulg.) in their wickedness, and be dried up in the fierce flame of God's wrath against sin. Once more, they take the grass to be the Mosaic Law, given in the morning youth of the nation by CHRIST on Mount Sinai, and abolished in the evening of time, when He came in the flesh. The whole figure is one frequently met in the classical poets, notably in Homer's comparison of men to the successive leaves of a tree, but perhaps the closest parallel to this passage is supplied by Plautus:

Like to a summer plant brief space I was, I sprang up suddenly, and sudden fell. Plaut. Pseudolus, i. 1, 36. Although the words of our LORD, wherein He speaks of "the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," may be taken as explaining this sudden decay as the result of external violence, as the action of the scythe, not of natural causes, yet there are not wanting those who prefer to see a reference to those ephemeral plants whose bloom and fading are comprised in a single day. But the most natural explanation is to see noted here the rapid effects of an Eastern sun on the herbage. And so the Apostle S. James,

”The sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof fadeth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth,” an apt type of the sinner in the presence of GOD.

S. Jas. i. 11. 7 For we consume away in thy displeasure : and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation. The double chastisement of body and soul is here set before us; the gradual wasting of our physical frame under the attacks of disease and age, and the mental terrors brought upon us by the thought of GOD’s divine anger against sin. Those who take the whole Psalm as a dirge over the vanished glories of the Hebrew race, explain this verse as denoting that a heavier punishment than falls to the lot of other men had smitten the chosen nation; whether we take the words as referring specially to the death in the wilderness of all but two of the great host of armed men that came up out of Egypt, to the Babylonian captivity, or to the final dispersion under Titus and Hadrian. And others again prefer to understand it of the gradual shortening of the span of human life, from the centuries of the earliest race to the decades of later times.

8 Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee : and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. Inasmuch as misdeeds are obliquities, perversities, and deviations from the right, GOD is said to set them before Him when, instead of hiding His face from them, or covering them, He does, as it were, turn them round towards Himself, and fixes His eyes upon them, so that they cannot escape nor be concealed, but be detected and punished. And in this He acts like earthly judges, who summon criminals before their tribunal, and submit them there to close examination, bringing hidden things into the light of judgment. Our secret sins. There is some variety of rendering the Hebrew , the LXX. and Vulgate taking it as our whole duration (alav, saeculum,) S. Jerome rendering negligentias, the Chaldee and some others as youth, that is, as elsewhere, youthful sins. But the Prayer Book version appears the most satisfactory, and in any case the ultimate meaning will be the same, that it is precisely what seems to us most obscure and forgotten, that will be placed in the full blaze of God’s countenance, which does not, like our sight, derive its rays from external objects, but is itself the source of light. The Syriac version, however, keeping to the idea of youth, beautifully turns the second clause into a prayer: Because Thou hast set our misdeeds before Thee, make us grow young in the light of Thy countenance. Put away from us the old man with his sins; renew in us the image of the New Man, and that by showing Him to us visibly in the flesh, that we may see Him as He is, and thereby become like Him, as the pool becomes like the sun which shines on it.

9 For when thou art angry, all our days are gone: we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told. The previous verse is taken by several commentators to have a special reference either to the sin of Adam, visited on his posterity, or to the rejection of CHRIST by the Jews, and, consequently, this passage is explained

by some to have general reference to the sentence of death pronounced against all mankind for the one cause, or of national overthrow against the Jews specially, for the other. Had it not been for this, the days and years would have still flowed on, but they would have brought none of the evils of age and weakness, far less of decay and death, in their course. As it were a tale that is told. There is a considerable variety of interpretation of the Hebrew text here, both amongst ancient and modern critics. The Chaldee turns it, As the breath of the mouth in winter. S. Jerome, not unlike our rendering, As one uttering a speech. Others again, as a meditation (A. V. marg.) or reverie; or further, as a sigh or groan, a meaning which is the most probable, and agrees with the sense of in the two other places where it occurs, Job xxxvii. 2, and Ezek. ii. 10. But the LXX., Æthiopic, and Vulgate agree in translating the

In this sense, favoured by most critics, we have an apt parallel in Theognis:

whole clause, meditated (or shall meditate) as a spider, i.e., a spider's web, which fuller form the Arabic gives, agreeing with the Syriac, however, in making the verb mean fail, or glide away. The fanciful nature of this simile has given birth to a crowd of interpretations. First may be placed that of Cassiodorus, that the lives of sinners are compared to spiders, because their intricate, subtle and yet frail devices for evil ends are like the webs woven to catch flies, while the word meditate is used in opposition to worked, to show the inutility and vanity of their existence. The web of the spider is very slender, and of no value, like worldly cunning, of which we may take those words of the Prophet, "Moreover, they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net works, shall be confounded. The spider spins its web out of its own entrails, and is thus like the covetous. Its toil is laborious, but rapidly swept away; just as the hypocrite's "hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. It weaves its web high up in corners, not on level spots, and thus denotes secrecy and cunning. It prefers to spin in deserted houses, and so they whose soul has been abandoned by God, delight in sinister occupations. It works chiefly in the dark, and thus resembles those who shun the light, because their deeds are evil.

It hangs downwards from its web by a slender thread, denoting those who are in constant suspense and anxiety about earthly trifles, and it labours hard for a very small result, giving much meditation thereto. Others, however, take the word meditated in the sense that the years of man shall be reputed or esteemed as no better than spider's webs. Eusebius, reminding us of that saying of Isaiah concerning the wicked Jews, "They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web . . . their webs shall not become garments; observes that in ancient times the children of Israel wove rich vestments for the High Priests, but that when the Great High Priest came, they wove instead subtle plots against Him with cunning use of Scriptural texts and traditional comments, meaning to snare Him therewith, but vainly.

10 The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years: yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone. Omitting the obvious literal interpretation of the verse, let us turn to the spiritual lessons which they draw from it. There is great difficulty in accounting for this curious rendering. On the one hand, the LXX. may have read instead of , or else instead of . But there is nothing but mere conjecture to go upon in the matter. A. And first, let us hear S. Augustine explaining, according to his wont, the mystical significance of the numbers. Seventy and eighty make one hundred and fifty, which the Book of Psalms itself proves to be a sacred number. And its proportional meaning is the same as that of the number fifteen, made up of seven and eight; whereof the former, by reason of the observance of the Sabbath, denotes the Old Testament; the other, the New Testament, because of the LORD'S Resurrection. Hence are there fifteen steps of the Temple, the fifteen Songs of degrees amongst the Psalms, hence the waters of the flood prevailed fifteen cubits above the tops of the mountains. Seventy years is the temporal life of the Old Testament; eighty, which is in power (Vulg.) that is, in things eternal, is the new life of the New Testament in the hope of renewal and resurrection to immortality, while anything beyond (Vulg.) this, anything which transgresses the faith, and seeks

B. for something else, is but labour and sorrow. Not very dissimilarly, others say that the word seventy denotes active life, as we number our existence here by the seven days of the week, while eighty, as suggesting the eighth day, the beginning of a new week, typical of a new life, implies contemplation on earth, and the Beatific Vision in the life to come. So soon passeth it away, and we are gone. The A. V. more ex- actly, with Targum and S. Jerome, we fly away. This at once suggests the famous parable of the heathen Thane in the Witan assembled by Edwin of Northumbria to debate on the mission of S. Paulinus. "The present life of man, O King, may be likened to what often happens when thou art sitting at supper with thy thanes and nobles in winter-time. A fire blazes on the hearth, and warms the chamber; outside rages a storm of wind and snow; a sparrow flies in at one door of thy hall, and quickly passes out at the other. For a moment, and while it is within, it is unharmed by the wintry blast, but this brief season of happiness over, it returns to that wintry blast whence it came, and vanishes from thy sight. Such is the brief life of man; we know not what went before it, and we are utterly ignorant as to what shall follow it. If, therefore, this new doctrine contain anything more certain, it justly deserves to be followed." But the LXX. and Vulgate diverge completely from the existing Hebrew text, reading as they do, For gentleness hath come upon [us, LXX.]

and we shall be corrected [instructed LXX.] That is, as they tell us, we derive at least this advantage from old age, that it breaks down the pride and obstinacy of youth, and we become gentle through consciousness of our feeble condition,

and are corrected or instructed into submitting ourselves under the mighty and chastening, but loving hand of GOD. Or, as another, yet more beautifully, teaches, He Who is gentleness itself, our dear and tender LORD, hath come to us, and will correct us, if we obey not His teachings, but more gently than under the harshness of the Law. Another, accepting gentleness as the special epithet of CHRIST, takes the coming and correction to be that of the last Judgment, when He Who has been so long-suffering with us, saying to us, like His Apostle, "What, shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and the spirit of meekness?" will punish the impenitent.

The LORD shall come, but not the same As once in lowliness He came,— A silent Lamb before His foes, A weary Man, and full of woes. The LORD shall come, a glorious Form, With wreath of flame and robe of storm, On cherub wings and wings of wind, Appointed Judge of all mankind. But one writer who follows the Vulgate reading, brings us back to the real force, saying, The phrase We shall be corrected means we shall die, and we shall be amended. For death is a general correction, which amends our vices in us, and in what way? By means of gentleness, for it pacifies all. For gentleness hath come upon us. The lion dies, the tiger dies, the adder dies, and where then is the lion's valour, the tiger's fierceness, the adder's poison? Now, the lion is not brave, the tiger is not fierce, the adder is not venomous, and all those untamed beasts and monsters are docile now, for death hath tamed them. And if death can work such amendment and change in wild beasts, why should it not do the like in man? A better change, too, than mere stilling of our passions, but like that of which one of our own poets has sung—

Vleyra. Sermon for Ash-Wednesday. . . . . from the Golden Throne the Lord of death With love benignant on Ladurlad smiled, And gently on his head his blessing laid. As sweetly as a child, Whom neither thought disturbs nor care encumbers, Tired with long play, at close of summer day, Lies down and slumbers, Even thus as sweet a boon of sleep partaking, By Yamen blest, Ladurlad sank to rest. Blessed that sleep, more blessed was the waking, For on that night a heavenly morning broke, The light of heaven was round him when he woke. Southey, Curse of Kehama, xxiv. 26. 11 But who regardeth the power of thy wrath: for even thereafter as a man feareth, so is thy displeasure. 12 So teach us to number our days: that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. This rendering is very obscure, and it is simpler to take the A. V., Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? even acA.

cording to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath. That is, what man can tell the awfulness of God's indignation against sin? seeing that His wrath is proportionable to His majesty, and to the reverential fear we ought to entertain for Him, to guard us from transgressing His precepts. And because no man can do this except God teach him, we then pray Him so to instruct us to understand our brief sojourn here, so to order our lives that we may understand His might and holiness, His justice and wrath as our Judge, our own weakness as miserable sinners, that we may truly repent, and

with softened hearts turn to the Eternal Wisdom, the Word of God Himself, and sit meekly at His feet to learn the way of holiness. But the LXX. and Vulgate follow a different reading, and join on the word number to the preceding verse, thus: Who knoweth . . . to number Thine anger in comparison with Thy fear? which, so far, does not affect the general sense of the passage. But they continue: So make known Thy right hand, and the instructed in heart in wisdom. That is, reveal unto us Thy CHRIST, the Right Hand of Thy power, that He, in turn, may make known to us that everlasting felicity which is prepared for those who shall be set on His right hand in the Judgment. And show us not only Him, but as further lessons and examples for us, those Apostles, Martyrs, and Saints who have drunk His wisdom in with thirsty hearts, and have thereby in their lives and doctrine taught us what it is to follow Him.

13 Turn thee, O LORD, at the last : and be gracious unto thy servants. At the last. LXX. and Vulg. rightly, with A. V., How long? As long as is Thy good pleasure, so that Thou be gracious unto Thy servants, or as long as is needful for Thee to turn unto us for our salvation; or again, for a time equal to that during which Thou wast turned from us; and, we pray, keep Thyself so turned with the light of Thy countenance shining on us, till we reach our desired end. But the Chaldee takes the sentence as incomplete, and fills it up thus: How long wilt Thou afflict us? And He gives us a plain answer: ”Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.” Then, when we are willing to forsake our sins, He will be entreated for His servants, and repent Him (A.V.) of His severity; that is, will like a strict loving parent show tenderness to His converted children, in proportion to the weight of His chastening hand so long as they continued froward.

14 O satisfy us with thy mercy, and that soon : so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life. Reading instead of . 15 Comfort us again now after the time that thou hast plagued us : and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity.

Soon. Rather, early, which the Vulgate turns, in the morning. It is not of the way, but of our Country that these words are spoken. Here, God’s love and grace are as a light that shineth in a dark place, in the night and sorrow of this world, in our dimly enlightened hearts, but there, in the morning, when we shall see ”the day dawn, and the Day-star arise in our hearts,” nevermore to set, we shall be satisfied with the mercy of God, that is, with His dear Son. So shall we rejoice, ”for Thou delightest not in our destruction, inasmuch as Thou makest a calm after the storm, and after crying and tears, Thou pourest in gladness. Wherefore it is added, After the time that Thou hast plagued us. ”This kind of rejoicing,” observes a Saint, ”the heavenly citizens would never have known were it not for the children of the Church. For joy comes in good time after sorrow, rest after toil, a haven after shipwreck. All love safety, but he most who has been afraid. Light is pleasant to all, but most to him who escapeth out of the power of darkness. By the passage

from death to life grace is doubled in its delightfulness. This is my special portion in the heavenly banquet, apart from those blessed spirits.

I am bold to say that the very life of blessedness itself is augmented, and obtains some addition to its perfection through me, by reason of what it enjoys through its love for me, and that to no small extent, for the angels rejoice at the repentance of a sinner. But if my tears are delightful to the angels, what will my delight be to them? There is a sense in which the prayer was granted even in this world, by the early morning Resurrection of CHRIST, by the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT in fiery tongues at the third hour of the Day of Pentecost. It is granted also to those on whom God bestows the grace of penitence, and inspires with the hope of pardon and salvation after He has chastised them for their sins; nay, with thankful rejoicing in the very chastisements which have testified His fatherly love, and they learn to "rejoice in the LORD alway" all the days of their earthly life, in preparation for the unending gladness of their promised immortality, in that morning which begins an unending series of days that have no evening.

Bellarmine. A. 2 S. Pet. i. 19. C. Tob. iii. 22, Vulg., om. LXX. and A.V. S. Bernard. Serm. in Cant. 68. S. Greg. M. in 1 Sam. 16. The night was dark with terror, The morn is bright with gladness; The Cross becomes our harbour, And we triumph after sadness; And JESUS to His true ones Brings trophies fair to see: And JESUS shall be loved, and Beheld in Galilee: Beheld, when morn shall waken And shadows shall decay, And each true-hearted servant Shall shine as doth the day. 16 Show thy servants thy work : and their children thy glory.

Not works, in the plural, like the many sacrifices of the Law. The covenant of grace knows only one work, that of CHRIST. Thy work. The especial work of GOD is the salvation of man, to be wrought out by the merits of CHRIST. It is therefore a prayer for His coming, His Resurrection and Ascension, the sending of the HOLY GHOST, and the foundation of the Church, for "this is the work of GOD, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." And note that the prayer is twofold, that we may see the work, and our children the glory, teaching us thereby that the triumph of the Church is not to be looked for till the work is ended, that the sufferings of the Saints must precede their victories, that the martyrdom of the Apostles is the needful preliminary to the conversion of the Empire. Or, if we take the words of GOD's work in the soul, their meaning will be, Work in Thy servants by Thy grace, that they may do good works, and let Thy work in the matter be so plain, that others may see their good deeds, and glorify Thee, their FATHER in heaven, and that this holy operation may not cease with them, but be continued for their children too. The LXX. and Vulgate are, however, slightly different here, and read, Look upon Thy servants, and Thy works, and guide their children. It is, observes Cassiodorus, a prayer to GOD to spare the Jewish nation, once His servants, though now rebels, and to guide into the way of salvation the children of those who slew Him. Bless,

as another will have it, the work of Thy servants in the ministry of souls, and guide their spiritual children, their converts and pupils, in the right way.

17 And the glorious majesty of the LORD our GOD be upon us : prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handywork. There is a twofold Rabbinical tradition respecting this verse and the preceding one; that they were the original prayer recited by Moses as a blessing on the work of making the Tabernacle and its ornaments, and that subsequently he employed them as the usual formula of benediction for any newly undertaken task, whenever GOD's glorious majesty was to be consulted for an answer by Urim and Thummim. For us that glorious majesty is CHRIST our King Himself, Whose splendour has enlightened us for ever; it is, further, the illumination of the HOLY GHOST, Whom He has sent us, it is even His own triumphal Cross, wherein we glory, wherewith we sign ourselves as a safeguard against evil. So enlightened, so fortified by His prevenient grace, we may begin our part of the great undertaking. When He has shown us His work, and given us clear light wherein to see it, then we may ask for wisdom and strength to carry it on, always under His guidance, to the one perfect work and end of charity, wherein He co-operates throughout with His grace, as He bestowed on us the will and power necessary for a beginning.

A. Glory be to the FATHER, Who is GOD from everlasting; glory be to the SON, His Mercy, Who saith to us, Come again, ye children of men; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Almighty GOD, Creator of the star of light, Who drivest away the night and bringest back the light anew to the world, satisfy us, we beseech Thee, with the renewed shining of Thy mercy, that we may, through Thine illumination, drive away all the darkness of sin. (1.) Keep us, O LORD, from one generation to another, and let not us, who have clung to Thy foundation, be carried away with this present world, but arise to be our Comforter in trouble, and by the bestowal of joy wipe away our sorrows. (11.) Let Thy glorious majesty, O LORD, be upon us, and guide Thou the work of our hands, look graciously upon Thy servants, and with Thy light direct the beginnings of good works in us. (11.) Be Thou our Refuge, O LORD, and guide Thy people with Thy fatherly governance, that as the times of our fathers felt Thy cares, so ours also may know Thy bounties towards them. (11.)

We beseech Thee, O LORD our SAVIOUR, that Thy glory may shine in our hearts, that Thou mayest cast out from us all assaults of darkness and all foul thoughts, and drive away all sins from our hearts; so enlighten our darkness that the shades may flee, and glorious light dwell in our hearts. (5.) O LORD, Who art GOD from everlasting and world without end, be Thou in all places our Refuge; look mercifully

upon us Thy servants, and let the glory of Thy Godhead be upon us, that our works may alway be guided by Thee, and be finished by Thee when begun. (1.)

Psalm 91

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Praise of a Song of David.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, returning as Conqueror from hell, trod under foot the head of the lion and of the perverse dragon. The Voice of CHRIST to the believing people, or the Voice of the Church to CHRIST. This Psalm is therefore to be read with the Gospel of Matthew, where CHRIST is tempted. The Voice of the Church to CHRIST. To be read after the Gospel of Mark, where CHRIST is tempted. To be read with the Gospel of John, concerning the Victory of CHRIST. The Voice of the Church to the LORD. A Prayer in the night-season. VEN. BEDE. A praise of a song is the praising of GOD, David should be understood as the Prophet himself. We always oppose this hymn, with pious confidence, to the evil spirits, that they may be overcome by us preferably with that very weapon wherewith they craftily made certain attempts against their Creator.

In the first part the Psalmist declares that every one who is very faithful is fenced with Divine protection. Whoso dwelleth in the help. In the second part, he chants praise to CHRIST, A thousand shall fall beside Thee. Thirdly, they are the words of the FATHER to every faithful one, whom He knows to put most devout trust in Him; promising him defence in this world, and rewards in that which is to come. I will deliver him and bring him to honour. SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, concerning Hezekiah the king, that he should be called the Son of David. Spiritually it is said to be touching the victory of CHRIST, and of every one who is perfected by Him. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm for meditation.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. } Daily: Compline. [Dedication of Church: III. Monastic. } Nocturn.] Ambrosian. } Parisian. } Sunday: Compline. Lyons. } Quignon. } Eastern Church. Sext: Late Evensong.

Antiphons.
The ferial Antiphons vary with the season, and are not special to the Psalm. Gregorian. Dedication. First verse of Psalm. Mozarabic. He shall abide under the

protection of the GOD of heaven:* he saith to the LORD, Thou art My taker-up. If you desire, writes S. Athanasius to Marcellinus, to stablish yourself and others in devotion, to know what confidence is to be reposed in GOD, and what makes the mind fearless, you will praise GOD by reciting the ninetieth (ninety-first) Psalm. Accordingly, we most fitly employ it at Compline as a defence against the snares of the night and the manifold temptations of the evil spirits. And when we do sing it devoutly at that time, we shall often taste its power and sweetness, wherewith it so wondrously and pleasantly abounds. The immediate occasion of the Psalm is not so easily ascertained as its spiritual meaning. Some Rabbinical authorities treat it as a part of the preceding one, while others, more numerous, agreeing with several modern critics, take it as a post-Captivity Psalm, referring to the return under Ezra, and the perils which beset the exiles from the human and animal foes which had taken possession of their old dwelling-places, while a few are found to accept the view of the Syriac Psalter, and to explain the poem as a thanksgiving for the deliverance of Hezekiah from the army of Sennacherib. It is the ninetieth Psalm in the LXX. and Vulgate, and the mystical import of the number which they give is that ninety, being the product of ten and nine, signifies the number of the faithful who suffer tribulation here, and who shall be made equal to the angels in blessedness, on receiving the crown of life, because ten signifies the denarius, or penny given by the LORD of the vineyard to the labourers, and nine is the sum of the grades in the angelic hierarchy.

1 Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High: shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Whoso. This first word denotes that the promise is a universal one; as though the Prophet were saying, Whosoever he be, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, noble or churl, young or old, it matters not, for GOD accepteth no man’s person, but is rich unto all them that call upon Him. And whereas we may dwell in a place, and yet be restless and unquiet there, the Hebrew here is sitteth, implying tranquillity and perseverance. Further, the word here translated defence, and in LXX. and Vulgate help, is more exactly, as in A.V., the secret place, a phrase not only denoting its perfect security, but also that it is no visible earthly tower, but an invisible fortress, which faith alone can find and enter. Yet the word help is not without its lesson, for it teaches us that devout and firm trust in GOD does not make man’s thought and labour superfluous, but rather stimulates them, in the hope of success through such mighty co-operation. Fitly, too, is the title Most High here applied to GOD our defence, because from His lofty throne He beholdeth all the dwellers upon earth, so that no peril of ours escapes His sight, and also because being supreme in majestic power, He is able to deliver us from them all. Shall abide, or, with A.V. margin, shall lodge, that is, shall pass the night, the whole season of darkness and peril, of trouble and doubt, safely under the shadow of the clouds of the glory of God, as the Chaldee paraphrase expands the latter clause. The Almighty, , Serm. in Qui habitat, 1.

S. Luke I. 35.

is translated by LXX. and Vulgate the God of heaven. It is He who thus receives, as it were under the shelter of His roof, to lodge there, the suppliant who ventures to sit down at the door of His secret place as a temporary shelter, but who is soon taught that a FATHER'S home is open to him. We may learn, remarks S. Bernard, in the beginning of his commentary on this Psalm, who he is who dwelleth under the help of the Most High, by noting who they are that do not dwell there. You will find three sorts of them: those who do not hope, those who despair, and those who hope in vain. The first are such as either trust in their own strength and possessions, or as have cooled in their early zeal, and think that God has no more good things to bestow; the second those who think only of their own weakness, not of God's might, and therefore make no resistance against temptation; and the third are those who forget God's justice, and relying on His mercy, continue in sin. The first of these dwells in his own merits, the second in his chastisements, the third in his vices. The dwelling of the first is sordid, that of the second disquieted, that of the third foolish and perilous.

With these we may contrast all holy souls, but especially her whom God chose as the helpmeet for Himself, the Most High, in working out the salvation of mankind by His Incarnation, to whom it was said by the Angel, "The HOLY GHOST shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Note, too, that the Holy Trinity is declared to us in this verse: the FATHER, Who is the Most High; the SON, His help in the work of redemption, as it is said in another Psalm, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; the HOLY GHOST, Who is that shadow of the Almighty which brooded over Blessed Mary.

2 I will say unto the LORD, Thou art my hope, and my stronghold: my GOD, in him will I trust. S. Bern. Serm. in Qui habitat, 2.

The sudden change of persons here (not the only one in the Psalm) may be accounted for in two ways, neither of which excludes the other. The Psalmist begins with a general reflection on the blessedness of trust in GOD; and kindled by the thought, applies it personally to his own spiritual needs, and bursts out with a direct address; and, further, the whole composition may very probably have been designed as an anthem for two or three voices in public worship, the solo parts being all in the first person. In fact the Chaldee does make the Psalm a dialogue between David and Solomon with a chorus. But the LXX., Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate tide over the difficulty by reading the first word of the verse in the third person. He will say, which is not very unlike S. Jerome's saying. This he will say as a thanksgiving, making acknowledgment to the LORD and His mercy for His twofold help. For every one who is still dwelling in GOD's help, is not yet in the kingdom, often needs to flee, and sometimes falls, but he is not dashed down, because the LORD is his taker-up (Vulg. so that he rises stronger when he falls. Let the faithful soul,

then, say unto the LORD, Thou art my taker-up. All things can say, Thou art my Creator; the very beasts can say, ”Thou art my Shepherd;

all men may say, ”Thou art my Redeemer,” but only he who dwells under the help of the Most High can say, Thou art my taker-up, or my hope, or again, my refuge (A.V. Observe, too, that the Psalmist continues, my refuge (Vulg. and my GOD. We have herein three blessings bestowed by GOD, past, present, and future, for which thanksgiving is made unto Him. First, is His unspeakable mercy, whereby He lifts up man fallen into sin, and sinking further to hell; next, that when GOD justifies a sinner, He does not at once transfer him to heaven, where are no perils, but places him in the array of His warrior soldiers, yet, if he trust in the LORD, the LORD in turn will be a sure bulwark for him in all temptations. Thirdly, comes the greatest of all the blessings, And My God. For GOD is the Supreme Good, and He will be our GOD when we see Him as He is. And why, seeing that it is so, do we not find our GOD, but my GOD written here? Because in creation, in redemption, and other general bounties, He is GOD of all; but His elect, each one of them, have Him for their very own in all their temptations, for so ready is He to lift up the falling, and deliver the fugitive, that it seems as though He quitted all the others to help that one alone. Note, too, that it is said, I will trust, not, I have trusted, or, I do trust;

because here the speaker makes a vow, a resolve, and fixes his intention to persevere.

3 For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter: and from the noisome pestilence.

The hunter. Are we then beasts? Truly so, for ”man will not abide in honour, seeing he may be compared unto the beasts that perish.” Men are beasts, straying sheep, having no shepherd. And who are the hunters? Evil and wicked ones, most crafty and cruel, hunters who do not sound a horn, lest they should be heard, but ”privily shoot at him that is perfect.” They are the rulers of the darkness of this world. Now that we know the hunters and the beasts, we must inquire what is the snare. The Apostle will show it to us, for he knoweth the thoughts of these hunters, ”They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.” Are the riches of this world, then, the devil’s snare? Alas! how few we find, who rejoice in being delivered from such a snare, how many that grieve because they think themselves too little enmeshed, and strive with all their might to involve and entangle themselves therein! The devil and his angels set

A. S. Ambros. in S. Lucam, cap. iv. their snares, but men who walk in CHRIST walk far from such snares. For Satan does not lay a snare in CHRIST, he sets it all around the way, but not on the way. Let CHRIST be thy way, and thou shalt not fall into the snare of the devil. Go not to left or right, but keep in the straight road, and thou shalt avoid the traps on either side. There are many snares which the hunters lay for us besides riches. The reward of honours, says a Saint, the height

of power, the delicacy of diet, and the beauty of an harlot, are the devil's snares: The close pursuers' busy hands do plant Snares in thy substance; snares attend thy want; Snares in thy credit, snares in thy disgrace; Snares in thy high estate, snares in thy base; Snares tuck thy bed, and snares surround thy board; Snares watch thy thoughts, and snares attack thy word; Snares in thy quiet, snares in thy commotion; Snares in thy diet, snares in thy devotion; Snares lurk in thy resolves, snares in thy doubt; Snares lurk within thy heart, and snares without; Snares are above thy head, and snares beneath; Snares in thy sickness, snares are in thy death. Oh! if these purlieus be so full of danger, Great GOD of hearts, the world's sole sovereign ranger, Preserve Thy deer; and let my soul be blest In Thy safe forest, where I seek for rest: Then let the hell-hounds roar. I fear no ill, Rouse me they may, but have no power to kill.

And so they tell of a favourite stag which belonged to an emperor, that it ranged safely about, because it bore on its neck a collar with the inscription, "I am Cæsar's, touch me not." They bid us observe how the word hunter is nearly always used in a bad sense in Scripture, citing as special examples Nimrod, Ishmael, and Esau, while fisher is mostly in a good sense. And we are seasonably reminded of those hunters who sought after the life of CHRIST, endeavouring to entangle Him in His speech, but vainly, because Eternal Wisdom delivered Him out of their snares. Cardinal Hugo sums up the points in which evil spirits and wicked men resemble hunters, as follows: Skill, bugle, poison, steed, bow, raiment pale, Decoys, snare, nets, shafts, dogs, make up the tale.

That is, they are crafty, they summon their companions to help them: whisperers, and panderers, and evil advisers of men are the bugle round the devil's neck, wherewith he sends out his voice: they poison their arrows with evil suggestions: the horse denotes the pride of the flesh; the bow denotes legal subtilty; the pale dress, worn to avoid scaring the prey, signifies the way in which the devil adapts himself so as not to startle his intended booty too soon; the decoys, snares, and nets, are his various artifices; the shafts and darts are temptations; and the dogs, slanderers. And if we bear in mind that hunters lay snares for wild beasts, not for tame and domesticated ones, we shall know that it is only when we follow our own way, and are not God's servants, that we are in any peril from them. And from the noisome pestilence. That pestilence is the epidemic of sin, not personal and individual only, but the general frailty of mankind, and the vices which at any given time are current and lightly regarded. It has been taken literally of the plague sent when David numbered the people, and by those who date the Psalm in the time of Hezekiah, as referring to the destruction of Sennacherib's army. But the Vulgate rendering, nearly identical with that of LXX., is from the harsh word. This they explain diversely. Many take it of the threats and jeers, or flatteries, used to force or tempt innocent persons into sin; others of the blasphemies of heretics and infidels. S. Bernard, explaining it of the cry of hell for more prey, reminds us of

that harsh word, ”Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him,” which the LORD bore for us, that He might save us from a yet harsher word, ”Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” an explanation which brings us back to the deepest meaning of noisome pestilence.

A. 4 He shall defend thee under his wings, and thou shalt be safe under his feathers: his faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler. The verse tells us of the continuance of the divine protection, for it does as it were say, Whilst thou art young, and no match for thine enemies, He will cherish thee under His wings, as the eagle or the hen cherishes her young; but when thou art grown, and able for combat, He will give thee a strong shield that will keep thee unwounded. In Holy Writ God is compared to two birds, the eagle and the hen. We read in Deuteronomy, ”As an eagle fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the LORD alone did lead him:” and this denotes CHRIST the LORD in His strength and terrors before the Incarnation. But under the milder Gospel dispensation, where He appears as Man, we find Him saying, ”How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.”

It is simply a question of pointing. is pestilence, word or, sometimes, thing. The same vocable recurs in verse 6, and accounts for the variation there between the Vulgate and English versions. A. S. John i. 14.

Under these wings we are safe from sun and storm, and from the wheeling hawk. When we see swallows, sparrows, and storks flying in the air, away from their nests, we cannot tell whether they have young, but we know the parent hen by the weak anxious cry, by the lowering of her plumage; she is wholly changed through her love for her chickens, because they are weak, she makes herself weak also. And because we are weak, the Wisdom of God became weak, for ”the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” that we might trust under His wings. They explain these wings in several ways, as the two Testaments, the two precepts of the Gospel, the mercy and justice of God; but better than all is that lovely thought which sees in them the arms of CHRIST extended on the Cross, to shelter the nations from the heat and glare of sin, from the foul birds of prey that are ever hovering in the air. These are the wings in which there is healing, whereof the Prophet speaks. With this accords that wonderful vision of S. Francis, when he beheld a great figure as of a Seraph, with extended arms and conjoined feet, as though fixed to a Cross, and with six wings, two elevated above the head, two extended for flight, and two veiling the body; or, as the form of the vision given by S.

Bonaventura runs, the form of the Crucified Himself appeared borne within the wings of the Seraph, and the stigmata of the Passion there beheld made themselves visible in the body of the Saint. The feathers will in this case denote the separate details, the single sorrows, which in their aggregate made up the Pas-

sion of CHRIST; while if we look only at His Divine aspect, they may signify the Angel guard ever hovering around Him, and employed by Him as ministers for the protection of mankind. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. The LXX. and Vulgate differ a little from this, reading, His truth shall encircle thee. The word translated encircle is, however, a noun from a root having that meaning, and probably here stands for a coat of mail, a rendering which avoids the mere repetition of the clause in English. The truth of Him Who never lies, observes a great Saint, is a mighty shield. That Truth is CHRIST, and His shield is the Cross, circled with which we are bold in every combat, and put every enemy to flight. This is the shield of Faith, which the Apostle bids us take, that we may therewith quench all the fiery darts of the enemy. This is that shield of gold which, when the sun shines upon it, makes the mountains glisten, and shine like lamps of fire. ”And the grace of divine protection is not inaptly compared to a shield, because it is large and wide in

Reading instead of . The Targum seems to have understood it as a small target or circular shield, the Latin parmula, as contrasted with the larger . the upper part, so as to guard the head and shoulders, but below it is narrower, so as to lessen its weight, and because the legs are more slender than the body, and less easily wounded, so that there is not so much danger of a wound there. In this wise CHRIST gives His soldiers for the protection of their lower part, that is, their flesh, narrowness and scantiness of temporal things, nor would have them weighed down by the abundance of such matters, but that having food and raiment, as saith the Apostle, we should be content therewith; but in higher things He gives greater breadth, and abundance of spiritual grace.” This is the shield which is better than that one of the warrior Myrtilus, which saved him from such dissimilar perils:

One weapon in two perils rescued me, Once as I fought, once as I swam the sea, When the white squall the ship’s keel sank, my shield Delivered me; thus proved by flood and field. 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day; 6 For the pestilence that walketh in darkness: nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day. Under these four heads all the perils of mortal life, at every time, are included. For the Hebrew division of the day and night was into four parts; the evening, midnight, morning, and mid-day. And perils themselves are classed under two main heads, secret ones, denoted by the dangers of the night; and open ones, which assail us as it were by day. And they are yet again classed in a different fashion by the commentators, according as they treat them as external to the soul, or arising within it. Thus the sins in the night are those of ignorance, those in the day are conscious and wilful, and are therefore spoken of in more forcible terms. The lesser sins of ignorance, the terrors by night, match with the lesser sins of knowledge, the arrow that flieth by day, while the grosser ones pair off likewise, the pestilence that only walketh in the darkness being thus contrasted with the sickness that actually slayeth in the noon-day. So the four phrases may also be taken of the varying methods of persecution

employed against the Church by Pagan tyrants, from the threats and blandishments employed against imperfect Christians, easily diverted from the Faith by hope or fear, and not thoroughly knowing the gravity of such a fall, to the actual violence used against fully-matured converts.

A.

The original law of persecution, which simply ordained the penalty of death against such as confessed themselves Christians, was the arrow by day. But when the craft and cruelty of the heathen waxed greater, then was fulfilled the LORD's parable touching those who received the seed of the Word in stony places, "and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away," lacking the firm root of Charity. And this heat of persecution blazed out when the new rule was ordained that any one confessing Christianity should no longer be put to death at once, but tortured till he recanted and denied CHRIST. This was the demon of the noonday (LXX., Vulg. which was so especially successful in the Decian persecution, wherein, unlike those which preceded and followed it, care was taken to have altars, images and incense ready at hand in the court, that the accused might be seduced or tempted into sudden apostasy, without having time to fortify their resolution. There is much more force in the LXX. and Vulgate rendering of the first clause of the sixth verse than in the English, by reason of the very vagueness of the word they use, the THING (πράγματος, negotio) that walketh in darkness, a term suggestive of formless dread, more terrible than anything which takes definite shape.

But the majority of both Greek and Latin expositors read it as meaning business, as something done with forethought and diligence, whence several take it to be the dogmas of heresy, or the deliberate fraud of hypocrites, while the demon of the noonday is either any audacious aggressor who does not condescend to cloak his violence, or Satan when he transforms himself into an Angel of light, as he did when tempting the Redeemer under the pretext of enabling Him to prove His mission. And in this sense, one who reminds us of the light and heat of noonday observes: Light pertains to discretion, and warmth to devotion. The demons, then, come to us with light and splendour, when they assure us, and strive to persuade us, that what we do at their crafty suggestion will be not merely wise, but pious. Again, whereas in hot countries the noontide is a period of repose and cessation from labour, the demon of the noonday is sloth, which goes on to ruin (LXX., Vulg. by its temptations to lust, the true child of languid self-indulgence after the mid-day meal. A further exposition is that of S. John Chrysostom, who follows the usual typology of night and day as denoting adversity and prosperity. The terrors of the night of trouble are those things which have

Ricard. Victorin. in loc. Reading for . This notion is found in classical literature: We may not, shepherd, may not pipe at noon, We are afraid of Pan. Theocr. Id. i. 15. See note on ver. 3.

no real power to hurt, such as slander and reviling, more dangerous to him that utters than to him who is assailed, unless he by fearing and magnifying them gives them power against himself. The arrow by day is the far more perilous flattery, which begets pride and self-conceit. The thing which walketh in darkness signifies the real calamities and persecutions deliberately planned by evil men against the righteous, while the demon of the noonday means any great crime into which wealth and power tempt men to fall. S. Bernard's gloss is not very remarkable. He takes the terror of the night to be cowardice; the arrow, vain glory; the thing in darkness, ambition or avarice; the demon of the noon-day, as above, temptation to evil under the pretext of good. Better than this is the view which sees here the four stages of sin; first, the secret thought, in the night of the heart; secondly, the resolve to sin, a walking in the twilight, drawing men on to the day of action; then the arrow, hastily and secretly shot, the first rapid commission of the sin, not yet deadly, but capable of being drawn out in time; and then the demon of the noon-day, when the hardened offender makes no attempt to disguise his guilt, but openly glories in it. Again, the terrors of the night may well denote evil demons, and the fear of death; while the perils of the day refer to more tangible objects of dread.

Finally, applying the whole passage to the sufferings of our Blessed LORD, they remind us how He was taken by night, and shot at by day. For the Jews shot at Him with their arrows, and sorely grieved Him, when they cried "Crucify Him, crucify Him; the thing in darkness was the secret council of the Pharisees held by night against Him; and the demon of the noon-day was when the mad populace, instigated by Satan, dragged Him to Calvary, for it was the sixth hour when they crucified Him.

7 A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee. There are three different views put forward as to the noun to be supplied after a thousand. It may be the arrows, shot in vain against the shield of GOD, or the enemies, routed with heavy loss, or the fellow soldiers of the heaven-guarded warrior. All three will hold, and yield a satisfactory meaning, although the last seems to have the most weight on its side. They raise the question why we find in the first clause only beside thee, and not at thy left hand, which is the obvious sense, and is supplied by the Chaldee. Some will have it that the left, as denoting the mere human power of resistance, the free-will of man, is unworthy to be specially named, when we are speaking of the grace of GOD, which guards us on the right, so that the just man has, mystically, two right sides, and none given over to evil, which the left or sinister

A. A. S. Bernard. Serm. in * Dom. Palmarum. Serm. 7, in Qui habitat.

term denotes. And this notion is enforced by Eusebius, who explains the Psalm of CHRIST, and says that the word left is purposely omitted, lest we should suppose any defect to exist in Him. The most ancient gloss on the verse now extant is found in the Apostolical Constitutions, where it is cited as referring to the conversion of the Gentiles, but this does not seem to have commended itself to later expositors. That which S. Augustine and Cassiodorus adopt is to see here two classes of persons who will be disappointed in the Day of Judgment in their hopes of salvation, the thousand being those who hoped to be assessors at CHRIST's side in His tribunal, the ten thousand those who looked for a place at His right hand in reward for alms-deeds, but who shall not come nigh to Him at all. But there is no clear contrast in this exposition, nor any adequate account of the difference of numbers. Far better than this is the explanation that ten thousand temptations come in time of prosperity, denoted by the right hand, while but a tenth of the number assail us in adversity; but neither can come near him who trusts in GOD, near enough to win his consent and prevail against him. This explanation agrees with the first of the three views named above, for temptations are the arrows, but S.

Bernard applies the same notion of the greater peril of prosperity to the third interpretation, saying that many more persons fall into sin and ruin by means of wealth and power than do so in time of adversity; though in his commentary on this Psalm he gives a completely different exposition, taking the thousand on the left to be men jealous of the temporal wealth of the righteous, and the ten thousand on the right, evil spirits warring against all spiritual well-being. Hence he takes occasion to remind us that CHRIST's spear-wound was on the right side, to teach us that thence alone should we drink, there only seek a refuge; while men have their heart on the left side, denoting their preference for earthly things, and bear their shields on the left arm, in token of their anxiety to protect their temporal belongings, whereas the true soldier of CHRIST will be more anxious to guard the right hand side. Parez brings us back to the notion cited from the Apostolical Constitutions, and takes the passage of the victory of the Apostles in effecting conversions, a thousand on the left denoting the temporal ruin of the unbelieving Jews, close at CHRIST's side in kindred and country, but who shall not come nigh Him in His true Country; ten thousand, the far greater company of the Gentiles, smitten down from their idolatry, and placed first as captives and then as conquerors at the right hand of the SAVIOUR.

And of such differences as these, between the temporal things denoted by the left hand, and the spiritual by the right, there was a type of old in the songs of the Hebrew maidens after the great battle in which Goliath fell, when they cried "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

8 Yea, with thine eyes shalt thou behold : and see the reward of the ungodly. That is, not only will no single one of all those hosts of enemies be able to reach thee,

but thou shalt see their total overthrow, as a mere spectator from a place of safety, while God Himself fights for thee, suffering them to come only just so near as to afford a distinct sight of their ruinous defeat. So Moses spake of old to the children of Israel: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will show you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." And again, when the confederate hosts of Ammon and Moab came up against Jehoshaphat, almost the same words were used by the prophet Jahaziel: "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem, and fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go ye out against them; for the LORD will be with you." In like manner the Christian Church beheld the ruin of her Jewish and Pagan enemies without any effort of her own, and those who abide patiently shall see at the Last Day the overthrow of all forms of evil which seemed too strong for them in this world; while, if we apply the words to the Head rather than to the members, we shall explain them as meaning that He will behold with His eyes the secrets of all hearts, and cause the universe to see the reward which He brings upon the ungodly.

A. 9 For thou, LORD, art my hope : thou hast set thine house of defence very high. There is a difficulty raised by most of the expositors as to the connection between the clauses of this verse, because of the word thine in the last hemistich, which seems to them inappropriate to God or to CHRIST even as Man, Who cannot need a defence in the highest, seeing He is Highest already, albeit the Arians cited this text against the Catholics. But there seems no absolute necessity for any such distribution of the verse as makes the second thou refer to the righteous man who dwelleth under the defence of the Most High. For a refuge which God provides is His, not ours, except in so far as it is a gift to us, and the meaning may thus be that He has planted His city of refuge (which some take to be the Cross of CHRIST) so high on the Rock that all may see it, and strive upwards towards it, but none come near to attack its citizens. And as the word art is not in the Hebrew, we may translate with Aquila and Symmachus, Thou, Lord, my Hope, hast set Thine house most high, which is also the sense of the Chaldee and Syriac. But the A.V., LXX., and

I 2 most modern critics, who take the word as the title of God Himself, the Most High, (τὸν Ὕψιστον) and not as a mere epithet of His dwelling place, do require the verse to be read in two independent clauses, as addressed to different persons; and this is the sense followed by most expounders of the Vulgate, although its rendering, Altissimum, is ambiguous. The first strophe of the verse is thus sung by a solo voice, and the second is the response of the choir to the singer, congratulating him on his choice of God as his hope, and narrating some of the benefits of it. Some few, however, though accepting Most High as the title of God, make no break in the

verse, but address it all to Him, saying: Thou hast made Thy Refuge, that SAVIOUR Who is the one hope of sinners, that Man in Whom the Godhead dwelt, Most High, being a Name above every name, being Co-equal with the FATHER. This comes to nearly the same as the most exact rendering, and fits in with that saying of S. Bernard on the passage; that the soul whose hope is God, and not merely in God, can be satisfied with nothing save Himself, and does not want, like Peter, to make Him a tabernacle on earth, nor like Mary Magdalene, merely to touch His feet here, but to clasp Himself for ever. The Acts of S. Afra tell us how she hoped for Him, how she set her house of defence in the Most High.

"Gaius the Judge said, 'Go up to the Capitol, and sacrifice.' Afra answered: 'CHRIST is my Capitol, Whom I have before mine eyes: to Him I daily confess my sins and wickedness. And because I am unworthy to offer sacrifice to Him, I desire to sacrifice myself for His Name, that the body wherein I have sinned may be cleansed as it suffers punishment.' Gaius the Judge said, 'As I hear thou art a harlot, sacrifice, because thou hast nought to do with the God of Christians.' Afra answered: 'My LORD JESUS CHRIST hath said that He came down from heaven for sinners. For His Gospels bear witness that a harlot washed His feet with her tears, and received pardon; and He never despised harlots and publicans, for He even suffered them to eat with Him.'"

10 There shall no evil happen unto thee: neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

Herein we have a twofold promise, first that sin, the one evil thing, shall not touch the Saint of God; and next that the plague (LXX. and Vulg. scourge,) or chastisement for sin, shall not come nigh his tabernacle, (LXX. and Vulg.) But as in the case of David we know that the evil of sin did happen to him in most grievous fashion, and that heavy scourges were inflicted on him and his house because of it, they ask how this promise can have been fulfilled in his case, or in that of the countless other servants of God who have fallen into the mire of pollution. The answer is twofold: that the promise belongs to the next world, not to this; but has regard only to the "blessed necessity of sinlessness" in heaven; or, as this is hardly comfort enough for those who are sorely beset here, they tell us, that although Saints are not promised absolute immunity from sin, yet by Divine Providence their very sins are turned into agencies for their good, to make them humbler, more watchful, more penetrated with the love of God, as confessing that they owe so very much to His grace and mercy, and that the scourge of temporal punishment which He may be pleased to send upon them is scarcely felt by them, because they dwell in the tabernacle of devout and penitent contemplation, and accept His fatherly chastisement as the earnest of future glory, saying with the Apostle: "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." So, too, in the sufferings of the martyrs, the scourges and tortures of the persecutors could neither avail to

overthrow that tabernacle of the Church Militant whereof they were the valiant and faithful guards, nor yet, while destroying their bodies, could they reach or harm those pure souls in which the HOLY GHOST was pleased to tabernacle.

Applying this verse to the LORD JESUS, the King of Martyrs, they remind us that though no evil, no taint of sin could by any possibility touch Him, yet He was scourged, and crucified, and done to death for us, and nevertheless, by rising again from the dead, He reassumed His Divine properties of impassibility and immortality, so that no temporal evil could touch Him any more. 11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways. 12 They shall bear thee in their hands: that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone. This is the passage, famous for evermore in the spiritual history of man, as that wherewith the Tempter vainly essayed to delude the Redeemer of mankind. And yet, as S. Thomas points out, he showed his ignorance even more than his craft, since the LORD JESUS hath no need of the guardianship of Angels, seeing that He is Himself their strength and stay, "upholding all things by the Word of His power;" and that even in His mortal condition, He was not tended by any guardian Angel, but supported by the union of the Eternal Wisdom with His human nature in one Person. Wherefore, by the almost general consent of the greatest Christian saints and doctors, we may not interpret this passage directly of the LORD JESUS Himself, but only of those members whose Head He is. But to us, as to the Jewish Church, the passage speaks of that special Providence of God whereby He

Heb. i. 3. Origen. Hom. sup. Num. 20. S. Hieron. in S. Matt. c. 18. S. Bernard. Serm. 12. S. John i. 51.

entrusts each one of us to the care of a particular guardian angel, while He sets yet mightier spirits over whole nations of the earth. Each one of us, observes Origen, even the least in the Church of God, has beside him a good angel, an angel of the LORD, to rule, to move, to direct him, and who, to amend our doings, and to ask for mercies on our behalf, daily seeth the face of our FATHER which is in heaven. Great is the dignity of souls, comments another Father, in that each has from the beginning of its nativity an angel appointed for its guard. O wonderful condescension, exclaims S. Bernard, and truly great tenderness of love! who is it that hath given charge, to whom is the charge given, concerning what person, and what is the charge itself? It is the Supreme Majesty Who hath given charge to His own angels, those exalted and happy beings ever abiding closest to Himself, as His peculiar servants, and that charge concerning thee. Who art thou? "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? Just as though man were not corruption, and the son of man a worm. What thinkest thou is His charge concerning thee? to keep thee. What reverence ought this phrase to inspire in thee, what devotion ought it to bring thee, what confidence bestow on

thee! Reverence for the angel's presence, devoutness for his good-will, confidence for his safeguard.

Walk heedfully, as one with whom the angels are present, as is commanded thee, in all thy ways. In every lodging, in every corner, show reverence for thine angel. Dare not aught when he is present, which thou wouldst not dare in my sight. What then means in all thy ways? There are many ways, many kinds of ways, great peril to the wayfarer. How readily may he who lacks knowledge of the ways err in his road where many ways meet! For God hath not given His angels charge to keep us in all ways, but in all our ways. Let us imagine then what are our ways, what are the ways of evil spirits, what those of blessed spirits, and what are the ways of the LORD. The ways of the sons of Adam are occupied in need and longing, the one driving, the other dragging us on. The ways of the evil ones are presumption and obstinacy, and the four steps of descent by which we may fall into these ways are self-flattery, self-ignorance, self-excuse, and contempt of rebuke. The ways of the holy angels are simply told, and that by the Only-Begotten, saying, "Ye shall see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. They ascend for their own sakes, in contemplation; they descend for our sakes, in compassion. And of His own ways we read, "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth.

To these ways the angels conform themselves, to mercy when they help us, to truth when they seek to know more of Him. And we can imitate them too, making them our own, showing mercy on our own souls by penitence, and our regard for truth by confession of sin. Here our need and longing will find their satisfaction, and the angels will not remove us out of our ways, but keep us in them, making those ways to become first their own, and then GOD's. And that is the meaning for us of that Eucharistic bidding, "Lift up your hearts. And note that the word ways is emphatic, for the road of sin, or any place where no duty brings us, is not a way, but a precipice, where the angels are not charged to keep us at all. It is no way, but a ruin; and even if a way, it is thine, not His. They compass us about, unseen, though mighty, with horses and chariots of fire, as they did Elisha in Dothan, they act as our deputies in prayer, as the suggestors of holy thoughts to our waking, and even our sleeping minds. So a devout servant of GOD says in a hymn endeared to countless thousands:

O may my Guardian, while I sleep, Close to my bed his vigils keep; His love angelical instil; Stop all the avenues of ill. May he celestial joys rehearse, And thought to thought with me converse, Or in my stead, all the night long Sing to my GOD a grateful song. They discharge other duties besides these towards us. First, they remove obstacles out of our path: "I will send an angel before thee, and will drive out the Canaanite." Secondly, they allay our trials: "The angel of the LORD came down into the oven together with Azarias and his fellows, and smote the flame of the fire out of the oven." Thirdly, they help us against visible foes: "The Angel of

the LORD smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand." Fourthly, they present our prayers and alms before GOD, and pray in their turn for us: "I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One." Fifthly, they guide us in the way: "The good angel will keep him company, and his journey shall be prosperous, and he shall return safe." Sixthly, they teach us our duty, and that at times by chastisement, as Gabriel dealt with Zacharias. Seventhly, they reveal themselves and GOD's secrets, as the same Gabriel did for S. Mary, and Raphael for Tobit. Eighthly, they ward us from sin: "Then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." Ninthly, they urge us to zeal in GOD's service: "And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, saying, Arise, and eat." Tenthly, they re-buke us for sin: "And an angel of the LORD said, Ye have not obeyed my voice; why have ye done this?"

Corderius Not. in Pseudo-Dionys. Col. Hierarch. ix. Exod. xxxiii. 2. Song of Three Child. 26. 2 Kings xix. 35. Tobit xii. 12; v. 21. S. Luke i. 19, 20, 28. Tob. xii. 15. Gen. xix. 15. That there is a special angel entrusted with the guardian-ship of each person, over and above that camping of the heavenly hosts around the righteous of which we read in Origen, Hom. xi. in Num. Acts xii. 15. S. Basil. M. in Ps. xxxiv. Comm. in Esalam, 5.

another Psalm, is a conclusion which Origen draws from the words of those who said, when S. Peter, loosed from prison, knocked at their door, "It is his angel:" whence he argues that S. Paul must have had another angel, and so the remaining apostles and brethren. And a similar conclusion is drawn from the words of Jacob, "The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." S. Basil the Great alleges that guardian angels attend only the righteous, and can be driven away from their post by the sins of their charge. "The angel of the LORD," says he, "will encamp round about each believer in the LORD, unless we put him to flight by our evil deeds. For as smoke drives bees away, and a fetid smell banishes doves, so lamentable and fetid sin repels the angel of our life." And he enforces this statement in another place by citing the words of the prophet, "I will take away her hedge," which he interprets as a threat to remove the angel-guard. And S. Peter Damiani inclines to the view that the commencement of this watch over us dates not from our birth, but from our baptism. But the more general opinion is that already given, that every human soul has its particular angel, if not two angels, a good and an evil one, in continual attendance on it. Both these views are found in heathen writers, and a few examples may not be out of place. In the Orphic verses we read:

The dæmon good, the dæmon ill of men. Censorinus de Die Natali, 3. Serv. in Æn. 6. Censorinus quotes Euclid, the Socratic philosopher, and Lucilius, as both holding this view, and it will also be found in the notes of Servius on the Æneid. The more common pagan view, however, is the same as the usual Christian one, that

there is but one genius to each person, and that one favourable. By every man, as he is born, there stands A spirit good, a holy guide of life. Epictet. ap. Arrian. Diss. i. 14. And Epictetus, rivalling, as is usual with him, the tone of Christian thought, observes in language which might almost be that of a Chrysostom or an Ambrose, "God has assigned to each individual man a dæmon, as his guardian, and entrusted him to this charge, who never sleeps, and cannot be deceived. For to what stronger or more careful protector could He commit each one of us? Therefore, when you shut the doors, and produce darkness within, remember that you can never say that you are alone, for God is within, and is your dæmon." As regards the two rival angels, it is worthy of mention that this view is as old as the Shepherd of Hermas, in which it is distinctly laid down.

And an old writer, meeting the possible objection that there is thus an absolute equilibrium of force, leaving the human will practically unaffected, teaches us that the bad angel cannot draw near so long as the good one is present to his sight, but that by God's providence the good one is permitted to become sometimes invisible, in order to allow the other to challenge us to battle, and give us an opportunity of combat and victory, but ready to strike in if we begin to faint. There is a very curious speculation of Origen as to this matter, which deserves mention. It is that an evil spirit, when once fairly beaten by any man in a struggle, is not allowed to act as a tempter to him or others any longer, but is compelled to go into the abyss, and therefore that every spiritual victory lessens the number of our ghostly foes, and so far hastens the total overthrow of evil, by thinning the ranks of Satan's army.

It is unnecessary to do more than refer to the beautiful legend of S. Frances of Rome, who is alleged to have been favoured with actual vision of her guardian angel, seeing him withdraw when she fell into voluntary sin, and return on her repentance; and on one occasion, when she had been called away several times from her prayers, and had resumed them only to meet with fresh interruptions, to have found the petition she had again and again commenced, written in her office-book with letters of gold, by no human hand.

They shall bear thee in their hands. It ought rather to be on their hands, as the LXX. rightly translates it, as nurses carry infants. And these hands are the twofold thought they suggest to our minds, the shortness of our trouble here, the eternity of recompense hereafter; or are their understanding and will. This they do lest men should dash their foot, that is, their affective qualities, and especially love or fear, those two feet of the soul, against any stumbling-block whatsoever, by sinning through either of these. And there are two especial meanings of the stone, on which they lay stress; first, that it denotes the Law, written on tables of stone, a constant stumbling-block to sinners; and next, that it is CHRIST Himself, the chief Corner-stone, for there were and are many who "stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; and whosoever

believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." We stumble against this stone whenever we sin against His precepts, or whenever we murmur at Him or are ashamed of Him and of His Cross. But if we be not so, happy are we in our journey, carried by such hands, whether here in our ways, or lifted up at the end of our mortal journey by the same holy guardians into our place of rest. Both these ideas are prominent in the old hymn to the guardian angel:

Hermæ Pastor, Mand. 6. Auct. Operis Imperf. in Matth. Hom. 5. Origen, Hom. in Josue. 15. The Hymn, Salve mi angelice. In each place and time of need From the foe protect me, I 3 And in thought, and word, and deed, Evermore direct me. Teach, assist me, and incite To endure temptation, Guide me in life's path aright Till I reach salvation. When I die, to soothe me speed, Sweetest comfort giving, And from every peril freed, Bring me with the living Heavenward to the courts of day, Where, without cessation, God is praised, and where for aye Is true consolation. A. Of the LORD Himself, S. Augustine tells us He was borne at His Ascension into Heaven by the ministering of angels, yet that His feet, to wit, His Apostles, by whom He travelled into many lands, were still on earth, liable to stumble against the stony tables of the Law, until such time as they were filled with the HOLY GHOST, to give His grace and love, and to cast out the fear which was the one sanction of the elder code.

13 Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet. Origen. Lib. i. in Job. S. Bernard. in lib. ii. Sent. 2, ii. 1. There is a tradition of great antiquity in the Christian Church that a particular evil spirit is appointed by Satan to make war against the soul of each human being, and to thwart, as far as may be, the influence of the guardian angel. It is of victory over demons such as these that the verse especially tells us, for, as a Saint observes, the good angel is more ready to keep us in the right way than the evil one to cast us headlong into evil. Strength and violence are denoted by the lion, craft and venom by the adder and dragon. And then comes in CHRIST's promise to His disciples, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Closely allied to this meaning is that which sees in the creatures here named various forms of sin, which men overcome with the help of the angels; and a third interpretation, more literally, sees a promise of such protection as was given to Daniel in the den of lions; for CHRIST, the Child who played on the hole of the asp, and put His hand on the cockatrice' den, can give power like His own to the Saints, as He saith Himself: "In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground," so that will come to pass which Eliphaz the Temanite spake, "the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee."

The LXX. and Vulgate read as the four names, the asp and basilisk, the lion and dragon. There is much variety of explanation, beginning with that of S. Irenæus, which is that the asp, erecting and swelling itself, and making men cold with its bite, is sin; the basilisk, or king-serpent, is death, once sovereign over the world; the lion is Antichrist, and the dragon Satan himself. S. Bernard takes the asp or adder to be obstinacy, stopping its ears against wholesome counsel; the basilisk to be envy, or the evil eye, (referring to the basilisk's fabled power of fascination;) the lion to be idle fear, excited by mere roaring; the dragon, with its pestilential breath, to be anger. The beasts also signify the four chief persecutions of the Church; first, that of those deaf adders or asps, the unbelieving Jews; secondly, that of heretics, signified by the basilisk; thirdly, the lion-rage of Pagan hostility; fourth, and worst of all, that of Antichrist. But the most usual interpretation is to see here one and the same enemy of souls, described in fourfold manner, according to the arts he employs for the injury of mankind, but in each and all, confronted and dismayed by that promise made to the Saints by the voice of the Apostle: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

S. Irenæi Hær. iii. 23. 14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him up, because he hath known my Name. Here God Himself begins to speak, and counts up the blessings He hath in store for His faithful servants who love Him. The love of God, says a holy servant of His, gives liberty, drives fear away, feels no toil, looks to no merit, asks for no reward, refreshes the weary, strengthens the weak, rejoices the sad, nourishes the hungry, makes the fainting cheerful. And such love has its recompense from Him, for He is not loved without reward, albeit He ought to be loved without looking for it, for true affection, though no hireling, can never go away empty-handed. And the reward here promised is deliverance, and that, as the lowest grade in an ascending scale, from temptations and sorrows here in earth, and from the tyrannous bondage of sin, because just as selfish desire chains us, so true love sets us free, and when our love is purest, and directed to the highest good, then we attain "the glorious liberty of the children of God." He does not stop short there, but sets on high (A. V.) out of the reach of enemies, so that no fresh captivity is possible to him that hath known His Name; that is, not its mere syllables, but its saving power, its wisdom, its loving-kindness, with close personal intimacy, knowing God as shepherd, friend, and Father; a knowledge whereof the Gospel speaks, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known

S. Bernard. Serm. in Cant. 79. of Mine." That Name of JESUS was hallowed from all eternity, prefigured by them of old time, desired by the Prophets, foretold by the holy Fathers, named by GOD, announced by the Angel, declared by the Blessed Virgin, witnessed to by the Martyrs, praised by the Confessors, foretasted by the Virgins, exalted by all Saints. Brev. Sarisb. The Sequence, Jesus dulcis Nazarenus. If thou but think upon this Name, Warlike array is put to shame, And

thou shalt conqueror be: Unto this Name be honour paid, Which evil spirits, sore afraid, Dread, and before it quail; This is the Name which brings salvation, The only certain consolation To aid when sad hearts fail. Hugo Card. And that we may be assured hereof, the LORD JESUS Himself, Who alone perfectly loveth and knoweth the FATHER, was delivered by Him from the power of the grave, and set up in the glory of the Resurrection.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will hear him: yea, I am with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and bring him to honour.

S. Bernard. Serm. 18. Joel ii. 32. The fruit of the knowledge of GOD is a call in prayer, and the fruit of that call is that the SAVIOUR will hear. How could any be heard that did not call, or how could he call, if he knew not the Name of GOD? Thanks be to Him Who revealed the FATHER's Name to men, bestowing the fruit of salvation in the act of calling on Him, as it is written, "Who-soever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be delivered. He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him. This is the covenant of peace, this is the league of loving-kindness, this is the pact of mercy and compassion. GOD doth not say: He was worthy, righteous, and good, innocent of hand and pure of heart, and I will therefore deliver, protect, and hear him. Had He said this, or aught like it, who would not be afraid? O blessed law, which hath ordained that the mere cry of praying shall have the merit of being heard.

And now let us see what are the results of this hearing on GOD's part, either as He heard His well-beloved SON, when "in the days of His flesh He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard," or as He hears us now when the first loud cry of the prayer that SON taught us, Our FATHER, pierces through the heavens and reaches His mercy-seat: I am with him in trouble; next, I will deliver him; thirdly, I will bring him to honour. These promises correspond to the history of those three most solemn days, Good Friday, when the LORD hung upon the Cross in grievous trouble; Holy Saturday, when He rested peacefully, delivered out of all His pain; and Easter Day, when He arose in glorious honour and strength from the dead. These three days are types of the experience of His elect, in the brief sorrowful life of this world, in the middle state of expectation, in the resurrection of glory with CHRIST. Observe too, that while all the other verbs in these promises are future, one alone is the present tense, I am with him in trouble, teaching us at once that He makes no delay when we are in need, and also that our sorrow is so brief as to be merely passing and instantaneous, having no future. And how, asks S. Bernard, are we to know that He is with us in trouble?

By the very fact that we are in trouble, for we could not bear it if He were not with us to be our stay and consolation. And therefore it is a very true sense of these words to see here, as some do, a promise of CHRIST's Incarnation, for "He was in

all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. And then, as Thomas à Kempis beautifully says: ”When any trouble comes upon thee, then CHRIST meets thee with His Cross, and shows thee the road to the kingdom of heaven, whither thou shouldest go. And it may be noted that GOD does not speak to Job till after all his sufferings, and then comes to him to speak familiarly as friend with friend. I will deliver him is not spoken now, as it was in the earlier verse, of mere temporal rescue, but of deliverance out of all the troubles of the world, and of salvation from the second death, even though the path of deliverance may be that of martyrdom, whereof one who attained the palm himself saith, ”As ye do battle, and fight in the combat of faith, GOD Himself looks on, the Angels too, and CHRIST is a spectator also. What lofty glory, what happiness, to struggle in GOD’s presence, and to be crowned by CHRIST as Judge!

Not martyrs alone, but all His servants, even the humblest and most obscure, brought by Him to honour as kings and priests, shining as the sun in the kingdom of the FATHER, and that for no brief time nor with any imperfect splendour, for the closing promises are—

16 With long life will I satisfy him : and show him my salvation. That is, as even the Rabbins saw, with the unending days of eternity, with the full revelation of the face of CHRIST in glory, that Beatific Vision which is the everlasting gladness of ransomed souls. Show us then Thy salvation, O LORD, and it sufficeth us. For he who sees it, sees Thee, since it is in Thee and Thou in it, and this is life eternal, that we may know Thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou hast sent. Thou wilt therefore, O LORD, let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, when mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, Thy JESUS, our LORD. Pseudo-Hieron. in Ps. 66. A. Glory be to the FATHER, the Most High; glory be to the SON, His salvation; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the shadow of the Almighty.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Grant us, O LORD, by invocation of Thy Name, to tread under foot the deadly poison of the asp and basilisk, that Thou mayest show us Thy salvation, and we be protected under the shadow of Thy shield against the snares of the spiritual enemy. (1.) O GOD Most High, grant us, we beseech Thee, to dwell under Thy defence, and to abide in Thy protection, that Thy right hand may put away evil that it come not nigh us, and that the scourge of sin touch us not, but that at Thy command, we may be kept by the Angels in all our ways. (1.) O GOD, Who in Thine unspeakable providence dost vouchsafe to send Thy holy Angels to be our guard, grant that we, Thy humble servants, may alway be defended by their aid and rejoice in their everlasting fellowship. (1.) O LORD, Who hast delivered us from every arrow that flieth by day, deliver us also from every thing that walketh in darkness; vouchsafe also that we may pass the course of this night without sin

or temptation of evil, and deliver us from all terror and dread which cometh to us from the devil. Through the mercy and compassion of Thine Only-begotten SON, with whom, &c.

Psalm 92

TITLE. A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath Day. Chaldee Targum: A Praise and Song which the first man spake for the Sabbath Day.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST hath caused the conquerors to flourish as though with the gift of the heavenly palm. The Voice of the Church. The Voice of the Church to GOD concerning her enemies. The Doctrine of Confession, and concerning the glory of the righteous in the world to come. VEN. BEDE. A Psalm denotes spiritual works, which tend upwards towards the LORD; in these all ought always to sing, that is, give thanks to the LORD our Helper. The Sabbath Day is interpreted Rest, whereby we are warned to cease from every evil deed, and likewise to hope with most sure devotion for the rest to come. Arnobius saith thus: On the Sabbath Day the LORD's enemies perish, that on the Sunday the LORD's friends may be glad; for on the Sabbath Day the LORD lieth dead in the grave, and on the Sunday is worshipped living among the Angels. In this matter His thoughts are very deep, which an unwise man doth not well consider. At the first outset, the Church speaks, declaring that it is a good thing to utter praises to the LORD; which it asserts to be a thing whereof the unwise and ungodly are ignorant. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord. In the second part she asserts that sinners will perish quickly like the grass. When the ungodly are green, &c. Thirdly; she saith that the righteous flourish like a palm-tree, and spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus; to the end that fear may correct the obstinate, and the blessed promise sustain the devout. The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous; Concerning the ministry of the Priests, and their Morning Sacrifices. It also foretells rest in the LORD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. Concerning that rest which is according unto GOD.

Various Uses.
Monastic. Friday: Lauds. [Comm. of One Martyr: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: I. Nocturn. Eastern Church. Mesorion of Prime.

Antiphons.
It is a good thing * to give thanks unto the LORD. Monastic. [Comm. of One Martyr: The righteous shall flourish as a palm-tree, and spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus.] 1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD: and to sing praises unto thy Name, O most Highest; A good thing for these reasons: because it is just, and due from us to GOD our King; it is useful, as being one of those works which are profitable to the soul; it is delightful, for it is pleasant for one that loves, to praise the object of his affection; it is ennobling, giving man a share in the office of the heavenly spirits. The LXX. and Vulgate, according to their wont, put the term confess instead of give thanks, and the commentators note that such confession, to be adequate, must be two-fold; acknowledgment of our own weakness and guilt, as the first step, on the one hand, and of GOD's might and holiness on the other, after we have fitted ourselves, by this preliminary cleansing of the heart, to celebrate His praises. Unto Thy Name. They tell us that this title especially applies to CHRIST, the Only-Begotten SON, by Whom GOD is fully revealed to us, so that we know Him, while the name LORD denotes the HOLY SPIRIT, and Most Highest the FATHER Himself. The word here translated sing is by LXX.

and Vulgate rendered play (ψάλλειν, psallere), and is mystically explained as the activity of devotion in good works, whereby the notes of our souls, as of a psaltery when struck, ascend to the ears of God. And we may fitly apply here the old Leonine saw as to the recitation of the Divine office: Thou singest the Hours aright, if in Scripture and prayer thou delight, The Hours are accepted when sung by the heart in accord with the tongue. 2 To tell of thy loving-kindness early in the morning: and of thy truth in the night-season. A.

There is a singular Rabbinical legend that this Psalm was the song of praise uttered by Adam as the first Sabbath dawned upon the world, and that it descended by tradition as the special hymn for that day. More consonant with actual history is the fact that it was sung in the Temple on the Sabbath at the offering of the first lamb in the morning, when the wine was poured out, and continues still in use as a Sabbatical psalm in the rites of the Synagogue, and that the Roman Church, amongst other tokens of the powerful Judaizing influence which affected its earliest days, retains it as part of the Saturday Lauds in the Breviary. Further, there is a distinct reference in this second verse to the morning and evening sacrifice; while more than one Rabbi is careful to point out that the happy Sabbath of which the Psalmist sings is not one of the present time, but belongs to the future revelation of Messiah in His glory. Observe, then, how fitly it succeeds Psalm xci., wherein we hear of the victory over temptation, now followed by restful peace of mind, figured by the LORD's repose in the grave when He, as at the beginning of creation, rested from all His work that He had done; and figuring in its turn the Sabbath of eternity. And as the clear morning denotes the sunshine of prosperity, we thank God, while it lasts, for His mercy and bountifulness towards us.

But we do not on that account charge Him with harshness and cruelty when the night-season of adversity arrives; rather we praise His truth, that is, the justice with which He weighs our faults and metes out His fatherly chastisements. And as the night always precedes the morning, so it is not till we have been tried by suffering and darkened by sin and trouble, that we thoroughly realize and can fittingly praise the mercy of God in that glad morning when the Sun of Righteousness begins to arise in our hearts. We tell of His truth in the night-season, because our eyes are unable to bear the dazzling glory of His full revelation, for it is written, ”He made darkness His secret place. Therefore the Law was given amidst clouds and darkness on Mount Sinai, therefore the Prophets spake in enigmas, therefore too the LORD Himself hid the mysteries of His kingdom in parables, therefore we too, here in the night-time of the world, ”see 1 Cor. xiii. through a glass, darkly, but then face to face; then, in the morning of the everlasting Sabbath, when all secrets shall be revealed:

For when the Sole-Begotten Shall render up once more The kingdom to the FATHER, Whose own it was before,— Then glory yet unheard of Shall shed abroad its ray, Resolving all enigmas, An endless Sabbath Day. 3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the lute: upon a loud instrument, and upon the harp.

There is some variation of opinion as to whether we have two, three, or four musical instruments named in this verse. The first is the view taken by the Syriac and Arabic versions, which make the lute to be the decachord, and the harp the mere accompaniment to a song. The second view is that of the Chaldee, LXX., Vulgate, and A. V.; as well as of most modern critics, who are divided as to the precise mode of rendering the second clause, some taking it to be ”a song to the harp,” and others, ”a loud (or a solemn) strain upon the harp” itself. The third opinion, which makes the word Higgaion, here occurring, that of a separate musical instrument, is supported by Aben-Ezra, and does, no doubt, preserve more fully the balance of parallelism in the two strophes of the verse. As to the mystical meaning of the decachord, it is only necessary to add a little to what has been already said under Psalm xxxiii. 2, namely, that one ancient Father tells us that it means the LORD JESUS Himself, seemingly because the initial letter of that holy Name stands for the number ten both in Hebrew and Greek, while, as the Latin X marks the Cross, and is also the Egyptian sign of life to come, it may well denote Him too. Nay more, our modern way of writing it, with the figure 1 followed by a cipher, itself nothing, tells of the One sole sufficient Godhead united by the Incarnation to the nothingness of man.

Again, the decachord’s ten strings denote the ten precepts of the moral law; by compliance with which our lives make music to GOD, while they take the song and harp (Vulg. to be the cheerful acceptance of bodily mortification, and the readiness of almsgiving. And that because, as was noted before, a mystical distinction

is always drawn between the psaltery, whose strings are struck from above, and which is therefore taken to denote divine contemplation, and the harp, played from below, and therefore typical

A. A. Rom. i. 20. Hom. 1, in Hexaem. Bellarmine. of humility, and the active service of the body. And S. Augustine here observes: Our business here is not merely to carry the psaltery but to sing to it. Even the Jews have the Law; they carry it, but they do not play upon it. Who then do play? They who put it into action. That is not enough. They who act with dejection are not yet playing. Who are they that play? They who do well with cheerfulness. For there is cheerfulness in playing. And what saith the Apostle? "God loveth a cheerful giver." And the same Apostle, in counting up the afflictions of mind and body which habitually befell himself in the course of his ministry, puts another deceachord of suffering into our hands, wherewith we, by striking its strings boldly and cheerfully, can make melody well-pleasing to the LORD. For, as one has well said, God speaks to man, saying, Thou art My harp, and flute, and temple; a harp, by reason of harmony; a flute, because of breath; a temple, because of the Word.

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy works: and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operations of thy hands. 5 O LORD, how glorious are thy works: thy thoughts are very deep! These verses appear to have suggested the Rabbinical legend already cited; that this was Adam's morning hymn on the day after his creation. And we may observe that the phrase in the first verse does not run, Thy works have made me glad, for if there be no more than that, then the beauties and marvels of creation are snares to draw us from the thought of God. But here it runs Thou hast made me glad, and that through Thy works as an instrument to declare Thy love and power. And thus our own poet, in the hymn he puts into Adam's mouth in Eden: These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good, Almighty, Thine this universal frame, Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then! Unspeakable, Who sittest above these heavens, To us invisible, or dimly seen In these Thy lowest works, yet these declare Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

And that because, as the Apostle says, "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Wherefore S. Basil the Great aptly calls creation the "school and lecture-room of souls." But there are some marvels which lessen by experience and knowledge, and therefore the Psalmist adds here that such is not the case with God's works, because their wonderful character, in greatest and least alike, and the whole mystery of creation is very deep, lying far below the longest plummet with which man would fain sound the abysses. But if the creation of nature be wonderful, far exceeding it in beauty and marvels is the creation of grace; and they tell us truly that the way God made us most glad through the work

of His hands was when He stretched forth those hands upon the Cross, there to work out our redemption, when His thoughts were very deep, looking forward to the whole constitution and history of His Church, and the coming of the nations into the fold.

6 An unwise man doth not well consider this: and a fool doth not understand it. They give several explanations of the distinction between the two classes of persons here named, some telling us that the first denotes unbelievers, who know nothing of the wisdom of God, and the second evil Christians, who, knowing the outer facts of His truth, are unable to comprehend them by reason of perversity. Others see, not dissimilarly, the man who is incurious of heavenly things, and him who is eager about earthly matters. Or again, the Jew who rejects, and the Gentile who has never learnt the Gospel. Once more, it is explained to denote the man endowed with worldly wisdom, but who is destitute of spiritual knowledge, and the man who has neither wisdom of this world nor of the next. But the most satisfactory account seems to be that by the first are meant simply those who are deficient in understanding, and dull in observation, as a mere mental deficiency; and by the second those who have blunted all their powers by perversity and wickedness. And we may draw one lesson from this verse, that the so-called ”sacrifice of intellect” is not an oblation well-pleasing to God, for it stunts our faculty of admiration for His glory, and folds in a napkin of specious purity of intention the talent He gives us to put out at interest for Him. Wherefore Lactantius says very well: ”Religion cannot be separated from Wisdom, nor Wisdom from Religion, for it is one and the same God Who ought to be understood, which is Wisdom, and honoured, which is Religion.

7 When the ungodly are green as the grass, and when all the workers of wickedness do flourish: then shall they be destroyed for ever; but thou, LORD, art the most Highest for evermore. 8 For lo, thine enemies, O LORD, lo, thine enemies shall perish: and all the workers of wickedness shall be destroyed. This is one of the deep thoughts of God which are not Agellius.

considered nor understood by the unwise and foolish, namely, that there is no Sabbath rest of mind or of future happiness awaiting the wicked. It is the consolation given to the servants of God, that their enemies, who are His enemies too, will fade and disappear in the very moment of their apparent strength and triumph; while He, Who is His people’s stay, is untouched by any change, is not as the grass of the field, lying low or rank, but Most Highest, is not one that can perish, but is for evermore. And thus, though His enemies counted Him a mere man, who could be slain, and His memory blotted out, yet His very death itself was the overthrow of both His ghostly and human foes. They give several explanations of the repetition of the words Thine enemies; for the most part taking it as denoting some special emphasis, either as increasing the terror of the threat, or fixing the certainty of ret-

ribution; but others prefer to see a reference to the great variety of sinners, and one will have it that two classes of offenders are here distinguished, those who break the positive law, specially enjoined by God, and those who transgress the natural law, familiar even to heathens. Shall be destroyed. Rather, with LXX., Vulgate, and A.V., scattered. And so the Chaldee takes it, shall be separated from the congregation of the righteous; a meaning which most of the Christian expositors transfer to the division between the sheep and goats at the Day of Judgment.

There is, however, a gentler reading of the verses, which deserves citation. The sinners, observes a Greek Father, who spring up like the grass, are impure thoughts, for grass is a weak and frail thing, possessing no vigour. When the evil thoughts arise in the mind, then all the workers of wickedness appear (LXX. which mean actual sins, that they may perish for ever. For when sins appear before warriors and athletes, they are at once slain by them. Note then the order of the language; first evil thoughts spring up; then sins appear, thereupon all of them perish. All this has to do with athletes. We, who carry sin into action, and always fulfil our vices, are unable to know when bad thoughts spring up, or when sins appear, but we are still in Lower Egypt, making bricks under Pharaoh.

9 But mine horn shall be exalted like the horn of an unicorn: for I am anointed with fresh oil. Whether CHRIST be here the speaker, or one of His members, the horn is the same, that mighty horn of salvation raised up in the House of David, the LORD strong in His own power, or His disciple strong in His co-operation. He is a horn, for springing from flesh, He hath nothing of the passions of flesh, but grows out beyond the carnal nature from which He derives Himself, and rises up on high, in strength and honour, a terror to all His foes, specially in the Judgment. He is anointed with fresh oil, not with that old traditional oil of the decrepit Mosaic dispensation, wherewith the Aaronic Priesthood was set apart, wherewith in former days kings and prophets had been consecrated. His unction was fresh, a new thing in creation, the direct anointing of the HOLY GHOST Himself, of which that elder rite was but a faint symbol, fresh, as knowing no corruption, as ever new and young, though eternal before and after all worlds; a new anointing which He sent on the Apostles in the fiery tongues of Pentecost. Of an unicorn. Those who take this whole speech to be that of the Church, see here in the unicorn the type of Catholic unity, or as the Greek Fathers take it, the worship of One God; while a third view is that the singleness of future glory, in which no foreign elements can mingle, is denoted; and a fourth sees here those who rejoice in the one hope of reaching that one glory.

In the latter strophe of the verse, the LXX. and Vulgate read, And my old age in rich mercy. And this they take of the old age of the Church, in the late evening of the world, when her beauty will be as snowy as the hair of an aged man: or again, of the future life itself, an old age in the sense of its late arrival and its tranquillity, although in itself a perpetual youth; or yet again, the gravity and calmness of life

and demeanour to be observed in Saints, even in their early years, all which are blessed with the rich mercy of God. And the Carmelite, citing Aristotle, urges that there are five good qualities of old men which make them apt types of the Church in the time of wisdom, as of individual Saints also; namely, that their passions have cooled, they have more pity for suffering than the young, they are not given to such strong assertion of doubtful matters, and they are discreet and temperate in action.

10 Mine eye also shall see his lust of mine enemies: and mine ear shall hear his desire of the wicked that rise up against me. They take it in a threefold sense, first, of the victory of the Church, by no physical act of her own, over the Jews and the Pagans who oppressed her in the earliest days of Christianity; next, of the inner eye of the soul beholding the victory of faith over temptation; and lastly, of the final overthrow of sinners in the Judgment. This rendering follows the LXX. μονοκέρως. But there is nothing to suggest the idea of one horn in the Hebrew , which is probably the now extinct Aurochs, urus, or wild bull. Deriving from , (whence old) instead of from , and misreading ἐλέψ for ἐλαίψ. A. A. 11 The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree: and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus.

Here is the forcible contrast to the lowly and fading grass of a previous verse, taken from the stateliest and most valuable trees of Palestine. There are many reasons given for the comparison of a Saint to a palm-tree, which have no lack of aptness. The palm grows in a barren soil, as the Saint in this world’s desert, and yet needs constant moisture, as he needs the fountains of the Word. It grows to a great height, and perfectly straight, denoting aspiration to heavenly things and uprightness of life; it grows as long as it lives, is an evergreen, and always fruitful, denoting spiritual improvement and continuous vitality of holiness; its leaves spread out above as high as possible from the ground, and its fruit is amongst those leaves, denoting loftiness of aim and action; it is slender and without bark, denoting the absence of all grossness of habit, or superfluity of possessions; it has wonderful elasticity of fibre, rising up from under heavy weights, a type of that buoyancy of confidence in God which makes His Saints cheerfully cast off troubles, and every part of it is good for some purpose, showing that in a holy life no faculty, talent, or opportunity is suffered to go to waste; and in its symbolical use, both amongst Jews and Pagans, because it never bends before the storm, it is the emblem of victory. The cedar, again, in its mountainous abode, in its vast spreading bulk and majesty, in its deep roots, its sweet perfume, its incorruptible wood, and its great longevity, serves as a type of other endowments of the Saints. They are cedars of Libanus, the ”white” mountain, because washed clean from their sins in the waters of Baptism, and the precious Blood of CHRIST, and they also denote the Gentile Martyrs, because Lebanon was outside the actual limits of the Holy Land.

12 Such as are planted in the house of the LORD: shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God.

As the cedar and palm both played their part in Solomon's temple, the one in actual timbers and beams, the other carved everywhere as an ornament; so the Saints of God, likened to these trees, can flourish only when planted within His Church, not merely inside its visible limits, but rooted in its doctrine. They have been transplanted thither out of Jewish unbelief, out of Gentile idolatry, out of worldly carelessness, by the agency of God's servants, for it is written, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God giveth the increase." Only there, and only so, can they flourish, for it is written, "Every plant which My Heavenly FATHER hath not planted shall be rooted up." We may take this house and courts of the Lord to be either the Church Militant, especially in the Religious Life, or the Church Triumphant after the Resurrection, in both of which the righteous flourish, though in different fashion. And one who prefers the former interpretation remarks that the courts are in front of the house, and outside it, and that they denote in this place renunciation of secular things, so that he who gives up the world, plants his palm in the courts of God's house. It is curious to find it said that they who are planted in the house shall flourish in the courts; but it is well answered that the righteous are planted by their inner faith in heaven itself, while the outward token of that holy rooting in love is visible in the Church below by their good works and devout conversation, or, as another tells us, their own hearts are those outer courts of God's house which are blooming with the trees and flowers of His inner dwelling. This verse is in use as a V. and R. in the Breviary Office for Martyrs.

13 They also shall bring forth more fruit in their age : and shall be fat and well-liking. Here reference is made to that distinguishing property of the palm-tree, already mentioned, that it never ceases to bear fruit, however old it may be, till its actual death, nay, that its produce is more abundant in its latter years; while the cedar, though not a fruit-bearing tree, continues to spread in bulk and foliage to a vast age, thus signifying the undying vitality and productiveness of the Church Universal and of the holy soul to the end of their earthly time. And so the Wise Man, after telling us how "the multiplying brood of the ungodly shall not thrive, nor take deep rooting," adds that "honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that which is measured by number of years; but wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age." The Vulgate reading in the latter clause is, They shall be right patient; that is, not merely holding out sternly against suffering, as criminals often do when being punished, but with that patience which is born of love and faith, the endurance of the Martyrs; right patient, because while they preach of heavenly things they bear adversity bravely and cheerfully, that by such endurance they may obtain yet more blessings for their souls. And this notion brings us back to the well-liking of our version, for Tertullian says of patience, that it is "beautiful in every sex and every age."

14 That they may show how true the LORD my strength is : and that there is no unrighteousness in him. That is, that here in all troubles, and especially when the persecution of Antichrist falls upon the Church, they may continue steadfastly to profess their unshaken faith in the justice and promises of GOD, their belief that He causes them to suffer only that patience may bring forth her perfect work, and increase the glory of that crown which He, the righteous Judge, our firm Rock, (A.V.,) hath promised to bestow upon them, when He brings them into the Sabbath which remaineth for the people of GOD. Glory be to the FATHER, the Most Highest; glory be to the SON, the LORD our Rock; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the fresh Anointing of the LORD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O GOD, the eternal rejoicing of the Saints, Who makest the righteous, strengthened with divers gifts of good things, to flourish unfadingly in the palm-bearing courts; we beseech Thee, that putting away the weight of our sins, Thou mayest vouchsafe to bestow upon us fellowship with them. (1.) It is a good thing for us to give thanks unto Thee, O LORD: and to sing unto Thy most high Name; that our confession may deliver us from peril, and our zeal in singing make us more acceptable in Thy sight. (11.) Mozarabic, for SS. Julian, &c., MM. Thy Saints, O LORD, flourish as a palm-tree in Thy sight, and stand planted and rooted in Thy holy courts, who, when set in the conflict of martyrdom, won from their torture the palm of victory, and for death everlasting glory in Thine house. We therefore beseech Thee, O glorious GOD, that for their great merits Thou mayest grant us pardon for the wickedness of our sins. (11.)

We beseech Thee, O LORD, that we may fulfil in deed that which we have heard, and turn our words into works, that we who are planted here in Thy house may flourish in the court of CHRIST. (5.) Plant us in Thine house, O LORD, with virtues, and make us as good seed bear fruit in all loveliness of religion, that growing up like a palm-tree in the flower of righteousness, and perfected therein by Thee, we may flourish in joy in Thy sight for evermore. (1.)

Psalm 93

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Praise of a Song for David himself, on the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was inhabited, (LXX.) or stablished (Vulg.) Syriac Psalter: Of David, concerning the ministry of the LORD. Arabic Psalter: Of David, who spake it for a praise on the Sabbath-day, when the earth rested.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, having overcome death, put on the glory of the Resurrection. The Voice of the Church concerning the Kingdom of CHRIST. Of the Nativity of CHRIST, and His first Advent. Concerning belief. VEN. BEDE. A Song in praise of the Godhead; For David is suitably applied to CHRIST. The question is raised how he can say that the earth was stablished on the day before the Sabbath, that is, on the sixth day of the week, seeing that we read in Genesis that the dry land appeared on the third day; but here we must understand earth to be man, to whom is said, Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt go. And as he was made on the sixth day by GOD the Creator, so too in the sixth age of the world he was stablished from the seed of David by the same GOD the Creator, for then was the earth stablished, when belief in Him was confirmed for mankind. And therefore the Praise is of His holy Incarnation, which is sung in the course of this Psalm.

The first passage describes His beauty, The Lord is King, &c. Then His strength, The Lord is clothed with strength. Thirdly, His works, He hath made the round world, &c. Fourthly, His might, Thy seat hath been prepared. Fifthly, the praises of the universe, The floods have lift up. Sixthly, His truth, Thy testimonies. Lastly, the praise of His house, which it befits to rejoice with everlasting gladness. Some copies have On the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was inhabited, which seems to agree better with the history, because the earth was stablished before, but on the sixth day of the week it was perfected by the flocks of animals and the indwelling of man himself; and on this day also the LORD restored man by the wood of the Cross to Paradise, where He had put him at the beginning, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A Hymn of the Kingdom of CHRIST, touching His first Advent. This is still a Friday Psalm in the Jewish use, whence it seems that the

titles here and elsewhere found in the LXX. but not in the Hebrew, were added for ritual purposes by the Alexandrian Jews, whose use differed in some respects from that of Jerusalem. K Gregorian. Sunday and all Festivals: Lauds. [Septuagesima to Easter Sunday: Prime.] Monastic. Ferial. Friday: I. Nocturn. [Easter-tide, and all festivals of Saints, Sunday: Lauds.] Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: I. Nocturn. [Easter Eve: Matins.] Eastern Church. Mesorion of Prime.

Antiphons.
Monastic. Arise, * Thou Judge of the world. Ambrosian. Ferial. As preceding Psalm. [Easter Eve: They set up* over His head His accusation written, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.] Lyons. Holiness becometh Thine house for ever. Mozarabic. Wonderful are the liftings up of the sea, * wonderful in the heights is the LORD. 1 The LORD is King, and hath put on glorious apparel: the LORD hath put on his apparel, and girded himself with strength.

The Psalmist, as with a herald's voice, proclaims publicly to all men that the LORD hath taken the insignia of a King, and after defeating in battle and casting out the prince of this world, hath reduced under His sway the kingdom which was always His possession. And so, under the type of a king, who assumes the royal insignia on the day of his proclamation, he declares that the LORD is clad in glorious apparel, as though adorned with kingly vestments. He styles His achievements and triumphant victory as glorious apparel, wherewith He is so adorned as a conquering king is wont to be decked in the robes of triumph. Or He is equipped with glittering and dazzling arms for the overthrow of His enemies, which view the next phrase confirms, He is clothed with strength (A.V., Vulg. for the arms He puts on are not merely splendid, but strong. Finally, He hath girded Himself, to wit, with baldric and sword, to do battle with the foe. This apparel may perhaps apply better to His Resurrection, when, laying aside the garb of mortality, He was clad in the raiment of immortality, glorious at once and strong; glorious in kingly majesty, strong for joining battle against the enemy. Epiphanius refers the glorious apparel to the Incarnation, that of strength to the Resurrection. When He came on earth, some heard Him gladly; and to them He appeared in His beauty, while others reviled and slandered Him, for whose punishment He clothed Himself with His might.

It is so still, wherever His Gospel is preached, according as men accept or reject it, for it is written, "We are unto GOD a sweet savour of CHRIST, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. The LORD showed His might, when at His word "I am," His enemies "went backward and fell to the ground. He girded Himself, in the might of that humility wherewith He overthrew the pride of Satan, when He stooped to wash the feet of His disciples. He clothed Himself with beauty and strength in the holiness and boldness of those Saints whom He joined to Himself, especially His Apostles, when He girded Himself to the task

of establishing His kingdom on earth. These were His royal purple, dyed in His own Blood as He was lifted, King, on His throne the Cross, and the valour of His Martyrs was the strength that compassed Him about. And as He was King from all eternity, beautiful and glorious in His Godhead, it is clear that we must interpret this beginning of His kingdom, this new clothing of His Person, of the Incarnation. And that Body which He assumed is called beauty εὐπρέπειαν, (decorem), because of its showing us His image, because of its sinlessness, and because of the loving-kindness towards us testified in the mystery. Wherefore it is said of Him, "Thou art fairer than the children of men;

and of His girding Himself, that "righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. This is the girdle wherewith He complies with that invocation, "Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty," as He goes armed with the Spirit of GOD to receive for Himself the Kingdom according to His own saying, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth; so that beginning from His hidden throne in the hearts of His elect, He spreads His empire by the voice of His preachers over the whole earth and amongst all nations.

A. A. 2 He hath made the round world so sure: that it cannot be moved. That round world, which aforetime was shaken under the rule of its prince, and was at strife through the warring opposition of divers opinions, and tossed about with the worship of numerous and unlike divinities, was made sure by the LORD when He became King, so that it cannot be moved, because it has now been given the steadfastness of truth, as worship is paid to the true GOD. Just so, the proclamation of a new king, whose title and power are unimpeachable, allays the strife of factions, contending before each for its own candidate, and joy spreads amongst the people, knowing that peace and justice will return. This kingdom cannot be moved, for it is founded on the Rock eternal, upon CHRIST Himself, Who establishes His chosen in faith, so perfectly that they cannot be shaken by any temptations or fears so as to fall from Him by violence from without.

3 Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared : thou art from everlasting. Hence there is not that peril with CHRIST the King which besets other new monarchs as they begin their reign; the danger of inexperience in governing. His throne is from everlasting, and all the hoarded wisdom of eternity is His very own. His seat is fivefold, that of His divine throne, co-equal with the FATHER, for "thus saith the LORD, The Heaven is My throne, and the earth My footstool;" that hallowed resting-place of His in the pure womb of Blessed Mary; that of His Cross; the believing heart of any of His faithful disciples, or, indeed the aggregate of all such hearts, making up the Holy Catholic Church; and the judicial seat allotted to Him, as Man, on the right hand of the FATHER. These latter thrones were prepared and predestined for Him since the world began, since the creation and fall of man necessitated His coming in flesh; but He does not Himself begin then, for He,

co-eternal and consubstantial with the FATHER, is from everlasting, is, not with the mere fact of existence, but with that plenitude of Being which is the life of all created things.

4 The floods are risen, O LORD, the floods have lift up their voice : the floods lift up their waves. 5 The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly : but yet the LORD, who dwelleth on high, is mightier. Herein we have set before us the roar and tumult of Jews and Pagans against the new Kingdom of CHRIST, and the climax of the triple repetition in the fourth verse denotes the gathering force of the deluge; first, the angry commotion; then the loud accusations; lastly, the wild tumult; all too weak to resist the eye and voice of Him Who rebuketh the winds and waves, saying, "Peace, be still." But the floods of the fourth verse are rivers, as rightly translated by LXX. and Vulgate, whereas those of the fifth verse are waves of the sea, and therefore more than one commentator has seen here a rivalry and opposition between the sweet waters of the one and the salt billows of the other. They will have it that the rivers flow from the well-head of living waters, that they are the rivers of that flood which makes glad the City of GOD, swollen by the descending rain of Pentecost, the Apostles themselves, lifting up their voice, the voice of many waters (LXX., Vulg.) in the speech of many a land, to proclaim that the LORD is King, lifting up their waves to sweep away

A. Ps. xlvi. 4. every barrier to the triumphant advance of the Gospel waters. Against them rise up in resistance the waves of the sea, trying to beat back the flood of sweet waters poured into their salt bosom, but vainly, for wonderful as are the liftings-up (LXX., Vulg.) of that wild sea of human rage, more wonderful still in the highest is the LORD Who is throned over all, and, through His mercy, those liftings-up of the very waves became wonderful in grace, by His conversion of the raging heathen into meek disciples of the Lamb, lifting them up to the very heavens, and that from the voices of many waters, the vows made to Him from the baptismal fonts of countless churches in divers nations of the earth. 6 Thy testimonies, O LORD, are very sure : holiness becometh thine house for ever.

Whatever the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, the words of the Evangelists, the teachings of the Apostles, the articles of the Creeds, allege concerning CHRIST the LORD, belonging as they do to faith, though incapable of proof by natural reason, as dealing with things hoped for and unseen, are proved by the marvellous works of the LORD Himself, and yet more by His patient life and painful death. His predictions, too, are fulfilled, telling His disciples that they should have tribulations in this world, and therefore they look for the accomplishment of the remainder of His prophecy, the victory and peace which He promises them in Himself. And because this is so, because His testimonies are true, holiness becometh His house, that is, it is the fit and peculiar attribute of that sacred shrine of His most pure Body, wherein the Godhead tabernacled; it is the fit adornment of that

Virgin Mother within whom He vouchsafed to dwell; it is the peculiar and distinguishing mark of His Church; it is the token of His true followers, who bear in mind the Apostle's saying, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of GOD, and that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you?" And that no mere passing holiness, no temporary consecration, such as Shiloh, and Gibeon, and Sion had for a time, but that which is for ever, hallowed by the perpetual abiding Presence of GOD in Beatific Vision.

The LORD, then, is King, for He assumed His Kingdom on the Cross; He put on glorious apparel in His Resurrection; He clothed weakness with strength, and girded Himself with eternity, and made the world sure in His Resurrection. And having His seat prepared, He ascended to the right hand of the FATHER in heaven. The floods of the Scriptures preached Him, and lifted up their voices for Him against the voice of many waters; more mightily, that is, than the gainsaying Gentiles. And thus CHRIST was made wonderful to the liftings-up of the sea, that is, to the kings and mighty men of this world; and not to them only, but The Gloss. wonderful in the highest, ascending the heavens as LORD, for then the testimonies of GOD were made very easy of belief, when He gave power of working cures upon mankind. And now that House of His which the Pharisees declared could not receive the holy precepts, hath accepted the Old Testament with its laws. Therefore now the Holy of holies befits it, that it may dwell there for evermore.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is from everlasting; glory be to the SON, the King Who hath girded Himself with strength; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is the holiness of the house of GOD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O LORD Almighty, Who, girt with the FATHER'S power, hast set heaven, sea, and earth in their places; hearken unto Thy humble servants, grant us belief in Thy testimonies, and clothe us with strength and beautiful holiness. (1.) Cause us, O LORD, to become heirs of Thy testimonies, which have been made matter of belief unto us, let them be constantly in our thought, that they may be sincerely held in true faith, and be so fulfilled in our work, that as they are uttered by the mouth they may guide us in sorrow with their comfort and make us more ready to labour with Thee. (11.) Thy testimonies are wonderful, O LORD GOD, wherewith Thine Only-begotten SON is King over all the earth; grant us, therefore, that we who behold His glory with unveiled face, may be set at His right hand in the judgment. (11.) O GOD, Who art clothed with strength, and girt with power, make us ready to stand before the seat of Thy majesty, that thenceforth and from everlasting we may magnify Thy Name, and vouchsafe to be gracious to us upon earth, Thou Who art wonderful in the highest. (11.)

O LORD, Whose kingdom is terrible in might, and girded about with power, Whom the floods of the Doctors praise with lifted voices, and the wonders of the sea celebrate; stir up Thy power, and the terrible strength of Thine arm, to break the yoke of our slavery, which presses sorely upon our necks. Let it confirm our weary hands, strengthen our feeble knees, make the faint-hearted become valiant, that we fear nothing henceforth from the enemy, because we believe Thee, our most loving Redeemer, to have come for our salvation. (11.) D. C. O LORD, Ruler of heaven and earth, clothe us with the beauty of good works, and the strength of Thy grace, and gird us with the testimony of truth; grant that we may go forth to meet Thee, clad in these clean wedding garments, and enter in with ready lamps unto the eternal marriage banquet with Thee. Who livest.

Psalm 94

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of David, for the fourth of the Sabbath.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, distinguishing His human members, teaches and instructs man in knowledge. The Voice of the Church to the LORD. The Voice of the Apostles and of the whole Church to GOD concerning the Jews and all persecutors. The Voice of the Church to CHRIST concerning persecutions. VEN. BEDE. The fourth of the Sabbath is the fourth day of the week counting from the Sabbath, that day on which the LORD created the lights of heaven. This is to be applied to holy men shining with heavenly conversation on earth, concerning whom the Psalm is about to speak. The Prophet, observing the hearts of the unwise to be disturbed, as though GOD paid no attention to mortal affairs, when they saw the ungodly in prosperity and the righteous afflicted; asks in the first part the LORD to requite the proud, through whom he knew that the world had been perverted to such a notion. O Lord God, to Whom vengeance belongeth. In the second part, he rebukes those who in their foolish blasphemy think that GOD does not behold human things, whereas it is He who gives sense and understanding to His creatures; and he counts him blessed who treads under foot worldly happiness and perseveres in reverence for GOD. Take heed, ye unwise. In the third part, in order to attract their minds, he declares that the LORD hath been his own refuge, and will be the punisher of sinners. Who will rise up with me against the wicked?

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, concerning the congregation of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Spiritually, it is of the persecutions against the Church. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. Concerning the persecutions against the Church.

Various Uses.
Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: I. Nocturn. [Easter Eve: Matins.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Ferial: Blessed* be the LORD for evermore. [Precious Blood: When they saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith there came out blood and water.]

Monastic. As preceding Psalm. Ambrosian. Ferial: As Psalm xcii. [Easter Eve: They that hate Me shall flee far from Me, they are not ashamed to spit in My face. * They wounded the sinews of My feet, and marked out My path.] Parisian. [Easter Eve: If the LORD had not helped me, my soul would have almost dwelt in hell.] Mozarabic. The LORD will not fail His people, * neither will He forsake His inheritance. 1 O LORD GOD, to whom vengeance belongeth: thou God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself. 2 Arise, thou Judge of the world : and reward the proud after their deserving. A.

This title of the Almighty, as God of vengeance, serves to correct the error that God deals with the universe only mediately, having laid down at the creation certain invariable laws for the government of the universe, and having then, so to speak, withdrawn Himself from His work, and allowed it to go on without Him. Here, on the contrary, it is plainly taught that He rules this lower world specially and directly, and is cognizant of and interested in all the dealings, good and bad, of mankind. The prayer here is that He may shine forth (A.V. marg.), and no longer hide His avenging justice in the thick darkness, but display it openly, and irresistibly. But the LXX. and Vulgate treat the first and second verses differently, taking the former in the past tense, and translating, instead of show Thyself, either hath spoken boldly (ἐπαβρησιάσατο) or hath dealt freely (liberè egit). And this is true of Him, because He is not like mortal judges, who often have not the power to take vengeance on an offender, either because they are deterred through fear of consequences, or through hope of favour; or else because their jurisdiction is checked and limited by superior authority, whereas no such restrictions can bind the Most High. Arise, Thou Judge of the world. This title is the especial one of the LORD JESUS, because ”the FATHER hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” and He is therefore besought to exalt Himself, (LXX., Vulg., A.V.) either by ascending His Cross, whereupon He triumphs over the proud enemies of our souls; or by the glories of His Resurrection and Ascension, whereby He is throned at the right hand of the FATHER. The notion of the Cross being the judicial seat of CHRIST is one which often reappears, as for example in the hymn of the Paris Breviary:

is an irregular form of imperative and ought to be either or else ; so that the LXX. and Vulg. may very possibly be right in taking it as preterite. Holy Cross, thou seat of judgment, Where the Just One sat enthroned, To pronounce the righteous sentence, Yet His righteous ire disowned, When He bare the wood of healing Who the rod of vengeance owned. Sant. Victor. The Hymn, Uneta Dei cruxcrugre.

But in whatever sense we take the seat, the word exalt will have the same spiritual force: for it is a call on the LORD to manifest Himself clearly, because He, as so great a Judge, ought to excel all other judges in righteousness as much as He does in power and dignity, and should therefore lift Himself up as though on a watch-tower, or some other lofty place, in order to behold all things which He is about to

try, and not lower Himself to the level of what He condemns. Further, in calling Him God of vengeance, we confess that the right of avenging ourselves is not lodged in our hands, and abdicate thereby all claim to exercise it, contenting ourselves with returning good for evil. And He is GOD of vengeances (Heb., LXX., Vulg.) in the plural, because His chastisements are not single, but manifold, for He punishes the criminal in his own person and in that of others, in body and soul, in this life and the next. And this especially in the case of those who are earth, men of carnal desires and earthly wisdom, who have no savour of heavenly things. Reward the proud. It is spoken in threefold fashion, of Satan and his angels who fell by pride, of the Jews who crucified the LORD, because He foretold their humiliation, of false Christians who harden themselves and will not repent. And pride is the special sin against which GOD exercises His judgments, because it is loftiest in its origin as a spiritual fault, as it began amongst the Angels of heaven, and is still the besetting sin of lofty minds; because it is the most vigorous of sins, in that it spares no person, time, nor place; and the most crafty, because it can disguise itself, unlike almost every other temptation, in the garb of a virtue.

3 Lord, how long shall the ungodly : how long shall the ungodly triumph? 4 How long shall all wicked doers speak so disdainfully : and make such proud boasting? The ungodly are twice named, not merely by way of emphasis, but as marking their twofold offence, against the GOD Whose laws they despise and break, and the men whom they oppress and injure in so doing; and we may also take the words as denoting the two great classes of GOD’s foes, evil spirits and wicked men. And yet, in the very terms wherein the Psalmist complains of the continued prevalence of the wicked, there is matter of comfort, for we have three (rather four, as A.V.) words to denote speaking, and only one, doers, to denote action, showing us that they are far more powerful with their tongues than with their hands. Hence too, we may gather that the teachers of false doctrine are the ungodly specially intended here.

5 They smite down thy people, O Lord : and trouble thine heritage. 6 They murder the widow, and the stranger : and put the fatherless to death. Philo Judæus de Grat. A. S. Bruno Carth. Herein God is invoked by a double appeal. As King, He is reminded that it is His people, and His heritage, which is assailed; as Judge, He is called to the special duty of a guardian of the laws, the aid of the weak, oppressed by overmastering force. And we may explain the sixth verse not merely as defining the special part of God’s heritage which is thus persecuted, but as being an exhaustive description of the whole. For an old Jewish writer has pointed out how aptly the titles of widow and orphan befitted the Hebrew nation, because it had no helper save God only, and was cut off from all other people by its peculiar rites and usages, whereas the Gentiles, by their mutual alliances and intercourse, had, as it were, a multitude of kindred to help them in any strait. So too the Christian expositors see here in the widow, the Church, or the faithful soul, waiting and

longing for the absent Bridegroom; in the orphan, one looking only to a FATHER in heaven, having been given up by his former father, Satan, and his former mother, the world: in the stranger, one who having become a proselyte to the Church of God, has no continuing city here in the world, but has become an alien to his old companions, and seeks, as a pilgrim, his way to a better country. These are the victims chiefly afflicted by the proud, who cannot endure the silent rebuke of the lowly servants of CHRIST, their mute appeal to Him to shine forth as their defender.

The Church has waited long, Her absent LORD to see, And still in loneliness she waits, A friendless stranger she. Age after age has gone, Sun after sun has set, And still in weeds of widowhood She weeps a mourner yet. Come then, LORD JESU, come. 7 And yet they say, Tush, the LORD shall not see: neither shall the GOD of Jacob regard it. He will not see the external act, nor regard or understand (LXX., Vulg.) the inward thought. Nevertheless, it is precisely as the God of Jacob that He is sure to regard it, for He spake to Moses in the Law: ”Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.” Some will have it that the verse does not actually imply the utterance of this blasphemy, but only a course of action in agreement with such a theory of God; but it seems more consonant with the scope of the Psalm and with the facts of history to explain the reference as being to that very speaking disdainfully of which the fourth verse complains. Thus the great poetical champion of practical atheism sings:

Lucret. i. 45. Omnis enim per se divum natura necesse est Immortali evo summa cum pace fruatur, Semota ab nostris rebus sejunctaque longe; Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis, Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nil indiga nostri, Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira. For the whole nature of the Gods must needs Enjoy undying life in perfect peace, Removed and set afar from mortal deeds; Since from all pain and risk it hath release, Strong in its own resource, it lacks us not, Thanks for no good, nor grows in anger hot. 8 Take heed, ye unwise among the people : O ye fools, when will ye understand? They explain the unwise among the people as false teachers in the body of the Church, forming externally a part of God’s heritage, although alien from it in spirit; while the fools are open infidels and blasphemers, or the uninstructed laity, contrasted with the evil clergy of the earlier clause. And of unwisdom and folly there are several kinds described in Holy Writ. There is that of mental imbecility; that of sheer wickedness or malice; that of base and filthy living; and that of unbelief and faithlessness. Yet the very words of reproach here addressed are enough to tell us that the condition of the fool is for the most part voluntary, for as S. Augustine wisely observes, If we could not be wise, and understand through our free-will, it would not be commanded us in the words

of Scripture, Take heed, ye unwise among the people, and ye fools, understand at last. For in the very fact that it is prescribed and commanded that we should understand, it requires our obedience, which cannot possibly be yielded without free-will.

9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear : or he that made the eye, shall he not see?

It has been noticed, from a very early time, in arguing against those Anthropomorphite sectaries who attributed bodily organs to GOD, that the Psalmist here does not ascribe ears and eyes to Him, but only the faculties of hearing and seeing, which He possesses, not by reason of having organs of sense, but as part of His essence; since, if those faculties did not exist in Him, He could not have so conceived them as to make them part of the creation. They dwell too, on the word planted, as implying design, in that the ear was not spontaneously evolved by an act of vital force, but independently created by GOD for a certain object, just as a tree, not of indigenous growth, is of set purpose planted in some new place by the hand of man. They draw another lesson from the term used of the creation of the eye, which is not merely made, as the Prayer Book version reads, but formed, πλάσας, finxit, directing our attention to the wonderful mechanism of the organs of sight, and thence to the marvellous skill of the Artificer. And CHRIST the LORD, Who planted the spirit of obedience, which the ear typifies, in the heart of man, wills it to grow, which it cannot do unless it be shined upon by the Sun of Righteousness; that is, unless CHRIST Himself show us the nature, and set us an example, of that obedience. Shall He not hear, then? Shall He give a law, and not keep it Himself?

By no means, for it is written, ”Though He were a SON, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered,” when He ”became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. The ear is no garden or paradise of GOD if the words planted therein do not spring up, but remain as seeds in the sand, buried, rather than sown. And with respect to the eye, we are reminded that it, as well as the ear, has a double meaning; for the inward sight is the faculty of spiritual understanding, which is necessary in order that we may comprehend, so as to carry out, the commands we have received through the ear. Wherefore that is wise counsel of the Rabbins, that the three best safeguards against falling into sin, are to remember first, that there is an ear which hears everything; secondly, that there is an eye which sees everything; thirdly, that there is a hand which writes everything in the Book of Knowledge which shall be opened at the Judgment.

10 Or he that nurtureth the heathen : it is he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he punish? The word nurtureth here does not express the original with accuracy. We may choose between the chastiseth of A. V. and Vulgate, or the instructeth of the Targum and LXX., either of which will yield an adequate sense, the one pointing to the temporal punishments inflicted by GOD on whole nations,

as the Egyptians, Canaanites, Assyria, and Babylon; the other, to His instruction, on the one hand by the agency of Holy Writ and the teaching of the Prophets and Apostles, and on the other, by the operation of the individual conscience, and of human laws regulating the limits of right and wrong even amongst those to whom no revelation had been granted. It is He that teacheth man knowledge. This is the office of GOD the HOLY GHOST, Who teacheth us and guides us into all truth, and Who acts towards us as a master that instructs his pupils in school, but expects them, on pain of stripes for failure, to repeat correctly to him the lesson he has thus taught. Shall not He punish? The word is rather reprove, ἐλίγξει, arguet, and fits in thus precisely with that saying of CHRIST touching the Comforter, "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" of sin which they did not shun, of righteousness which they did not love, of judgment which they did not fear. But if we accept the reading punish, we may then remember that GOD punishes in three ways: in love, and gently, for the purification and trial of His Saints; in anger, for the conversion of sinners; and in wrathful indignation, for the destruction of the obstinately impenitent.

11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man: that they are but vain. There are three kinds of thoughts which come into the mind of man; those which GOD inspires, which are wise and holy; those which the devil suggests, which are evil and impure: and those which man devises for himself, and these are vain. Lest we should think that such vanity can be attributed only to the unwise and fools of whom a previous verse speaks, the Apostle, citing this passage, reads it, "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain," as being engaged about transitory matters to the exclusion of eternal interests. 12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD: and teachest him in thy law; Here is the true contrast to the vanity and sorrow of the man who is left to his own thoughts, the blessedness of the Saint whom GOD Himself instructs (LXX. Vulg.) And observe that there are two distinct kinds of instruction, that which GOD conveys personally, that is, in time past by His life as Man on earth as our example and pattern, but now by inner light, warning, and inspiration; and that which He bestows upon attentive students or hearers of His Word. And this teaching has four several objects, which are the

The Gloss. avoidance of sin, the keeping of the commandments, the escaping everlasting punishment, and the desire of eternal life. 13 That thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity : until the pit be digged up for the ungodly. It is something more than patience, it is the rest, (A. V.) or tranquillity, implied in the LXX. πραῦναι, which God bestows on the souls, not on the bodies, of those whom He teaches, so that although the Saint must endure sorrow and trial here, yet God mitigates (Vulg.) it for him, by giving him such delight in the law, and such spiritual joy as enables him to bear up against the weight of trouble; seeing that unmixed gladness is not given here, but in our Country. Therefore the Apostle encourages his converts, saying, "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be

also of the consolation;" and in another place, "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing," where we may observe that the word sorrowful is qualified by the word as, in order to denote that the rejoicing overpowers it; which is more clearly set forth a little later in the same epistle: "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations."

2 Cor. i. 7. A. The Greek Fathers explain the day of adversity to be the final judgment of the ungodly, and allege that suffering patiently endured in this world makes the tribunal of CHRIST less awful, and insures a milder sentence. Until the pit be digged up for the ungodly. The metaphor may be taken either from the pitfalls made by hunters to entrap wild beasts, or from the preparing the grave of a dying man. Either way, the words imply the certain destruction of sinners, and fix a limit to the sufferings of God's scholars. This pit is one which sinners dig for themselves by their vices, and which the avenging Angels of God complete. And the intention of the ungodly is to make a high mound for their own exaltation, not observing that every increase of the height of it does but increase at the same time the depth of the yawning hollow at its base, into which they will surely fall; whether we take the pit itself to be shame and ruin in this world, bodily death, or condemnation at the Doom. But there is another pit, unlike all these, dug for the sinner in this life, to win him from his evil courses, namely, the wound in the spear-pierced side of CHRIST; open to receive all who will take refuge there from their enemies, as did the Israelites who hid themselves in pits from the Philistine invaders. This pit continues to be dug all the time of this mortal life, because the call to repentance is unceasing, and therefore the troubles of the righteous are mitigated here, as one and another of his former oppressors are united to the company of the elect.

14 For the LORD will not fail his people : neither will he forsake his inheritance; This is the answer to the complaint in the fifth verse of the havoc wrought by wicked doers against GOD's people and heritage. It is the assurance, not merely that their destructiveness will be checked in due time, but that it is in fact only an instrument in GOD's hands for the fatherly correction of His chosen, and that only for a little time. 15 Until righteousness turn again unto judgment : all such as are true of heart shall follow it.

They explain this difficult passage in more ways than one, both literally and mystically. And first, it may refer to the effects of GOD's teaching. Justice and judgment have become separate, and even opposite things, man's law has not been according to right and truth, but GOD will not forsake His inheritance, nor cease His instruction, till He has wrought a change in this respect, and till justice is once more faithfully dispensed by the judges who sit to try causes. Or again, it may be GOD's judgment which is called in question by man, as though He were not equal in His dealings, because allowing the righteous to be oppressed and the wicked to prosper. Here again GOD will continue His teaching till He vindicates Him-

self to us, till we learn that the Judge of all the earth must do right. Mystically they take the words as referring to the Day of Judgment, when CHRIST Himself, our Righteousness, shall turn from His long-suffering and patience unto judgment upon sinners; and when His Saints and Apostles, who have borne affliction and injustice here below, shall sit with Him as His assessors to try the very sinners who persecuted them upon earth. There is one other explanation, in part the same as this : that GOD did not forsake His people and inheritance of Israel, until Incarnate Righteousness was brought into judgment before Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, and denied, rejected, and condemned by His subjects. All they that are true of heart shall follow it.

That is, as they variously explain, all the Saints shall come with CHRIST unto judgment; or shall agree in the sentence He pronounces; or again, shall be themselves in full conformity with CHRIST's righteousness. Some of the Latins point the sentence differently, and read with an interrogation, Who shall be along with it? That is, Who shall be assessors at that true judgment? and the answer is : the true of heart. And on this truth or righteousness of heart, let us hear S. Augustine, "Because GOD is right, when thou fixest thine heart on Him, let thy care be to have a right heart, that GOD may be pleasant to it in all things. Let it be right with the rightness of intention, with the exclusion of froward

A. thoughts, with steadfastness in contemplation. Let it be ready to follow the Will of God, in whatsoever direction it may know that will to move. Let it tend upwards, to contemplate and desire heavenly and divine things alone. Let it be pure, so as to suffer no evil thing to linger within it, nor let it account the tiniest stumbling-block as bearable, in its own conscience or in another's." 16 Who will rise up with me against the wicked : or who will take my part against the evil-doers?

Seeing then that all injustice will most surely come to an end, the Psalmist asks who will be bold enough, in the mean time, while the reign of justice is still put off, to range himself on the side of oppressed truth, and to fight for the cause of God, when that cause seems to have the worst. It is true that God alone, without any helper, is able to defend and avenge His elect, but they who refuse to take His side will be involved in the punishment of His enemies, even though they did not actually share in their crime. Just so, in the laws of Sparta, it was enacted that whoso allowed any offence to be committed in his presence without protest, subjected himself to the full penalty due to the offence itself. And thus, when Israel made the golden calf, Moses said, "Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me," and employed the Levites as the instruments of Divine vengeance against the idolaters. So it may be taken, as many do take it, of the appeal made by CHRIST Himself for aid, not as really needing it, but in order that those who share His battle may share His triumph; and that He calls His disciples to resist, like Him,

the temptation of wicked spirits, and the persecutions of the evildoers amongst men, Jews, Pagans, and worldly unbelievers.

Or, as another, slightly varying, takes it, the SAVIOUR cries, "I am holy, I was lifted up on the Cross, I died and rose again, and ascended a Conqueror to heaven. Which of the Saints, then, will arise and stand with Me? which shall be counted worthy, not only of the Resurrection, but of a place at My side? But most of these expositors agree in understanding the passage of the conflict against sin in this life; while one aptly points the metaphor by comparing it to a sudden night-attack upon a city, when the captain of the garrison sounds the alarm for his soldiers, that they may arise, quitting their beds, and then stand with him upon the walls to repel the foe. Arising without standing is not enough, for there are many who so far arise as to teach men to resist the inward temptations of wicked spirits, but who do not stand when themselves corrupted by the example and seeming prosperity of human evil-doers. And that more fail than endure the test in this way is clear from the very word of inquiry, Who? denoting that the speaker is, for the time at least, alone.

17 If the LORD had not helped me : it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence. This is a confession at once of the magnitude of the peril, and of the grace of GOD; it casts aside every thought of personal strength or merit, and acknowledges man's utter feebleness when not upheld by the arm of the LORD. The second clause is more exactly rendered by the A.V. My soul had almost dwelt in silence, which last word is explained by LXX. and Vulgate as Hades or hell (inferno). The literal meaning is a narrow escape from physical death; but mystically it is taken of CHRIST, Whose soul was not left in hell, and Who here, in His manhood, gives thanks to His FATHER for the Resurrection. Then it applies to each of His members, who, but for that same Resurrection, would themselves have dwelt in Hades, or even in the lower deeps of Gehenna, but who are now risen with CHRIST. And finally, the words may be used by any faithful soul who feels that only GOD's grace has preserved him from yielding to temptation and persecution, so as to fall into the pit and darkness of sin.

18 But when I said, My foot hath slipped : thy mercy, O LORD, held me up. See how GOD loves confession. Thy foot slips, and thou dost not say, My foot slips, but thou sayest that thou standest when thou art falling. So then, if thou have begun slipping, if thou have commenced to totter, confess thy slip, that thou mayest not have to bewail thy fall, that He may help thee, that thy soul be not in hell. GOD wishes for confession, He wishes for humility. Again, if these be words of CHRIST Himself, then His foot denotes any of His Apostles and preachers, who carry Him throughout the world by proclaiming the Gospel. These feet of His slipped, when they lost faith during His Passion. Peter denied Him, and all the others forsook

Him and fled, breaking the faith they had vowed to CHRIST. But GOD's mercy at once helped these slipping feet by leading them back to faith through repentance.

Any one, then, who is tempted or oppressed, and who fears to fall through consent or impatience, may use these words that he may be helped against falling by GOD's mercy, when calling upon Him. That thou perish not, call upon GOD, saying, "LORD, save me," and straightway He stretcheth out the hand of His mercy as He did unto Peter, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" A. 19 In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart : thy comforts have refreshed my soul. The word here translated, as by LXX. and Vulgate, sorrows, is more exactly anxious thoughts, those which branch out in different directions, and thus cause perplexity. In the multitude of these, or, as most of the old versions take it, according to the multitude of them, in exact proportion to man's need, God sends His consolation. And in this sense, the word heart, or within me (S. Hieron.) is emphatic, since God does not give bodily comforts to the righteous in this life as a set-off against bodily pains; but He does give them spiritual comforts as a support in both physical and mental trouble. The special word here found in the Hebrew for comforts, , occurs in only two other places; Isaiah lxvi. 11, and Jeremiah xvi. 7; in the former of which it is applied to the mother who stills her crying infant by giving it the breast; and in the latter is used of the cup of strong wine, called the "cup of consolation," given to mourners at a funeral by their friends, as the first refreshment after the fast for the dead. The fullest and yet the briefest comment on the passage is to be found in the words of S. Paul: "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."

2 Cor. i. 7. 20 Wilt thou have anything to do with the stool of wickedness: which imagineth mischief as a law? The stool of wickedness. It ought rather to be, as in LXX. and A.V. the throne of iniquity or lawlessness. That is, the Psalmist is protesting not against mere obscure thieves and murderers, but against princes and judges, who pervert the laws they should defend, and by false judgments or wicked enactments oppress the people of God, and endeavour to destroy His Church, as did Antiochus Epiphanes and the Pagan Emperors in their various statutes against those who refused to conform to idolatrous rites. He asks if God, by tolerating them any longer, and delaying their punishment, can consent to be ranked, even in thought, on their side, and to be supposed their partner in guilt. The Greeks push the idea further, and identify the throne of lawlessness with Satan, who frameth toil in commandment (LXX.,) that is, who either puts some troublesome obstacle in the way of our obedience to God, through which we have to force our path laboriously, or else, by making the yoke of religion too heavy to bear by means of burdensome additions and stern repression, induces men to throw it off altogether. The Vulgate reading in the latter clause is different, Thou Who framest toil in commandment, taking the words as still referring to God. That is, seeing

that Thy commandments are so clear and precise, and that Thou art so desirous that they should be perfectly and laboriously observed, even through toil and

The feminine form is found in Job xv. 11, and xxi. 2. sorrow, can it be that Thou art indifferent to right and wrong, and careless, like iniquitous judges, that the law is broken? or wilt Thou suffer those who will not toil in the commandment, but who have given themselves to the service of Satan, and their souls to be his throne of iniquity, to have any place or fellowship with Thee? There is an alternative explanation, moreover, applying the whole verse to an unrepentant sinner. Wilt thou not be converted, wilt thou suffer the throne of iniquity, that "seat of the scornful" of which another Psalm speaks, the habitual practice of sin, to be inseparably joined to thee, thou who feignest (fingis) that God's commands are too laborious and difficult for man to keep? 21 They gather them together against the soul of the righteous : and condemn the innocent blood.

It is the history of the sufferings of martyrs in all times of persecution, but especially of their King, the SAVIOUR Himself, Who is, in an especial sense, the Righteous and Innocent. It is against the righteous they gather themselves, for him they will hunt (LXX. and Vulg.) because the souls of the unrighteous are their prey already, and they do not need to entrap afresh those who are ensnared. Euthymius, who explains, as already mentioned, the twentieth verse as a prayer against allowing Satan to take any part in the Last Judgment, will have it that the reason for that prayer is given here; namely, that the evil spirits will bring against the righteous accusations of sins committed either ignorantly or unwillingly, in order to ensnare them. The Carmelite, dwelling on the former explanation, observes that there are three things, any one of which makes a condemnation unjust : innocence on the part of the accused; irregularity in matter of law, especially failure of evidence; and hostile bias on the part of the judge; all which, he observes, were united in the sentence passed on the LORD JESUS. And lest we should pass over the verse as having no warning or lesson for ourselves, we are seasonably reminded that slander, detraction, and calumny, is a condemning of innocent blood, even if it be not actually aimed at the life of the victim. Slander is unjust judgment, because it is a sentence passed by one who has no authorization as judge in the matter at all, because the same person acts as sole judge and witness, and that without any oath binding him to speak the truth; because there is no examination of the witness, and contrary evidence, even when stronger, is not admitted, and because the most frivolous and inconsistent conjectures are accepted as proofs.

22 But the LORD is my refuge : and my GOD is the strength of my confidence. Ps. i. 1. This is the triumphant cry of CHRIST's soldiers, reeking nothing of the confederacy against them, knowing that they too are banded together, under an invincible Captain, against the throne of iniquity; and are to condemn the blood of the guilty when they sit by Him in judgment upon them. GOD is the refuge of His

Saints when He shelters them from evil, the temptations of sin, or the persecutions of enemies. He is the strength of their confidence, when He aids them in holiness, helping them to hope, and to obtain what they hope for, and that by the co-operation of His grace, so that their hope is not in vain, but they are able to do all things through Him that strengtheneth them. The words are explained also of CHRIST Himself, as well as of His followers, with special reference to the Resurrection.

23 He shall recompense them their wickedness, and destroy them in their own malice: yea, the LORD our GOD shall destroy them. A. Here S. Augustine bids us notice the stress on the words in their own malice, whence he draws the lesson that GOD punishes us not so much for the things we do, as for the motive wherewith we do them. Judas Iscariot delivered up the LORD JESUS to death, but GOD the FATHER delivered Him up also. The sin of Judas worked out the purpose of GOD, and brought us a priceless blessing, but we thank GOD only, and turn away from the crime of the traitor. So too the persecutors of the martyrs were, all unwittingly, preparing and gemming crowns of gold for them, but in hate, which is the reason of their condemnation, the adequate cause of that vengeance which shall fall upon them, when the LORD GOD shows Himself.

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD; glory be to the SON, the Judge of the world; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Whose comforts refresh the souls of the Saints. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Teach us, O LORD, with the good-will of Thy law, and be our refuge in trouble, Who wisely teachest man knowledge that he may not sin. (1.) Fail not Thy people, O LORD, whom Thou hast purchased; neither forsake the inheritance for which Thou didst hang upon the Cross, but until such time as Thy justice, now hidden, shall shine forth in manifest judgment, guide us with Thine outstretched loving-kindness, and according to the multitude of our sorrows, make us glad with Thine encouragement, that Thou Who now framest toil in commandment, mayest grant us rest in the world to come. (11.) Grant us, O LORD, the desirable gift of power to do, whereby we may be able to rise up against the ungodly, and to oppose the sayings of the wicked, and as a pit is made ready for those who work iniquity against Thee, so let there be a glorious dwelling made ready in the heavens for us who believe. (11.)

Arise, O LORD, Who judgest the earth, and Who dealest vengeance to the proud: bestow on Thy redeemed the medicine of Thy lovingkindness, and grant mercy to the guilty, Who wast for us adjudged to the Cross by ungodly men. (11.) O GOD, the help of our hope, be the refuge of Thy servants in every need, soften the evil days for us, and let the consolations of Thy lovingkindness ever make our soul glad. (1.)

Psalm 95

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Prayer of a Song for David.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, the Good Shepherd, predestines His sheep unto eternal rest. The Voice of the Church to the LORD touching the Jews. The Voice of CHRIST to the Apostles, or of the Church to the LORD touching the Jews. The Voice of the Church to CHRIST, and of the Prophet concerning the unbelief of the Jews. The Voice of the Church advising repentance. VEN. BEDR. Praise denotes devotion of voice, song cheerfulness of mind, for David, CHRIST our SAVIOUR, to the end that we may come together and rejoice, not in vain delights, but in the LORD. The Prophet, foreseeing that the Jews would be able to resist CHRIST, at the first opening invites their tribes to the singing of Psalms, describing the LORD's praises with the sweetest truth. O come, let us sing unto the Lord. Secondly, the LORD Himself speaks, that the aforesaid people should not harden its heart, lest that should befall them which befell their fathers, who did not attain to enter the land of promise. Harden not your hearts.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David. Literally, when the people passed over by Jordan; and he hints in it the despair of the Jews. I was vexed with this generation. As I sware in My wrath. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARRA. The calling of the Jews, and their rejection. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of encouragement, and as it were of command. Gregorian. Daily: Invitatory at Matins. [Epiphany: III. Nocturn.] Monastic. Daily: Invitatory at Matins. Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: II. Nocturn. [Christmas Day: III. Nocturn. Epiphany: III. Nocturn.] Parisian and Lyons. As Gregorian.

Antiphons.
In the Gregorian and identical uses the Antiphons to this Psalm recur as intercalations in the Psalm itself, are called Invitatories, and vary for every day and festival. Ambrosian. Let us heartily rejoice in the GOD of our salvation. [Christmas Day: This is the SAVIOUR, of Whom the Prophet spake; and this is the Lamb, of which Isaiah spake. Gabriel announced to the Virgin, let us worship Him, and serve Him. Epiphany: Come, every creature, let us worship the LORD, Who hath shined upon us, Whom the Prophets preached, from Moses unto John the Baptist. Y. To-day

CHRIST hath appeared, GOD of GOD, Light of Light.] Mozarabic. Let us come before the face of the LORD with thanksgiving,* and show ourselves glad in Him with Psalms.

The use of this Psalm as introductory to Divine Service is of very remote antiquity, in both the Eastern and Western Church. In the former it has for many centuries been abbreviated into a short invitatory or anthem based on the first, third, sixth, and seventh verses; while in the latter the Psalm itself has been retained in full, along with the invitatory. There are traces of its liturgical use in the Pseudo-Athanasius and in S. Augustine, and it had assumed its present position before the time of S. Benedict. Its mode of employment in the Temple Services is not accurately known, but it is used now in the synagogues of the Ashkenazin as the first of a series preparatory to the great Sabbath Psalm xcii. And on the Christian use of the Psalm Honorius of Autun observes in the Gemma Animæ, that the Precentor who begins the invitatory is the herald who summons the soldiers of the watch to mount guard, and when he has done his part, all join in singing the Venite as soldiers assembling in camp to praise their King. And then they apportion the watches amongst themselves, as they proceed to chant the three nocturns.

1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation. There is, however, one remarkable difference in the use of this Psalm on the Epiphany from its ferial employment. As a rule, it is not recited in the Vulgate, but in the version of the old Roman Psalter; but on the Epiphany the Vulgate is conformed to. For examples, see Vol. I., pp. 43, ff.

The Prophet invites us to a great banquet of rejoicing, not in the world, but in the LORD. And in saying, O come, he means that those who are far off are to draw near. But how can we be far off from Him Who is everywhere present? By unlikeness to Him, by an evil life, by evil habits. A man standing still in one spot draws near to GOD by loving Him, and by loving unrighteousness he withdraws from GOD; he does not move his feet, and yet he can both approach and retire, for our feet, in this journey, are our affections. Come then, ye Gentiles, who are far from the city of Jerusalem, who are in Babylon, the city of Satan, come from unbelief to faith, from the devil your seducer to CHRIST your SAVIOUR. Come, as sick men to a physician to obtain health, as scholars to their master to learn wisdom, as thirsty men to a fountain, as fugitives to a sanctuary, as blind men to the sun. Let us sing unto the Lord. Why then do we find it said, Blessed are they that mourn, and woe to you that laugh? Surely because they are blessed who mourn to the world, and woe is to them that laugh to the world, but blessed are they who exult unto the LORD, who know not how to be glad of rapine, of fraud, of their neighbours' tears. He exults unto the LORD who in word, deed, and work, exults not for himself, but for his Maker. In the strength of our salvation. The simplest comment on these words is the version of S. Jerome, who translates, to Jesus our Rock.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving: and show ourselves glad in him with psalms. For come before the LXX. and Vulgate have, much better, anticipate (προφθάσωμεν, præoccupemus) His face, that is, let us make haste to meet Him, not waiting till He sends to call us before Him. Not that we can in any way forestall GOD's grace and bounty to us, but that we may offer our thanksgiving with sufficient promptness to avoid the charge of ingratitude. Again, whereas the LXX. and Vulgate word in this clause is not thanksgiving, but confession, which may be either the confession of GOD's might and goodness, or of our own frailty and sin, the confession of praise or the confession of grief, we are bid, in this second sense, to come away from our sins, to come in penitence to GOD, before He comes to judgment. We cannot forestall the Searcher of hearts, Who knoweth our sins, and seeth our secret thoughts, and foreseeth things yet to come; but we can confess now, while there is hope of mercy, a time of pardon, a place of repentance, to our FATHER, that we feel not our Judge, when He cometh for the second time, remembering how often the face of GOD stands in Holy Writ for His wrath. And the reasons why such forestalling ought to be prompt are, first, that delay in confession when there is an opportunity for it, enhances sin, because the soul is kept just so much the

longer in the fetters of evil habit; next, that this continued habit makes the soul less able to resist the next temptation of Satan, and more liable to fall into fresh sins; and thirdly, that we cannot be sure, if we delay, that either the time or the capacity to repent will be granted us. And this idea we find in the Responsory of the Second Nocturn of the First Sunday in Lent: "Let us amend for the better those things wherein we have ignorantly sinned, lest suddenly forestalled (præoccupati) by the day of death, we seek time for repentance, and be not able to find it. And we may note that the phrase of coming before God's face is sometimes used in Holy Writ for offering sacrifice, as thus: "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? The chief constituent of the sacrifice of thanksgiving under the Mosaic code was an oblation of cakes of fine flour and wafer-bread, and thus we may justly see in this place a prophecy of the Sacrifice of the New Law, that Eucharistic oblation of praise and thanksgiving wherein CHRIST is Himself offered in a mystery to the FATHER. And show ourselves glad in Him with psalms.

We may take the words in their obvious literal sense of the continuous use of the Psalter in the public and private devotions of Christians, who begin with the praises of God before they ask for gifts to satisfy their needs; not like starving men who fall at once upon food set before them, ere they greet their host. But the majority of the Latins take psalms, as usual, to denote the combination of will and action in good works, because the word implies the use of an instrument as well as of the

voice. And we may be glad with psalms when we are alone, as well as when joining with others in the offices of the Church, saying, O come, all ye powers of my soul, my whole being, and all that is within me, especially my reason, memory, and will: let us come, and let us be glad together in the LORD.

3 For the LORD is a great GOD: and a great King above all gods. The force of this verse is somewhat weakened in all the versions, by their failing to give the precise point of the Hebrew, which is that Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the One supreme Deity, exalted not only above all the false gods of the heathen, but over all angels and spirits, which however superior in power and wisdom to man, are yet inferior to Him. The literal rendering is, "For JEHOVAH is a great El, and a great King over all Elohim." To us, the words teach the mystery of the Eternal SON, pointing out that our LORD, even in His mortal Body, is a great God, by reason of the hypostatic union, and also because He is the express Image of the FATHER, whence we find this very title given Him by the Apostle, saying, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." And observe how it is true of Him in a special sense, wherein it was not true of GOD as revealed under the Law, that He is a great King above all gods, for the Gospel has made successful war against idolatry amongst many lands and nations, which Judaism left quite unaffected; while, in turn, it has never itself been supplanted anywhere by polytheism; and CHRIST is, moreover, the King Whom all the gods, all those Saints and rulers of His Church whom He hath made partakers of Him, obey and love. Here the Roman Psalter adds a clause not in the Hebrew, LXX., or Vulgate: For the Lord will not repel His people, that Christian people which He hath purchased with His own Blood, will not reject it crying, praying, seeking, or knocking, to Him.

4 In his hand are all the corners of the earth: and the strength of the hills is his also.

If we take this verse and the following one as descriptive of the power of GOD over creation, there is no better commentary on them than the words of Isaiah: "He 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. But the fuller explanation is to take it as depending on the previous verse, and as pointing out that while various false gods are locally worshipped in special places, He only is LORD everywhere. And thus we shall see a reference here to the Catholic Church, no longer bounded by the narrow limits of a single people, but drawn from all the nations of the earth. This view derives especial force from the consideration that while there is one false creed, Buddhism, whose adherents numerically exceed Christians, yet it is practically limited to the east of Asia, to China, Japan, Thibet, and Ceylon; while the Gospel has spread into every part of the world, and covers an enormously larger

area of supremacy than any other creed, dominant as it is in Europe, America, and Australia, the belief of the Russian and English masters of half Asia, and pushing its frontier ever further to the north from the ends of Africa itself, to join at last the weak remnant of the ancient Egyptian Church. The strength (or height, A.V. of the hills is His also.

The words not only denote the empire of GOD over the most inaccessible and untrodden regions, but the overthrow of heathen temples, so often situated in high places, and the rearing of Christian shrines on the eminences of Tabor, Sinai, Athos, and many another famous hill. Mystically, all the corners of the earth may denote all the powers and faculties of man (a notion brought out better by the literal Hebrew, all the deep places of the earth), while the lofty mountains are types of the exalted citizen of heaven. Yet again, the earth is often put for men of earthly and grovelling minds, mountains for Saints lifted on high in contemplation of Divine things, alike subject to the sway of the same LORD, Who guides at His will the wealth and honours of earth, the rewards and glories of heaven.

5 The sea is his, and he made it : and his hands prepared the dry land. A. Gen. i. 2. It is a curious fact, noticed by some of the old commentators, that there is nothing said in the first chapter of Genesis about the creation of the sea, and from this circumstance, certain early heretics maintained that GOD was not its Maker. This error answers to the commonest mystical interpretation of the sea in this place, namely, that it denotes the Gentile nations, tossed about in the bitterness and barrenness of heathenism, whom the Jews, in their spiritual pride, refused to believe GOD's children and care. But He made them, as it is written: "Doubtless Thou art our FATHER, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O LORD, art our FATHER, our Redeemer." And His hands prepared the dry land. This land, differing from the sea in stability and in capacity of fruitfulness, denotes the Church, or any holy soul. It is dry, because without the grace of GOD it can do nothing, as land will not bear unless it be watered, but it gaspeth to Him as a thirsty ground. He formed (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), which means more than He made it, implying that He gave shape and beauty, and fulness, to that which before was "without form and void," by reason of Adam's sin.

6 O come, let us worship and fall down : and kneel before the LORD our Maker. Here the duty of bodily reverence to GOD is set before us, and the words denote a climax of humility; we are to worship, that is, to bend the head, as servants before their master, to fall down, as subjects acknowledging their king, to kneel as suppliants beseeching a favour. But the LXX. and Vulgate, instead of kneel, read weep, and on this word lies all the stress of the expositors. Cassiodorus observes that GOD calls His people first to rejoice, while they are as yet unacquainted with religion, lest they should be alarmed and repelled by its sorrows and austerities; but when they have once accepted the faith, He then summons them to repentance

for their sins. Nay, rather, observes a Saint, they are tears of joy, for gladness brings weeping, as well as sorrow,

Either because the LXX. read instead of , or because their own text ὀκλάσωμεν was accidentally altered into κλαύσωμεν. and then grief for our past sins is blended with the hope of blessing and glory to come. Some commentators, who take this psalm as having special reference to the Nativity of CHRIST, bid us see here a command to adore Him in the manger, undeterred by the tokens of mortality and lowliness around. We may well weep, even amidst our Christmas joy, in sympathy for the sorrows He came to bear, and for our own sins which laid such a burden upon His shoulders. And thus S. Augustine remarks: ”If women, when about to put on their attire, are careful to wash away any stains with water, why should not we still more wash away with tears the stains of our souls, when the Nativity of our LORD is coming to us?”

7 For he is the LORD our GOD : and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Note, remarks S. Augustine, the graceful change in the order of the words. It is not, as we might think more exact, the sheep of His pasture and the people of His hand. And that in order to teach us that we, even as people, are sheep in respect of GOD, needing Him as our Shepherd, capable of being satisfied with His green pastures only, and yet not unreasoning sheep, which must be driven with a staff, but guided with GOD’s own Hand, the very Hand which made them, and which is sedulous in its loving care to prevent any harm to the flock from the negligence, ignorance, or malice of those inferior shepherds, those pastors and teachers, to whom He commits, in a measure, the task of herding. He feeds us with bread from heaven now, as He fed our spiritual forefathers with manna in the wilderness; and He cares for us, as a shepherd for his flock, so that we need not do so for ourselves, but cast all our care on Him, and be like sheep in fruitfulness, patience, and innocence.

A. 8 To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts : 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 works.

To-day, that is, ”daily, while it is called to-day,” as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews comments, in one of his threefold citations of this verse; so long as the night has not come, so long as the door of mercy is not shut. To-day, in the time of grace, when He speaks to us by His SON, not by the Law. To-day, at once, not deferring till to-morrow. If ye will hear His voice, is the reply to the assertion in the previous verse, ”We are the sheep of His hand,” for the unerring test of CHRIST’s flock is laid down by Himself: ”My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” You call yourselves His sheep, prove your claim, then, by hearing His voice. And yet, as S. Bernard tells us, there is no difficulty at all in hearing it; on the contrary, the difficulty is to stop our ears effectually against it, so clear is

it in enunciation, so constant in appeal. Yet there are many who do not hear, from divers causes: because they are far off; because they are deaf; because they sleep; because they turn their heads aside; because they stop their ears; because they hurry away to avoid hearing; because they are dead; all of them types of various forms and degrees of unbelief. In all these ways the Jews sinned in refusing to hear the voice of the LORD JESUS; in all these ways we too sin, when we refuse or delay repentance. Satan's counsel, observes S. Basil the Great, is "To-day for me, to-morrow for GOD;" whereas, in the words of another Saint, He that hath promised pardon to repentance, hath not promised to-morrow to the sinner. And thus the heathen counsel is better than Satan's:

To-morrow's life is far too late, live thou to-day.

Harden not your hearts. For in so doing, you set yourselves in direct opposition to the will of GOD, which is to soften those hearts, in that He said, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew," to moisten the dry ground that it may bring forth the tender herb of grace; whereas it is said of sinners that their hearts are stony, and of Leviathan, the type of evil power, "His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone. As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation. We should perhaps do better by taking the leading words here as proper names, and rendering, As in Meribah, and as in the day of Massah. Some commentators argue hence a double sin, and a possible division amongst the rebellious Jews, referring the word provocation to their resistance to the authority of Moses, and temptation to their unbelief in the providence of GOD. Cardinal Hugo points out that the words which follow, in the wilderness, are an aggravation of guilt, because it was exactly there, in the absence of all external help, all human aid, that the thoughts of the Jews should have been most unwaveringly directed to the GOD Who had so wonderfully brought them out of Egypt.

He reminds us, too, that men who come out of the Egypt of sin or secularity, who begin a life of repentance or of monastic obligation, are at first in the wilderness, deserted by those they have left behind, not attaining yet to that they seek, and that in that stage of spiritual progress the risk of rebellion and unbelief in GOD is very great, the temptation to resist the pleadings of the HOLY GHOST incessant. When your fathers tempted Me. There is a stress on your fathers, implying that we are the same people which sinned in a former period of its history, and are therefore likely to yield to our besetting error, and to sin again. And we may tempt God in several ways: His mercy, by indevout and careless prayer; His patience, by continuance in sin; His righteousness, by desiring unjust revenge; His power, by lack of trust in Him during perils; His wisdom, by undertaking to teach others without previous study and meditation. Proved Me. This is more than tempting, which denotes the bare experiment; whereas proving implies its too complete success, inasmuch as the God Whose power they doubted, slew them all in the wilderness. And saw My

works. That is, although they saw them, and that during forty continuous years (which is the connection of the words in the Epistle to the Hebrews), yet they did not believe, and were never really subdued, but renewed their experiments after each miracle and each judgment.

10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said: It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways. This mode of reading the verse, which is that of the present Hebrew punctuation, is also that of the LXX. and Vulgate; while, as remarked above, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews joins on the words forty years to the previous verse, and inserts the word wherefore immediately after them, a reading which the Arabic version has adopted. There is, however, no real discrepancy between the two, since, on the one hand, the murmurings and rebellions of the Israelites were renewed at intervals during the whole time of their wanderings in the desert; and on the other, the wrath of God was continually provoked thereby. Grieved is hardly strong enough for , nor is the Vulgate offended much better. It ought rather to be loathed, implying their obstinate persistency in the foulness of sin, so as to inspire God's purity with disgust. The Roman Psalter has here a variant, I was close, (proximus) to this generation. Most of the commentators take this as meaning close in the sense that one who punishes is near the criminal, or as a teacher keeps beside an idle and refractory pupil, to compel his attention to his tasks. However, S. Augustine explains it differently, of God's continual presence in signs and miracles; while S. Bernard interprets it of an inward voice and inspiration. The ordinary reading exhibits to us the effect of God's anger; but this one supplies the cause; the ingratitude of the children of Israel

Alcuin. The Gloss. Genebrardus. Titelman. A. S. Bernard. de Convers. ii. Ric. Cenom. From taking the LXX. προσάχθισα as if derived from ὀχθή, and meaning "putting close to shore."

for God's unceasing watch over them. They do not fail to point out the mystical import of the number forty, repeated in the fasts of Elijah and of our LORD, and in the great forty days after Easter; and they tell us that as ten is the first limit we meet in computation, so that this number and its multiples give all the subsequent names to sums, it serves as the type of fulness; while four, as denoting either the seasons of the year or the quarters of the heavens, extends that fulness to all time and place, and thus forty years stand here for the entire of our earthly sojourn. One reminds us that there is a stress on years, because the journey of Elijah teaches us that the Israelites could have passed through the desert in forty days, had they only been obedient. And whereas this generation applies literally to the six hundred thousand who came up out of Egypt, and then by accommodation to all living men at any time while it is called To-day, there is also a special fitness in taking it of the Jews after the Passion of CHRIST; for the interval which lay between that and the

final destruction of Jerusalem was almost precisely forty years, up to which time the door of hope was still open for Israel, and it was still to-day, ere that terrible night set upon the Temple worship. They do always err in their heart. It is even stronger in the Hebrew, They are ever wanderers in heart.

It is a great deal more forcibly said, observes a mediæval commentator, than if it were, They err in their act, for the error of an act has a definite end, whereas the error of the will has no end. Death, at any rate, puts an end to the evil-doing of a sinner, not because he has lost the will to sin, but because he has no longer the power to do so. For they have not known My ways. The word known does not here signify that acquaintance with God's ways which may be gathered from reading or meditation, but only the knowledge which comes of assiduous walking in the ways themselves, that is, practical holiness and well-doing. And the ways of God are all reducible to one, that is, CHRIST JESUS Himself, "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; moreover, they all lead to the same heavenly country. They are one way in their construction, in their king, in their goal; they are many ways according to the diversities of the operations of grace, according to the variety of callings and temperaments amongst those who journey home through the wilderness.

11 Unto whom I sware in my wrath: that they should not enter into my rest. A.

This He did when the spies brought back the evil report of the Land of Promise, and the congregation prepared to elect a leader to bring them back into Egypt. It is a terrible alarm, comments S. Augustine. We began with rejoicing, but the Psalm ends with awful dread. It is a great thing that God should speak, how much more that God should swear! Thou hast reason to fear a man who hath sworn, lest he should, for his oath's sake, do aught against his will, how much more to fear GOD, Who cannot swear rashly. Let no one say in his heart, That which He promiseth is true, that which He threatens is false. As certain as thou oughtest to be of rest, happiness, eternity, immortality, if thou keep His commandments, so certain shouldst thou be of destruction, of the burning of everlasting fire, of damnation with the devil, if thou despise GOD's commandments. He hath sworn that these shall not enter into His rest, and yet "it remaineth that some must enter therein," for it could not be designed for no occupant. And this rest which meant the earthly Canaan to the Jews of old, means for us that Sabbatism of the heavenly country whereof the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us. Even here on earth, before reaching that blessed land, there remaineth a rest for the people of GOD, whereof the weekly festival is a type and pledge.

There is the rest from sin, common to all the righteous, and the rest from bodily cares and temptations, achieved by the contemplative Saints, while, crowning all, is the rest of the blessed, whence all sorrow is banished for evermore. "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief," and be included under the terrible oath of exclusion; and in prayer

for grace that it may not be so, "O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the LORD our Maker."

Glory be to the FATHER, the Great King above all gods; glory be to the SON, the Strength of our salvation; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD, the glorious salvation of all people, graciously look upon the sheep of Thy pasture, and bestowing upon them the salt of prudence, vouchsafe to bring them unhurt into everlasting rest. (5.) Coming before Thy face, O LORD, with confession, and rejoicing in psalms unto Thee with fitting melody, we worship and fall down before Thee, beseeching Thee with inward weeping and sighing, that as Thou hast made us, and art our GOD, Thou wouldst as a merciful LORD protect Thy people, and as a careful Shepherd tend the sheep of Thy pasture, and grant grace to them for whom Thou didst lay down Thy life. (11.) O LORD, Who wast close unto Thy people for the number of forty years, grant unto Thy Church which Thou hast purchased with the price of Thy Blood, that she may not err in heart, but fill her with the flooding of the HOLY GHOST, and join her unto Thee in everlasting blessedness. (11.)

By the gift of Thy bounty, let us rejoice and be glad in Thee, O GOD of our salvation, and obtain from Thee the blessing of continual peace; grant that we may know Thy way, and passing through it, may, as Thou hast sworn, enter into Thy rest. (1.)

Psalm 96

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Song of David, when the house was built after the captivity.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, reigning from the Tree among the nations, is to be shown in His second coming. The Voice of the Apostles to the people, and concerning the confusion of the idols and the calling of the Church. The Voice of the Church calling. The Prophet, touching the first and second coming of CHRIST. VEN. BEDE. As to the letter, the time signifies that when the Temple was restored at Jerusalem on the loosing of the Babylonian captivity. But spiritually the destroyed house is built when after the captivity of sin, the soul recovers the way of truth. For that house, to wit, the Church universal, wherein CHRIST dwells, is always being built up with living stones, until the number of the elect shall be fulfilled at the end of the world. In the first part of the Psalm the Prophet exhorts the general body to sing unto the LORD, and to preach the coming of the LORD'S Incarnation throughout the world, because He is Very LORD above all Gods. O sing unto the Lord, &c. In the second place, he warns the various nations first to offer themselves, then to discharge the office of preaching, and he makes mention of both comings of the LORD, as well that wherein He was judged by the world, as that wherein He is to judge the world. Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARRA. The Calling of the Gentiles, and the Coming of CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of counsel, and, as it were, of command.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Friday: Matins. [Christmas Day: II. Nocturn. Circumcision: II. Nocturn. Epiphany, Trinity Sunday, Holy Name, Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, Sacred Heart, Feasts B.V.M., Michaelmas Day, Comm. of Virgins, Dedication of Church: III. Nocturn.] Monastic. Friday: II. Nocturn. [As Gregorian, and also Ascension Day and Pentecost: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: II. Nocturn. Parisian. Monday: Terce. [Christmas Day and Epiphany: III. Nocturn.]

Antiphons.

Gregorian. Sing unto the LORD, and praise His Name. [Christmas Day: Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad before the LORD, for He cometh. Circumcision: Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the face of the LORD, for He cometh. Epiphany: Worship the LORD Alleluia: in His holy hall. Alleluia. Trinity Sunday: The FATHER is love; the SON is grace; the HOLY SPIRIT is communion, O Blessed Trinity. Holy Name: Sing unto the LORD, and praise His Name, be telling of His salvation from day to day. Feasts of the Cross: We adore Thee, O CHRIST, and bless Thee, because by Thy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world. Sacred Heart: Be telling of His salvation from day to day. Feasts B. V. M.: Rejoice, O Virgin Mary thou only hast slain all heresies throughout the world. Michaelmas Day: Michael, the Archangelic Angel, messenger of GOD for righteous souls. Alleluia. Comm. of Virgins: I am black but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, therefore the King loved me, and brought me into His chamber. Dedication: The temple of the LORD is holy, it is GOD's structure, it is GOD's building.]

Monastic. As Gregorian. [Ascension Day: Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad, for the LORD cometh. Alleluia. Dedication: Jacob set up a stone for a pillar pouring oil upon it.] Ambrosian. As preceding Psalm. Parisian. Bring offerings and worship the LORD, for He hath corrected the round world. [Christmas Day: As Gregorian. Epiphany: Declare His honour unto the heathen and His wonders unto all people.] Lyons. As Gregorian. Mozarabic. Tell the good tidings * from day to day, of the salvation of the LORD. 1 O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the whole earth. This new song, framed, as the LXX. title informs us, for the ceremony of dedicating the Second Temple after the Captivity, is a simple recasting of the latter part of David's own psalm for the bringing up of the Ark out of the house of Obed-Edom to the tabernacle in Jerusalem. The alterations are very slight, and do not introduce any fresh ideas, and the absence of any special reference in the earlier draft of it to the Ark, or in this to the new building, has led the Rabbins to interpret it of a yet future Temple to be erected by Messiah Himself; which accords precisely with the spiritual application to the kingdom of CHRIST insisted on by the early Christian expositors on precisely the same grounds. S. Chrysostom applies it directly to the Church Militant, other Greek

A. S. Chrysost. Hom. in Luc. ii. 13. Ps. cxxxvii. 4. D. C. S. Irenæus. S. Bruno Carth. S. John xlii. 34.

Fathers to the two comings of CHRIST, but the majority agree in taking it of the gradual rise in the heavens of that building of lively stones, made without hands, eternal, the Church Triumphant. This is the City of GOD, which rises, like the walls of Thebes in the Grecian legend, to the sound of sweet music; built up with song, founded on belief, raised high by hope, completed in love, dedicated at the end of the world. The Targum assumes the Psalmist to address the heavenly spirits,

inasmuch as it adds the words exalted Angels to the first half of the verse. Hence Christian expositors have seen here a call for that burst of new song which was heard by the shepherds of Bethlehem on the morning of the Nativity; and that, whereas it was not possible, it may be not lawful, for the Jew to sing any of the old songs of the LORD in a strange land, this new song, unrestrained by any such scruple or precept, was to be chanted in every quarter of the globe, by every nation of the world, wherefore is added, Sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth. It is a new song for all us Gentiles, in that we sing the song of Baptism, which brings us regeneration; of repentance, which cleanses us afresh when we fall; of glory yet to come, when all things shall be made new. It is new, in celebrating the Incarnation, because then GOD created a new thing, in that a woman compassed a man.

Our old songs were those of pride, of gluttony, of luxury, in hope of gain, prosperity, or harm to others; our new song is of praise, reverence, and obedience, and love of GOD, in newness of life, in the spirit that quickeneth, no longer in the letter that killeth, but keepeth that new commandment, that we love one another, not with the narrow patriotism and fellow-feeling of a small tribe, or a mere national Church, but with a citizenship which embraces all the whole earth.

2 Sing unto the LORD, and praise his Name: be telling of his salvation from day to day. In this triple injunction to sing unto the Lord, they bid us see the worship of the Blessed Trinity, and one further tells us to note that there are, moreover, just three new songs in the Gospel, added to the ancient Psalter and Canticles; the Benedictus, Magnificat, and Nunc Dimittis, daily sung in the Church. And praise His Name. Herein the Unity of Essence is denoted, as the Trinity of Persons by the threefold mention of the LORD which precedes. So in the Breviary Preces at Compline we have the V. ”Let us bless the FATHER, and the SON, with the HOLY GHOST,” followed by the R. ”Let us praise and highly exalt Him for ever.” It is not enough to sing, unless we also bless the LORD’S Name, for it is possible to have songs wherein that Name is mentioned without reverence or love. We bless His Name by a pure and holy life, because thereby we make His honour known to aliens, and bring them to submit themselves to His sway;

and it may be that here only His Name, and not Himself in very deed is specified, because the WORD was not yet made flesh; and in that case the Name we are bidden to praise is that holy one, JESUS. Be telling of His salvation. The LXX. using here the specific term εὐαγγελίζεσθε, evangelize, preach the Gospel, and the Roman Psalter, rendering this as closely as it can, bene nunciate, fix definitely for us the spiritual meaning of the verse, as directed first to the Apostles, and then to all preachers of the kingdom of CHRIST. And as we have the Holy Name itself hid for us in the Hebrew word here for His salvation , we can be at no loss to tell

what is that salvation, or as the Chaldee reads, that redemption, which is to be preached. From day to day. For He is Light of Light, Very GOD of Very GOD; so

that when we preach the FATHER truly, we must preach the SON, and when we preach the SON, must preach the FATHER. Praise the LORD JESUS always in the light of the day, not in the darkness of sin, but in the brightness of virtue. Let Him, the Sun of Righteousness, always rise in thy soul, that the new light may ever spring up in thee. Praise Him from day to day, in the Old Testament and in the New, two days which make one light, in both of which He shines. Praise Him not in the Old alone, like Jews, nor in the New alone, like Manichees, but remember that the Apostles went out two by two as preachers of His Gospel. Praise Him from strength to strength, from one bright lesson of power and holiness to another yet brighter, pressing on in the way of salvation, lest when ye have preached to others, ye become yourselves castaways; praise Him, and tell of His salvation, literally, each day as it comes, that none may rise and set without His kingdom being extended; praise Him from the day of the Gospel to the yet brighter day of the Resurrection.

3 Declare his honour unto the heathen : and his wonders unto all people. Some will have it that honour, or rather glory, as A.V., LXX., and Vulg., here denotes the Godhead of CHRIST, as salvation tells us of the work of His Manhood; but the more usual exposition, from S. Justin Martyr downwards, has been of the Passion, wherein the hour came that the Son of Man was glorified, that His people might thenceforth glory in nothing save His Cross. The wonders of which the Psalmist speaks are not only the miracles of healing and other works of CHRIST recorded in the Gospels, but more especially His Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension. And one who was himself a great preacher draws three salutary lessons for preachers from this verse. It is His Glory which should be proclaimed, not the learning, ability, and eloquence of the orator who professes to speak for Him; it is His glory, the The Gloss. Hugo Card. loving beauty, the attractiveness of His Gospel, the lavish promises to repentant sinners, the blessedness of heaven which should be the chief themes of discourse; not threats, menaces, sermons on hell and torment, to affright men, and at best make them God’s trembling slaves, not His loving friends. The preaching is to be unto all people, in obscure country districts, amongst unpolished and illiterate congregations, and not to be confined, as fashionable preachers like to confine it, to the cultivated and critical audiences of the capital.

4 For the LORD is great, and cannot worthily be praised: he is more to be feared than all gods. A. It is of that LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who came to us as a little Child, that these words are spoken. Despise Him not when little, understand how great He is. He became little, because ye were little; but let His greatness be understood, and you shall become great in Him. So uprises the building of the House, so the very stones for the edifice increase and are lifted up. Cannot worthily be praised. The Hebrew is simply, greatly to be praised; but the Prayer Book here is trying to render the force of the Vulgate, laudabilis nimis, that is, praiseworthy, too much for our faculties; for what, asks S. Augustine, can a little tongue do towards praising

the Great One? In saying too much, he suggests the thought, Ponder what I cannot utter, and when thou hast pondered, it will be all too little. ”O LORD,” exclaims S. Anselm, ”Thou art not only He than Whom no greater can be the object of thought, but Thou art something which is greater than any thought.” And therefore He is to be feared above all gods, which are but the creatures of man’s thoughts, those idols of the heathen which He can overthrow, or those earthly potentates whom He sets up and pulls down at His will.

5 As for all the gods of the heathen, they are but idols: but it is the LORD that made the heavens. Idols. The literal Hebrew is nothings, (Symm. ἀνυπάρχοντος) mere phantasms having no real existence. And so the Apostle: ”We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.” But the LXX. and Vulgate translate it demons, a word implying less dignity than that of a God, and therefore suited to the graven images, the deified men, and the sacred animals of heathenism; implying besides the notion of evil and fraud, as connected with the ancient oracles, which has been bound up with that word ever since the proclamation of Christianity. But it is the Lord that made the heavens: a claim on behalf of His Almighty power exceeding that made for their divinities by any of the heathen nations known to the ancient Jews; inasmuch as they either accepted the heaven as itself a god, or left its origin shrouded in doubt, unable as they were to rise to the height of conceiving GOD as the Creator of the universe. Mystically they explain, as usual, the heavens in this verse to denote the Apostles, and other holy preachers, superior in spiritual might to the evil spirits against which they contend.

6 Glory and worship are before him: power and honour are in his sanctuary.
As the previous verse told us of the supreme power of GOD, so this one speaks of the regal pomp and dignity which attends Him, either in His heavenly court, where He is encompassed by the shining ranks of the angelic hierarchy, or in His earthly Temple, with its rich gifts and stately ceremonial. The Vulgate turns the words a little differently, so as to give room for additional matter of reflection: Confession and beauty are in His sight, holiness and magnificence in His sanctification. And S. Augustine, taking the first word as signifying acknowledgment of sin, points out how it precedes beauty, how it is the washing and purifying of a disfigured face, necessary before we can recognize the true grace of the features, or loveliness of the complexion. He also bids us observe how holiness, as the only way to heaven, is the precursor of magnificence, which can be attained there alone in His sanctification, that is, amongst the glorified Saints; whereas those who seek to be magnificent first, and without holiness, do but fall into destruction. In our Country, there are in full perfection that confession of GOD’s praise and glory which we make so imperfectly here in the way, and that inner beauty of soul which is now marred and defaced by sin; because in His sight, in the Beatific Vision, there

can be nothing defective, since the holiness and magnificence thereof surpass all words and imagination.

A further meaning, closer to the letter, is the absence in the Gospel rites not only of the obscenities which attended the worship of many heathen deities, but also of the grossness and coarseness which necessarily beset even the sacrifices of the Law, making a shambles of the very Temple itself, that sanctuary which the Psalmist here lauds. This word, it may be noted in passing, is one of the chief variations from the first draught of the Psalm by David, wherein, as there was as yet no fixed Temple, we find only the term place. Two other explanations of the sanctuary, closely akin to each other, see in it the human Body of the LORD JESUS, endowed with spotless purity and miraculous power; or the bodies of His Saints, hallowed by His indwelling and that of the HOLY GHOST, and thus showing, in their degree, those attributes of His humanity. Euthymius, explaining the words of any

A. Christian churches dedicated to the service of GOD, reminds us of the cleanliness, purity, and costliness which befit them, an interpretation which agrees with the version of Apollinarius here: Pureness and stately glory fit His shrine. 7 Ascribe unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people : ascribe unto the LORD worship and power. 8 Ascribe unto the LORD the honour due unto his Name : bring presents, and come unto his courts.

There is a peculiar force, observes an early commentator, in this phrase, kindreds of the people, much more than if we had the word peoples alone; for in every nation there are at all times strangers, aliens, sojourners abiding permanently or for a time, but not reckoned amongst the natives; while the phrase here includes all such, and provides that no one shall be shut out because of his origin. And as it was the custom of the Jews to come up on great festivals to the Temple in Jerusalem, literally divided into companies according to their tribes, so all the nations of the world are to do the like spiritually, by flocking into the Church of CHRIST, and that with the triple ascription of glory and worship to the Eternal Trinity, as in the song of the redeemed in the Apocalypse. The kindreds of the people heard and obeyed this call, when in the Epiphany the wise men ascribed glory to their GOD, offering Him frankincense, power to their King, with gold, honour to the mighty dead, with myrrh for His embalming. We can do the like, in true repentance for our sins, giving glory to GOD by contrition, as it is written, ”My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD GOD of Israel, and make confession unto Him; power by actual confession, made in the strength of GOD’s grace, alone mighty enough to deliver us from the bonds of sin; and honour in making satisfaction, fitly the honour of His Name (A.V.

because His credit is impeached when any of His professed followers fail in their duties. Bring presents. It is rather, Take an offering, the minchah, or unbloody sacrifice of fine flour. And for us this means two things: the oblation of the Holy

Eucharist, the one sacrifice left when all others were abolished, and the living oblation of ourselves, our souls and bodies, the dedication of all our faculties and powers, the offering of prayer, confession, fasting, and almsgiving to GOD in His courts, that is, His local Churches here in earth, the Religious houses of His contemplative servants, or the inner recesses of our own hearts when we withdraw into silence and meditation.

Jansen. Gand. Mal. i. 11. 9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness : let the whole earth stand in awe of him. In the beauty of holiness. There are three interpretations of this clause. First is that of the A.V. margin, in His glorious sanctuary, which is practically identical with the LXX. and Vulgate, holy court; next, that it means bowing before His awful majesty, taking the words as descriptive of His attributes; thirdly, and most correctly, Worship the LORD in the sacred vestments, in the solemn attire of the priesthood. So we read of the High Priest, Simon Bar-Onias, "When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy altar, he made the garment of holiness honourable." And in calling on the Gentiles to act thus, the Psalmist does not merely foretell the ceremonial usages of the Church, but that mystery of which they are but the type, the being clothed with the gifts of the SPIRIT, and with the righteousness of CHRIST, our Great High Priest.

Accepting the first explanation, we are met by the contrast of the plural courts of the previous verse, and the one court of this, and of this they give us two expositions; that we pass from the many Patriarchs, seers, and Prophets of the Old Dispensation, each being but an imperfect type, to the fulfilment of all in the One Man Who is the tabernacle of GOD under the New Covenant; and that we pass from the outer courts, the Churches militant and local here on earth, into one vast sanctuary of the Church universal and triumphant in heaven. Let all the earth stand in awe of Him. This is a second proclamation of the herald, as the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving begins, that there may be no sound to break the solemn stillness of the rite. So we read in the Prophet, "The LORD is in His holy temple : let all the earth keep silence before Him." But the LXX. and Vulgate read, Let all the earth be moved before His face. And this is explained first of the stir and expectation which preceded the first coming of CHRIST, so that the world was moved and shaken from its deeply rooted error, and turned to the LORD; whereof the earthquake at the Crucifixion was a type. Then it is taken also of the second coming of CHRIST to judgment; and finally of the alarm raised in the souls of earthly and carnal sinners, and the thought of the wrath to come, so that they turn to repentance, in fear and trembling of heart.

10 Tell it out among the heathen that the LORD is King : and that it is he that hath made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved; and how that he shall judge the people righteously. In the time of S. Justin Martyr, and for a long time

subsequently, the reading in the first member of this verse was, The Lord hath reigned from the Wood, and that Saint explicitly charges the Jews with having quite recently cut out the latter words, as well as some expressions in Ezra and Jeremiah, as being too distinctly prophetic of CHRIST. Certain it is that while Tertullian, S. Cyprian, and Lactantius, as well as S. Augustine, adopted them, they were not to be found in the Hebrew MSS. which S. Jerome consulted, and Genebrardus inclines to the view that they were a paraphrase introduced by the Seventy into the Greek text. The original reference, assuming their genuineness, was probably to the wood of the Ark of the Covenant, from which went forth the might which overthrew Dagon, the Philistine idol, and brought about the restoration of the Ark itself to Israel. The later reference, to the Cross, is embodied by the Church in the Passiontide hymn:

S. Venant. Fortunat. The Hymn, Vexilla Regis. Fulfilled is all that David told In true prophetic song of old; Amidst the nations GOD, saith he, Hath reigned and triumphed from the Tree. It was amongst the heathen that these tidings were to be spread, as the Jews refused to hear them; and the proclamation of the LORD as King denotes not the beginning of His power and rule, but the recognition of it in faith and worship by His new subjects. And observe that it was a heathen governor who made this proclamation by the very form of that title which he set up on the Cross, in despite of the remonstrances of the Jews, He hath made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved. They agree in explaining this of that Church which is firm and steadfast, because founded on Himself, the Rock. The LXX. and Vulgate read He hath righted (LXX.) or corrected (Vulg.) the round world; whence they argue that the Psalmist does not here speak of the first creation of nature, but of the new creation of grace, whereby that which had been injured was corrected and made good anew; that which was out of shape brought into a perfect sphere. CHRIST came that He might correct mankind (aforetime corrupted,) that it might never be moved. His Cross is the pillar of mankind, and on that pillar His

Otto, in his edition of S. Justin, traverses this statement, and alleges, without a particle of evidence, that the words are a Christian interpolation, not a Jewish excision. The preciseness of another of S. Justin's charges, that they had in some synagogues cut out Jer. xi. 19, but that it was retained in other copies, seems to establish the accuracy of his information, especially as he expressly says that he will quote no instances of the kind which all the Jews agree in denying, but only such as he can conclusively prove. house is reared; that house which is built on the foundation of those Apostles whom He corrected, after their doubt, by His Resurrection, and stablished firmly by the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost, so that they were never moved again. He shall judge the people righteously. It is not spoken of the Second Coming only, but of the first also, as the words denote the whole course of CHRIST's providential government, the absolute righteousness of the laws which He has laid down in the Gospel for the guidance of mankind.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is. 12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD. The Chaldee explains the first clause, Let the Angelic hosts rejoice, and the righteous upon earth be glad; and a favourite Christian explanation sees in the heavens the Apostles and other Gospel preachers, and in the earth their hearers thirstily drinking in the rain of doctrine; while the sea denotes sinners, restless, bitter, and barren, and the fulness (A.V.) of it the proud and wealthy, who despise the Gospel. The field is the precise contrast to the sea, being level, stable, fruitful, and thus a type of the lowly Saints who are diligent in good works, and especially the first Jewish converts, as already brought unto salvation, while the trees of the wood are the yet unreclaimed and wild stocks of the Gentiles. The heavens rejoiced at the Nativity of CHRIST, because of His Divine nature, and showed their gladness by the shining of a star and the songs of the Angels; the earth was glad because of His Manhood; the sea, and all waters, because of their hallowing as the medium of Baptism, the fields, because of His presence in

Over whose acres walked those blessed feet Which ’eighteen’ hundred years ago were nailed For our advantage on the bitter Cross; Henry IV., i. 1. while all the trees of the wood rejoiced in that one of them was to be wrought into the instrument of man’s redemption. And after all, there is no better interpretation of the words than the literal one, which sees the exultation of the universe in the appearing of its Creator, as we read in that marvellous, yet unconscious Gentile prophecy of His Nativity: Aspice, convexo nutantem pondere mundum, Terrasque, tractusque maris cælumque profundum: Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia sæclo. See the world nodding with its convex weight, The lands, the sweeps of sea, the vaulted sky : See how all things in this new time are glad. The same idea recurs in many hymns, especially for Paschaltide, culminating in the Alleluatic Sequence. Here is an example, less beautiful, but also less known:

The Hymn, Ite noctes, ite nubes. Away, O night, away, O cloud, Ye stars of mourning, flee away; Let heaven and earth rejoice aloud, And depths beneath as well as they; Let air and water join their voice, And all the finny tribes rejoice. Let praise be heard from woods and fields, And from the groves with joyance gay; Let all things that the meadow yields Blend with the laud glad rivers pay; Let hills and vales the strain prolong, Buds, flowers and fountains, swell the song. Let praise by rocks and floods be paid, And all things CHRIST the LORD extol, Our foes and barriers low are laid, And conquered Hell bewails its fall; The broken bar gives joy to earth, And all the Fathers join her mirth. 13 For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth : and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth.

In the twofold use of the words He cometh, they see a reference to both Advents of CHRIST, that in which He came to judge between us and the enemy who held us in

bondage, against whom He gave sentence, casting the prince of this world out; and that wherein He shall come again for the distribution of rewards and punishments, according as His conditions of salvation have been accepted or rejected. Some too distinguish between the world and the people, as denoting Gentiles and Jews. He will judge in righteousness, as without any partiality or acceptance of persons, and in truth, because He knows all things, and cannot be deceived; and yet more, because He fulfils His true promises made to His people, who shall be received into everlasting glory when the world is judged, and will therefore rejoice before the LORD, flourishing as green olive-trees, no longer in the wild wood, but in the Paradise of heavenly bliss.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is more to be feared than all gods; glory be to the Son, Who reigneth from the Tree; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the beauty of the holiness of GOD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O GOD, the Maker of heaven, Creator of earth, to Whom Ludolph. all the earth payeth the melody of a new song, we beseech Thee, that as we humbly confess Thee reigning from the Tree, so leaving behind us all Gentile error, we may with keen perception await the glory of Thy future coming. (5.) O GOD, Maker of heaven, and Creator of earth, to Whom Ludolph. all the earth payeth the melody of a new song, we pray Thee, that Thy people, obedient unto Thee, may persevere in righteousness and truth, and that we who have sinned through negligence may be mercifully corrected by Thee. (1.) Let all the earth sing a new song unto Thee, O LORD, because Thou hast redeemed the whole world through the Blood of Thy SON our LORD JESUS CHRIST; so that we, who are buried with Him in His death, may rejoice together with Him in unbounded joy. (11.)

Let the multitude of the redeemed sing unto Thee. Thou hasst wrought new wonders; new light hath sprung forth from the Virgin; which, however, was not new unto the Godhead, but was new in the display of an unwonted marvel, the new mystery of regeneration, whereby Thou renewest the world; new kinds of power in the healing of the sick, a new mode of humility and patience amidst the pride of the oppressors, a new and wondrous kind of power in the glory of the Resurrection, a new exercise of Thy Majesty displayed to human sight, when Thou borest very Man to the heights of heaven. Grant, on behalf of them for whom Thou, O glorious Artist, hast wrought such new marvels, that they may be followers of Thy steps and co-heirs of Thy glory, and that Thou wouldst mingle our voices with the applaudings of the Saints in the melody of song. (11.)

O GOD, Who hast made the heavens, and art terrible above all gods; grant that we, with the help of Thy mercy, may appease Thy face with the beauty of confession,

that purified from the defilement of our sins, we may with pure mind and voice alway sing unto Thee, O LORD. (1.)

Psalm 97

TITLE. LXX.: To David, when his land was constituted. Vulgate: To this David, when his land was restored.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, proclaimed by the voices of the heavens, is shown to the nations in the flesh. The Voice of the Church concerning the Advent of CHRIST. For Praise. A Prophecy. The Voice of the Church concerning the Advent of CHRIST, or the Voice of the Apostles to believers. A Prophecy touching the future condemnation of the ungodly, and glorifying of the righteous. The pomp of GOD as King is described. The Voice of the Church at the Advent of the LORD. VEN. BEDE. To David himself, is referred to CHRIST: and the land restored is understood as either the Resurrection of the flesh which He took of the Virgin, or any sinners who return to Him after their sins; as was done in the case of those Jews who washed away with penitence the sacrilege of the LORD'S Crucifixion. In the first portion of the Psalm, the Prophet, describing the powers of the LORD in His Resurrection by various modes of proclamation, chides the worshippers of idols with merited rebuke. The Lord is King, the earth may be glad. Secondly, he directs his words to the LORD, rejoicing that the Church believes in her Author, and exhorting the faithful to rejoice in the LORD, because He is wont to deliver them from the oppression of the ungodly. Sion heard of it and rejoiced.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David. He foretells in it the Advent of CHRIST, and also hints at His last appearing. EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. A hymn of the Kingdom of CHRIST, concerning His Second Coming. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of Exhortation, as it were of command, and of glorying in the LORD.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Friday: Matins. [Circumcision, Epiphany, Holy Name, Ascension, Transfiguration, Trinity Sunday, Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, Five Wounds, Nails and Spear, Sacred Heart, Feasts B.V.M., Michaelmas Day, All Saints, Common of Apostles, and Common of Virgins: III. Nocturn.] Monastic. As Gregorian. [Christmas Day, and as Gregorian.] Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: II. Nocturn. [Christmas Day: II. Nocturn. Circumcision: Matins. Epiphany:

III. Nocturn. Easter Eve: Matins.] Gregorian. As preceding Psalm. [Circumcision: In the beginning, and before the worlds, the WORD was GOD, and He is born to-day the SAVIOUR of the world. Epiphany: Worship GOD. Alleluia, all ye Angels of His, Alleluia. Ascension: He is exalted, Alleluia, far above all gods, Alleluia. Trinity Sunday: The FATHER is true, the SON is truth, the HOLY GHOST is truth. O Blessed Trinity. Transfiguration: There is sprung up a light for the Righteous, and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted. Holy Name: According to Thy Name, O LORD, so is Thy praise unto the world's end: Thy right hand is full of righteousness. Sacred Heart: Worship Him, all ye Angels of His, Sion heard of it, and rejoiced. Feasts B.V.M.: Grant that I may praise thee, O hallowed Virgin; give me strength against thy foes. Michaelmas Day: There was given unto him much incense, that he might burn it upon the golden altar, which is before the eyes of the LORD. All Saints: O ye that love the LORD, rejoice in the LORD, and give thanks for a remembrance of His holiness. Common of Apostles: There is sprung up a light for the righteous, Alleluia, and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted, Alleluia. Common of Virgins: Draw me after Thee, * we will run after the savour of Thine ointments. Thy Name is as ointment poured out.]

Monastic. As Gregorian. [Christmas Day, as Circumcision. Trinity Sunday: In the FATHER abideth eternity, in the SON equality, in the HOLY GHOST the union of eternity and equality.] Ambrosian. As Psalm xcv. [Christmas Day and Epiphany: The heavens have declared the righteousness of the LORD: and all the people have seen His glory. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Circumcision: Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and that delight in vain gods. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Easter Eve: Horror hath come upon the heavens, day hath fled into night, the moon is darkened with the colour of blood.] Parisian. O ye that love the LORD, see that ye hate the thing that is evil: the LORD preserveth the souls of His Saints. [Christmas Day: There is sprung up a light for the righteous, and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted. Epiphany: The heavens have declared His righteousness, and all the people have seen His glory.]

1 The LORD is King, the earth may be glad thereof: yea, the multitude of the isles may be glad thereof.

This Psalm as one of the post-Captivity series, begins with a glad proclamation of the restored sovereignty of GOD over Israel, displayed in the overthrow of the heathen power of Babylon, and the revival of the Temple worship. It declares that the LORD has shown Himself stronger than those kings of the earth who warred against Sion, so that His people, however threatened with any calamity by earthly tyrants, can with a sure confidence trust in a King mightier than any of Eusebius Cæsarien. A. them. Hence its deeper spiritual meaning points to the kingdom of CHRIST, as manifested in His Nativity, and yet more in His Resurrection, when the yoke of the enemy of souls was broken off the neck of mankind; and to be

manifested once again in greater power at His second Advent. The earth may be glad thereof. Not the narrow territory of Judæa alone, but the whole face of the world and all the dwellers therein. Tertullian explains the earth to denote especially the bodies of the Saints, to which such blessings come by reason of CHRIST's victory. Again, the phrase may stand for the whole body of the Church Militant here on earth now, of the Church Triumphant hereafter in the Land that is very far off.

In this case, the multitude of the isles, literally denoting the islands of the Mediterranean Sea, (and perhaps also those of the Indian Ocean, standing for all unknown and heathen countries,) will here signify the local Churches, described as isles, because they are howled around by the waves of manifold temptation; yet just as an island, however it may be buffeted by the roaring billows, is not broken thereby, but rather breaks their force by its resistance: so the Churches of GOD which sprang up everywhere in the midst of persecutions raging about them, remained unbroken, and now rise high above the waters of a calm and glassy sea. S. Gregory the Great, taking the earth, the solid land, to denote the assembly of the teaching Church, the firm belief of the Doctors, explains the isles as the multitude of believing souls firm in the midst of a sea of troubles, parted from earth and its allurements. In the literal reference to the islands of the Ægean Sea, we may bear in mind that strange legend recorded by Eusebius, that at the moment when CHRIST died upon the Cross, a voice was heard from the Isle of Paxo, exclaiming in a loud voice, "Great Pan is dead," and that the pilot of a passing ship was commanded to make proclamation of these words at a certain point: whereupon a sound as of the wailing of a great multitude was heard, and the heathen oracles ceased. --- --- L. Tertull. de Resurr. L. Agellius. A. S. Greg. M. in 1 Sam.

xvi. 8. Hugo Card. L. Præparat. Evang. v. 9. Plutarch. De Orac. Defect.

E.B. Browning, *The Dead Pan*. 'Twas the hour when One in Sion, Hung for love's sake on the Cross— When His brow was chill with dying, And His soul was faint with loss: When His priestly Blood dropped downward, And His kingly eyes looked throneward— Then, Pan was dead. By the love He stood alone in, His sole Godhead rose complete; And the false gods fell down moaning, Each from off his golden seat— All the false gods with a cry Rendered up their deity— Pan, Pan was dead. 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat.

The first and obvious meaning of the earlier clause of the verse is the invisible majesty of God, Who dwelleth in light unapproachable, and whose revelation of Himself to Israel was first in the pillar of cloud, out of which He looked when He troubled the host of the Egyptians, and then when He gave the Law from Sinai in the midst of darkness and thunderings. On the mystical import of these clouds and darkness, themselves brighter and more resplendent than any natural light,

the Pseudo-Dionysius dwells, as denoting, amidst much else, the abstraction from all earthly thoughts and sights which is necessary for perfect contemplation of the Divine glory; and that confession of our own ignorance and incapacity for comprehending the Infinite which is a necessary preliminary for our reception of any special revelation of God. They do not fail, however, to remind us that the Second Advent of CHRIST is to be in the clouds of heaven, even as was His Ascension, and that there is thus a second literal sense besides that referring to the earlier manifestations of God. Yet again, as He withdraws Himself from sinners, and refuses to show them His face, He is said in respect of them to be hidden in clouds and darkness. There are, besides, several mystical interpretations, which are conveniently summed up thus: "These clouds and darkness overshadowed the Church when the Law and the Prophets made CHRIST known to her. The clouds were also the Apostles, who filled the restored earth with their teaching; the darkness those wise men, who understanding deep mysteries, explained them to the Church. The cloud is also the Body of the LORD, wherein the Sun of Righteousness was hidden; the darkness, His concealed Godhead, which appeared not to eyes of flesh."

Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His seat. More exactly, the basis of His throne. (Aquila, ἄρμαμα, A. V. marg. establishment.) The direct meaning is, that when we have by faith and upward soaring penetrated the cloud of mystery which shrouds the Providence of God, we find absolute truth and justice to be the very foundation of all His doings. Thus, after Moses had sprinkled the blood of the Covenant, and when he went up into the clouds which shadowed Sinai, along with "Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: they saw the God of Israel: and under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in purity." For habitation the LXX. and Vulgate have righting or correction. And hence, while some have understood the words literally as denoting the perfect equity of CHRIST's judicial power in rewarding the just, and punishing the ungodly; others, taking the soul of each Saint to be God's throne, explain that this

A. throne is righted, and set straight by attentive consideration of His dealings with sinners, which serve as its warning and guidance. 3 There shall go a fire before him : and burn up his enemies on every side. The Hymn, Apparebit repentina. This is, they tell us for the most part, that fire which is to precede the Last Judgment, that which Daniel foresaw in vision, when the Ancient of Days did sit, and "a fiery stream issued and came forth before Him," of which S. Peter tells us that "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." It will burn up His enemies, the wood, hay, stubble, but it will do no more than purify His Saints, the gold, silver, and precious stones reared on Him their foundation. Flamma ignis anteibit justi vultum Judicis, Coelum, terras et profundi fluctus ponti devorans.

Flames of fire before the visage of the Righteous Judge shall go, Swallowing up the earth and heaven, and the ocean depths below. A. S. Bernard. Serm. in Cant. 31.

But S. Augustine takes it of the first Advent of CHRIST, and of the flame of anger and persecution kindled everywhere by the preaching of the Gospel, a flame which burnt up the persecutors themselves, and not the Evangelists against whom they raged, just as a torch applied to green wood is itself consumed without effecting its aim. There is besides these, more exactly still, that fire which CHRIST came to send upon the earth, the kindling blaze of the HOLY GHOST, which came down in tongues of fire at Pentecost, to burn freely throughout the world, for the destruction of obstinate unbelievers and the purifying of those who gladly received the Word. And of this the Prophet spake, saying, "I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles : and they shall know that I am the LORD." This divine flame goes still before the face of the LORD in His coming to every faithful soul, as it kindles with longing for Him, and burns up all its sins therewith, as He heaps His coals of fire upon its head, to soften and purify it. "It must needs be," teaches a great Saint, "that the fervour of holy desire must go before His face to every soul to which He means to come, a flame which will burn up all the mildew of sin and make ready a place for the LORD. And then the soul knows that the LORD is at hand, when it feels itself kindled with that fire, and it saith with the Prophet, 'From above hath He sent fire unto my bones, and it prevaileth against them;' and again, 'My heart was hot within me, and at the last I spake with my tongue;'" so that by the remission of sins, His aforetime enemies are kindled with love, and break forth in praise of His Name.

4 His lightnings gave shine unto the world : the earth saw it, and was afraid. Here again the literalist view sees a reference in the past to the thunderings of Sinai, and in the future to the words of S. Paul, that "the LORD JESUS shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty Angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST," a flame foreshown, as they remind us, by falling stars and other similar portents. But the mystical sense, referring to the preaching of the Apostles, those sons of thunder, to the clear shining and mingled threats and promises of the Gospel, to the awe which fell on the nations at the mighty words and miraculous power of the new preachers, is more widely followed. So the Paris Breviary in the Common of Apostles :

L. Genebrardus. 2 Thess. i. 8. A. All full of Thy Godhead, While earth lieth still, They thunder, they lighten, The waters o'erflow. Sant. Victor. The Hymn, Supreme quales Arbiter. They thunder—their sound, It is CHRIST the LORD! Then Satan doth fear, His citadels fall : As when the dread trumpets Went forth at Thy word, And one long blast shattered The Canaanite's wall. 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD : at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth. So we read that when GOD came down to deliver the Law, "Mount Sinai was altogether

on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." They agree in the mystical sense, that the hills here denote all those eminent in station, influence, power, wealth, or ability; who will be either converted to the LORD, and become plastic and ductile in His hands, like pure and yielding wax, so as to receive readily the impress of His image upon their souls; or else be destroyed, as by an earthquake, before His face, according to that saying, "The everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow." In the good sense, a Saint points out that we have here a type of penitence, because the liquid form and level surface which wax assumes under heat fitly denote the tears and humility of a heart softened by the grace of GOD.

M 6 The heavens have declared his righteousness : and all the people have seen his glory. A. The Angel carols at the Nativity, the Star of the Epiphany, the Voice at the Baptism and Transfiguration, the eclipse at the Crucifixion, the cloud of glory at the Ascension, the voices of the Apostles, all these declared the righteousness of the LORD; as Angels will again, uniting with the holy preachers of the Word, be the heralds of His second coming, when all the people, those nations of the earth who have already heard of His glory, as well as those who actually beheld Him working miracles in the flesh, shall see Him in His regal Majesty upon the judicial throne. 7 Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and that delight in vain gods : worship him, all ye gods. A.

Has it not come to pass, asks S. Augustine, writing when the final overthrow of classical Paganism was fresh in the memory of living men, who had seen its last fierce struggle under Julian, its ignominious collapse when Eugenius was routed at Aquileia; were they not confounded, are they not confounded every day? Why are all they confounded that worship carved images? Because all the people have seen His glory. Now all the people confess the glory of CHRIST, and they who worship stones are ashamed, for those stones were dead ones, but we have found the Living stone. Nay, these stones were never alive, so that they cannot even be called dead, but our Stone is living, and hath ever been alive with the FATHER, and He died and lived again for us, and He lives now, and death shall have no more dominion over Him. The people know of this His glory, they abandon the temples, and hasten to the churches. So Theodoret tells us of S. Publia, the aged Abbess of a company of nuns at Antioch, who used to chant, as Julian went by in idolatrous procession, the Psalm, "Their idols are silver and gold, even the work of men's hands . . . they that make them are like unto them : and so are all such as put their trust in them ; and he narrates how the angry Emperor caused his soldiers to buffet her till she bled, unable as he was to endure the sting of the old Hebrew song.

There are other vain gods, mere phantom objects of worship, besides graven images, as they seasonably remind us; for all assiduous court and homage paid to

persons endowed with wealth and power, and all preference of earthly things to the will of GOD, is idolatry. Worship Him, all ye Gods. This may be taken as a direct challenge to the false deities of heathenism, and as a further claim on behalf of GOD upon such Pagans as acknowledge that an idol is nothing in itself, but allege that they worship the invisible deity which presides over it, the

A. angel, good or evil, whom they invoke. If the true God be so great that even these mighty beings are bound to do Him homage, then the case becomes even stronger than before against the graven images. The Syriac and LXX. both have here Angels for Gods: and this interpretation is strengthened by the citation of a precisely similar phrase from the LXX. reading of Deut. xxxii. 43. ”When He bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the Angels of God worship Him.” The Angels did worship Him, as they sang at His Nativity, as they ministered to Him in the wilderness after the Temptation, as they attended Him in His Ascension. It is sufficient to mention the allegory seen here by Cardinal Hugo, of the special service of worship rendered to CHRIST by the ministry of the hierarchy of the Church, His Angels or messengers to mankind.

Heb. i. 6. 8 Sion heard of it, and rejoiced: and the daughters of Judah were glad, because of thy judgments, O LORD. The Chaldee gives us the key-note here, paraphrasing The Church of Sion. The whole Church Militant here on earth in its expectation, all the local daughter Churches, all the holy souls in each such Church, true children of praise, rejoice in the spread of the Gospel, in the proofs of CHRIST’s sovereignty, in the righteousness of His sway. And, with closer reference to the historical meaning, we may take the Church of Sion to mean that first small assembly in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, and the subsequent clause to denote all those children whom their preaching bore to CHRIST, the Prince of the house of Judah. One commentator will have it that there is here a direct reference to the joy of the Apostles in Sion, and of the saintly women who abode with them, the Blessed Virgin, S. Mary Magdalene, and others, when they knew that all the Angels had worshipped and done homage to their LORD in His Ascension. And so we read, ”They worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” There may be, not improbably, a reference to the solemn processional dances of the Hebrew virgins, of which we read often in Holy Writ, beginning with that which was led by Miriam after the destruction of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea.

9 For thou, LORD, art higher than all that are in the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods. The word for is here emphatic. It is possible for us to rejoice with a sure gladness in CHRIST’s judgments, because He is supreme, and His findings cannot be overruled and set aside by any higher authority. It is even more a thought of rejoicing for the daughters of Judah, all tender and faithful souls, that it is their own Bridegroom, One of their own flesh and blood, Who is throned above the highest Archangels, and that He, now LORD and King of heaven, has thrown

it open to us. The Hymn, Optatus votis omnium. He hath gone up in clouds above, Bestowing hope on them who love, And throweth open Eden's door, Which our first parents closed of yore. O wondrous joy for all men won, That He, a mortal Maiden's Son, Who bore the spitting, stripes, and Tree, Now shares the FATHER'S Majesty!

10 O ye that love the LORD, see that ye hate the thing which is evil: the LORD preserveth the souls of his saints; he shall deliver them from the hand of the ungodly.

Here is a test of true love for GOD, not merely abstaining from evil, but hating it, shunning it for its own sake, and not only for the danger of indulging in it. The evil, here assumed to be a thing, is by many commentators taken as a person, the Evil One. We may have a lower and imperfect love of GOD, mixed in character and motives, which does not involve a hatred of sin; but that love of Him which is pure, and for His own sake only, includes this abhorrence of His opposite necessarily. And thus a Saint observes, "Let no man deceive himself, GOD and the devil cannot be loved alike by one person, for either the devil is hated, or GOD is loved; if the devil is loved, it must needs be that GOD is despised. How then can we apply a sufficient touchstone of our sincerity in love? Another of the Saints shall answer: "You must ask your heart, your tongue, your work, whether you truly love GOD. Your heart, because the heart thinks often on what it loves, and if you do not often think of GOD, you cannot believe that you truly love Him; and if you think more of the world than of GOD, you love the world more than GOD. Ask your tongue if you love GOD; for the tongue gladly names what the heart loves; therefore he who speaks chiefly of the world is proved to love it more than GOD.

Ask of your work, whether you love GOD, for fire cannot be among straw and not burn, and no more can the fire of divine love be in the heart without showing itself in action. The Lord preserveth the souls of His saints. Here we may note two things, that the LORD makes no promise as to the bodies, nor yet as to the souls of any save His Saints. He suffered the persecutors to work their will on the tortured bodies of His martyrs, but He did not permit their souls to be shaken by either threats or blandishments. But He offers His salvation to all who will accept it, and will not allow any soul which trusts in Him to be separated from His love. How freely He does give not only His help, but Himself, that He may be with us as our defence, we may gather from those words which the Western Church has for many centuries addressed to those who draw near His altar to receive Him under the form of bread and wine: "The Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST preserve thy soul unto everlasting life. Amen. And He shall deliver them out of the hand of the ungodly, not only by His grace and the protection of His holy Angels here, but by saving them from the accusations of the enemy in the judgment, and appointing them to be where no servants of evil can ever trouble them more.

11 There is sprung up a light for the righteous: and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted. Sprung up. The literal Hebrew is sown. And this may mean simply

widely diffused, scattered abroad, as we have the same figure in Milton, speaking of the dew at dawn, Now Morn her rosy steps in th' Eastern clime Advancing, sowed the earth with Orient pearl. And Lucretius, more exactly, Sol etiam summo de vertice dissipat omnes Ardorem in partes, et lumine conserit arva, And the sun from mid-heaven sheds his heat On every side, and sows the fields with light.

But we get a deeper meaning, suggested by R. Kimchi, who explains the words of the sowing of the seeds of light and joy in this world for the righteous, which they are to reap abundantly in the harvest of Messiah. We may take it first, then, of the seeds of Divine grace sown in the illumination of Baptism, and growing up ever more and more to the perfect day of true holiness; and then of CHRIST Himself, sown with tears in the grave, to rise again in glory, bringing gladness to His people. The Chaldee, LXX., and Vulgate, however, read simply sprung up, as above, or risen. And that we may take at pleasure as signifying the Incarnation or Resurrection of CHRIST the true Light, or else as denoting the mission of the HOLY GHOST; the effect of either of which, or rather of both, is the enlightening of the heart with the inward illumination of Divine grace, which is vouchsafed to the righteous and true-hearted; not to those who are naturally and inherently such, but to all who have washed their sins in the Blood of CHRIST. And all such may say with one of the truest of penitents: "There was a great dark cloud of vanity before mine eyes, so that I could not see the Sun of Righteousness and the light of truth; I being the son of darkness, was involved in darkness: I loved my darkness because I knew not Thy light: I was blind, and loved my blindness, and did walk from darkness to darkness: but, LORD, Thou art my GOD, Who hast led me out of darkness and the shadow of death, Who hast called me into this glorious light, and, behold, I see."

12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous : and give thanks for a remembrance of his holiness. Remembrance of His holiness. The Chaldee paraphrases to the memory of His Holy Name; that is, that every time the Sacred Name of GOD occurs to our thoughts, it should be greeted with joy and thanksgiving. But the ambiguity of the Vulgate rendering, for the memory of His sanctification, has caused many of the commentators to see here, not an attribute of GOD, but a grace bestowed by Him on His people, for which they are to give thanks. It is Justification by faith, say most of them; it is sacramental Confession, which cleanses our souls, as another will have it; it is Holy Baptism, according to yet a third view. We may reconcile the two schools of interpretation by translating, literally enough, Give thanks to His holy memorial, and seeing in the words a prophecy of that Eucharistic worship, where we bless and thank Him in His own memorial rite, wherein He is Priest and Victim, Host and Guest. And thus S. Thomas,

The Rhythm, Adoro te devote. O most sweet memorial of His death and woe, Living Bread, which givest life to man below, Let my spirit ever eat of Thee and live, And the blest fruition of Thy sweetness give.

Wherefore:
Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD of the whole earth; glory be to the SON, Who preserveth the souls of His Saints; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is the joyful gladness of the true-hearted. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O GOD, Preserver of holy souls, Whose kingdom is the perfect lot of the righteous, grant that the lightnings of the Prophets and Evangelists may enter into our hearts, and if there be aught found therein covered with the ancient veil, let it be disclosed by the revelation of the HOLY GHOST. (I.) O GOD, in Whose kingdom the earth of believers rejoices, Whose righteousness the heavens declare, Whose sovereignty the legions of Angels worship, preserve the souls of Thy servants; and lest we should perish by following the author of evil, deliver and protect and preserve us, that when the burning fire shall go before Thy face, the punishment due to our merits may not lay hold of us to burn us up, but the mercy of our Maker rescue us that we may live. (11.) O LORD GOD, Most Highest over all the earth, teach us to love Thee with entire devotion, and to hate evil; preserve our souls in this life, and when they pass hence, deliver them from the place of everlasting punishment. (1.)

Psalm 98

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of David. Chaldee Targum: A Prophetic Psalm.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That GOD, by the Advent of the Nativity, hath declared His salvation unto all. The Voice of the Apostles, rejoicing at the Resurrection of CHRIST. Further, the Voice of the Church to the LORD and to the Apostles. The Apostolic Voice. A Prophecy, and the calling of the Gentiles. Concerning the first and second coming of CHRIST. VEN. BEDE. This title refers to the LORD CHRIST, concerning both Whose comings this Psalm is about to speak. The Prophet speaks throughout the Psalm. In the first part he recommends the Christian people to be glad with the rejoicing of a new song, since the wondrous Advent of CHRIST is granted. O sing unto the Lord a new song, &c. In the second part he declares more fully in various ways that we should rejoice, because the Judge desired by the righteous is to come at last. Show yourselves joyful in the Lord, all ye lands, &c.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David. Concerning the freedom of the people from Egypt, when they conquered and triumphed. Spiritually, it is a prophecy of the coming of CHRIST and the calling of the Gentiles. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARRA. The calling of the Gentiles and the coming of CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of exhortation and as it were of command.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Saturday: Matins. [Christmas Day, Circumcision, Trinity Sunday, Holy Name, Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, Nails and Spear, Sacred Heart, Common of B.V.M., Common of Virgins: III. Nocturn.] Monastic. Friday: II. Nocturn. [Christmas Day, Circumcision, Epiphany, Whitsun Day, Trinity Sunday, Holy Name, Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, Common of B.V.M., Common of Virgins: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. [Christmas Day: I. Nocturn. Epiphany: I. Nocturn.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian. For He hath done marvellous things. [Christmas Day: The LORD declared, Alleluia, His salvation, Alleluia. Epiphany: Before the morning star begot-

ten, and before the worlds, the LORD our SAVIOUR vouchsafed to be born to-day. Trinity Sunday: The FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST is one substance. O Blessed Trinity. Holy Name: O sing unto GOD, and sing praises unto His Name, make a path for Him Who ascendeth over the sunset, the LORD is His Name. Sacred Heart: All the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our GOD. Common of B.V.M.: After thy childbearing, thou didst remain a spotless Virgin; Mother of GOD, intercede for us. Common of Virgins: Come, Bride of CHRIST, receive the crown, which the LORD hath prepared for thee for evermore.] Monastic. [Epiphany: As Christmas Day. Whitsun Day: Stablish the thing, O GOD, which Thou hast wrought in us, for Thy temple's sake at Jerusalem, Alleluia, Alleluia. Trinity Sunday: Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Common of Virgins: Thou art fair and comely, O daughter of Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.]

Ambrosian. Show yourselves joyful before the LORD the King. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. [Christmas and Epiphany: The LORD declared His salvation. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr.] Parisian. The LORD hath chosen out an heritage for us, which He hath loved. [Christmas Day: As Gregorian.] Lyons. Let my crying * come unto Thee, O LORD. [Epiphany: As Christmas Day, Gregorian.] Mozarabic. The LORD declared His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly shown in the sight of the heathen. 1 O sing unto the LORD a new song : for he hath done marvellous things. 2 With his own right hand, and with his holy arm : hath he gotten himself the victory.

The song must be new, because of the unwonted nature of the marvellous things which GOD has wrought. When of old He brought His people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm, it was but one small nation that He saved, it was only a human enemy that He overthrew in the Red Sea. But now the salvation He has wrought extends to all the nations of the earth, the enemy He has routed is the Prince of the powers of the air, attended by all the spiritual wickednesses. He hath done marvellous things in the mystery of His Incarnation, Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and the mission of the HOLY GHOST, not to speak of the miracles He wrought in person during His earthly ministry, or by the hands of His servants since. But the words most especially refer to His raising Himself up from the dead by His own inherent power, by the might of that Godhead which He united to the Manhood. Therefore He saith of His life, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." And in that He wrought this marvel alone, with no human or angelic aid in the agony of His Passion, with no hand to pluck Him back from the grave; He said in prophecy of old, "The year of My redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm hath brought salvation unto Me, and My fury, it upheld Me." We may also, without any material change in the meaning, take the words as spoken by the FATHER, Who declares that He wrought the salvation of mankind by one instrument alone, His Right Hand, the Only-begotten Son, in

Whose Second Advent, of which this Psalm sings as well as His first, the triumph will be completed.

3 The LORD declared his salvation : his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen. It is the manifestation of the Only-Begotten, the SAVIOUR of Mankind, the Light to lighten the Gentiles, of Whom Simeon chanted his dying song, doubtless looking to this Psalm. And observe that it is not said in the first clause that GOD showed, but that He made known (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) His salvation. For He had shown it in mystery of old to the Patriarchs. Adam knew Him, and so did Abel, who offered Him a lamb; and Seth, who called on His Name; and Noah, who was His type, saving mankind in the Ark; and Abraham, who offered up his son. But the world had forgotten Him, and therefore the FATHER made Him known. He did so with care that His Nativity should not pass unnoticed, for He made it known to the shepherds by the Angels, to the wise men by a star, to Zacharias and Elizabeth by S. Gabriel, to Simeon and Anna by the HOLY GHOST. But to the Gentiles, who had no previous knowledge to be recalled, He openly showed His righteousness. Wherefore it is to be noticed that the Apostles never address their Gentile congregations in parables, as their Master did the Jews, but make direct proclamation of the Gospel.

4 He hath remembered his mercy and truth toward the house of Israel : and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our GOD. The term remembered is here employed, as in the Benedictus and Magnificat, not as in any way denoting the possibility of forgetfulness on God's part, but to set before our minds the length of time which elapsed before the promised Deliverer appeared, a delay which would, in any human analogy, be due to oblivion. It is said, to the house of Israel, because the promises of mercy were originally made only to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so that God's truth was concerned in fulfilling His pledge, and accordingly the first manifestation of the SAVIOUR, the first preaching of the Gospel, was amongst the people and in the land of Israel. And then the latter clause of the verse teaches us that this mercy of God is extended to all the ends of the world, to all those Gentiles who had no claim on His truth, in that He has shown them His JESUS. And precisely so runs the prophecy in Isaiah: "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the desolations of Israel; I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth."

5 Show yourselves joyful unto the LORD, all ye lands: sing, rejoice, and give thanks. They tell us that by the use of these several words various grades of spiritual exultation are denoted, to each of which all the lands, the whole extent of the Church Universal, are invited. Show yourselves joyful is the first inarticulate expression of the soul's delight, striving for utterance, but not yet able to collect itself, nor to perfectly understand the nature of its gladness; sing tells us that words of suit-

able devotion have been found at last; rejoice tells of the fervent happiness with which the Saints pour forth their prayers to God; and give thanks (which the LXX. and Vulgate render play, ψάλατε, psallite) implies the active laud of good works performed for His sake. 6 Praise the LORD upon the harp: sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving. 7 With trumpets also, and shawms: O show yourselves joyful before the LORD the King.

We have now five methods of rejoicing put before us, the five words which we speak with our understanding in the Church, better than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue, and answering to the five titles of CHRIST given earlier in the Psalm, to wit, right hand, holy arm, salvation, righteousness, and truth. As regards the mystical signification of the various instruments named here, we are reminded first that the harp teaches that all our faculties, all parts of our conduct, should be vocal with melody to GOD. For a harp is imperfect, if even one chord be lacking, or if the strings be not tuned in harmony. What profits it thee, then, if thou be chaste, liberal in almsgiving, and yet envious? What advantage is it if thou have six strings sound and one broken? If even one fail, the sound of the harp cannot be perfect. The harp (a symbol of mortification, with its tense strings and empty hollow) is twice named, to teach us that bodily austerity and the practice of holiness need to be repeated, and not be left off after beginning, that we are to praise with body and soul, in prosperity and adversity, in this life and the next; and it is coupled with the psalm of thanksgiving in the second place, because contemplation and prayer, in addition to active virtues, are essential to the full development of spiritual life and joy. Some, however, think that the ten-stringed psalter is meant here, implying the keeping of the moral law.

With trumpets also and shawms. The Vulgate, distinguishing with sufficient accuracy between the straight silver trumpets implied by the former word, and the curved ram's horns of the latter, translates, On ductile trumpets, and with the sound of the horny trumpet. The first are aptly assigned to the herald proclamation of the Gospel law, purified from the dross of the elder code by the fire and hammer of CHRIST's Passion, while the humbler cornet is the pastoral address of Christian shepherds to their flocks. Euthymius will have it that both the trumpets and the cornet denote the Apostles and their successors; saying that the plural word points to the four Gospels, the singular one to their identity; while the metallic epithet signifies the operation of the HOLY GHOST on the Apostles, shaping and moulding them at His will, and the word horn, as betokening that which once had animal life, implies that they were not mere dead instruments, but endowed with vitality and personal force. Yet another view sees in the metal trumpets purged in the fire, the martyrs of CHRIST; and in the cornet, made of that which springs from the flesh, yet is not of it, but stands out from it, the Confessors who have checked all their carnal passions by austerity and by lifting themselves up towards GOD.

O show yourselves joyful before the Lord the King. We do this when we keep GOD so constantly present before us in our thoughts, words, and deeds, that we are conscious of acting with continual reference to Him, and not to the world or to ourselves, and that with a glad and filial service, not with the servile terror of bondslaves. The notion is that of the processional march with music and singing to greet the King as He returns from victory and coronation. And as a monarch in such cases bestows largesses upon his subjects, See Psalm lxxxi. 3. But this verse is the only one in the Psalter where the straight trumpets are mentioned. so the special time for this rejoicing on our part is when our King comes to judgment, and bestows rewards on His faithful people. 8 Let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is : the round world, and they that dwell therein.

9 Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the LORD : for he is come to judge the earth. A.

The Psalmist calls the inanimate creation, which had aforetime been groaning and travailing in pain, awaiting the SAVIOUR, to swell the hymn of triumph in honour of Almighty GOD, raised by all that dwell in the round world. But there are spiritual meanings underlying the various terms used. The sea, as one will have it, denotes the Law, once bitter, now made sweet by the wood of the Cross ; or else, as so often, it means the restless, tossing, bitter, and sorrowful life of the world, and all that are mixed up with it, though it may also denote those who shed the salt tears of penitence : the round world, those within the circle of the Church, firm and fruitful : the floods, drinking in the waters of wisdom from their source, and irrigating the dry ground, denote all holy preachers of the Word ; the hills are those in high position, especially in the offices of the Church. The Pseudo-Jerome, arguing against the hyper-literalism of Jewish expositors, points to the phrase clap their hands, as inapplicable in any strict sense to the floods, and insists on the spiritual interpretation as necessarily meaning those Saints of various degrees of eminence, from the merest rill to the mightiest torrent, who all alike flow from the LORD JESUS, the fountain of living waters. These clap their hands because they work for GOD, and are not content with talking about Him, since He is best served and praised with the hand, not with the voice. And observe, remarks S.

Augustine, that it is exactly when the sea makes a noise, when the storms of persecution are raging, that the Saints are most zealous and most happy, that they clap their hands in honour of their King. Arnobius, who seems to prefer that meaning of the floods which more than one commentator adopts, namely, all the faithful regenerated in the sweet waters of Baptism, reminds us that the rivers flow down from the hills, and bids us see here the exaltation of Christian Saints and teachers in the spiritual might and progress of their disciples in the Faith. For He is come to judge the earth. We may take this either of the first or of the second coming of CHRIST. If of the first, then the ground of rejoicing is that the LORD comes to

rule the world with a perfectly righteous code, and to do so not as of old, in the unseen majesty of Godhead, but in bodily and visible form as a Man dwelling with men. If of the second Advent, then the final victory over sin, and the renewal of all creation, delivered at last from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD, is the theme of rejoicing.

10 With righteousness shall he judge the world : and the people with equity. This Psalm ends precisely as the ninety-sixth, with the exception of the last word, equity, instead of truth. It is a word of hope and of fear alike. Of hope, because the feeble and oppressed will find an advocate in their Judge against all the power arrayed against them, for it is written, ”With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and argue with equity for the meek of the earth.” Of fear, ”for if Thou, LORD, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O LORD, who may abide it?” But as He hath not yet come, why should men tremble? Let them amend, and rejoice. It is in thine own power, how thou shalt look for the coming of CHRIST. He delays that coming, that He may not have to condemn thee. Behold, He cometh not yet. He is in heaven, and thou on earth; He delays His Advent, delay not thou thy counsel. His coming is hard to the hard, is gentle to the loving. Look then at once what thou art; if hard, thou mayest soften; if gentle, rejoice that He is coming. For thou art a Christian. Yes, sayest thou. I believe that thou prayest, and thou sayest, ”Thy kingdom come.” Thou desirest Him to come, of Whose coming thou art afraid. Amend, that thy prayer be not against thyself.

A. Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD and King; glory be to the SON, His own Right Hand, Who shall judge the world with righteousness; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who declared the salvation of GOD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O LORD, Who hast revealed Thy righteousness to all the Gentiles, and Thy salvation unto our minds, grant that as Thou didst once come to be judged on behalf of the lost, Thou mayest bestow mercy when Thou comest to judge, on them for whom Thou wast judged. Who. Let Thy right hand deliver us, O LORD, and bow the necks of the haughty under Thy dominion, that the nations may be enlightened with the coming of truth, and with holiness of heart accept the salvation shown unto them. (11.) Let all the earth sing unto Thee, O LORD, sing a psalm, rejoice, and praise Thy Name, Whose Name is wonderful and glorious. Grant therefore unto the prayers of Thy Church, that Thou mayest never forsake in temptation those whom Thou callest in faith, and that they who sing unto Thee the song of praise may attain the reward of eternal blessedness in the world to come. (11.)

All the earth sings unto Thee, O LORD, and all they that dwell therein, the floods clap their hands unto Thee; and not only do the voices of the Doctors wait on Thee with the service of speech, but their zeal also attends Thee with the observance of

good works. Grant therefore, O our GOD, that by Thine inspiration both constant praise and unwearied meditation, together with the pure and undefiled religion of holy conversation, may prevail in us. (11.) O GOD, Who hast made known Thy salvation amongst the peoples, by revealing Thy righteousness in the sight of the Gentiles, show unto us the abundance of Thy mercies, that as we are lifted up by the knowledge of Thy salvation, we may be comforted by the revelation of Thy righteousness. (11.) Mozarabic. for S. Mary. Let all creation sing a new song unto Thee, O LORD, Who didst show forth in the Virgin Mary the marvel of a new childbearing, that a woman should compass a man, and a Virgin without knowing man should bring forth a male child; grant that we in this world may be aided by her prayers, who brought Thee forth in stainless birth: that our mind, strengthened by the light of the HOLY GHOST, may so conceive the affection of Thy love, as alway to bring forth the increase of good works. (11.)

Almighty, everlasting GOD, Who alone workest great marvels, remember Thy mercy, and correct us when we go astray, and make us so steadfastly and faithfully abide by Thee, that we may be fitted to sing acceptable songs unto Thee, our LORD, for evermore. (1.)

Psalm 99

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of David.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is taken up into the heavenly Sion, and is to be accounted high above all peoples. The Voice of the Church concerning the Advent of CHRIST. The Voice of the Apostles to the people of the Jews, that they should be wroth against evil spirits and vices, and follow CHRIST the LORD. The Voice of the Church to the LORD, and of the Apostles to the people of the Jews. Concerning the Tree of CHRIST and a declaration of the merits of the Saints. VEN. BEDE. David is taken as CHRIST, Whose honour and power are sung of in this Psalm. In the first section the Prophet exhorts all the peoples to confess to CHRIST the LORD, because He hath executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob. The Lord is King, let the people be angry, &c. In the second, he exhorts the people to worship the LORD the SAVIOUR, Who was gracious to Moses and Aaron, and Samuel, because they kept His laws, whence he saith that the LORD, Who vouchsafed to hear His faithful ones, is to be exalted and worshipped. O magnify the Lord our God, &c.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, concerning the slaughter of the Midianites, whom Moses and the people of Israel led captive. And a prophecy of the glory of CHRIST'S Kingdom. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A Hymn of the Kingdom of CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of glorying in the LORD.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Saturday: Matins. [Circumcision, Ascension, Common of Apostles, Dedication of a Church: III. Nocturn.] Monastic. Friday: II. Nocturn. [Christmas Day, Circumcision, Epiphany, Ascension, Corpus CHRISTI, Common of B.V.M., Common of Apostles, Common of Virgins, Dedication: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: III. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. As preceding Psalm. [Circumcision: When the LORD was born the choir of angels sang; saying, Salvation to our GOD, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Ascension: The LORD in Sion, Alleluia, is great and exalted,

Alleluia. Common of Apostles: They kept His testimonies and His laws, Alleluia. Dedication: Blessed be the glory of the LORD from His holy place, Alleluia. Monastic. As preceding Psalm. [Christmas Day: When the LORD was born, the choir of angels sang, saying, Salvation to our GOD, Alleluia. Circumcision: as Gregorian. Epiphany: Three are the gifts which the Wise Men offered to the LORD, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, to the SON of GOD, the Great King, Alleluia. Ascension: as Gregorian. Corpus CHRISTI: The LORD is great in Sion, * Moses and Aaron among His priests. Common of B.V.M.: I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded. Common of Apostles: as Gregorian. Common of Virgins: She girded her loins with strength, and strengthened her arms, therefore her candle shall not go out for evermore. Dedication: as Gregorian.

Ambrosian. As preceding Psalm. Mozarabic. The LORD is great in Sion, and high above all people. 1 The LORD is King, be the people never so impatient: he sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet. This is the last of the series of six Royal Psalms, from 93 to 99 inclusive, (with the omission of 94,) terminating in Psalm 100 as a doxology, which make proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Three of them, 93..97, and 99, make this proclamation in their opening words; but with a certain difference of application. The first points to the splendour of God's reign, the second to its spread and happiness, the third and last to its resistless power.

Impatient. The LXX. and Vulgate read be angry, the A.V. more correctly, with Syriac and Symmachus, tremble. The word implies quivering with agitation from any cause, and this is translated by S. Jerome simply as moved. But these various shades of meaning all converge in the one thought of God's supremacy, and the uselessness of any human striving against it. Taking the Psalm, with the Greek Fathers, as a Post-Captivity hymn, the literal reference will be to the setting up of the Theocracy anew in the midst of idolatrous nations, and despite their active resistance. But the Christian expositors, with one voice, read it as a proclamation of the Kingdom of CHRIST. S. Justin Martyr twice writes it at full length as an indisputable prophecy of the Gospel, of the reign of that King Whom the Jews rejected in their anger, against Whose new law the Gentiles raged; for, as S. Irenæus observes, "those who said The Lord hath reigned, let the people be angry, He sitteth upon the cherubim, let the earth be moved, were thus predicting partly that wrath from all nations which after His Ascension came upon those who believed in Him, with the movement of the whole earth against the Church;

and partly that fact that when He comes from heaven with His mighty angels, the whole earth shall be shaken, as He Himself declares, 'There shall be a great earthquake, such as has not been from the beginning.'" How soon this anger and trembling began after the announcement of the new reign, the Evangelist may tell us, as he narrates that when "there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem, say-

ing, Where is He that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him? When Herod the king had heard, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And still, whenever God gives proof that He is King, either by His undisputed rule in the hearts of His faithful servants, or by His conversion of sinners, or yet again, by granting revival to His Church after a time of sleep and torpor, after a lowered standard of teaching or of worship: then evil men immediately begin to be angry, and attempt to overthrow His dominion, as we read that after Judas Maccabæus purified the desecrated Temple, and restored the lights, incense, and daily sacrifice, "when the nations round about heard that the altar was built, and the sanctuary renewed as before, it displeased them very much, wherefore they thought to destroy the generation of Jacob that was among them, and therefore they began to slay and destroy the people.

There is, however, a good sense in which we may take the words, of that salutary anger against their own sins with which penitents rise up to chastise them, when they have once thoroughly realized that the LORD is King.

He sitteth between the cherubims. The immediate reference is, of course, to the Mercy-seat in the Holy of holies, overshadowed by the statues of the cherubim on each side, and brooded over by the mysterious Shechinah. Hence, those commentators who suppose this to be a Davidic Psalm, explain the verse of David's capture of the citadel of Sion from the Jebusites, and his transfer of the Ark thither from the house of Obed-Edom, a type of the victory of CHRIST's kingdom. But we are not limited to this sense, for the word between does not stand in the original, which rather requires upon or above. And then we come to the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel, whence we pass to the thought of the Ascension and enthronement of the LORD JESUS, "for," as S. John Chrysostom teaches us, "it was not enough for His perfect glory to pass into the heavens, nor to take His stand with the Angels; but He passed through the heavens, ascended above the Cherubim, was exalted beyond the Seraphim, and stayed not till He had attained the throne of the LORD." Above the cherubim, wisest of all creatures, because their knowledge, vast and measureless by us though it be, is yet finite, acquired by the process of thought, and derived, whereas perfect knowledge of all things is inherent, without effort, in the nature of GOD.

Will He stay Him where the Cherubs, of created things most wise, Ponder in rapt meditation on the heavenly mysteries? Nay, for He, Eternal Wisdom, Sole-begotten, Uncreate, Is the source of all those marvels upon which they meditate. Ever onward, ever higher, passes He those ranks above, Where the Seraphs are on fire with the flame of endless love, Passes them, for not e'en Seraphs ever loved so well as He, Who hath borne, for His beloved ones, stripes, and scorn, and shameful Tree. S. Augustine tells us that we too, by having within us the fulness of knowledge, become spiritually cherubim, and make our souls a throne for GOD.

And to the first question how man, with his finite capacities, can obtain this fulness of knowledge, seeing that he is ignorant of even such matters as the visible facts of creation; the Saint replies that the meaning for us is simply a perfect knowledge of GOD's law. But,

Ezek. i. 15. Dan. vii. 9. A. Pereira in Dan. lib. 4. A. S. Cyril. Alex. in Hab. again, this raises a difficulty for the unlearned and the scrupulous. How can they tell that they do know that law fully? The answer is of the briefest. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Let the earth be moved. (LXX. Vulg. A.V.) Not merely does this mean that no shaking of the earth, no tumult of the nations, can make that throne totter which is borne up by cherubim, but it is a command to earth to stand in awe of the LORD, and a warning to those who have heretofore been firmly rooted in earthly sin, who were unshaken in obstinacy, stablished in ungodliness, fixed in error, that they should now cast themselves loose from all such hold, and anchor themselves on the love of GOD; and that Israel, in particular, should pass from the carnal law to the spiritual Gospel. And it is well said be moved, for the sinner cannot move of himself. No feeble hand can stir that earth, for it is heavy and firm; as it is written, "A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both." Wherefore the Prophet cries thrice, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the LORD," yield thyself to be moved by the ploughshare of His teaching, that thou mayest bring forth fruit for Him.

2 The LORD is great in Sion : and high above all people. First, because in Sion, as the central and holy city of Judaism, the Name of GOD was magnified, and His will revealed in the prophets, and then because it was from Sion that the Gospel law went forth, when the WORD of GOD Himself appeared in human form in the midst of Jerusalem, and wrought there miracles which were to be noised abroad among all people; especially that crowning one of the mysterious Sacrament of His Body and Blood, which destroys idolatry wherever it is made known. Thence it comes that He is great too in the spiritual Sion of His waiting and watching Church on earth, diffused amongst all nations, ever exalting His Majesty. 3 They shall give thanks unto thy Name : which is great, wonderful, and holy. The FATHER'S Name is great, for He is the Source, the Creator, the LORD of all; the SON'S Name is wonderful, for He is Eternal Wisdom, and it is terrible (LXX. Vulg. A. V.) for He is to be our Judge; the Name of the HOLY GHOST, is holy, for He it is Who bestows hallowing and sanctification. The Hebrew commentators see here the mystic Tetragrammaton , whose true pronunciation was kept a profound secret by the Rabbins, owing to a feeling of awful reverence; while the Greeks are precise in bidding us take it of that Name which is terrible to GOD'S enemies, holy to His friends, and great to both, the Name of JESUS.

'Tis the Name by right exalted Over every other name: That when we are sore assaulted Puts our enemies to shame; Strength to them that else had halted, Eyes

to blind, and feet to lame. The Hymn, Gloriosi Salvatoris. To this Name we give thanks, not too curiously inquiring into the mystery of the Incarnation, but gratefully rejoicing in the blessings it has brought us. And S. Bonaventura, in his Life of S. Francis, tells us that whenever the Saint, in the course of his reading aloud, had occasion to pronounce the Name of JESUS, he lingered on the sound with a tender, loving emphasis, and with a musical ring in his tone unheard at other times; and that he was scrupulous to let no fragment of writing which had those syllables in it, lie neglected on the ground or be put to any servile use. 4 The King's power loveth judgment; thou hast prepared equity: thou hast executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

The sudden change in the construction in the first clause here from the second person to the third, and then back again, has induced some critics to connect the verse closely with the preceding, especially as it begins in the Hebrew with And, omitted or misplaced by both English versions, but rightly put by LXX. and Vulgate: And the King's power loveth judgment. The order then will be, They shall give thanks unto Thy Name, because it is holy, and to Thy royal might, for it loves justice. There is, however, a slight difficulty in the way. The word Holy at the end of the third verse does not belong, as an epithet, to Name, but directly to GOD Himself. It is a refrain, He is Holy, and it recurs at the end of the fifth and ninth verses, thus making the Tersanctus, in honour of Him Who was, and is, and is to come, the Trinity in Unity. But if we take this refrain here as a pure intercalation, not interrupting the structure of the sentence and the flow of thought, we may still connect the first part of the verse with the give thanks of the preceding one. The commentators have various explanations of this love of judgment here attributed to GOD, besides that first and obvious sense of His own inherent essential righteousness. Thus one will have it that GOD loves judgment, because He does not choose to be worshipped out of mere caprice and without due thought, but with a reasonable, meditative, intelligent service. Again, He loves impartiality and fair dealing amongst men; He loves, yet more, that sinners should sit in judgment on their own sins, and condemn them, and making confession and satisfaction, achieve full repentance. He loves the clear preaching of His Gospel, the declaration of His doings for

S. Bonaventura in Vit. S. Francis. mankind. Thou hast prepared equity, Thou hast executed judgment and righteousness. These words recur in the Proverbs, where the instruction of wisdom is explained as being "justice, and judgment, and equity;" whence it is clear that some noteworthy distinction exists between the terms. The Carmelite points out that the precepts of the Mosaic code may all be reduced under three heads of moral, judicial, and ritual statutes, and declares that these are what GOD established in Jacob. A writer of a later day suggests that the first term applies to regulations for promoting peace and amity; the second, to all matters of jurisprudence, especially in criminal law; the third, to contracts and bargains between man and man. He executed judgment in Jacob, when He

punished His people by captivity, and righteousness when He brought them again out of Babylon, pardoned and restored. He did the like, judging Jacob by the hands of Vespasian and Hadrian; He will do the like, righteously granting restoration to the remnant of Israel when the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.

5 O magnify the LORD our GOD : and fall down before his footstool, for he is holy. A.

The first reference is to the Ark, just below the Mercy-seat of the Temple of Jerusalem, the special place of GOD's abode under the Law, and it is now a call to worship in any of the countless churches dedicated in His honour under the Gospel. The Vulgate reading, however, is Worship His footstool, for it is holy; although there is a variant, agreeing with LXX. He is holy. And for the most part, they agree in explaining this footstool to be the Sacred Humanity of CHRIST, "For GOD, being exalted, and bowing all creation under His feet, became unchangeably Man, united to our nature, which is His footstool. We adore Him indivisibly, because, although His human Body is a created thing, yet it is inseparably joined to the eternal Godhead and the WORD. And observe, that whereas the Word of GOD lay within the Ark, inscribed on the stone tables of the Law, so the living WORD was enshrined in the true Ark of the Covenant, the Manhood of the LORD JESUS. Others, looking to that saying, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," bid us see here either Golgotha, the spot which lay below the feet of our crucified LORD, or the Cross itself, that hard footstool, to which His sacred feet were nailed. There is a further sense, which S. Augustine discusses at length. How can we, asks the Saint, adore the earth, GOD's footstool, when Scripture plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD? I am in doubt;

I fear to worship the earth, lest He Who made heaven and earth should condemn me. Again, I am afraid not to worship my LORD's footstool because the Psalm tells me, Worship His footstool. In my hesitation I turn to CHRIST, for I seek Himself here, and I find how the earth can be worshipped without impiety. For He took earth from earth, for flesh is of earth, and He took Flesh from the flesh of Mary. And because He walked here in that flesh, and gave us that very Flesh to eat for our salvation; and no one eats that Flesh unless he first worship, a way is found whereby this footstool of the LORD can be worshipped; and we not only do not sin in worshipping, but we sin if we do not worship. Does the flesh then quicken? The LORD Himself said when He was speaking to teach concerning the same earth, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. Therefore, when thou bowest and prostratest thyself before that earth, look not upon It as earth, but that Holy One whose footstool thou worshippest, for it is for His sake thou dost worship.

Of this most holy Sacrament the Ark of the Covenant was a type; for it was framed of incorruptible wood; it had above it the golden Mercy-seat, sustained by cherubim, it had within it the priestly rod of Aaron, the pot of manna, the tables of the Law;

it was by its presence and might that the people passed over Jordan, and the walls of Jericho fell down; it was death for the profane to touch it, stand near it, or even look upon it, and it was treated with holy reverence by the Hebrews. Cardinal Hugo and Ayguan enumerate many other footstools of the LORD, as the Blessed Virgin, the Church, the Angels, the land of Israel, the souls of the penitent; and all those enemies of CHRIST whom the FATHER makes His footstool, by casting them bound at His feet, as the discrowned Valerian lay before his conqueror Sapor.

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among such as call upon his Name: these called upon the LORD, and he heard them. Richard of S. Victor, reminding us that Moses appears chiefly as Legislator, Aaron as Priest, and Samuel as Prophet, bids us see in them the types of the discretion, devotion, and foresight, which befit all true servants of GOD. But two other views show lessons of warning, rather than of encouragement, from the mention of these names. To the Jews, rejecting the kingdom of CHRIST, they recall the memory of the rebellion against the two great brothers in the wilderness, the demand for a King like those of the nations around, in the place of the Theocracy. To us, should we indulge in spiritual pride, the same names tell of the deaths on Hor and Nebo, outside the Land of Promise, in punishment of the hasty words and acts of Moses and Aaron at the waters of strife; and of the fall and apostasy of Samuel's sons. It is to be noticed that Moses is certainly, and Samuel perhaps by implication, included here amongst the priests. It is clear that the former discharged all the chief sacerdotal functions

Ric. Victor. in loc. 1 Sam. i. 1. 1 Chron. vi. 22. 1 Sam. vii. 9. 1 Sam. ix. 13. S. Cyprian. S. Thomas Aquinas. S. Athanasius. S. Chrysost. The Gloss. S. Hieron. in Joel c. 2. until, and inclusive of, the consecration of Aaron and his sons, and Samuel (whose genealogy is variously ascribed to Ephraim and the Kohathite family of Levi,) if he did not actually offer sacrifice himself, as the literal wording of one passage seems to imply, at any rate attended to utter prayers and blessings at the oblation; and it is as a man of prevalent might in prayer that he, the "Heard of God," most frequently comes before us in Holy Writ, albeit many of the Fathers held that he was a Priest too, by special dispensation of the LORD. The names too, in their special meaning, show us how these three great Saints serve as types of different faculties of the faithful soul. Moses, "drawn out" of the waters, tells of withdrawal from worldly pleasure and cares; Aaron, "shining light," of intense illumination by the grace of God; Samuel, "asked, or heard of God," perseverance and victory in prayer, whence we see, moreover, that the qualities, as well as the offices, of these three rulers of Israel converge in that LORD JESUS on Whom they called in prayer long centuries before He came in the flesh. He not only heard them, as the Prayer Book version reads, but answered them (Targ. Syr. A. V.) as we find again and again declared in Scripture, whence S. Jerome draws the lesson, that it is no light or easy thing to call effectively on God, but an effort which tasks the powers of His most perfect servants.

7 He spake unto them also out of the cloudy pillar: for they kept his testimonies, and the law that he gave them.

So we read, ”And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak unto thee, and believe thee for ever. And again: ”As Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and the LORD talked with Moses. Once more, ”The LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Moses. There is no express testimony of the same kind touching Samuel; but there is a Rabbinical tradition that a pillar of cloud stood at his door, when Saul and the servant went to inquire of him for the lost asses. Others suggest that the darkness of the night when God first revealed Himself to the child Samuel in the tabernacle may be here referred to; or again, that the oracular vision commonly manifested itself amidst the smoke of the incense in the Holy place. But in the deepest mystical sense, that cloudy pillar out of which God spake was Eternal Wisdom, Who saith, ”My throne is in a cloudy pillar,” Who veiled Himself in type and figure under the Law, and was seen shrouded in the form of a Man under the Gospel, that form wherein He is ”a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall; and is the pillar which supports the whole building of the Church.

For they kept His testimonies, in observing the ceremonial code which He delivered, and the law which He gave them in the Decalogue for their moral guidance. Or, as another will have it, the testimonies are the common regulations binding on all, while the law given to them refers to the special instructions conveyed to Moses and Aaron for the right government of the people. To us it has a different meaning: ”A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. And upon this follow the two promises: ”He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My FATHER, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to him; and again, ”If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

8 Thou heardest them, O LORD our GOD : thou forgavest them, O GOD, and punishedst their own inventions.

There are two varying explanations of this verse. That which is more profoundly spiritual, and also simpler as a matter of construction, is that which refers the whole verse to Moses, Aaron, and Samuel; and points out that in nothing did He show His love and regard for them more than in chastising them for their sins—Moses for his anger at the rock, Aaron for his making the golden calf, Samuel for repeating the error of Eli in permitting the misconduct of his sons. By all the trials and contradictions they all bore at the hands of the rebellious people, by the exclusion of Moses and Aaron from the Holy Land, by the deposition of Samuel from his rank as Judge, GOD purified them from their sins, and scourged them

as a loving FATHER. The other view, adopted by the Greeks, and by many others, refers all the latter clause not to the three great Saints, but to the whole people of Israel who murmured and rebelled against them, and who were punished on the one hand by the fire and plague in the wilderness, and on the other by the tyranny of Saul, contrasted with the gentle sway of the Theocracy. But in either case there is a profound lesson to be drawn from the close connection of the two words, forgavest and punishedst, teaching us that GOD's pardon of sin is proved by His chastisements, as we read in Nathan's address to David, "The LORD also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." And this GOD does not only for the immediate correction of sin, but for the perfecting of holiness; as it is written by the Apostle: "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of

A. the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to afflict me, lest I should be exalted above measure." 9 O magnify the LORD our GOD, and worship him upon his holy hill : for the LORD our GOD is holy. A. This the Rabbins explain as a summons to the solemn rites celebrated on Mount Moriah, whence it is transferred by Christians to the Church Universal, high upon the holy hills, and to "Mount Sion, the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem." This is the mountain which began as a stone cut out without hands, and which grew into a great mountain that filleth the whole earth, a mountain upon which they only worship who are in the Catholic Church. And as this Church is the mystical Body of CHRIST, so His sacred Humanity, His natural Body, is also the holy hill of GOD, wherein and whereby alone we worship, and that in the lofty spirit of a true and exalted faith, for the Lord our God is Holy, thrice Holy, as we find Him named in this Psalm, and in His pure worship are found none of the foul rites and dark superstitions of the heathen.

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD our GOD; glory be to the SON, Who loveth judgment; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Whose Name is Holy. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O GOD, high upon the throne, we pray and beseech Thee, that having the pillar of light shining upon us, we may, by Thy protection, keep to the rule of the priestly order. (1.) O LORD our Redeemer, Who art supposed to be high above every lofty thing, and great in Sion, increase and perfect the belief of Thy Church in Thee, and make the nations to unite in the sincerity thereof, that as we are confessing Thy Name, which is great, and with faithful service paying honour to Thy kingly glory, Thou mayest graciously look upon us from on high, and bring us from this low place of earth to the dwellings of heaven. (11.) O GOD, Who art high above all people, be gracious unto Thy servants; grant, we beseech Thee, that we may keep

Thy testimonies, and the holy laws Thou gavest us, that observing them devoutly unto the end, we may obtain reward from Thee in a blessed eternity. (1.)

Psalm 100

TITLE. A Psalm of praise (or thanksgiving, Marg.) LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of confession. Chaldee Targum: A song for the sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That we, made by CHRIST, ought to rejoice, serve and play unto Him. The Voice of the Apostles to the people. An exhortation to gratitude, that we should serve GOD. VEN. BEDE. Whereas the word Confession is often set down in the Psalm according to the particular occasion, here it is, however, inscribed by itself in the title, because the whole of this Psalm belongs to the two kinds of Confession, to wit, of penitence and of praise. In the first part of the Psalm the Prophet exhorts all creation to praise the LORD with exultation. O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands. And lest thou shouldst suppose that this kind of confession is always to be used, he promises us in the second part that if we repent of our sins we can enter through the gates of His forgiveness. O go your way into His gates.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. Concerning Joshua, the son of Nun, when he quelled the war of the Amorites. But in the New Testament, concerning the conversion of the Gentiles to the Faith. EUSEBIUS OP CÆSAREA. The calling of the Gentiles. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of rejoicing.

Various Uses.
Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: III. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Saturday: O be joyful in the LORD, * all ye lands. Monastic. The same. Ambrosian. As Psalm xcviii. Parisian. Serve the LORD * with gladness: be ye sure that the LORD He is GOD. Lyons. O go * into the gates of the LORD with confession, and into His courts with hymns. This Psalm, observes S. Augustine, is brief, and by no means obscure. Its verses are few, but weighty in the importance of their matter; let them bring forth seed in your hearts, that a granary N A. may be prepared for the harvest of the LORD. This Psalm of Confession commands and exhorts us for this end, that we rejoice in GOD. Nor does it exhort any one corner of the earth,

nor yet any one or other dwelling or assembly of mankind, but because He knows that He hath sown blessing everywhere, He requires rejoicing on all sides.

The Psalm is properly a liturgical one, and from its wording appears to have been especially intended for the sacrifices of thank-offering, made with an oblation of fine flour; and it is thus a prophecy of the one offering of the Holy Eucharist, to be made, not by Aaronic priests in Jerusalem alone, but by Gentile priests and Levites in every country of the world. 1 O be joyful in the LORD, all ye lands: serve the LORD with gladness, and come before his presence with a song. A.

As when the younger son returned, the whole household joined in the dance and sang a heavenly melody, so we ought to take this Psalm, give the timbrel, touch the merry harp with the lute. What is it that demands such rejoicing? Why should earth be called to exultation and gladness after the utterance of the terrible and wonderful precepts of GOD? Because that awful Deity chose as His own the office of the meek shepherd, and clad Himself in a shepherd's form, to gather, in His mercy, the wandering nations, the straying people, the tribes scattered far and wide, as lost sheep into one fold. As the terrible trumpet summons the warrior to battle, so the sweet sound of rejoicing calls the sheep to their pasture. And as CHRIST, coming to earth, cries out, "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep; He seeks for helpers and companions in His charge of all that world whereof He is Master, saying, O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands. All are invited, there is no acceptance of persons, the summons is to all that labour and are heavy laden, that they may rejoice, and trust in no perishable good, but in the LORD. The plural verb, joined to a singular noun, as the text stands in Hebrew, LXX., and Vulgate, points to the union of all the races of mankind in one harmonious chorus of praise. Serve the Lord.

All service is full of bitterness, all who are tied down to a servile condition serve and murmur. Be not afraid that GOD's service will be such; there will be in it no sighing, no mourning, no wrath. None will ask to be sold from thence, for it is sweet to know that we all are ransomed. It is great happiness to be a servant in that house, even if fettered. The LORD's service is free, because not necessity but love serves therein, "for, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. Let love make thee a servant, because the truth hath made thee free. With gladness, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for GOD loveth a cheerful giver; with gladness, because "the sorrow of the world worketh death. There is good reason for this gladness, because man has passed from his wretched, hopeless, fearful slavery under sin, idols, evil spirits, to the easy yoke of his Maker, to the tenderness of a FATHER, to the free service of the one good LORD. And thus the Saints observe in a phrase embodied since in the Collects of the Western Church, that to serve Him is to reign, and as Boëthius says very well, to be guided by His bridle is perfect freedom. With gladness, for he

who serves unwillingly makes a slavery for himself, but if thou put good-will into thy service, thou wilt find that thou art not GOD's servant, but His son.

And fitness for GOD's service involves many things: bodily purity and cleanliness, reputableness of character, orderliness, sparingness in living and substance, humility and reverence, cheerfulness and gladness, since all these qualities answer to attributes of the Master we propose to serve.

And come before His presence. It is come in before His presence in LXX. and Vulgate, denoting entrance within the Temple bounds. And hereupon we are reminded of the several ways of coming in to GOD. We should come, as doves into the windows of CHRIST's wounds, "Come away, O my dove, into the clefts of the rock," "as the doves to their windows. As a flock into the sheepfold, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring. As the timid into a fortified camp, "Let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there. As men pardoned, into penitence, "I will give him the valley of Achor for a door of hope. As a prince into his dignity, "The prince shall enter in by the way of the porch. "There shall enter into the gates of the city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David. As conquerors into a captured city, "They said, Show us the entrance into the city. And JESUS said, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by storm. As a procession into a church, "They shall enter into My sanctuary, and they shall come near to My table. As the elect into glory, The LORD saith, "Enter thou into the joy of thy LORD," and we add, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.

This we are to do with a song, the fit wedding garment for the marriage of the King's Son. And yet Archangels tremble, Angels fear, Powers are filled with dread, the elders fall down in the face of heaven, the elements fly, the rocks melt, the mountains flow down, the earth quakes, and shall man, who is earth, enter thus fearlessly, and stand upright, rejoicing? How can the Prophet be bold to say that this is what we ought to do? Because of the words which follow:

Judg. i. 24. S. Matt. xi. 12. 2 Be ye sure that the LORD he is GOD : it is he N 2 that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. A. The Complutensian LXX., Syriac, and some copies of the Vulgate read He is our God, although this is not essential to the meaning, which comes out with sufficient clearness in the last clause. There is also an important variant in several Hebrew copies, supported by the Targum, Aquila, S. Jerome, and R. Saadia, which, instead of not we ourselves, runs and we are His. It is because the LORD JESUS is GOD, Who was a little child in our flesh, Who lay cradled as a mortal babe, Who, rocked peacefully on His Mother's bosom, was gentle and meek in His converse with us, laying aside all the terrors of His Godhead, all His awfulness as Judge, that we are bold to enter into His presence with a song, going to meet the welcome embraces of a loving FATHER, not the searching examination of our secret faults. Think not

meanly of that LORD, for though ye crucified Him, scourged Him, spat upon Him, crowned Him with thorns, clad Him in a robe of scorn, hung Him on a tree, pierced Him with nails, smote Him with a lance, set guards at His sepulchre, He is GOD.

JESUS is GOD! the glorious bands Of golden Angels sing Songs of adoring praise to Him, Their Maker and their King. He was True GOD in Bethlehem's crib, On Calvary's Cross True GOD, He Who in heaven eternal reigned, In time on earth abode. JESUS is GOD! If on the earth This blessed faith decays, More tender must our love become, More plentiful our praise. We are not Angels, but we may Down in earth's corners kneel, And multiply sweet acts of love, And murmur what we feel. S. John i. 3. It is He that hath made us, for "by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made." He made us in our first creation of nature, He made us also in the second and more glorious creation of grace. Human pride or human science may speak in the spirit of "Pharaoh, king of Egypt, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself;" but the servants of GOD will say, Not we ourselves, for "O LORD, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand." Not less precise is the testi-

This is the Keri reading , instead of the Cethib .

mony of Holy Writ to the sole operation of God in that creation of grace whereby we are made His people, for He saith by the Prophet, "Bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; 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." If we take the other reading, And we are His, it teaches us that He not only made us, but made us for Himself, to be His very own, and that He has not resigned His claims over us, nor we chosen Him first. And therefore, because of this close mutual relation, the Bride exclaims, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." This it is to be His people, serving Him with intelligent obedience, with confident love, and the sheep of His pasture, because we constitute His inheritance and His wealth; we need His guidance, are ruled, cared for, and preserved by Him. We find Him so loving and tender that we cannot forget Him, we seek Him with sighs and yearning, we know and hear His voice, and follow Him, but no other. The Carmelite, by reason of the liturgical expressions in the succeeding verse, is inclined to limit the latter clause of this one to the Christian ministry, God's people, as specially engaged in His service, the sheep of His pasture, as living upon the tithes and oblations offered in His honour by the body of the faithful. But, bearing in mind that all Christians are "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," we shall not need so to restrict the phrase, and will rather see in the pasture a reference to the food of His own Body and Blood, wherewith the Good Shepherd feeds us in the wide and pleasant meadows of His Church, as He once fed Israel in the pleasant fields of Canaan.

3 O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name. The Rabbinical interpretation of this verse is that, in the days of Messiah, all the sacrifices of the Law will be done away save the thank-offering of flour or bread, so that the coarse rites of the slaughter of animal victims, suggestive of pollution and sin, shall have no place under the New Covenant. How precisely this accords with the accomplished fact of the substitution of the Eucharistic Sacrifice for the bulls, sheep, and goats of the Law, in accordance with the prophecy of Malachi, need not be dwelt on at length. Mal. i. 11. Enough the blood of victims flowed of old, The shadows pass, and legal offerings; Now higher ministries Thou, LORD, dost mould, On which a holier shade Thy Priesthood flings.

Brev. Paris. The Hymn, Jam satis fluxit cruor hostiarum. Elias from the heavens called down the flame; One greater than Elias, hid from sight, Is here: obedient to His awful Name, Of Him we make the dread memorial-rite. Great office, the mysterious Cup to bear In which the guilty world's salvation lies, And with our trembling hands full of deep fear To offer up the bloodless Sacrifice. The ambiguity of the term confession, here put, as usual, for thanksgiving by LXX. and Vulgate, leads to various other expositions of the verse. A. Isa. xxix. 13. S. Luke xviii. 11. S. Matt. xxvii. 4; xxii. 16. 1 Sam. xxix. 9. S. Matt. xxvii. 29. S. Mark i. 24. Ps. 1. 16.

S. Augustine teaches us wisely that repentance must be the outset of the service of God, into whose gates we enter with confession of sins, not attempting to burst forth in the language of praise till in the advance of our spiritual improvement we penetrate into His courts. Not essentially different from this is the view which takes the gates to be the Sacraments of the Church, especially Holy Baptism, as the entrance of that Church, each of which is fittingly preceded by confession of sins. Another reminding us, that the LORD has called Himself the Door, explains these gates of the Apostles and other holy teachers, His messengers, to bring men to Him, by whom, therefore, they enter in to Him, making confession first and renunciation of all their sins in the time of their ignorance. And after this strait and painful entrance, we should go at once into the spacious courts of charity, passing from the narrow exclusiveness of the question, "What must I do to be saved? to the embracing love of that other saying, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved," passing into the width of heavenly contemplation, and that in the secret recesses of our hearts and consciences. There is a stress on His gates, which are many, that we may learn to distinguish them from gates which are not His, by which men often enter in confession. There is the gate of hypocrisy;

of which we read, "This people draw near with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me. Pride: "I am not as other men are. Despair: "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.

Treachery: ”Master, we know that Thou art true. Flattery: ”Thou art good in my sight as an angel of God. Mockery: ”Hail, King of the Jews. Compulsion: ”I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God. Sacrilege: ”Unto the ungodly saith God, Why dost thou preach My laws?”

Opposed to all these gates of the evil one, are the twelve gates of the City of God, named from the twelve tribes of Israel. On the north, the type of sin, lie Reuben, Judah, and Levi. Reuben, ”behold a son,” is the prodigal returning to show himself to his FATHER;” Judah, ”confession” or ”praise,” the giving God the glory by acknowledgment of sin; Levi, ”joined,” is the being united to the Church of GOD by the abandonment of pagan error. On the east, the region of light and progress, are Joseph, the ”increase” in good works; Benjamin, trust in the ”right hand” of GOD alone, and desire for the good things set there; Dan, reverent thought of the coming of the ”Judge.” On the south, where the warmest rays fall, and thus the emblem of those perfected in love, are Simeon, Issachar, Zebulon. Simeon, ”heard” in prayer; Issachar, the ”hireling,” who has accepted the summons of the householder, and has entered His vineyard to labour in certainty of reward; Zebulon, ”dwelling,” because they shall go out no more, but dwell in the courts of the LORD’s house. And on the west, towards the sunsetting, type of death, are Gad, Asher, Naphthali. Gad, the ”troop,” denotes the ”innumerable company of angels” and saints. Asher, their ”blessedness” in the vision of GOD. Naphthali, ”a wrestler,” reminds us that the violent have taken His kingdom by storm, and that no one is crowned unless he have conquered. And these are the gates through which GOD’s true servants must enter in confession.

Be thankful unto Him, and speak good of His Name. This is a higher praise than our songs while we were still passing through the courts; it is the thank-offering in the Holy Place itself, where we approach the presence of GOD. And thus it here denotes the service of heaven, to which the local Churches of earth are but the courts and vestibules, that service wherein the redeemed will praise for ever the Name of JESUS, in that endless evening that remains Amongst those white flocks and celestial trains That feed upon their Shepherd’s eyes, and frame That heavenly music of so wondrous fame, Psalming aloud the holy honours of His Name! 4 For the LORD is gracious, his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth from generation to generation. He is gracious, for He can never be so wroth with a sinner as not at once to be appeased by sincere confession of sin, gracious with that tender compassion which induced Him to take away the sins of the world. He is sweet (Vulg.) for in Him is no bitter at all, and thus an ancient Christian poet invokes Him:

O nomen perdulce mihi, lux, et decus, et spes, Blandus in ore sapor, fragrans odor, irriguus fons. O Name, sweetest to me, my light, my hope, and my glory, Savoury taste in the mouth, true fragrancy, watering fountain. His mercy is everlasting,

because, on the one hand, He extends the acceptable time, the day of salvation, to the end D. C. A. of the world for all, to the end of life for each sinner, rejecting none, and not closing the door of grace till the last necessary moment; and on the other, He will keep His redeemed in heaven secure in the blessed necessity of sinlessness. And His truth endureth from generation to generation, because the promise He made to the Patriarchs He fulfilled in their descendants, by coming in person, no longer in type and prophecy; because His words in Holy Writ shall never pass away, even when heaven and earth are gone; because He keeps to the uttermost in this world and the next the pledge He has given to His disciples of bestowing everlasting blessedness.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is gracious, for He hath given His Son for us; glory be to the Son, Whose mercy is everlasting, as He ever pleads for us the death which He endured for our sakes; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter and Teacher of the Church, Whose truth endureth from generation to generation of Christians unto the end of the world. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
We rejoice in Thee, O LORD everlasting, with gladness and exultation, beseeching Thee, that while the gates of our hearts are thrown open in Thy praise, they may also be flung wide to receive Thy mercy and truth. (1.) Inspire our hearts, O LORD, that we may praise Thy Name, for Thou art gracious, and that our earth may be filled with Thy prayer. And let Thy mercy, moreover, protect us, that Thy revealed truth may make us glad for evermore. (11.) Let us, O LORD, who serve Thee in fear, enter Thy gates with confession, and into Thy courts with hymns and confessions; let us praise Thy Name, for Thou art gracious, and inspire Thou our hearts, that our mouth may be opened wide in Thy praises, and that Thy boundless truth may prevail for evermore. (11.) O GOD, eternal glory of the heavens, make us enter Thy gates with confession, and Thy courts with hymns, that giving thanks to Thy majesty, we may receive at Thy hands the crown of life, which Thou hast promised to them that love Thee. (1.)

Psalm 101

TITLE. A Psalm of David.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, after the Judgment, will destroy the ungodly with early vengeance. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, or the Voice of the Church to CHRIST. The Voice of the Apostles to the FATHER touching the repose of the Saints. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, touching the repose and expectation of the righteous. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, touching the relics of the Saints. Of Penitence with Praise. VEN. BEDE. The title is familiar, and the Psalm itself is enclosed in the form of perfect holiness, and may look for the hundred-fold fruit of reward. In the first part of the Psalm the Church saith that she sings of mercy and judgment unto the LORD, and avoids the fellowship of the wicked. My song shall be of mercy and judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing. In the second part, she declares that she loves the faithful, and delights in dwelling with them, but that she drives from her heart the evil spirits with their suggestions, and knows that they have no portion with the servants of GOD. Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of Asaph. An exhortation of David concerning those things which are required in the ministry of the LORD'S house. And a prophecy concerning the praise of him who hath conquered and been made perfect in GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A hymn of the man who is perfect after GOD.

Various Uses.
Monastic. Friday: II. Nocturn. [Common of Apostles: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Thursday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. Eastern Church. Third Psalm at Prime.

Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. As preceding Psalm. [Monastic. Common of Apostles: They walked in the innocency of their heart, in the midst of Thine house.] Ambrosian. As Psalm 98. Parisian. I have set no* wicked thing before mine eyes, whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy. Mozarabic. In the morning, O LORD, destroy all our sins. 1 My song shall be of mercy and judgment : unto

thee, O LORD, will I sing. The general view of the Rabbinical commentators, acquiesced in by the great majority of modern critics, is that this Psalm belongs to the commencement of David's reign, when GOD had shown mercy to him, and wreaked judgment on the house of Saul; when David's supremacy was fully acknowledged, but whilst much of the work of organization and construction of the new polity remained to be completed; and that it lays down therefore in regular order the principles of government which the king purposed to apply to himself, to his immediate household, to the capital city, and the whole country under his sway. The Greek Fathers appear inclined to assign it to Josiah, with whose character and actions it is in complete accord, but there seems no adequate reason for disputing the authenticity of the title. Its mystical purport, as signifying the holy resolutions of any saint, is confirmed by S. Athanasius and S. Chrysostom, with many others, dwelling frequently on its place, the hundredth Psalm in the LXX. and Vulgate computation, as implying so much. The most usual treatment of it, however, is as a discourse on the qualities and duties of a good king, and there is one commentary upon it, with this end, from the pen of one Antonio Velasquez, a Spanish Jesuit, constituting a folio volume of between four and five hundred pages, published at Antwerp in 1640.

A. Mercy is set first, and then judgment, because this life is the time of grace, and the next world the place of sentence; since had the LORD come first as Judge, instead of coming as SAVIOUR, there would have been none able to abide His inquiry, none capable of receiving a reward. The two attributes are so blended in GOD that we cannot separate them, and therefore despairing sinners may hence learn to hope, proud and obstinate ones to fear. We are taught too that mercy, the deeds of love and gentleness, almsgiving and other good works, is that which will enable those who have practised it to obtain it themselves in the judgment, so that they shall sing thankfully to GOD; whereas of the hard and pitiless the Apostle tells us, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." In the mouth of the King, the words denote two great maxims which are to guide his reign. So a heathen poet too:

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento, (Hæ tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem, Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos. Thou, Roman, bear in mind to rule with sway The nations, and to fix the bounds of peace, (These be thine arts) to spare those once subdued, And rout in war the proud. Such ought to be the policy of every Christian ruler, be he prince or prelate, and of every preacher too, who by mingling in his discourse the threats and promises of the Gospel, pours oil and wine into the wounds of sinners. There are some who sing only of His mercy, forgetting His judgment, and say, "Tush, the LORD shall not see, neither shall the GOD of Jacob regard it." Others sing only of His judgment, despairing of mercy, and these "have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hem-

lock," while there are some who, careless and at ease, keep silence, singing of neither, "dumb dogs, they cannot bark."

2 O let me have understanding : in the way of godliness.
These words are not read as a prayer, but as a promise and resolve, in the other versions. They are connected, by most of the Latin expositors, with the last word of the previous verse, thus : I will play, and I will understand, &c. That is, I will give full heed to the devotion in which I am engaged, my mind shall co-operate with my outward act, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also," and that in the way of sincerity, of contemplation, of obedience to GOD's commandments, ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace.

3 When wilt thou come unto me : I will walk in my house with a perfect heart.
The first literal meaning would seem to be David's longing to bring up the Ark of the Covenant out of the house of Obed-Edom into the newly acquired city of Jerusalem, but this is far from excluding the deeper reference to the personal advent of GOD to the soul, for we read His own promise, "In all places where I record My Name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee. Hence the Greek Fathers take the words as a prayer for the triple Advent of CHRIST; in the flesh, to each soul as its own SAVIOUR, and to judgment. Some, including S. Jerome, couple the words with the previous verse, reading it without the interrogation, and explaining it, I will understand . . . when Thou shalt come to me; but this is far less striking than the usual rendering, in which David pledges himself to keep the shrine of his house pure and guarded for the Guest he invites. I will walk. The word denotes the activity, promptness, and watchful care of a teacher who overlooks his scholars, as the Chaldee paraphrase seems to imply, and of the master of a great household, as one of the most learned of the Rabbins prefers, reminding us how Elisha, after stretching himself on the dead child, "walked in the house to and fro. In my house. The LXX. and Vulgate read, in the midst of my house, A.V. within my house.

There are many who appear in public with studied gravity of attire and decorum of mien, yet cast aside restraint in the privacy of home, and show themselves in their true evil colours, but David here promises that no escape from the observation of men shall lead him to forget the presence of God. Some, therefore, take the house here to mean his heart, while others explain it of the Church, which is the dwelling of God's true servants. Yet another view is that this present life is intended, and Cassiodorus bids us mark the word perambulabam, which the Vulgate reads, I walked through, as teaching us the merely transitory nature of this life, through which we need to walk with a perfect heart, or, as he reads, in the innocency of my heart; the innocency of a dove or of a lamb, types of the HOLY GHOST and of the LORD JESUS. He walked in a perfect heart, in the absolute stainlessness of His whole life, in the midst of His house, the people of Israel, the land of Judah, the

very Temple itself reared in His honour; and that, in His Passion, from scourging to mocking, from mocking to spitting, thence to blows, to the Cross, to the grave. And it befits all who, as His ministers, preside over any charge, be it kingdom, diocese, community, household, congregation, not to remain shut up in some one corner of that house, not to lie snoring lazily on a soft couch, nor to sit gorging at a luxurious table;

but to walk in the midst of the house, seeing to all things affecting those under them, like true Episcopi, or overseers; set over CHRIST's flock, as keepers of their souls rather than of their bodies. And it is needful that they should walk, not stand still in the midst of the house, for the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth round about, seeking what he may devour, and therefore a true shepherd must meet him at every point, that he may not force an entrance into the fold. It is not less important to bear the literal sense in mind, that of the duty of every ruler to exhibit his care and forethought first and principally in his own immediate family, "for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?"

4 I will take no wicked thing in hand; I hate the sins of unfaithfulness: there shall no such cleave unto me. The first clause here should run, as in A. V., I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes; words which remind us of the duty of the custody of sight, by neglect of which one thing David fell from the holiness he had theretofore achieved. This reference is not done away by the Vulgate reading unjust thing, because one scope of the pledge is the avoidance of all those acts of tyranny and lawlessness into which the possession of absolute power hurries monarchs, and of which the murder of Uriah was a palmary instance. I hate the sins of unfaithfulness. The LXX. and Vulgate, nearly agreeing with A. V., read, I hate them that commit transgressions, that is, who turn aside out of the straight road, and walk crookedly. The king therefore promises not only that he will not set any evil thing before his eyes as an object of desire or a pattern for imitation, but declares his aversion to all who do otherwise. Cardinal Hugo points out that the plural word here denotes various kinds of violation of law, and he distinguishes them as breakers of the natural, the Mosaic, the Gospel, and the civil code. From the special meaning of the Vulgate prævaricationes here, which strictly implies collusion in the law-courts, either by reason of false accusation, or by an advocate betraying his client to the opposite side; one commentator is inclined to see here indicated that part of David's reform which dealt with unjust judges, removing them from their posts, and subjecting them to heavy punishment. There shall no such cleave unto me. That is, the sins of crookedness and transgression, the substitution of craft and policy for upright dealing, shall make no part of my life.

5 A froward heart shall depart from me : I will not know a wicked person. The King, after stating the rules which are to govern his own conduct, now proceeds to lay down those for his household. The LXX. and Vulgate, punctuating the verse

differently, read thus: There shall not cleave unto me a froward heart, the wicked that departeth from me, I know not. Theodoret's explanation of the passage is that the speaker declares that, by sheer holiness of life, he will make himself so distasteful to wicked men that they will not merely fail to attach themselves to him with any close intimacy, but will actually shun his society, and treat him as an utter stranger. But the words seem to require rather more, and to imply a direct banishment of such characters by the King. It is not unfittingly, therefore, that we find the first clause applied to the traitor Judas, and the latter to those false Christians who have departed from the ways of CHRIST, and of whom He declares, "Many will say in that day, LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, all ye that work iniquity."

6 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour : him will I destroy. 7 Whoso hath also a proud look and high stomach : I will not suffer him. He proceeds now to specify the classes of persons who shall S. Bernard. Serm. in Cant. 26. S. Bonav. in Sap. 1. A. at once be removed from his court, the secret intriguer, and the overbearing noble. He had experienced the effects of slander in the massacre of the priests on the false charge of Doeg; he had known, at the Court of Achish, what it was to be scorned by haughty princes. He knew of slander too, that it is, of all sins, the most repugnant to Divine charity, for, as a Saint has forcibly said, "He who slanders, smites charity with his reviling tongue, and so far as in him lies, slays and quenches it entirely, and not only so, but also in all persons absent, to whom the flying word may chance to come through those who were present." And there are four ways of slandering: denying an unpublished good thing; disparaging it when made known; publishing a hidden wrong thing; and magnifying it when it comes abroad. We may add to the list, those who readily listen to such conversation, and those who always lean to the harsher interpretation of a doubtful matter. And of all these, one who was most like to CHRIST in his perfect charity, observes, in one of his rare moods of sternness, "The sin of slander is a foe to the fruit of loving-kindness and grace, and hateful to our most loving GOD, for the slanderer feeds on the blood of souls, which he murders with the sword of his tongue."

A high stomach, that is, with A.V., a proud heart. The literal Hebrew is a wide heart, and this is turned by the phrase insatiable by the Vulgate, following the LXX. ἀπλή-στῳ, implying one who is greedy of wealth, rank, and power. And, taking the words as spoken by CHRIST, we may understand the slanderers of the Jews, who ascribed His miracles to Satan, the inspiration of His Apostles to drunkenness; while the conceited Greeks and haughty Romans, and all Pagans despising the obscure Eastern sect, are fitly denoted by the proud. I will not suffer him. The LXX. and Vulgate, I did not eat with him. And this refers primarily to the exclusion of such persons from the royal table, as not suffered to hold any rank in the court

entitling them to that distinction. It also holds of being guest as well as host, according to the warning given to the prophet to refuse the invitation of Jeroboam; to the counsel of the Apostle as to the mode of dealing with a Christian of evil life, "with such an one no not to eat." Mystically, CHRIST does not eat with the wicked who draw near to His table, because they do not receive the grace and benefit of the Holy Sacrament, albeit physically communicating at that rich banquet of the King.

8 Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful in the land : that they may dwell with me. 9 Whoso leadeth a godly life : he shall be my servant. Reading , instead of .

The word faithful here, unqualified by any further expression, denotes, as usual in Holy Writ, fidelity to the Law of GOD, as the true basis of loyalty to an earthly code or sovereign. And as persons of this stamp are to be selected throughout the land, to the exclusion of all inferior qualifications for offices of the court; so the chief amongst them, the immediate minister of the King, shall be he who is not only faithful, but godly. The first verse is well illustrated by the conduct of Constantius Chlorus, when he was Cæsar in Britain, and the edict of Diocletian and Maximian against Christianity was published there. He assembled the Christian officers of his household, and reading the mandate, told them to choose between apostasy and resignation of their employment. Such as chose the former alternative were immediately dismissed with ignominy, as their sovereign declared he could never trust the fidelity of men who had proved themselves traitors to their GOD. Mystically, the faithful in the land are diversely taken as the Apostles, over whom GOD's providential care watched, as they proclaimed the Gospel throughout the world; or those who are loyal and unshaken while dwelling amongst persons of earthly and carnal minds; or again, those who are sedulous to guard the purity of their own bodies. That they may dwell with Me. And that here in hope and sanctity of conversation, but in our Country by perfect fruition in the mansions of the FATHER.

The LXX., Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate, however, read, That they sit with Me, at table, in council, in judgment, in participation of good things and of employments. We may find here the charity of CHRIST, in that He will not sit alone at His board, but saith, like holy Job, "If I have eaten my morsel myself alone . . . then let mine arm fall. We see also in the word with, His humility, in that He does not set Himself above His guests, but mingles among them, as it is written, "If thou be made the master of a feast, lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest. But the interpretation most followed is that which takes the words of CHRIST's promise to the Apostles, that they should sit, with Him, on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. The two verses may also be taken as the words of a conscientious Bishop, declaring that no considerations of favour or kindred should affect his ordinations, but solely orthodoxy of belief and purity of life on the part of

the candidates. And this meaning is almost forced upon us by the LXX. here, using as it does the priestly word ἐλειτούργει at the end of the ninth verse.

10 There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. The parallelism of this verse is obscured by the LXX. and A. Vulgate, which put he that doeth pride in the first clause. They take the house, as before, diversely, either as denoting office in the Church of God, personal favour and acceptance with CHRIST, or a place in the heavenly Jerusalem, for it is written, "without is whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Shall not tarry in My sight. The Chaldee is yet stronger, shall not have the power of appearing before Me. The literal Hebrew is given by the margin of A.V., shall not be established, that is, shall have no firm footing, a meaning practically coinciding with the Prayer Book Version. There is an increase of stress in the second paragraph. The crafty and deceitful person, who quibbles, misleads, and equivocates, while avoiding all directly false statements, shall not be suffered to be a permanent inmate in the King's house; while he that telleth lies shall be altogether banished from the royal presence. The force of this whole clause is much weakened by the LXX. and Vulgate, reading, He that speaketh unjust things hath not gone straight before Mine eyes. This is explained by most to mean, hath not pleased Me, but Agellius will have it that it denotes the terror and consequent stumbling of the deceiver when meeting the indignant lighting of the King's glance of rebuke. Even Pagans could rise to this zeal for truth:

Hateful to me as gates of hell is he Who hides one thing within his mind, and speaks Another. 11 I shall soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land : that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the LORD. Targum. A. S. Chrysost. Haymo. In the literal sense, S. Basil and Theodoret, who ascribe the Psalm to Josiah, remind us of his punishment of the idolatrous priests and purging of the Holy City; while those who allow David's authorship, remark that he failed, by his condoning the crimes of Joab, to keep the promise of speedy judgment on the guilty. For soon, we should read with all the ancient versions, in the morning, the time of the sitting of courts of law in Eastern countries. The Chaldee explains this to be the world to come, bright as the morning, wherein Messiah will destroy His enemies, a meaning adopted by many Christian expositors, who take this passage of the morning of Resurrection and Judgment, marked by the condemnation of the wicked and their final exclusion from the heavenly Jerusalem.

A second view, taking the words not as spoken by CHRIST, but by any one of His servants, explains them of amendment of sins in the light of GOD'S Word, and the diligently rooting Origen. out of our hearts, His city, every evil passion and thought, D. C. every suggestion of our spiritual foes. Glory be to the FATHER, the GOD of mercy and judgment; glory be to the SON, Who taketh the faithful to dwell with Him; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who giveth understanding in the way of

godliness. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD of measureless might, Who graciously bestowest Ludolph. mercy and judgment upon Thy servants; grant that we may faithfully love Thee, enter upon the right way, and depart from the vanity of hateful pride. (1.) Singing unto Thee of Thy mercy and judgment, O LORD, Mozarabic. we pray and make music, beseeching that we may walk with understanding in the way of godliness, so that by the prompting of mercy we may keep in the straight path, and in fear of judgment may correct our errors. (1.) We sing of mercy and judgment unto Thee, O LORD, our Mozarabic. SAVIOUR and Judge, help us with the one, warn us with the other; on that side is the light of pity, on this the rule of inquiry. Grant us Thy humble servants, O LORD, that a froward heart may not cleave to us, and that evil things before our eyes may not allure us, but that walking in the simplicity of innocence, Thou mayest lead us on in Thy pity and love, and absolve us as a truthful Judge. (11.)

Grant us, O LORD, through the interposition of Thy mercy, D. C. we beseech Thee, not to cling to a froward heart, but cause us to walk alway innocently in Thy courts, that pleasing Thee, Thou mayest vouchsafe to bring us to the fellowship of Thine everlasting glory. (1.)

Psalm 102

TITLE. A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That all the Gentiles reverence and fear the Name and glory of CHRIST. The Voice of CHRIST to the Church. The Voice of CHRIST to the Church when CHRIST ascended to the FATHER, or the voice of any one doing penance. The Voice of CHRIST in the Passion, and a prophecy of the new people. The Voice of CHRIST on the Cross. VEN. BEDE. Although some have thought the present Psalm applicable to the LORD our SAVIOUR, it seems more suitable to suppose that the person of an afflicted and groaning poor man, as the title itself contains it, is introduced: for when he saith, before the Lord, he discloses the intention of the suppliant; whereby, dismissing the tumult of thoughts from his mind, he makes mention of nought save himself and Him to Whom he makes his prayer. And note, that while names are constantly set down in the titles, here a poor man without name is introduced as speaking: doubtless that whereas it is given to one, all CHRIST'S poor may know that it is assigned to them.

This poor man, needy in goods, but rich in virtue, in the beginning of the Psalm beseeches the LORD in many ways to give heed to his prayer; because, broken down with constant affliction, he has his bones as it were burnt up. Hear my prayer, O Lord, &c. Then follows a mournful account of his necessities, I am smitten down like grass, &c. And lest he should appear, after so many sufferings, ungrateful for his chastisement, he proceeds in the third part to the praises of the LORD, by Whose Advent he saith that the Church will be built up; and whereas all things are to be changed, He, nevertheless, will abide for evermore. Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever. There is introduced also a very prayerful ending, that the seed of the Saints may be directed to that place where the LORD dwells in everlasting glory. Thus the prayer of the poor man, which began with tears, is achieved in joy. The children of Thy servants shall continue.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. A lamentation over the former people, and a prophecy of the new people, and the calling of the Gentiles. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm in prayer.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Saturday: Matins. Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian, &c. Let my crying * come unto Thee, O LORD. Parisian. My drink * have I mingled with weeping, from the face of Thine indignation and wrath. Mosarabic. First portion: In whatever day I call upon Thee, hear me right soon, O LORD my GOD. Second portion: The heathen shall fear Thy Name, O LORD, and all the kings of the earth Thy majesty. This, the fifth of the Penitential Psalms, against avarice, was formerly recited daily in Lent at Nones after the Miserere, a custom retained in the last Sarum Breviary, but now disused in the Roman Office. In its first origin, it seems to have been composed towards the end of the Captivity, perhaps after the decree for the rebuilding of the Temple, but certainly before the restoration of the gates and walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah. The private and personal character of the Psalm is marked by its title, which stands alone amongst the inscriptions of the Psalter, inasmuch as all the other examples are either musical or historical.

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD : and let my crying come unto thee. The Church makes constant use of this verse, as a preparation to other petitions, for she hath learnt from the Prophet, that we must ask a hearing from GOD, before our special petitions are set forth; not that GOD needs to be roused to hear, as though He were intent on other matters, but because we need that GOD give us the spirit of prayer; nay, that His own SPIRIT may make supplication for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Hear my prayer, make me so to pray that I may be worthy to be heard; and let my crying come unto Thee, that my prayer may be such an eager and fervid cry of the heart, that it faint not on the way, but although sent up from the deep may reach Thee, sitting on the throne most high. That a prayer may be able to effect this, it should have certain properties:

Commoda, pura, volans, devota, tenax, pia, justa, Communis, brevis, in CHRISTO, cum spe, locus, ardor. Useful, pure, winged, devout, persistent, loving, just, Common, brief, in CHRIST'S Name, with hope, place, zeal. That is, it should be for some salutary object, free from all evil thoughts, uplifted by alms and fasting, humble, constant, with true affection for GOD, uttered for a righteous purpose, in the person of the Church, so as to be profitable for all, not made up of vain repetition, in faith and through the merits and mediation of CHRIST, if possible in a house of prayer, and with fervency of purpose. My prayer, the Psalmist calls it, showing that it is not enough for us to have the intercession of others on our behalf, but we need to have a petition of our very own to prove our earnestness to GOD. He says

prayer, moreover, in the singular, implying that it is one special petition. And if we take the poor man of the title, as so many do, of Him Who though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, we may then explain this prayer of His to be that Our FATHER which He taught His disciples, or His supplication for the redemption of mankind. If the poor man be a type of the whole Jewish nation in Babylonian captivity, then we may see in the literal sense an intreaty for the deliverance of Israel, which we may spiritually apply to our ransom from the captivity of sin. The manner in which this mournful cry follows on the jubilant tone of those Psalms immediately preceding it is an apt type

A. of the manner in which joy and sorrow are blended in man's earthly life. It may be uttered fitly by any who are poor in spirit, and yearn for the riches of the Heavenly Country, or by any penitent soul which thinks with awe on the strictness of the Judgment to come; remembering that there are cries, like that of Sodom, which come up to GOD, and bring down brimstone and fire from Him out of heaven; so that it behoves every one who makes his prayer to GOD to beware that wrath, reviling, cursing, falsehood, and the like evil things mingle not with his cry, lest the answer should be a chastisement. 2 Hide not thy face from me in the time of my trouble: incline thine ear unto me when I call; O hear me, and that right soon. Eusebius. S. Chrysost. Hugo Card. A.

GOD is said to hide His face when men ask for things which it is not good that He should grant, and therefore this petition is for a right spirit in prayer, that He may cease to turn away, and may show us His countenance in loving bestowal of that we ask. If the words are put into the mouth of CHRIST, it is only as pleading for His members that we can suppose Him to speak of the FATHER's face being hidden from Him, but our low estate and sinfulness enable Him Who has identified Himself with us to speak in this wise. And therefore it is that He adds, In what day soever I am in trouble, for He saith to any one of His suffering members, "Thou art in trouble to-day, I am in trouble too; another is troubled to-morrow, I am in trouble; after this generation others who succeed are in trouble, I am in trouble unto the end of the world, for whosoever are troubled in My body, I am in trouble. But we may take it especially of the day of His bitter Passion, when the FATHER did incline His ear to Him when He called, and that right soon, by raising Him up on the third day; nay, in strictness, when but half the full space of that time had elapsed. Some will have it that there is a mystical stress on the word day here, connoting light and clearness;

and others that it implies calling on GOD in purity of heart and clearness of understanding; or again, that it is a reference to the greater ease and efficacy of prayer under the rays of the Gospel than under the shadows of the Law. Hear me right soon, lest if Thou delay, there be none left for Thee to heal when Thou comest.

And GOD's reply is precise: "Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am."

Bellarmine. A. Isa. lviii. 9. 3 For my days are consumed away like smoke: and my bones are burnt up as it were a fire-brand. This is the reason why God is asked to hear right soon, lest there should be an end before His arrival to save. Some commentators, interpreting the Psalm as one of the Maccabee period, expound this passage with reference to the nearly successful attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to root out the Hebrew polity and worship. It may be more accurately referred to the gradual absorption of the exiled Jews into the heathen population amongst whom they dwelt, and the diminution of the faithful remnant. And this view is forcibly confirmed by the language of the prophet Zechariah touching the high priest Joshua, one of the exiles who did return, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?" If, as before, we ascribe the words to our LORD, they will be His expression of grief that His life and death have been in vain, so far as very many of His nominal followers are concerned, those teachers and priests who ought to be as days, giving light to the Church; those Religious, who ought to have been her strength and bones; the one darkened and defiled with the smoke of pride and vanity, the others burnt up by indevotion and greed; terms of reproach which every sinner who uses this Psalm in prayer on his own behalf, and is conscious that he has blackened his days with his evil living, may well apply to himself.

4 My heart is smitten down, and withered like grass: so that I forget to eat my bread.

This withering is from excess of heat, which may be either that of undue worldly prosperity or of crushing affliction, each destructive to a weak and sapless mind. He who has basked too long in the sun of riches and luxury, whose heart has dried up with the cares of the world, may truly say, I forget to eat my bread, that bread of heavenly wisdom, which man calls mine, because it is not, like bodily food, common to him and the beasts; but which he ceases to relish, nay, begins to loathe as light and unsatisfying, when he is not sheltered under the overshadowing wings of God, and watered with the continual rain of divine grace. The Chaldee paraphrase coincides in part with this explanation, reading (as all the old versions rightly do) because instead of so that. My heart is withered, because I have been forgetful of the teaching of the Law. And this interpretation squares precisely with those two sayings of the LORD, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" and again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Arnobius and some others interpret the verse literally of a physical fast, but Cassiodorus justly objects that a complaint on the score of lack of bodily food is unworthy of the spiritual self-denial of the Psalmist, and that we should see here a confession of the suffering caused by the want of the Bread of Life, the royal banquet of the Eucharist, whether our own neglect

or some cause external to us have occasioned our cessation of communion; an acknowledgment of the dryness and indevotion which comes of infrequent partaking of the Sacrament, so unlike the daily Eucharists of the Early Church.

5 For the voice of my groaning : my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh. A. The latter clause ought to run as in A.V., My bones cleave to my flesh (marg.) or skin. Some commentators see in these words the severity of the penance and mortification wherewith the returning sinner bewails the time of his forgetfulness and neglect of the Divine food of the Word; but most of the mediæval expositors prefer to follow the mystical gloss of S. Gregory; that the voice of my groaning means the suggestions of the Evil One, who has caused all the grief and sighs of mankind, and that by reason of listening to that voice, Adam, the bones or strength of the human race, yielded to Eve, the flesh, or weaker vessel, and sinned; an event repeated every time that reason yields to fleshly emotion. There is a milder interpretation, which takes the voice of groaning to be the compassion of the righteous for the lapsed, which results in the bones, the vigorous Saints, attaching themselves firmly to the weaker brethren, denoted by the flesh, that they may aid and sustain them. There is a further exposition, taking this, as well as the previous and following verses, of the physical sufferings of our LORD in the Passion, though this partial literalism is here abandoned by one commentator, who singularly expounds the verse of S. John, the firmest of the Apostles in his steadfastness, standing close to her whose flesh the SAVIOUR took, while He was uttering His dying groan upon the Cross.

6 I am become like a pelican in the wilderness : and like an owl that is in the desert. 7 I have watched, and am even as it were a sparrow : that sitteth alone upon the house-top. There are three kinds and degrees of penitential retirement set before us under the types of the three birds mentioned here, the pelican, seeking solitary places, being an apt emblem of the hermits of the Thebaid and other like solitaries; the owl, dwelling in ruins once occupied by men, denoting the Common Life in the cells of the cloister, bare of the comforts and luxuries of secular life; while the sparrow on the house-top signifies those living of necessity in the world, but withdrawing at times for secret prayer and contemplation, above the level of temporal concerns; watching anxiously over the spiritual interests of those with whom they have to do.

Amongst the strange legends once current of the pelican, there are two which stand out conspicuously here in the notes of the mediæval commentators. One is that familiar idea of the ”pelican in her piety,” feeding her young with blood from her own breast (a tale due to the bird’s red-tipped beak, and its custom of pressing this beak against the breast in order to disgorge the fish stored in the pouch under its lower mandible); the other, yet wilder, declaring that the mother-bird itself kills its young (or, as others tell us, finds them killed by serpents,) and after mourning

over them three days, sprinkles them with blood from a wound it makes in its own side, and brings them to life again. These two stories are applied to CHRIST, feeding His children with His Blood, and reviving them, either after they have been slain by the old serpent, or after He has Himself killed sin in them. There is much else of a similar kind, but these are enough as examples.

An owl that is in the desert. For owl, which is most probably the correct reading here, the LXX. and Vulgate have nycticorax, the night-raven, whence Bellarmine, comparing this bird, as mentioned above, to Religious of the Common Life, explains the word as denoting the vigils and midnight offices of the cloister; which is not dissimilar to the earlier view, which sees in the word a reference to the secret good works and prayers of a penitent soul. The word desert ought to be ruins, and thus denotes the sorrow of the repentant sinner for the wasted years and slighted opportunities of his past life; while those who take the word here as a type of CHRIST remind us how the Jews slew Him in the night of their ignorance and unbelief, amidst the ruin and fall of their nation, partly standing in its observance of the Law and possession of the Prophets, but fallen as regards true and inward faith.

I have watched, in prayers and fastings and vigils, against all the snares of the enemy, and that as a sparrow on the house-top, uplifted in faith upon the Church as a secure watch-tower, sitting alone, because separated from worldly companionship. Of CHRIST they take this watching to be His awaking at the Resurrection, His sitting on the house-top, to mean His Ascension into heaven, where He, alone of all mankind, sitteth in the highest; whereas, but a little before, He was lying, as a bird of night, in the darkness of the grave, amidst the ruins of those gates of hell which He smote down. There are yet more allegories drawn from these two verses. S. Augustine will have it that three classes of preachers are designated by the three birds: the pelican of the wilderness standing for the missionary to those who have never heard the Gospel; the owl of the ruins, the seeker of lapsed Christians; the sparrow of the house-top to believers who have become tepid and fleshly, and who need therefore to be called

A. A. to higher things by a voice from a loftier grade of spirituality than theirs. Another prefers to see the hearers rather than the preachers in these types, and distinguishes them as Gentiles, dwelling in the wilderness, Jews, abiding amidst the ruins of their Law and nation, Christians, rising from secular habits to religious contemplation. 8 Mine enemies revile me all the day long : and they that are mad upon me are sworn together against me. A. S. Greg. M. A. C.

They take the words in the first place of the LORD JESUS, both as to the revilings and slander which He endured before His Passion, and also the mocking and insults as He hung upon the Cross. The LXX. and Vulgate, instead of They that are mad upon me read They that praised me. And this is variously explained as feigned and

hypocritical, or else as ironical, praise by some; while others suppose that a revulsion of feeling is indicated, so that those who were friends have been turned into enemies, and are now sworn together in conspiracy against the life of their former associate, owing to their anger for his having adopted a stricter life than theirs; so that they exclaim, ”Therefore let us lie in wait for the righteous, because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our ways.” And Euthymius mentions a further meaning, as given by some expositors, that we have here a prophecy of S. Peter’s denial of his Master, confirmed with cursing and swearing. But in truth the latter clause is not given accurately by LXX., Vulgate, or the two English versions. It ought to stand, as in Symmachus and S. Jerome, They swore by me, or They made me their oath. That is, when imprecating curses on themselves or others, they took me, because of my misfortunes, as an example of misery. And in the literal sense of the passage, as referring to the sufferings of the Jews, either in the Captivity or under the persecution of Antiochus, according as the Psalm is dated, it expresses very forcibly the contempt of the nations around for the oppressed and diminished remnant of Israel.

9 For I have eaten ashes as it were bread : and mingled my drink with weeping; 10 And that because of thine indignation and wrath : for thou hast taken me up, and cast me down.

Here is the special cause of the reviling mentioned just before. The commentators are at no small pains to discuss the literal meaning of the words, in order to give some plausible account of the eating of ashes. Thus a Jewish expositor tells us that the Israelites in the Captivity were forced, by reason of their poverty, to eat bread roughly baked on the coals, without any proper oven, and that in consequence of this hasty preparation, it was mixed with cinders and pebbles. Others, looking to the penitential custom of lying in sackcloth and ashes, assume that food was taken in this attitude, so that it became sprinkled with the ashes from the hands and face of the penitent. A third view treats the act as a deliberate act of mortification, such as has been recorded of more than one Christian Saint, as S. Godric of Finchale, or S. Francis of Assisi, the latter of whom is said to have sprinkled ashes on any dainty food served him at great tables, saying with a smile, ”Brother Ash is pure. In the mystical sense, they take the words of that Master whom Francis served and imitated, in His tenderness and companionship with publicans and sinners, black with their guilt, and yet repentant, because the fires of evil passions were burnt out in them: while He mingled His drink with weeping, when at the banquet in the house of Simon the Pharisee, He permitted the sinful woman to wash His feet with her tears. And S.

Augustine points out that the doctrine of penance and restoration of sinners was precisely the one heaviest charge which Pagans in his day brought against the Christian Church, as they alleged that the inevitable result of such treatment would

be the multiplication of crimes in the confidence of future impunity. The Carmelite, answering this objection, reminds us very happily that the strongest lye for cleansing purposes is made with water poured through ashes, and that penitence does not merely hide, but removes sin. The notion of eating and drinking in this connection is, as they explain it, the incorporation of penitents into the Body of CHRIST or of the Church. Thus a Saint observes: "My penitence is His food, and my salvation is His food, I am myself His food: for does He not eat ashes as it were bread? For I, because I am a sinner, am ashes, that I may be eaten by Him; I am cleansed when I am rebuked, I am swallowed when instructed, I am digested when undergoing change, I am assimilated when I am shaped anew."

We too eat ashes for bread when we swallow down our sins, now burnt out, so that they pass forth from us into the draught, we mingle our drink with weeping, when we approach the chalice of the Holy Eucharist with true penitence, or when our longing for the Heavenly Land causes us to burst into yearning tears. For thee, O dear, dear country, Mine eyes their vigils keep, For very love, beholding Thy happy name, they weep. A. S. Bernard. Serm. in Cant. 7. And that because of Thine indignation and wrath. Here L. III. O Ps. cxix. 71. Vulg. A. is the cause why CHRIST and the Church, His Bride, take sinners to themselves, that they may be sheltered from the face (LXX. and Vulg.) of Divine anger against evil; and it is likewise the cause why penitents humble themselves before the LORD their GOD, Who, that they might be saved, hath taken up His Only-Begotten on the Cross, and cast Him down into the grave. And as an eagle snatches turtles and shell-fish high into the air, and then dashes them down upon a rock to break their hard covering that he may eat, so CHRIST lifts the sinner up in prosperity, wealth, and security, that by a sudden fall the hard shell of worldliness and evil habit may be pierced, and the softer nature within be incorporated into His own Body. Happy is such a casting-down, as it is written in another place, "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy statutes." And while we may take the verse of man's fall from that innocence and dignity up to which GOD took him out of the dust, we may yet remember that a better Eden, a nobler dominion is promised to the sons of Adam when repentant than Adam enjoyed before his sin.

11 My days are gone like a shadow : and I am withered like grass. S. Matt. vi. 23. S. Bernard. Serm. in Cant. 20.

Our very mortality is a token of the casting-down which sin has brought upon us. As a vase, flung from a height, does not merely lose its place of dignity, but is shattered to fragments by its fall, so man did not merely lose his high position by Adam's transgression, but was plunged into the ruin of the first death, and the peril of the second. And in comparing the days of man to a shadow, we have not only the idea of unsubstantiality and fleetingness put before us, but that of darkness. If our days are like a shadow, what are our nights? If our clearest understanding,

our holiest and warmest efforts after good are this, what are our errors and our sins? ”If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness?” And consequently S. Bernard bids us note that it is not here said, My days have set like the sun, for the sun, soon as his course is over, leaves tangible results behind him in the life and warmth he has bestowed, but a shadow in no way affects the objects over which it passes; and in like manner, the life of a sinner is of no profit to mankind. I am withered like grass. For grass, when it has been cut down, is carried away in wagons, is given as food to cattle, is made into beds for men to lie on; and so we, when death comes with his scythe, are borne on a bier, given as food to worms, trodden under foot as wayfarers pass over our graves. And the suitability of the verse to the enfeebled and fading condition of age or sickness, points the use of the Psalm in the Greek office for the dying.

12 But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever : and thy remembrance throughout all generations. We have here not merely a confession of the distance between GOD and the sinner, an appeal to His mercy, in that He is so much the mightier, not to bear too hardly on His feeble creature, saying, ”Wilt Thou break a leaf driven to and fro; and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?” but also a declaration of confidence in Him Who, being eternal, has the time and power to help always in His hands. It is thus a cry for the Messiah to come for the deliverance and restoration of His people, and His remembrance may thus mean the promise of His Incarnation, preserved from generation to generation in type and prophecy, and destined to everlasting continuance; or His own covenant with mankind to bestow eternal life upon them; or again, that Memorial which He has given His Church in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, wherewith He is with us from generation to generation, ”alway unto the end of the world.” Another, reminding us that the phrase remembrance or memorial is technically applied to any brief document containing an abstract of pleadings, to assist the recollection of an advocate, tells us that the memorial of CHRIST, which endures from generation to generation, is the terse petition He has taught us as the sum of all prayer: ”Our FATHER, which art in heaven,” &c., which is also, as it were, the title-deed of our inheritance above.

13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion : for it is time that thou have mercy upon her, yea, the time is come. Here, in the literal sense, is the declaration of the close of the seventy years’ Captivity, and a prayer to GOD to fulfil the words of His prophets, by delivering Israel out of Babylon. And then, taking it of CHRIST, and of His mercy shown to His Church, they explain the word arise in three ways, as denoting His Incarnation, whereby He did as it were stand up from His throne and repose of Godhead, to enter the battle for man; His Resurrection, when He had mercy on the small and panic-stricken remnant in the upper chamber in Jerusalem; and His second Coming, when His earthly Sion shall see all evil crushed for ever, and the breaches of the heavenly Sion shall be repaired by filling up with ransomed men the ranks thinned by the fall of the rebel angels. The time is come. The first

advent of CHRIST was in that fulness of time when GOD sent forth His SON; and His Advent to every faithful soul which He has tried sufficiently by tribulation before He comes to give it peace and comfort, is also in "the accepted time, the day of salvation."

Serm. in 14 And why? thy servants think upon her stones: and it pitieth them to see her in the dust. A. The Gloss.

The Rabbinical explanation of this verse is that the servants of God here mentioned are the sovereigns who granted permission for the rebuilding of Jerusalem; to wit, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes. But it seems far better to understand it of Ezra, Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, with other zealous Jews, preferring the very ruins of their own dear city to the stately palaces and vast gardens of Babylon. And this sense is brought out more clearly by the true rendering of the first clause, as given by A.V., LXX., and Vulgate: Thy servants take pleasure in her stones. Mystically, the words are taken of the Apostles, delighting in choosing out and hewing fitly choice and living stones for building up the Church of God, in whom they can take pleasure, while their pity is reserved for the dust, the mere ruins from the fallen walls, the downtrodden Jews who crucified their LORD. The Saints take pleasure too in the hardships they suffer in the Church Militant, and thus in one of the Antiphons at Lauds on the feast of the Protomartyr S. Stephen, the Church says, "The stones of the torrent were sweet unto him, all righteous souls follow him." Note too, that the servants of God delight in the thought of those foundations of sapphire, those walls of costly jewels, wherewith the Heavenly Jerusalem is built up; while they feel grief and pity for the low estate of the earthly Church, contrasting its suffering condition with the glories of the City which is free, the mother of us all; and pity too the misery of those who are content to be mere dust and earth here, in grovelling desires, rather than be as "the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon the land," built high in the crystalline battlements of the royal Sion.

15 The heathen shall fear thy Name, O LORD: and all the kings of the earth thy majesty; 16 When the LORD shall build up Sion: and when his glory shall appear; A. The non-fulfilment of this prophecy at the restoration of the Jews and the erection of the second Temple, albeit certain offerings were no doubt made to the God of the Hebrews by various Gentile monarchs, on the renovation of the Temple, and after its expiation under Judas Maccabeus, teaches us that we must look to a higher meaning than a literal one for the Psalm; and we see in it first, the victory of the Church over the Empire, and the barbarous nations and kings who overthrew the Roman sway; and then, the final revelation of the glory of CHRIST in Judgment. And a Saint reminds us that the LORD, when He was laying Himself as the foundation of Sion, was not seen in glory, but in humility and sorrow, yet that His weakness has become our strength, so that He is seen now in glory in building up the Saints of His Church.

17 When he turneth him unto the prayer of the poor destitute : and despiseth not their desire. These words are the completion of the two former verses, and imply that the building-up of Sion is in answer to lowly supplication. And they will thus have their first literal sense in the restoration of the Jewish polity on the full repentance of the captive people; while their deeper import will be found in the Incarnation, as God's reply to the orisons of the Prophets, and in His coming to judgment, invoked by the cry of the Martyrs under the altar, "How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" 18 This shall be written for those that come after : and the people which shall be born shall praise the LORD.

The literal sense of the verse appears to be a direction for committing this prophecy to writing, in order that when it had been fulfilled by the restoration of Israel to Palestine, and the revival of the national polity almost by a new creation, (for the A.V. correctly reads here, with LXX. and Vulgate, created instead of born,) the memory of it might not be lost, but thanksgivings be offered to God in divine worship because of His wonderful truth and goodness. But a fuller sense is suggested by the words of the Apostle, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." For we are that other generation (LXX. and Vulg.) which was to come, the people which have been created anew by the laver of regeneration, gathered out of heathenism to praise the LORD; and taught the full mysteries of the New Testament by means of that Old Testament which bade the former generation look in hope for that which we hold in fruition. "Therefore, if any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And it is only for those who are willing to become a new generation, unlike the children of this world, a fresh creation, of grace, not of nature, that the Gospels are written, that the law of the Most High is written, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of our hearts. There is no name of the writer given, because only One can so write on our hearts, the HOLY SPIRIT Himself.

19 For he hath looked down from his sanctuary : out of the heaven did the LORD behold the earth; A. 20 That he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity : and deliver the children appointed unto death. S. Greg. M. C. Haymo. S. Bruno Carth. Innocent III. Hugo Card. Exod. iii. 7. The A.V. reads correctly with LXX. and Vulgate, the height of His sanctuary. And the general voice of the early expositors bids us see here a prophecy of CHRIST stooping from the exalted throne of His divine Majesty, to take upon Him the clay of our human nature; beholding with His especial grace and favour that lowly and beauteous valley, the Blessed Mary, wherein He willed to abide. A certain ambiguity in the Vulgate, de excelso sancto suo, which may refer to a person as well as a place, has led to some variety of exposition here amongst the Latins; of whom some refer the verse to the FATHER, looking lovingly on mankind from the Person of His "high and holy One," the Eternal

Son; while others take the phrase tropologically of any saintly Prelate, through whom GOD vouchsafes to instruct and guide His people.

That He might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity. And so He spake to Moses at the burning bush, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good land and large." Again, He delivered them in like manner out of Babylon, and came Himself in person a third time to save them from the sorer bondage of sin, to bring them into a yet better country. Those in captivity to sin He hears, that He may let them go. These fetters of sin are manifold, and may be summed up thus: Hugo Card. Ignoro, nequeo, corrumpor, negligo, lassor, Hoste premor, consuetus agor, timeo, socius sum. I know not, cannot, am tainted, idle, faint, Forced by a foe, driven by custom, fear, am a mate.

Gerson. Ecclus. vi. 24, 29. Cd. Hugo Card. That is, we are liable to sins of ignorance, of weakness, of the corrupt flesh, of omission, of weariness in well-doing, by actual compulsion from without, by the force of habit, through fear, and because of evil companionship. From all these the LORD came to set us free. But He especially delights in hearkening to the petitions of those voluntary prisoners who have heeded the counsel of the Wise Man, preaching of Wisdom, "Put thy feet into her fetters, and thy neck unto her chain; bow down thy shoulder, and be not grieved with her bonds . . . then shall her fetters be a strong defence for thee, and her chains a robe of glory." And thus the words will fitly apply to those who have taken upon them the obligations of the Religious Life, and pass their time in making intercessions for others. There is a further meaning to be drawn from the verse, namely, the deliverance of the souls of the Patriarchs from Hades and their introduction to Paradise when CHRIST harrowed hell.

The prey which Hell had gorged of old Is torn for ever from its hold, And hosts from prison chains set free With JESUS leave captivity. S. Fulbert, The Hymn, Chorus Novæ Hierusalem. The children appointed unto death. The literal Hebrew is the children of death. And this metaphor may be taken either as above, or as meaning the children of slain parents. The former is the more exact, and thus indicates simply the imminence of the peril out of which GOD delivered His people, mystically or literally. But the majority of the expositors prefer the latter, and explain the words of Christians now, either as spiritual descendants of those Jews who died in their sins as having rejected the Messiah, or of Adam and Eve, who brought death into the world; while another interpretation prefers to see us described as the descendants of the Apostles and Martyrs who died for the Faith, and left their examples to us for imitation. This second meaning can defend itself by the literal history of the two great deliverances of Israel, seeing that it was the children of

those that came out of Egypt, and not the first members of the Exodus themselves, who entered Canaan, inasmuch as all the six hundred thousand save two died in the wilderness; and similarly that but a very few scanty relics of the generation which had known the first Temple attained with the younger one to see the new one raised. There is a further distinction, that the Jews, possessed of life, though tied down by their traditions and blindness, are those in captivity, while the children of death signify the Gentile heathen, cut off from all knowledge of immortality in CHRIST, and bound in the chains of the devil.

21 That they may declare the Name of the LORD in Sion : and his worship at Jerusalem ; 22 When the people are gathered together : and the kingdoms also, to serve the LORD. Here, upon earth, in Sion, the Church Militant, our task is to preach CHRIST, to declare the Name of the Lord, till we make the people of the earth His disciples, till "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST," and that gathered together, in one faith, one baptism, one body; while the heavenly Jerusalem will be the place for the everlasting worship or praise of the LORD, when the fulness of the Gentiles has come in, and those crowned kings who have subdued the earth of their own bodies, the hosts of their own passions, cast their diadems in love and awe before the throne of the Son of God.

Come, O ye kings, ye nations, With songs of gladness hail Him, Ye Gentiles all before Him fall, The royal Priest in Salem. O'er hell and death triumphant Your conquering LORD hath risen, His praises sound Whose power hath bound Your ruthless foe in prison.

23 He brought down my strength in my journey :
and shortened my days. A.

This is, as the Rabbins allege, a cry of weakness from those Jews whose place of exile was very distant from Jerusalem, and who feared that the long and toilsome journey would exhaust their powers before they could reach the Holy City, and share in the glory and happiness of reviving it anew from its ruins. They differ as to the He of the verse, some taking it, as seems the natural order, to mean God, named but just before at the close of the previous verse, while others suppose that the Enemy is meant, cutting off the straggling bands of pilgrims on the way. But it seems better to take the verse in a more general sense, of the course of this life, wherein God suffers us to be afflicted and weakened, lest, loving the road too well, we should be insufficiently mindful of the Land to which we journey. But the LXX. and Vulgate, following a totally different reading of the Hebrew text, give a very dissimilar version here : He (or, she) answered Him in the way of His might, Tell me the fewness of my days. And there is a great variety of expositions due to the obscurity of this rendering. Thus, S. Augustine will have it, that the question is addressed by Jerusalem, by the Church, to CHRIST, after His Resurrection in

power, asking how long her earthly sojourn is to last, before the day of eternity comes on.

Another takes it that the earth, which the LORD beholds, answers Him in the way of virtue, by becoming obedient to His precepts, and then prays of Him to teach her the shortness of human life, that she may be fitted with longing for immortality. A third view ascribes the words to the ”poor man” of whom we hear in the title of the Psalm, who, seeing that God has begun to show mercy upon Sion, is fearful of dying before he has seen the salvation fully wrought out, and beseeches God to remove his alarm by granting him a longer space. Another explanation takes it thus : Jerusalem asked the LORD to tell her the fewness of her days, and He an-

Reading for , for , and perhaps instead of . swered her in the way of His might, as He was fast treading the road which led to His victorious Cross: ”The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.” 24 But I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of mine age: as for thy years, they endure throughout all generations.

It is not a mere prayer for life for its own sake, but that the speaker may behold God’s redemption of Israel. And therefore S. Augustine takes it as the prayer of the Church that God will prolong her earthly existence to the end of the world, that she may do His work amongst mankind. And spoken by the individual believer, the words denote his prayer that God will permit him to see the great work accomplished; for, on the one hand, being Eternal, He has the empire over time; and on the other, the brief prolongation of human life asked for brings man no nearer to the years of Him Who is before all time and to all ages. And it is, further, an intreaty that God may not cut short the days of amendment, but permit penitence to have its full course and perfect work. But the Vulgate rendering here, Call me not back, has led to a curious mystical exposition. I am running a race, the Psalmist would say, on the way of salvation, call me not back from that race to the sins of my hot youth, when I had as yet measured only half the span of my days; call me not back from my exile before I am ready, lest I should have but that half of my life which belongs to this world, which knows only half-days, because night claims a moiety of the hours as her own, and not attain to the fulness of those eternal days, which have no cloud nor evening, those years of the LORD which endure throughout all generations.

A. 25 Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 27 And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. These verses hold an important place in Scripture, for they are cited by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, obviously adopting a Messianic tradition of

the Jews, as spoken of CHRIST, the Only-begotten SON, and not primarily of the Heb. i. 10-12.

S. Greg. M. Eternal FATHER. Mystically, they teach us that GOD laid the foundation of the Church in Him Who is the Beginning and the End, none other foundation than which can any man lay, and that He lays the foundation of spiritual life in us while we are yet in the very beginning of our existence, in that He suffers us to be brought to Him in baptism as infants. The heavens, the Apostles and Saints, raised high in contemplation, pouring down refreshing rains of doctrine upon the earth, are, in an especial manner, the work of His hands, because only His efficient grace makes them what they are. They shall perish, in that they must undergo the common lot of men, for their earthly garment of flesh waxes old and faint, but He Who endures for ever changes them as a vesture, for "we shall be changed, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." And this is certain, for Thou art the same, "JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," the same Who hast said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away," and Thou, the Faithful and True, hast promised eternal life in the new heaven and new earth to them that are loyal to Thee, Whose years shall not fail, and Whose kingdom is therefore everlasting, so that it follows:

28 The children of thy servants shall continue: and their seed shall stand fast in thy sight. A. S. Augustine, pointing out that these words seem to exclude the servants themselves, that is, the Apostles (whose spiritual children we are,) or any generation of Christians which takes the Psalm as its own; argues that we must interpret them mystically of the good works done by the disciples of CHRIST, which are their fruits borne to Him, the Bridegroom of their souls. The servants, then, must dwell by means of their works, by means of their children. Be not barren, if thou desire to dwell, send thine offspring before thee whither thou art following. Let the children lead thee into the land of promise, the land of the living, not of the dying; as Joseph went before his father Jacob into the land of Egypt, and said to him and to his brethren, "GOD did send me before you to preserve life." And their seed shall stand fast in Thy sight. That is, the future generations of Christians shall be confirmed in the faith, so that the Church will never be abolished nor die out till the end of the world, but will be guided to eternity (Vulg.) by the same HOLY SPIRIT which has hitherto been the Teacher of the faithful; or, with the fuller spiritual meaning of the A. V., shall be established before Thee, strengthened in heaven against the possibility of fall, by gazing for ever on the countenance of CHRIST; so that there is not only the glory of the changed vesture, the royal apparel of the renovated body, but the perfect vigour and felicity of the ransomed soul.

If the body, once made glorious, Such high gifts and bright shall own, What the beatification Of the spirits round the throne, When in perfect revelation Shall the Bridegroom's Face be shown? The Hymn, Nec quisquam oculus vidit. Glory be

to the FATHER, the Maker of heaven and earth; glory be to the SON, Who shall build up Sion; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who heareth the prayer of the poor destitute. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Hearken, O LORD, graciously to the prayers of Thy humble Ludolph. servants, that we who, bound in our sins, have withered like grass, may be lifted up by the glance of Thy heavenly mercy. (1.) Arise, O GOD, and have mercy upon Sion, for the time of Mozarabic. having mercy on us is come, look upon our lowly petition, and accept the prayer of Thy humble servants. (11.) Hear our prayer, O LORD, and let our cry come unto Thee Mozarabic. without any obstacle; in what day soever we call upon Thee, let our prayer be swiftly laid open before Thee, and turn not Thy face from our sight, nor withdraw Thy guidance from our conduct, that we, whose desires will then attain unto Thee, may rejoice in obtaining our request. (11.) O LORD, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee, Mozarabic. in the gentle ear of Thy loving-kindness; call us not back in the midst of our days, but grant that as we aim at a certain goal, we may finish our race of holiness, and through desire for sanctification may obtain, in the few days of this present life, the kingdom of eternal glory. (11.)

Thine enemies reviled Thee unjustly all the day long, when Mozarabic. they not only failed to know Thee the LORD of the world, Passiontide. but the men of peace swore against Thee. Grant us, therefore, that as we truly believe in Thy Passion, we may also live without end together with Thee in the everlasting Resurrection. (11.) Hear our prayer, O LORD, as we cry unto Thee, and from D. C. the height of Thy sanctuary behold the earth, and graciously put away from us evils present and to come, that we may declare Thy glory in Sion, and Thy praise in the heavenly Jerusalem. (1.)

Psalm 103

TITLE. Of David.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, sitting in the heavens, extends His kingdom and dominion over all nations. The Voice of the Church to her people, that the creature should praise the Creator. VEN. BEDE. After those most lowly prayers of the happy poor man, and the utterance of his sighs of penitence, the whole of this Psalm overflows with the praise of the LORD, and the gladness of laudation follows the previous tears, for to David always means CHRIST, to Whom praise is given. Throughout the whole Psalm the Prophet is speaking. In the first part he enjoins his soul to bless the LORD and to remember His benefits. Bless the Lord, O my soul. In the second place, he tells what things He did for Moses and His other faithful ones, that He may be understood to have been ever bountiful from all ages. He showed His ways unto Moses. Thirdly, he directs his words to the Angels and heavenly powers, and summons the other rational creatures to busy themselves constantly in the praise of the LORD. Bless the Lord, all ye angels of His.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, concerning the coldness which mastered him in the time of his old age. Also an acknowledgment and thanksgiving offered by men of GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. The doctrine of thanksgiving. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of counsel, and, as it were, of command.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Saturday: Matins. [Ascension: III. Nocturn. Michaelmas Day and Guardian Angels: III. Nocturn.] Monastic. Saturday: Matins. [Ascension: II. Nocturn. Michaelmas Day and Guardian Angels: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: I. Nocturn. Eastern Church. Fifth Psalm of the Hexapsalmos at Matins: First Psalm of the Typica.

Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. As preceding Psalm. [Ascension: The LORD in heaven, * Alleluia, hath prepared His seat, Alleluia. Michaelmas: Many mighty things concerning Michael the Archangel, who, strong in battle, achieved victory. Guardian

Angels: O praise the LORD, ye Angels of His, ye that excel in strength; ye that fulfil His commandment, and hearken unto the voice of His words.] Ambrosian. As preceding Psalm. Parisian. Whoso putteth his trust * in the LORD, in the mercy of the most Highest, shall not be moved. Mozarabic. The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, * for He will not alway be chiding, nor will He keep His anger for ever. 1 Praise the LORD, O my soul : and all that is within me praise his holy Name.

The notes of confession and lamentation in the previous Psalm change into those of praise and thanksgiving found in this and the five succeeding ones; whence the Greek Fathers suggest that this may very well be a Temple-Psalm of acknowledgment of the merciful restoration of Sion prayed for just before. And we may take it as the thanksgiving of the pardoned sinner, who has made his acknowledgment of guilt and has received absolution, breaking out thereupon into a song of thanksgiving, like Moses after the overthrow of the Egyptians. Praise the Lord, O my soul. There is no special occasion of thanksgiving mentioned, no particular time for it prescribed here, whence we may gather that every event of our life gives us sufficient reason, every moment of it a fitting opportunity, to praise the LORD. In the hymns of the Church during public worship, in the conduct of business, in taking food, in slumber itself, innocent and free from all evil thoughts and dreams which the memory of past sins may excite, praise the LORD, O my soul. All that is within me, my secret plans, my thoughts, desires, inclinations, whatever goes on within and appears not externally, for it is not enough to praise with the voice alone, unless all that is within praise too, unless desires, thoughts, and reason combine in one act of earnest thanksgiving to the holy Name of GOD as He is in heaven, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, to the holy Name JESUS, by which He is revealed to us on earth.

2 Praise the LORD, O my soul : and forget not all his benefits; He repeats his opening words, for the more effect of kindling the ardour of his soul, to show that the praise of GOD should never cease, and that both the active and passive faculties of the soul should join in praise. If thou forget, thou wilt be silent. Thou canst not have the LORD’s benefits before thine eyes, unless thine own sins are there too, not pleasure in past sin, but condemnation of it, condemnation by thyself, remission from GOD. Several of the commentators, dwelling on the Vulgate word here for benefits, retributions, dwell on its meaning as teaching us how GOD repays us good for evil, how He has given us back, over and over again, all the gifts of grace which we lost by our first parents’ fall; how He bestows on us afresh, with large and accumulated interest, any benefit for which we have yielded Him hearty thanks, how all His bounties are double, first in withholding the punishment which is our due, and then in conferring the prize we could never win.

3 Who forgiveth all thy sin : and healeth all thine infirmities; 4 Who saveth thy life from destruction : and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness; 5 Who

satisfieth thy mouth with good things : making thee young and lusty as an eagle. A. L. D. C. Z. A.

The Psalmist counts up six benefits which we have received from CHRIST in redemption. First, that He has remitted our guilt, making satisfaction by His own death. Secondly, He hath healed our infirmities, by allaying the heat of our carnal passions, and by doing away in Baptism with the imputation of original sin. Thirdly, He has delivered us from the ruin and death of wickedness by the teaching of the Gospel. Fourthly, He bestows on us reward for the faithful observance of the Gospel precepts. Fifthly, He has purchased for us the kingdom of heaven and all its happiness, with His own Blood. Sixthly, He has obtained for us, by His own Resurrection, the immortality of the body, when our forms shall be renewed in youth and vigour, and soar upward to the celestial heights. Who forgiveth all thy sin : that is, both original and actual. And healeth all thine infirmities : that is, all the weakness and tendency towards sin engendered partly by original guilt, and partly by former evil habit and all outward occasions, such as ignorance, forgetfulness, and other frailties, which make it easy for us to err. And the fulness of the claim made here by the Psalmist for that great Physician Who ”hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,” teaches us that no sin is unpardonable, that no trace of the sickness of the soul will finally remain in the forgiven penitents who are to swell the ranks of heaven.

They take occasion to remind us, too, of the bodily cures wrought by the LORD JESUS during His earthly sojourn, and of His being still the one source of all healing wrought for us still by human agency. Who saveth thy life. The A.V. more exactly, with LXX. and Vulgate, redeemeth thy life, teaching us that we, who were sold under sin, have been bought back by the Blood of CHRIST, and that our life, the principle of grace, is not given over to destruction, that is, to the evil one, nor our soul to the second death. Who crowneth thee. And that either by encircling us for a defence, as though with armour or a ring of soldiery; or in the more usual acceptance, with the royal diadem of the kingdom, or the wreath of a victorious struggle here and in the world to come. Cardinal Hugo enumerates many crowns named in Holy Writ, first of which is the LORD JESUS Himself, of Whom is written, ”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 He is thus Himself the chief reward and glory conferred upon His Saints. There are, besides this chief and imperial diadem, various others; as the Church, of which the Prophet saith, ”Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy GOD.

There is the Manhood of CHRIST, that ”crown wherewith His Mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals” to the human race. There are the converts made by the preachers of righteousness, ”for what is our life, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?

Are not even ye? There is everlasting blessedness, ”Thou hast crowned him with glory and worship. There is wisdom, for ”much experience is the crown of old men. And ”the fear of the LORD is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of rejoicing. With these, and others like them, the LORD crowns us in His mercy and loving-kindness, crowning His own gifts, not our merits.

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, and especially that good thing of the Holy Eucharist, the rich food of His own Body and Blood, as well as with the blessedness of heaven and the crowning felicity of the Beatific Vision, satiating and surpassing all our desire (Vulg. And a Jewish commentator wisely adverts here to the proof of GOD’s pre-eminent skill as a Physician, in that He not only heals us, and snatches us out of the very jaws of death, but that when we are faint, and loathe not only medicine, but even food, He, instead of exhibiting nauseous drugs, offers such pleasant and dainty remedies, that they are eagerly swallowed, and bring back appetite, health, and vigour to the patient, so that his youth is renewed as an eagle’s (A.V., LXX., Vulg. This renovation of the eagle is correctly referred by S. Jerome to the moulting of that bird, after which all feathered creatures seem to obtain fresh strength and activity, which is of course more noteworthy in the large and powerful eagle than in smaller birds.

But a wild Rabbinical legend that the eagle, once in every ten years, till it reaches a century of life, flies so high in air that its wings are scorched to cinders in the blaze of the sun, and that it then falls headlong into the sea, whence it emerges with new plumage and renewed strength, has been eagerly caught up by some of the mediæval commentators, who allegorize it of man, having his old sins scorched up by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and then, plunging into the waters of Baptism, coming forth born again to GOD. S. Augustine recounts another piece of natural history, only less wonderful, to the effect that the upper beak of the eagle gradually enlarges with time, till it completely overgrows and as it were locks the under one by curving round it, so that the bird is on the point of starvation, till instinct urges it to break the upper beak away by dashing it violently against a rock, whereupon it resumes its feeding and recovers its strength; which the Saint explains of the sinner’s recourse to that Rock which is CHRIST, and of the food which He bestows on

Ecclus. i. 11. A. A. L. the famished soul. The interpretations of the renewal here as that of regeneration, of repentance, or of resurrection, are common to all the expositors; as also the notion of the lofty and rapid ascent in holiness and glory of the soul which has thus obtained new vigour, ”for 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: they shall walk, and not faint.” 6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment: for all them that are oppressed with wrong. S. Basil. M. This He did for us men, when we were oppressed by the wrong-doing of the

enemy that held us in bondage, for He executed righteousness, or, as LXX. and Vulgate read, mercies, for man in redeeming him with His own Blood, while at the same time executing judgment in overthrowing the dominion of our spiritual foes, triumphing over them openly on the Cross; of which twofold operation the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, accompanied by the plagues and destruction of their oppressors, was a type. And the verse teaches us that lesson inculcated in another place, ”Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the LORD,” warning us therefore not to take the office of revenging our wrongs with our own hands, but to imitate the patience of the Saints in leaving it in His, for, as the Wise Man has written, ”He that revength shall find vengeance of the LORD, and He will surely retain his sins.” S. Chrysost. Ps. xxv. 9. Agellius. Ex. xxxiii. 13. Exod.xxxiv. 6. Bellarmine.

7 He showed his ways unto Moses: his works unto the children of Israel. Those ways of GOD were the precepts He delivered to Moses, and they are so named, partly because they were designed for the Israelites to walk in, and partly because the Law itself was but a transition to the Gospel, a road to the fuller dispensation of grace. And in that it is said in another place, ”All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth,” He showed His ways unto Moses when the Prophet besought Him, saying, ”Show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee,” and He made that proclamation before him as He passed by, ”The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” He made known His works unto the children of Israel, in permitting them to behold the miracles He wrought in the deliverance out of Egypt, and for their sustenance or their chastisement in the wilderness.

The LXX. and Vulgate for works read wills, and they explain that though the will of GOD is one and indivisible, yet in its multiplicity of effects it may be spoken of as manifold. Some will have it that there is a marked distinction to be drawn here between the knowledge communicated to Moses, as GOD’s faithful servant and interpreter, who was suffered to know His ways, and that given to the rebellious people, who were told His will, which they did not obey, and therefore never attained to true knowledge of His ways, so as to walk in them. And as He literally taught Moses the road by which the Israelites were to journey towards Canaan, while enjoining on them simply obedience to the leader He had set over them, so in the Church He makes known His ways to His Saints, teaching them the inner secrets of the spiritual life and of the path to heaven, while instructing the general mass of believers simply as to what His will is, which is plainly set before us, ”for this is the will of GOD; even your sanctification.”

A. 8 The LORD is full of compassion and mercy: long-suffering, and of great goodness. These four titles denote all the bounties of GOD, from the first to the last. The first is the grace of predestination, or the eternal love of GOD; then follow the gift of justification and the remission of our various sins, and finally there is added the crown of glory, which He bestows on penitent sinners. 9 He will not alway be chiding: neither keepeth he his anger for ever. He does chide us in this world, from the cradle to the grave, in chastising us for our sins, and in purifying us with trials and afflictions; but He reserves His mercies for us in the perfect happiness of His kingdom. We have a pledge of this in that, while we were yet in our sins, He justified us, and gave us blessings instead of parental punishments. And, spoken especially of His chosen people, the words tell us of the final restoration and conversion of Israel, so long suffering under the wrath of GOD. They are careful to warn us that the verse does not prove the Universalist theory, as it is dealing only with the promises of GOD to His elect and to all penitent souls, not to such as harden themselves in sin, who must look for wrath and fiery indignation.

A. 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins: nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses. That is, as some will have it, He has not punished our original guilt, but has rather shown us how we may be cleansed from it, nor has He straightway taken vengeance on our actual transgressions, but has given us time and means of repentance. And others remind us that when He does punish, it is with far greater leniency than our guilt merits. So Ezra makes his confession: ”And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given such deliverance as this, should we again break Thy commandments?” 11 For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth: so great is his mercy also towards them that fear him. 12 Look how wide also the east is from the west: so far hath he set our sins from us.

Lorinus, writing at a time when Galileo was but on the track of his astronomical discoveries, and when the almost total lack of instruments narrowed the range of observation and even of conjecture, endeavours to exhibit the forcible nature of these similes by setting before his readers some calculations as to the vast distances of the heavenly bodies from us, the extent of the firmament which is penetrable to our gaze. It is enough to say, in briefly substituting some of the incomparably greater results of modern science for those which the learned Jesuit offered his readers two centuries and a half ago, that there are nebulae visible to the telescope now, but too distant to be resolvable into separate stars, whence light, travelling at the rate of twelve millions of miles in a minute, must have required seven hundred thousand years to reach our earth; that at the very least one hundred millions of stars believed to be suns, the centres of planetary systems like our own, are countable, each of which systems revolves in a minimum orbit of six thousand millions of miles, and is probably distant from its next neighbour nineteen billions of miles;

while all this inconceivable vastness is merely one tiny point in space which our feeble organs and imperfect instruments have enabled us to observe and map out. So great is His mercy, so far hath He set our sins from us.

For He hath caused our sins to set in the grave of Baptism, and made the Man, Whose Name is the East, the Sun of Righteousness, the Day-star, to arise in our hearts, so that we, who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the LORD, Who ascended to the height of heaven from the earth, shows His mercy thence to those that fear Him, by His perpetual mediation on behalf of His tried and suffering Church. In the mention of the East and West there may be very possibly a reference to the restoration of the Jewish exiles from Babylon to their own land. And a Rabbinical commentator

A. C. Honorius. 2 S. Pet. i. 19. Eph. v. 8. observes that we do not find the North and South named, because much of the space lying between their extreme points is uninhabitable by man, owing to the bitter cold, whereas life can be supported in every part of East and West, which therefore serve as better types of the fostering love of GOD. 13 Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children: even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him. 14 For he knoweth whereof we are made: he remembereth that we are but dust.

Let Him be as stern as He will, He is our FATHER. He hath scourged us, hath afflicted us, hath crushed us; He is our FATHER. Son, if thou weepest, weep under a FATHER's hand, be not angered nor violent in pride. What thou sufferest, what thou lamentest, is not punishment, but medicine, it is chastisement, not condemnation. Refuse not the scourge, if thou wouldst not be ousted from thine heritage. Think not of the pain of the scourge, but of thy place in the testament; for He knoweth whereof we are made, He knoweth our weakness, our proneness to sin, the fuel of evil that abides within us. He knows what He made, how it fell, how it may be restored, adopted, enriched. Behold, we were made out of clay. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the LORD from heaven." Observe, too, that a father's affection for his children is of much earlier date than theirs for him. He cares for them even before their birth, bears with their childish faults, provides them with all necessaries, and rules them, usually, with more justice and firmness than their mother; while, on the other hand, children need to emerge out of infancy before they begin to have any intelligent love for their fathers, and it rarely becomes their task to contribute to their support. Whence we are here taught the lesson that GOD's love and care for us does not depend on our goodness, but on His own, and that we are not less His children, nor less the objects of His tenderness when we rebel against Him, for He remembereth that we are but dust, and making full allowance for our frailty, is more ready to forgive than we to sin.

15 The days of man are but as grass: for he flourisheth as a flower of the field. 16 For as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone: and the place thereof shall know it

no more. The simile of man's frailty which occurs in Ps. xc. 5, 6, is here presented afresh, with two additional circumstances to heighten it; the comparison with the flower of the field, and A.

the mention of the wind as sufficient to destroy it, instead of the scythe implied in the former passage. The commentators dwell on the contrast between a flower of the field, left to itself, untended, and therefore withering for lack of moisture when the heats come, and the flower of a garden, sheltered from the too scorching rays of the sun, and carefully watered. And, further, as a field is designed for the plough, unlike a wood or a meadow, a field-flower has little prospect of being allowed to live out its span, as it is uprooted or cut down in the act of making the furrows, if it be not even sooner cropped by cattle as they graze. As soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone. This is the true sense of the text, confirmed by the parallel passage in Isaiah: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it; and the reference is to the hot wind of the desert, parching up the herbage suddenly. But the LXX. and Vulgate, taking a different sense of the Hebrew , translate it as spirit, and most of the commentators then explain it as meaning either the breath, the vital principle, or the soul of man, thus: For the spirit will pass (hath passed, LXX. through him, and he will not abide, meaning either that he will cease to draw his breath, and will therefore die; or that vital power will forsake him;

or, again, that the soul will be parted from the body. And this meaning can be fairly defended by a similar passage in another Psalm, "For He considered that they were but flesh: and that they were even a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. There are one or two mystical senses proposed also, of which the most noteworthy are, that the words refer to the unseen passage of the Angel of Death, as he comes to take the soul away; or else to the loss of the principle of grace and strength on the part of our first parents, so that they could not abide, but fell from Paradise, so that their place knew them no more. The last clause is slightly changed in construction by LXX. and Vulgate, He shall know his place no more. That is, the dead cannot return to animate their bodies, nor to resume their former state and employment; and we may gather also from the words a presage of the fuller teaching of S. Paul on the Resurrection, that our revived bodies will not be numerically and physically identical with those which died, nor will the revival itself be according to natural laws. Others deduce from the words an argument for the unconsciousness of the dead as to what takes place in this world, save in the case of special revelation.

Cardinal Bellarmine suggests a more profitable lesson, by bidding us observe how the heavenly bodies, albeit constantly moving, revolve in vast orbits, and do return, unchanged, to their former place, whereas things sprung from earth are in constant process of change and decay, and can never retain, much less recover, the vigour of their prime, an allegory which needs no explanatory gloss.

17 But the merciful goodness of the LORD endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear him: and his righteousness upon children's children; 18 Even upon such as keep his covenant: and think upon his commandments to do them. The LXX. and Vulgate mode of rendering for ever and ever here is from eternity to eternity, whence the commentators explain the sense as denoting the everlasting predestination of GOD to save mankind by the sacrifice of the immaculate Lamb, and the everlasting duration of the blessedness thereby obtained for us. And we may notice the contrast between His mercy and ours, for it is written, "Your goodness (mercy, marg.) is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away." Upon them that fear Him. This holds not only under the Law, but under the Gospel, for the same condition is expressed by the Blessed Virgin in the Magnificat; and we may obtain the merciful goodness of the LORD by penitence, as He will grant us justification in return for contrition, sanctification for confession, and the grace of obedience when we make satisfaction.

And His righteousness upon children's children. Hence we may gather the continuance of mercy for Israel, whatever time it may repent and believe, for, as S. Peter declared to the Jews in his Pentecostal sermon, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the LORD our GOD shall call." And S. Augustine bids us remember that this does not exclude the barren, for men's works are, in a sense, their offspring, so that the promise here is first that GOD's mercy, in approval and co-operation, is upon these works, and then upon the children of all such works, namely, the rewards which follow them. And with this interpretation we shall do well in understanding the eighteenth verse as referring not to the children, as it seems at the first glance, (which, however, would be mere iteration of the first clause) but to the parents, for whose sake, and because of whose faithfulness and obedience, blessing is bestowed on their descendants, though not necessarily on all without distinction. So we read that when the dying patriarch Jacob was laying his hands in benediction on Ephraim and Manasseh, it is not said that he blessed them, but "he blessed Joseph," that is, he knew that the most precious benediction to Joseph would be one which descended to his children. There is a difference between keeping the covenant of GOD, and thinking upon His commandments to do them. The first need not necessarily imply more than observance of the prohibitory laws, while the second denotes fulfilment of the positive ones; or yet more fully, keeping is storing the seed carefully in a granary; doing is planting it in the ground, that it may bring forth abundant fruit; a

S. Luke i. 50. A. S. Prosper. Hugo Card. A. Origen, in Ps. xxxviii. S. Hieron. S. Basil. M. S. Chrysost. Hom. in Gen. notion well brought out by the Talmudic parable of the man who left a bag of corn in charge of a friend; and on his return from a journey, asked for his deposit, and was shown a field of waving wheat instead of the small parcel which he expected. We are all bound to God in the covenant made with Him in Baptism, and have His Scriptures to teach us what are the command-

ments thereby made binding upon us. But Holy Writ, to those who merely think upon it, and admire its beauties, but do not put its precepts in action, is as the voice of Ezekiel to the rebellious Jews, ”They hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but do them not.” Accordingly, the Fathers use many similes to describe the uselessness of mere reading of Scripture apart from living it. It is like, says one, having a table spread with meat and drink, but taking no food from it. It is like an armoury, whence you borrow no weapon, observes a second. It is a well whence you draw no water, a dispensary whence you take no medicine, a garden whence you gather no flowers, a treasury whence you extract no wealth, as the Golden-mouthed preacher forcibly urges.

19 The LORD hath prepared his seat in heaven: and his kingdom ruleth over all. Not on earth, in the sanctuary of the Temple, ruling over the Jews alone, as aforetime; but now ascended, the LORD, the SON, assumes the throne which the LORD, the FATHER, hath prepared for Him and rules all creation, Jews, Gentiles, angels, and spirits alike. And therefore we, if we wish to stand by that throne, if we would gain the merciful goodness of the former verse, must have ”our conversation in heaven,” ”where CHRIST sitteth on the right hand of GOD.” The LORD hath prepared His seat not merely as a throne, but as the place of judgment, and it is added that His Kingdom ruleth over all, to teach us that He is not a Judge under a king, but is Himself at once supreme Judge and King, Whose citation none can resist, against Whose sentence none may appeal. Mystically, they remind us that the Church, the practice of holiness, and the devout soul, are all seats of the LORD, and true heavens, as well as that celestial home of the Angels, where He is lifted above the Thrones. And as the word seat may be used in three senses, for the chair of a teacher, the tribunal of a judge, and the throne of a king, so CHRIST the LORD dwells in this threefold fashion in the righteous soul, as Teacher of its reasoning faculties, as Judge over its passions, as King over its will and desires.

20 O praise the LORD, ye angels of his, ye that excel in strength : ye that fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words. 21 O praise the LORD, all ye his hosts : ye servants of his that do his pleasure. Conscious of his own infirmity, the Psalmist desires that not only his weak powers, his soul and all within him, should praise the LORD, but that a worthier homage may be done to Him, and therefore invokes the Angels to take up the strain in clearer and more fitting accents. He calls not only on the Angels, as a special order of celestial beings, but upon all those that excel in strength, all GOD’s hosts, the whole chivalry of heaven throughout the nine ranks of its hierarchy, to swell the song. And we may observe the apparent inversion in the latter clause of the twentieth verse, where fulfil stands before hearken, contrary to the natural order. There are three expla-

nations of it. First, that the sentence should run, ”fulfil . . . that ye may hearken;” implying that the Angels are not like men, who do GOD’s will in hope of reward, but that obedience itself is the reward, pleasure, and glory of the heavenly spirits, who look for nothing further. The second is, that the phrase denotes the swiftness of their obedience and execution, in that their task is accomplished at the instant when the command is uttered. Thirdly, and best; they not only obey such orders as are given them, but stand waiting and listening intently, to catch the first intimation of the Divine will.

Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best : His state Is kingly, thousands at His bidding speed, And post o’er land and ocean without rest, They also serve who only stand and wait. The frequent use of the word Angel to denote a messenger, has led some of the commentators to apply these verses in a secondary sense to the preachers of the Gospel or to the priests of the Church, alike bound to serve and praise GOD in voice and acts. Ye servants of His. In this epithet the majesty of GOD is set before us, in that they who just before are described as excelling in strength, are now declared to be but ministers to do His pleasure. And that pleasure that they should minister to the heirs of salvation. In Holy Writ, before the coming of CHRIST, we find that the Angels who appeared to men accepted their reverence and homage, as when David and the elders fell down before the destroying angel, and Daniel before Gabriel; but after the Ascension of CHRIST, the Angels refuse all such marks of respect, saying, as twice to the Beloved Disciple, ”See thou do it not : I am thy fellowservant,” for now they see that human nature, once

S. Greg. M. Hom. 8 in Evang. so far below them, is exalted above them in supreme dominion. The Hymn, Æterne Rex altissime. The Angels tremble as they see The lot of mortals altering, Flesh sins, but flesh again sets free, And GOD, the Flesh of GOD, is King. 22 O speak good of the LORD, all ye works of his, in all places of his dominion : praise thou the LORD, O my soul. It is possible for all the works of GOD to praise Him, though not in the same fashion. His intellectual creatures praise Him consciously and audibly, as witnesses of His might and glory, His irrational and inanimate works praise Him silently, by fulfilling exactly the end of their creation, and by teaching men somewhat of His power and goodness, so that they are quickened to praise Him anew, Coleridge, Hymn in the Vale of Chamouni.

And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun, Earth, with ten thousand voices, praises GOD. C. S. Chrysost. Mal. i. 11. A. 1 Tim. ii. 8. A. In all places of His dominion. Where GOD has no dominion, there is no need to praise Him; but wherever He hath dominion, He is to be praised, and as that is everywhere, no one can be excused from paying this homage. They are no words for the Jews, observes a Greek Father, for they, tied to one spot for their worship, asked ”How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a strange land?” But we have been taught by the LORD Himself in His

words to the woman of Samaria, ”The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the FATHER; . . . but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth;” in that Holy Catholic Church which is made up of all nations, and spread through all lands, so that from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, in every place incense is offered unto the Name of GOD, and a pure offering, because all the earth has been purged with the Blood of CHRIST, and men may now ”pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands.” Praise the Lord, O my soul. The last verse is the same as the first, praise at the outset, praise at the close; we have set out with praise, may it be our lot to return thither, and reign where it is everlasting, where the heavenly hosts praise the FA-THER, where all the works of creation praise the WORD by Whom all things were made, where the souls of ransomed men praise the SPIRIT, Who hath sanctified them.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who pitieth His own children; glory be to the SON, Who hath prepared His seat for judgment in heaven; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who healeth all our infirmities. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O LORD, heal the infirmities of Thy people, Who dost always Ludolph. pity sinners as a father his children; that delivered from the destruction of everlasting death, our soul may praise Thee, and our life glorify Thee. (1.) O LORD of mercy and compassion, be not angry with us Mozarabic. for ever: but so far as the east is from the west, put all our sins from us, and as high as the heaven is from the earth, magnify Thy mercy amongst us. (11.) Let our soul bless Thee, O LORD, and all that is within Mozarabic. it cry aloud together in Thy praise, that Thou mayest hear our prayer and hasten to heal our infirmities, and ransom our life from destruction, satisfy our desire with good things, and crown our wish with fulfilment. (11.) O GOD, the SAVIOUR of them that live, Who desirest not D. C. the death of sinners, know, as a merciful FATHER, that which Thou hast made, and be not angry with us sinners for evermore, but stablish Thy mercy upon us, and deliver our life from destruction. (1.)

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