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

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Psalm 104

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Of David. Complutensian LXX.: A Psalm of David, on the constitution of the world.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. The Voice of the Church praising GOD, and recounting His works. The Voice of the Prophet touching the fabric of the whole reconciled world. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST touching the fabric of the world. The Voice of the Apostles concerning the Jews. VEN. BEDE. David denotes the person of the speaker, but the whole Song is in honour of CHRIST the LORD, Who is Creator, and Ruler, and Redeemer of the world. The Prophet, desiring to signify divine mysteries by the order of nature, first sings of the Sacraments of CHRIST and the Church under the type of the formation of heaven and earth: Praise the Lord, O my soul. In the second part, he enumerates the works of the LORD veiled under divers figures: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works. P In the third place, he declares that in the everlasting world he will unceasingly utter the praises of the LORD, which he had made his song, even in his short life here: I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will praise my God while I have my being.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when he was going to worship before the Ark of the LORD together with the Priests. As regards us, it teaches us Confession and Prayer. And it gives us information touching the first beginning and order of creation, and tells somewhat of the Angels. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The Doctrine of Confession. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of exhortation and as though of command.

Various Uses.
Monastic. Saturday: I. Nocturn. [Transfiguration: II. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: I. Nocturn. Eastern Church. Prefatory Psalm at Vespers.

Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. Praise the LORD, O my soul. [Whitsunday: Send forth Thy SPIRIT, and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Alleluia. Alleluia. Transfiguration: He is clothed with majesty and honour decked with light as it were with a garment.] Ambrosian. As Psalm 102. Parisian. All *

hast Thou made in wisdom, O LORD, the earth is full of Thy possession. Lyons. Praise * the LORD, O my soul. Mozarabic. Thou art clothed with majesty and honour * Thou deckest Thyself with light as it were with a garment. This Psalm, the anthem of Natural Theology, and, as it were, the poetical re-casting of the Mosaic record of creation, sets before us, as no other part of Holy Scripture save, perhaps, the closing chapters of Job, the continual dependence of the universe on the guiding and sustaining influence of the Creator, Who is depicted throughout as the life which moves and energizes the whole mass, not as the maker of a machine, withdrawn from the work of His hands.

In its main outline, it follows the order of the Hexaëmeron in Genesis, beginning with the origin of light, and leading up to the formation of man, but it represents the process as a living and continuous evolution, rather than as a memory of a great event in the remote past. Less specific in its details than the Benedicite, it is more graphic and vivid in portraiture, and those who have pondered most deeply on the profound analogies which exist between the world of sense and that of thought, between the natural and the spiritual creation, will find it most easy to recognize the lessons of mystical theology which underlie, at no great distance from the surface, the letter of this magnificent poem. It is the first of the Alleluiatic Psalms in the Hebrew reckoning, but as the LXX. and Vulgate attribute that character to the succeeding one, the question will be discussed when treating of it.

1 Praise the LORD, O my soul : O LORD my GOD, thou art become exceeding glorious ; thou art clothed with majesty and honour. The Prophet calls on himself to bless the LORD, and knowing how mighty is the grace of unity in the Faith, he speaks to himself alone that which he would exhort all men. He saith, Thou art become exceeding great. We need to inquire closely into the force of these words, for was He at any time not great, that He should become great through men’s praises? Or what can be added unto Him, Who is the wonderful and incomprehensible fulness of all might? But GOD is magnified amongst men, when He is plainly seen by them to be great and exalted, so that they feel Him to be their Maker, the bestower of all good things, their Redeemer, and finally, their Judge. So, too, to put on, is to be clothed with some covering which one had not before. But when did GOD lack beauty (Vulg.), Who ever bestoweth all lovely things upon His creatures? Never; but till He created the world, He was, so to speak, bare and unadorned, and unknown, but then, by making confession and beauty (Vulg.) that is, beautiful and graceful things, whereby He could be known and praised, He clad Himself therewith. And He became yet better known, yet more truly magnified, by His Incarnation, even in its very lowliness, He was glorious in His Resurrection, exceeding glorious in His Ascension, exceeding glorious, because exceeding humbled first, for ”Wisdom lifteth up the head of the lowly.” Now, enthroned in the highest, He is clothed with the majesty of heaven, with the honour paid Him by

adoring Angels; and on earth, in His Church, He is girt about with the confession of repentant sinners, whom He robes in the beauty of His own righteousness.

2 Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment : and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain. CHRIST our LORD is revealed in these words as the Great High Priest of His own universe, clad in the white vesture of perpetual holiness, while the heavens are spread around Him as ”the tent for Him to dwell in,” the Tabernacle whence He pours down His benediction, as they are also the scene of His perpetual intercession for mankind. In the first literal sense, the verse describes the manner in which GOD, Ay. A.

1 Tim. vi. 16. ”Whom no man hath seen, or can see: dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto,” has yet created light as conveying to our minds the best image of Himself, His ineffable radiance and unimaginable purity; according to that saying, ”Light is the shadow of GOD; whence some imagine that in this place the shining forms of the Angels, encompassing the throne of GOD, and deriving all their glory from vision of Him, are intended; or, as others will have it, the heavens themselves, studded with constellations as though with jewels, are the garment of the Most High. Others prefer, however, to read the words in the sense of the Apostle’s saying, ”GOD is light, and in Him is no darkness at all,” and to understand here the uncreated and vital glory of His essence. The pure and stainless Manhood which the LORD took of His Virgin Mother, whereby He became known and visible to mortals, was likewise a garment of light, by reason of its holiness and the revelation it made; and its true beauty was disclosed for a little to the three Apostles in the vision of the Transfiguration; while a like glory, by Divine favour, encompassed the mystic woman of the Apocalypse (whether we take her as the Blessed Mary or as the personified Church), clothed as she is with the sun, borne up on the moon, and diademed with twelve stars. And spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

How He did this thing, that He might clothe Himself with the Church as a garment of light, the Psalmist would fain set before us in certain typical mysteries; how the Church was made to be light, without spot or wrinkle, but white and shining in the raiment of her Spouse; we may observe by noting these words, like a skin (Vulg.), denoting the perfect ease with which GOD deals with His vast creation, far more readily than a shepherd pitches a tent, or a man unrolls a scroll, because His word alone is enough to effect His will; a marked contrast with the toil and pain which men must put forth in any trifling enlargement of their fixed dwellings or their roofs. That skin which He has stretched forth for us, is the great scroll of Holy Scripture, for as the parchment skin on which we write is taken from the bodies of dead animals, so the Bible was set forth by GOD for man after he fell by sin into the power of death. Out of that skin of death the heaven of Scripture was made, and while the living Prophets and Apostles were, for the most part, known to but few, and restricted within narrow limits, they, being dead, yet speak, and

are now far more widely known and familiar, for while they yet lived, the skin was not stretched out, the heaven was not yet extended.

A.

And whereas it was the valiant martyrdom of the Apostles and early Saints which spread their teaching far and wide in that Gentile world out into which the Jews drove them; now, on the other hand, there is little progress made in the conversion of heathen nations, because preachers and missionaries have no love for martyrdom, and do not care to peril their lives for the Gospel; wherefore the LORD complains of them by His Prophet: ”There is none to stretch forth My tent any more, and to set up My curtains, for the pastors have become brutish, and have not sought the LORD. The heavens are spread out like a parchment also, that they may be a great roll wherein the countless names of CHRIST’s Saints can be written, they are spread out as the curtains of a tent, to be the tabernacle wherein those Saints shall dwell; the new heavens, that is, which shall take the place of that former ”heaven, departed as a scroll when it is rolled together. The Church Militant here in earth, a fairer heaven than the visible sky, enlightened by the Sun of wisdom and the moon of knowledge, studded with the starry examples of the Saints, is spread out like a tabernacle as a shelter and refuge for all who need it, as a shrine wherein perpetual worship is offered to the LORD.

And it is most rightly said to be stretched out, for whereas only the righteous might seem to have any claim to it, yet GOD’s mercy has extended it so as to embrace the publican, the harlot, and the sinner, whom He thus shelters in the dwelling of the Bride, in token of His folding them Himself in the all-embracing love of the everlasting arms. And as each holy soul is His heaven too, He stretches it out by enlarging its charity, and that in such self-denial and mortification as is typified by the skin, implying, as we saw before, the idea of death.

Serm. in 3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind. The Hebrew is more properly upper chambers, (as LXX. ὑπερῶα) and the literal notion is that the dark and thick rain-clouds are, as it were, the foundations of GOD’s heavenly dwelling, while the bright ethereal clouds, much higher in the atmosphere, are the upper chambers resting upon them. It is to be noted that the Latin word expressive of this same idea, cæmaculum, is used by Ennius and Plautus in the sense of the dwelling-place of the Gods in heaven. The ancient commentators, however, almost universally understand the phrase to denote a stratum of water superimposed, as a roof, above the visible sky, in fact, as ”the waters above the firmament” of the Book of Genesis, and enter at length into physical theories which are more ingenious than tenable or instructive, though closely adhering to the Vulgate, rendering here Who coverest the upper parts thereof with water, which does not differ materially from the Chaldee paraphrase. The mystical sense of the true meaning

is, nevertheless, recognized by Hesychius, who refers the verse to the Sacrament of Baptism, the foundation of that spiritual life which rises far into the heights of heaven; albeit he seems to think, like a Latin commentator, that the idea presented is the immer-

Gen. i. 7. A. The Gloss. S. John vii. 38. Alcuin. S. Greg. Naz. Orat. 44, in Pentec.

sion and covering over of the body of the neophyte with the waters of the baptistery. The Latins explain the upper parts of the heaven of Scripture to be charity, as the chief of graces, and this, they say, is roofed over by the HOLY SPIRIT, typified by the waters; while another view is, that we may here understand the surface letter of Holy Writ, covered over with deep mystical meanings. And a Saint reminds us how an upper chamber was the scene of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, as also of the descent of the Paraclete in fiery tongues, in type of our co-operation with GOD, as He comes down to meet us, who have ascended a little way to meet Him. And though he follows the notion of the waters covering the chamber, he might better have referred to the common phrase of ”ascending from the laver of baptism,” so often met in early Christian writings.

And maketh the clouds His chariot. The notion here presented is that of the noise of peals of thunder, resembling the roll of heavy wheels, while the swift movement of the lighter clouds through the air suggests the rapid pace of horses. Thus Horace: Hor. Od. i. 34. Namque Diespiter Igni corusco nubila dividens Plerumque, per purum sonantes Egit equos, celeremque currum. For the Lord of skies, Though wont to cleave the clouds with vivid flame, Through the clear heavens drove his echoing steeds, And chariot fleet. Titelman. Hesychius. Acts i. 9. A. Hugo Card. Targum. A. C.

In such a chariot as this the LORD came to battle against the Egyptians, in such a one He descended to give the Law on Sinai, and when He went up, forty days after Easter, from Olivet in the presence of the Apostles, ”a cloud received Him out of their sight.” He is still borne into all regions of the world, into the hearts of countless disciples, by His true preachers, clouds which are high above the level of earth, which pour down the refreshing rain of doctrine, which are borne along by the mighty rushing wind of the HOLY GHOST, which flash and blaze with the light of holiness and the power of miracles. And walkest upon the wings of the wind. This is expounded by the Chaldee paraphrast into ”clouds swift as the wings of an eagle.” And the notion is accepted by most of the Fathers, who see here simply a type of the rapidity of GOD’s operations, though they add a mystical sense also, taking the winds or spirits to mean righteous souls, on which GOD treads as His path, when they put themselves under His feet in loving subjection. But we may very well take the words in close connection with the immediately preceding clause, and interpret them as the corresponding passage of Ps. xviii. 10, of the swiftness

with which the preaching of the Gospel was communicated to the world from its starting-point at Jerusalem.

4 He maketh his angels spirits : and his ministers a flaming fire. If it were not for the gloss upon this verse in the Epistle to the Hebrews (and for the plural predicate in the second clause following a subject in the singular) its most obvious literal sense would be, He maketh the winds His messengers, and the flaming fire His ministers, as when He used a wind to dry the Red Sea before Israel, and when He sent fire on the cities of the plain. But the construction as given above is that of the New Testament citation, which may be explained in two ways; first, that GOD gives His angelic messengers the swiftness of the winds, and the mighty force of burning flame, as we read of the horses and chariots of fire which caught away Elijah, and compassed Elisha in Dothan; not that their faculties are limited to this extent, but because these are the most striking similes at hand. The other view is nearer to the grammatical construction, and is that He maketh His spirits messengers to bear His will to men, and especially chooses out those who are kindled and glowing with the fervour of heavenly love. ”Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?”

Heb. i. A. S. Greg. M. Hom. 34 in Evang. Heb. i. 14. And is there care in heaven? And is there love In heavenly spirits to these creatures base, That may compassion of their evils move? There is :—else much more wretched were the case Of men than beasts : But O! th’ exceeding grace Of Highest GOD that loves His creatures so, And all His workes with mercy doth embrace, That blessed Angels He sends to and fro, To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe! How oft do they their silver bowers leave, To come to succour us that succour want! How oft do they with golden pinions cleave The flitting skyes, like flying pursuivant, Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant! They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward, And their bright squadrons round about us plant; And all for love, and nothing for reward :

O why should heavenly GOD to men have such regard? ”It should be known,” observes S. Gregory, ”that the word Angel is a title of office, not a description of nature. For those holy spirits of the heavenly country are always spirits, but they cannot always be styled Angels, for they are Angels only when some message is brought by them.” And S. Jerome will help us to the reason why fire is named in this connection : ”Angels are sent for various ministries, and especially to those who need purification, and because of former Ep. 20, ad Damas. L. Hugo Card. sins, deserve to be purged in some degree by chastisements.” The rushing wind and fiery tongues of Pentecost justify us in applying this verse also to the Divine Commission of preachers of the Word, sent to sweep away the clouds of heathen darkness, and to kindle and enlighten souls with the Gospel, that fire which their Master came to send on the earth.

5 He laid the foundations of the earth : that it never should move at any time. Cd. A. 1 Cor. iii. 11. Rising at once from the thought of the material earth, and that principle of gravity which keeps it in its appointed orbit, they bid us see here the creation of the Church, or of every holy soul which is the microcosm of the Church, steadfast and unshaken in faith, because of the firmness of the base on which it stands, for ”other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST.” 6 Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a garment : the waters stand in the hills. 7 At thy rebuke they flee : at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid. 8 They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath : even unto the place which thou hast appointed for them. 9 Thou hast set them their bounds, which they shall not pass : neither turn again to cover the earth.

Bellarmine. Gen. i. 9. Targum. Bellarmine. Jer. v. 22. Job xxxviii. 11. This is the description of the gradual emerging of the earth from the shroud of waters which enveloped it at the first : and is in fact but the expansion of that one verse, ”And GOD said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry ground appear : and it was so.” The waters are represented as fleeing hither and thither at the voice of the LORD, and either rising in waves as high as mountains and then sinking into abysses like the valleys, (according to the version above and the Chaldee paraphrase) or else, by their gradual subsidence, permitting the mountains to rise and the valleys to sink into their appointed stations, (which is the sense of the LXX. reading, the A.V. margin, and that of S. Jerome,) and then assuming their own permanent place, namely, the sea and springs, into which they are gathered. Their bounds are explained for us in another passage of Holy Writ, ”Will ye not tremble at My presence, which have placed the sand for a bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it?” ”And I said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further : and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” It is not uninteresting to compare Ovid’s description of the harmonizing of chaos, far inferior as it is, merely as a piece of poetry, to this noble Psalm, and those who please may institute further comparison with the seventh book of Paradise Lost.

Circumfluus humor

Ultima possedit, solidumque coërcuit orbem. Sic ubi dispositam, quisquis fuit ille deorum, Congeriem secuit, sectamque in membra redegit. Principio terram, ne non æqualis ab omni Parte foret, magni speciem glomeravit in orbis. Tum freta diffudit, rapidisque tumescere ventis Jussit, et ambitæ circumdare littora terræ. Addidit et fontes, et stagna immensa lacusque; Fluminaque obliquis cinxit declivia ripis: Quæ, diversa locis, partim sorbentur ab ipsa, In mare perveniunt partim, campoque recepta Liberioris aquæ, pro ripis littora pulsant. Jussit et extendi campos, subsidere valles, Fronde tegi silvas, lapidosos surgere montes. Ovid. Metamorph. i. 39.

Moisture, flowing round,
Seized the last place, and held the strong world bound. Some God then clave the huge mass thus prepared, And, after cleaving, into sections shared. First, that the earth might on all sides appear Equal in bulk, he shaped it a great sphere: Then poured the billows, bade them swell when fanned With gales, and gird the shores of compassed land. Gave also springs, meres, broads full widely spread, Hemmed the steep rivers in their winding bed, (Which, varying in each region, are imbibed In part by earth, while part, less circumscribed, To ocean's freer plain of waters reach, And banked no longer, dash against the beach.) And bade the valleys sink, the plains extend, The woods be green, the craggy mounts ascend. The mystical interpretation given to the verses, is the gradual arising of the Church Catholic out of the wild waves of heathen ignorance and darkness, which stood at first on the hills, that is, oppressing and slaying God's chief Saints, but then fleeing before the voice of the Sons of Thunder, the Apostles of the LORD, and allowing the mountain heights of saintly contemplation, the lowly valleys of devout humility, to be plainly seen; while these waters of heathenism, though not altogether dried up, shall never again be suffered to sweep over the whole earth, whatever partial floods and deluges may waste local Churches, but have as their final bound the Second Coming of CHRIST, when there shall be "no more sea."

10 He sendeth the springs into the rivers : which run among the hills. 11 All beasts of the field drink thereof : and the wild asses quench their thirst. 12 Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation : and sing among the branches.

For the rivers we should rather translate water-courses, the channels of a torrent down the side of a mountain, which is the exact force of the LXX. φάραγξιν. As the vast expanse of the salt ocean, referred to in the former verses, teaches us the mighty power of God, so His bounty and tenderness, not only to man, but to the lower animals, are set before us now in His provision of the sweet waters whence beasts and birds slake their thirst. The mystical interpretation is that from CHRIST, Who is the Rock, the streams of Gospel doctrine flow down to the valley in the channels which He has grooved in His great mountains, the Apostles (those twelve wells of Elim,) and other eloquent preachers of the Word, so that men, mere beasts of the field in comparison with the immortal Angels, draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation, because "when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him." Which run among the hills. The Vulgate, not dissimilarly, reads, The waters shall pass through in the midst of the mountains, that is, as it is explained, Christian teaching will flow forth amongst all nations from amidst the harmonious concord of the prelates and rulers of the Church, till not only the tame and domesticated beasts of the field, that is, the partially instructed Jews and the more civilized Gentile races, but also the wild asses, the untaught and savage heathen, shall alike drink of those cool streams, while the birds, the Angels and those holy souls winging on high in prayer and contemplation, shall sing the

praises of God among the branches of that Tree of Life which grows by the banks of the ”pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,” for ”the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

Quyte through the streets, with silver sound, The Flood of Life doth flow; Upon whose bankes, on everie syde, The Wood of Life doth growe. There trees for evermore beare fruite, And evermore do springe; There evermore the Angels sit, And evermore doe singe. A. Honorius. Hugo Card. For among the branches, however, the LXX. and Vulgate read, from the midst of the rocks, which they variously explain as from the firm testimonies of Scripture, from the fellowship of the Apostles, or from the surroundings of a hard and austere life, which causes no sorrow, but singing and gladness to the Saints of the LORD. 13 He watereth the hills from above : the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.

As the hills are the source of the chief rivers which irrigate the earth, so they (too lofty for those rivers to reach) are in turn watered themselves from GOD’s chambers (A. V.) of the clouds, which pour down rain impartially on all those surfaces which are not already moistened by fountains, streams, and lakes, so that the whole earth, not merely a few isolated tracts, is satisfied (Vulg. A.V.) with the fruit of GOD’s works in that it produces the abundant harvests of which the succeeding verses speak. The mystical sense is explained by S. Augustine of the direct and immediate teaching of the Apostles by CHRIST Himself, as for example in the vision of the sheet full of unclean beasts shown to S. Peter, and the conversion of S. Paul on his road to Damascus, so that the torrents of Gospel teaching flowed down upon the plains below through the water-courses of these great hills, and watered the whole earth with the knowledge of the LORD, producing a great harvest of converted sinners. And, remembering that the same word upper chambers stands here as in the third verse, we may well bear in mind that assembly of the disciples in Jerusalem, when the fiery rain of the HOLY GHOST came down upon them, and was communicated to the nations far and wide by the sermon of S. Peter and his fellows; when the multitude from many countries were astonished, as each man heard them speak in his own dialect, and many a one amongst them brought forth fruits meet for repentance, whereof the Prophet saith, ”this is all the fruit to take away his sin.”

A. 14 He bringeth forth grass for the cattle : and green herb for the service of men. 15 That he may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man : and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man’s heart. The gradual ripening of the crops, ”first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear,” is here set before us, with the distinction of the kinds of herbage designed for the use of animals alone from those intended for the benefit of man. The favourite exposition of the former verse is that it denotes the spirit of

liberality which the rain of Gospel grace causes to spring up in the hearers of the Word, so as to induce them to provide abundantly and cheerfully for the temporal needs of their teachers. ”It is true, I see, and acknowledge,” observes S. Chrysostom, ”the fact is certain, the earth does bring forth grass for cattle and green herb for the service of men. But I see other cattle of the LORD, which are meant when it is said, ’Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.

A.

Doth GOD take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written.’ How then does the earth bring forth grass for the cattle? Because ’the LORD hath ordained that they which preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel.’ He sent forth preachers and said unto them, ’Eat such things as are set before you, for the labourer is worthy of his hire.’ And when He said, Eat such things as are set before you, lest they should object, ’We shall be despised at the tables of strangers, if we are in want; wouldst Thou have us so intrusive?’ No, saith He, it is not a gift of theirs, it is your hire. Hire for what? What do they give, what do they receive? They give spiritual things, they receive carnal things; they give gold, they receive grass. For ’all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.’ All thy temporal superfluity and abundance is grass for the cattle. Hear for what cattle. ’If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?’” In like manner the Saint explains herb for the service of men, as signifying the same thing, the temporal offerings made to those who have become the servants of men by devoting themselves to the ministry of the Gospel.

Another view is that the whole verse has to do, not with paying the hire of labourers, but with bestowing alms on the needy; of whom there are two classes, the noisy, persistent and shameless mendicants, compared to the cattle, and the self-respecting, patient, suffering poor, who have a right to the nobler title of men. And they cite a saying of an unknown author against indiscriminate almsgiving, which has a Talmudic ring in it: ”Let thine alms sweat in thy hand, till thou find a righteous man on whom to bestow it. So the Wise Man saith, ”Give to the godly man, and help not the sinners. Do well unto him that is lowly, but give not to the ungodly; hold back thy bread, and give it not unto him, lest he overmaster thee thereby. A happier exposition, however, than either of the above, is that which sees in these verses the gradual unfolding of doctrine, the ascent in spiritual instruction, from the grass for the cattle, that is, the plainest and simplest teaching for the perfectly unlearned, and the green herb for the service of men, the somewhat more advanced, but still primary catechizing of new converts; to the richer and more solid gifts of corn, and wine, and oil, which are held back for those who are able to receive them.

But in each and all, in grass and herb, in corn and wine alike, in the simplest rudiments, and in the profoundest speculations, the food of the soul is one and the same JESUS CHRIST, growing up like a tender plant out of the pure soil of His Virgin Mother, cut down and dried up like grass in the burning heat of the Passion, Himself that Bread which came down from Heaven, and yet was brought out of the earth, once in the Nativity, and again in the Resurrection, to be the spiritual food of man, as well in devout thought as in that Blessed Sacrament of His love, wherein He is indeed the Wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and the Bread to strengthen man's heart.

O Tree of Life! O Vine of GOD! Thou art amid us now; The Bread we break, the Wine we bless, are they not very Thou? Veiled in His creatures comes our GOD; He comes Who dwells above, The altogether lovely, and the Fount and Life of Love. A. M. Morgan. "O come, ye heavy laden, and henceforth restful be; O come, your weary weight of sin long since was laid on Me"— This is Thy call, O Merciful; to all who will is given To eat supernal Bread and drink the mystic Wine of heaven. "For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids."

And oil to make him a cheerful countenance. Our FATHER does not confine His bounty to giving us His SON, to be our food, our joy, and our strength, but He bestows upon us also the blessed Unction of His HOLY SPIRIT, Whom He sent upon the Apostles, and through them, on all redeemed mankind. There is, however, a certain ambiguity in the construction of the Hebrew, which may be turned (as it is nearly by LXX., Vulgate, and S. Jerome,) in order to make his face cheerful [as though] with oil, taking this as a result produced by the wine, and not that oil is a separate gift, which is, however, the better way. Hence, some of the commentators explain this "oil of gladness" to be grace, wherewith the LORD JESUS is altogether anointed, whence He is named CHRIST, and He anoints His preachers and messengers therewith, that they may give the Gospel freely, and not for sale; while others take it of the Divine mercy which brings man out of his grief into gladness by the remission of sins, and confers upon him that regal chrism which makes him a king and priest to GOD. Further, we are reminded that oil enters literally into the rites of four sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Unction of the Sick; while mystically the oil of mercy belongs to penance, and that of love to matrimony.

One commentator, seeming to bear in mind that saying of Pliny, "There are two liquors most grateful to men's bodies, wine within, oil without," takes the oil here to mean the outward and visible graces and gifts of the SPIRIT, particularly the power of working miracles, which made the face of the Apostles to shine before men, giving them renown and lustre, while the wine signifies the inner working of the same SPIRIT, in heavenly operation upon the soul. If, however, we do take the

oil as a qualification of the wine, and not as an independent matter, we may fitly couple it with the last clause of the verse, bread to strengthen

A. man's heart, and take the whole passage of the Holy Eucharist: "For I feel that two things are most especially necessary to me in this life, without which this miserable life will be unbearable to me: Prisoned in the dungeon of this body, I acknowledge that I need two things, to wit, food and light. Therefore Thou hast given me, a sick man, Thy Body for the refreshment of my soul and body, and hast made 'Thy word a lantern unto my feet.' Without these two I cannot live well; for the Word of GOD is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament is the Bread of Life." And one result of that blessed communion is the spirit of martyrdom, the desire of sharing the Passion of CHRIST, a sweet and intoxicating wine pressed out for us from the Vine of the Cross, a food which strengthens man's heart to bear all for JESUS.

16 The trees of the LORD also are full of sap: even the cedars of Libanus which he hath planted; 17 Wherein the birds make their nests: and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork.

The trees of the Lord are the indigenous ones, not planted by the hand of man, nor tended by human culture. The words of sap are not in the Hebrew, and though the meaning does, no doubt, ultimately, come to that, yet the immediate sense rather appears to be with rain, which continues the train of thought begun in verse 13. And the intention is to impress further the idea of the sweep and completeness of GOD's providential care, not only in the creation, but in the maintenance, of the great forest trees, needing no hand but His to tend them. The usual reading of the LXX. here, followed by the Vulgate, is trees of the plain, implying their indigenous and wild condition, as distinguished from trees of an orchard or park. These trees of the Lord are, they tell us, the Gentile nations, heretofore uncultured and ignorant, but now filled not only with the refreshing showers of heaven, but with the corn and wine, and oil of GOD. The cedars of Libanus come later in order, because He chose the base things of the world first, and filled the lowly and hungry with good things, before turning to the rich and mighty. There are cedars of Libanus in the world which never are so filled, those haughty and ungodly sinners, lying outside the Land of promise, of whom it is written, "The LORD breaketh the cedars of Libanus;" but these, which are filled, are such only as He hath planted, for "every plant which My heavenly FATHER hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Note also that Libanus, meaning white, may be taken in two ways, of the shining pomp and splendour of worldly dignity, and of the purity of soul, the true whiteness of sanctification, conferred by the cleansing waters of heaven; so that here we may, in the latter sense, understand the more eminent Saints as intended.

Wherein the birds make their nests. The word , meaning any small birds, is here translated by LXX. and Vulgate as sparrows, and the explanation given is that spiritual persons, and especially members of Religious Orders, are supported by the

bounty of wealthy and powerful persons, from whose superfluous riches they are fed, in some corners of whose domains they build their convents, aptly called nests, because they who erect them are conscious of being mere sojourners, and of having here no continuing city. The insignificance, gregariousness, and homely brown aspect of the sparrow, have made it a not inapt emblem of the monastic societies, and in fact the French name for the bird is moineau, ”little monk.” Happy is that tree, observes Cassiodorus, (himself senator, consul, prime minister, who left all to become a simple monk,) where such a nest is built, for any that contains such an institution may know that it has been planted by God.

And the fir-trees are a dwelling-place for the stork. This, which is the true meaning of the last clause, is so unlike the LXX. and Vulgate reading, that the commentators are of no real assistance in arriving at the mystical sense. This appears to be that the Saints of secular and domestic life are here signified. The fir-tree, from its utility in building and joinery, and from its yielding pitch for binding planks together, so as to exclude wind and damp, serves as a type of settled habitation, a notion brought out by the word house (A.V., LXX., Vulg.,) here contrasting with the nests of the earlier clause, and confirmed by the stork’s habit of returning year after year to the same spot. The bird itself (called by the Greeks, ”most pious of winged creatures,”) whose

Hebrew name is derived from a root , ”to be kind,” is noted for its tenderness to its young, an affection popularly said to be reciprocated, so that the whole picture adequately corresponds to the suggested meaning. But the LXX. and Vulgate read, The house of the heron (ἐρωδιον, herodii) is their leader, meaning that the larger size of that bird, and the alleged loftiness of its nest, give it a kind of kingship amongst the feathered tribes. The commentators, not being very clear as to the nature of the herodius, tell us that it is a bird of prey, of great size and strength, more than a match for the eagle, and thus a type of violent and daring sinners. But if these sinners will be converted, and take refuge with CHRIST, then He Who is the Leader of the birds, of all spiritual and devout souls, becomes the house and shelter of the sinners too, and enables them to overcome the evil spirit whom the eagle typifies. Or again, reading the sentence conversely, they tell us that the bold sinner himself, who has once been the house of the herodius, on being converted, becomes the leader of spiritual persons, and emi-

A. C. Hugo Card. in Esaiam. nent over them in capacity for good now as for evil previously, as instanced in S. Paul and S. Augustine. 18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats : and so are the stony rocks for the conies. That is, the loftier mysteries of devout contemplation and the more difficult parts of Scripture form the favourite theme of meditation for soaring hearts, inasmuch as the literal meaning of the Hebrew name of the ibex or wild goat is climber. ”Let not these animals seem vile to thee, thou seest that the flock feeds in lofty places, to wit, on a mount.

Therefore, where are precipices for others, there is no peril for the goats; there is the food of this flock, there their provender is sweeter, their pasture choicer. They are seen by their herdsmen, hanging from the wooded cliff, where can be no attacks by wolves, where the fruitful trees minister abundant produce."

The conies. These are included in the Proverbs amongst the "four things which be little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise," for though they "are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." The coney or hyrax is a small animal externally much resembling a rabbit or a marmot, though of a totally different species, and is noted for its extreme wariness, and the rapidity with which it hurries to the shelter of a cleft or cavern on the first alarm. It is thus a fit type of all timid souls, unable for the bold climbing of stronger natures, but finding a refuge not less sure than the highest hills in devout and lowly reliance on the Wounds and Passion of CHRIST, the Rock of Ages cleft for their salvation. For wild goats and coneys, the LXX. and Vulgate read stags and hedgehogs, but there is no important difference introduced thereby into the exposition, save that a few of the commentators take the latter word to denote men still rough with small daily sins, who seek refuge and purification within the Church of CHRIST. And observe, that in these two verses we have three refuges set before us: the Tree of the Cross, the mount of prayer, the rocks of a steadfast faith in CHRIST.

19 He appointed the moon for certain seasons : and the sun knoweth his going down. One meaning of the first clause is more fully set forth in another place: "He made the moon also to serve in her season for a declaration of times, and a sign of the world; from the moon is the sign of feasts." But it may be extended to a wider significance, and embrace all the lunar phases, and the seasons of the year. S. Chrysostom understands by the moon here, drawing its light from the unseen sun, the Synagogue, appointed only for the certain seasons S. Ambros. Hom. 16 in Ps. cxix. A. Gen. i. 14. S. Chrysost. in Ps. cxi. of the Law and Prophets, but not knowing the mystery of the Passion, for only the Sun of Righteousness Himself knew of His coming Crucifixion, His awful setting in blood: saying, "FATHER, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." The more usual exposition of the moon here is, however, as the Christian Church, waxing and waning, but never extinguished, but sometimes decrescent by reason of apostasy and coldness, sometimes shining at the full in the victories of the Martyrs. Only the sun is said to know, for the moon depends on him, and has no independent light of her own, and therefore must draw her knowledge from him, as the Church derives all her wisdom from CHRIST. And one of the things He knows, which we do not, is why He sets at times in the hearts of His people, leaving them in the darkness of their sins or of their doubt and sorrow; wherefore it follows:

A. 20 Thou makest darkness that it may be night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do move. It was darkness, that of sorrow, in the hearts of the Apostles at

the time of the LORD's Passion, when the wild rage of the populace, truly beasts of the forest, was wreaked on Him. It was darkness, that of sin, then too, in the hearts of the Jews, when the evil spirits, believing themselves victorious, assumed the mastery over them; and a little later, when the fierce heathen of Rome moved their camps and forces against the guilty city for its total overthrow. Of these several glooms that darkness which lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour at the Crucifixion was a type; and so, when the like overshadows our hearts, then evil thoughts and passions, the suggestions of our ghostly enemies, move and pass through (Vulg.) our minds; while in the whole body of the Church, the darkness and ignorance of incompetent and slothful pastors enables heretics to devour the LORD's flock, as it is then "in darkness and the shadow of death."

Pseudo-Hieron. S. Luke i. 79. 21 The lions roaring after their prey: do seek their meat from GOD. This the evil spirits did at the time of the Passion, when they saw treason and cowardice invade the very college of the Apostles; when Judas betrayed, Peter denied, and the others fled. Wherefore the LORD saith, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired you, that he may sift you as wheat." They seek their meat from God, because, on the one hand, as we read in the story of holy Job, they can tempt no man unless GOD grant them permission; and again, their object is to draw sinners from GOD and to themselves. Peter was dragged out of those very jaws: Judas was swal- Honorius. S. Luke xxii. 31. A. lowed up. And the words hold good of rapacious kings and governments seizing on the property of the Church and of religious houses, robbing from God, for "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

22 The sun ariseth, and they get them away together : and lay them down in their dens. A. S. Hieron. in Gal. vi. When the LORD arose again in the glory of His Resurrection, the evil spirits and their tools, the chief Priests and Pharisees, were confounded and put to rout; when the Truth is boldly preached in all its clearness after a season of neglect and darkness, or of persecution, the enemies of the Gospel, Jews and heretics alike, retire to their lurking-places; when the Day-star arises in our hearts, the evil passions of the soul are lulled to rest, and hidden from the thought. Before the Resurrection, the evil spirits had greater power in the world than now, and went up and down, seeking whom they might devour; but now their power is restricted, and they are compelled to lurk in dens, and not to range openly about. When the last great arising of the Sun of Righteousness shall take place, and the LORD shall come in glory to judgment, then His enemies shall lay them down in their dens, in the everlasting prison of the bottomless pit. And because the evil spirits are fettered even now, and cannot work harm at their pleasure, we read,

23 Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour : until the evening. Here is the result of sunrise, teaching us the contrast between man and beast. For the wild

beasts hide in the daytime, to avoid capture, but roam about at night for prey, while man, endowed with reason, rests in the night and toils in the day. Every one on whom CHRIST shines is prompted to toil for Him, and that till the evening of life, to the coming on of death; and thus the Apostles, and all other great preachers since, have gone forth to the labour of extending the Gospel kingdom, to last through the persecution of Antichrist, and to the very twilight of the world. Until the evening, for "the night cometh when no man can work," but not ceasing until that time, for the LORD hath said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The toil may be heavy, and the hours slow, so that man is "as a servant that earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling that looketh for the reward of his work," but takes comfort, remembering that

Be the day weary, or be the day long, At the last the bell ringeth to evensong. 24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works : in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. He does not undertake to answer his own question, How manifold? for he confesses GOD's works to be greater than his own power of expression; whether these works belong to the creation of nature or to that of grace. And observe how the concurrent operation of the Blessed Trinity is set forth : O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, teaches of the FATHER, the Source of all things; in Wisdom hast Thou made them all, tells us of the SON, the Eternal WORD, "CHRIST the power of GOD and the Wisdom of GOD, by Whom were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made;" the earth is full of Thy riches, is spoken of the HOLY GHOST, Who filleth the world. And they explain this last clause diversely of the Church, GOD's possession (Vulg.) which fills the earth, as it is made known in every land, or of the gifts of the sacraments, and those of faith, hope, and charity poured out on the world by the Gospel; or again of the special land of Judæa, filled by the Apostolic preaching with saintly disciples, the true riches of the LORD.

25 So is the great and wide sea also : wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. So is. These words are not in the Hebrew, which is better translated Yonder is the great and wide sea, the expression of a writer living at some distance from the coast. In this recurrence to the ocean, it is no longer mentioned, as in the sixth verse, merely as a shroud and pall which hid the earth, but as itself a field of creation, teeming with living things, and as wonderful as the earth and sky. Mystically, the great sea is the life of the present world, full of creeping things, temptations and perils, both small and great, through which man must pass before he can reach the peaceful shores of his Country; lured as he is on his voyage by the siren voices of desire, pride, and avarice. The literal Hebrew of the epithet wide is given by LXX. and Vulgate, wide with hands, that is, stretching out its arms, as it were, to east and west; but the commentators take it as meaning wide for hands, that is, affording ample employment to the Saints in the conversion of the heathen.

26 There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan : whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein. These ships are the preachers which carry CHRIST into the A. 1 Cor. i. 24. S. John i. 3. Petrus Blesensis in Job. A.

hearts of men, of the local Churches which pass over the sea amidst storms and tempests, piloted by CHRIST with the wood of the Cross. And observe, that as the world is the sea, and temptations and persecutions the storms, so if the Church be the ship, the Cross is the mast, faith the sail, good works her yards, the Apostles and doctors her crew, the HOLY GHOST the favourable wind, the harbour the end of the world, and the country reached everlasting life. This is that vessel of which we read, ”And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him,” of which it is true that ”Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Every soul that has set out on the voyage for the Happy Isles is like a ship too, whereof some make shipwreck of the faith, and never reach the haven, while others, more blessed in their undertaking, come safe to land. And in saying there go the ships, we are taught that the way to heaven must needs be over the waters of Baptism. Leviathan, translated dragon by LXX. and Vulgate, cannot here mean, as it elsewhere does, the fresh-water crocodile, but stands for any sea monster, taking its pastime, by sporting and playing freely in the waters. But the ambiguity of the Hebrew, reproduced by the Vulgate, makes another reading possible, whom Thou hast made to sport with him, a sense borne out by the similar language, ”Wilt thou play with him [leviathan] as with a bird?

or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? And then the notion will be of the perfect ease with which GOD deals with the vast bulk of the monster as a mere toy in His hands. There is a wild Jewish tradition that the male leviathan is for three hours daily the plaything of GOD, while the female, slain to avert the multiplication of such huge creatures, is salted down for the food of Israel in the days of Messiah. A literalist view, taken by some of the mediæval commentators, albeit with some incredible adjuncts, sees here denoted the ease with which leviathan, despite his size and strength, is captured and killed by means of human skill and ingenuity pitted against brute force.

Mystically, they take it to mean the devil, who, in despite of his power and craft, is made a mock of by GOD, by men, and by Angels; by GOD, when suffered to tempt men that they may advance in holiness; by men, whom he often finds stronger, like Job, the more he strives to weaken them; by Angels, whom he knows to be fully aware of all the circumstances of his fall. The LXX. rendering of Job xl. 19, speaking of Behemoth, is ”This is the beginning of the creation of the LORD, made to be sported with by the Angels;” whence S. Augustine, illustrating the present Psalm, remarks, ”Wouldst thou mock the dragon? Be an Angel of GOD. But thou art not yet an Angel of GOD. Until thou be such, if thou do but hold the course towards it, there are Angels to mock the dragon, lest he should hurt thee. For the Angels of

heaven are set over the powers of the air." And thus, having lost his great power, he is made for a mock, so that any one who has CHRIST for his Head, can trample on the dragon, and bruise the head thereof, by refusing to yield to his suggestions, or to swerve from the right way. And so the Master Himself made a mock of the sea monster, luring him with the bait of Manhood which had the hook of Deity, and does so still by daily rescuing sinners from his grasp through means of repentance.

27 These wait all upon thee : that thou mayest give them meat in due season. 28 When thou givest it them they gather it : and when thou openest thy hand they are filled with good.

The Psalmist once again turns to the contemplation of God's continual providence and care for His creation, in that He does not simply make it, and having laid down certain fixed laws for its guidance, withdraw Himself from all interference and supervision, but is its active and incessant ruler, so that all vital things live by His bounty, and would die were He to close His hand and turn His face away. All faithful souls wait upon God, that He may give them CHRIST's Body and Blood to be their food, in the due season of love and penitence; and all persecutors, all evil spirits, and even the great dragon himself, must wait God's pleasure before they can tempt or devour any man. When temptation comes, or when destruction comes, it is only in due season, at the time when Divine probation or Divine displeasure wills it. They then who would fain not be the dragon's food, have to see that they be not earthy in their conversation, for it is written of the serpent, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life;" so that they whose conversation is in heaven are far above out of his reach, and are not fed upon, but feeders, for "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And man obtains this when God discloses Himself by opening His Hand; that is, revealing His Only-Begotten Son, by Whom, and not by any efforts of our own, we are filled with good; with the graces of faith, hope, and charity, with the gifts of the Sacraments and of the SPIRIT in this life, and satiated with everlasting blessedness in the world to come; for "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the FATHER of lights."

A. A. S. James i. 17. 29 When thou hidest thy face they are troubled : when thou takest away their breath they die, and are turned again to their dust. A. God turns away His face sometimes, lest men should ascribe to their own merit or holiness that good wherewith they are filled, and to teach them that His open hand is its efficient cause, so that they are troubled, till they pray to see once more the light of His countenance. And as He is the bestower of life, so He also takes it away, and as the withdrawal of His Spirit from any man means spiritual death, (for we read, "The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him,") so a man thus punished is turned again to the dust, and becomes the prey of the creeping serpent. But the LORD also, in His mercy, after He has

troubled sinners, takes away from them the spirit of pride and rebellion, so that they die to their sins, and make their confession to God in the dust of humility and repentance.

30 When thou lettest thy breath go forth they shall be made : and thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Gen. i. 2. The force of the former clause here is seen better in the A.V. translation, nearly identical with LXX. and Vulgate. Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created. That is, in the literal sense, whereas God destroys one generation of animated beings, reducing them to dust, He exercises His creative energy by calling a fresh generation into being, and thus replenishes the earth with creatures of every species. It is the same quickening and vivifying influence of which we read in the beginning of the Mosaic record, ”The SPIRIT of God moved upon the face of the waters.” And what He does in this wise by secondary causes, He is able to do at once by primary and immediate operation, so that the verse may be well understood of the general Resurrection, when the LORD GOD will say, ”Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” And besides this sense, there is the further one of the continual mission of the HOLY GHOST in the Church for the conversion of sinners, and their renewal by the new birth of Baptism, the new cleansing of repentance, ”For we are His workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works,” wherefore, ”be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” And it is rightly said the face of the earth, because the teaching of the Apostles, converting the Gentiles to the truth, has spread everywhere, ”their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world.”

31 The glorious Majesty of the LORD shall endure for ever : the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

This ought rather to be taken, as by LXX. and Vulgate, as a prayer: Let the glory of the Lord be for ever. The Psalmist begins with the praise of GOD’s glory and ends with prayer for its everlasting continuance. His first petition is also the first in the Our FATHER. Because the LORD renews the face of the earth, and creates afresh living creatures therein, because He maketh all things new, and will bring forth a new heaven and a new earth when the old have passed away, therefore His glory shall endure for ever. Not that it would cease to be, in its essence and eternity, were He alone in the universe, but that it can be manifested only while there is a creation to disclose, to serve, and to worship Him. And it is then said, The Lord shall rejoice in His works, because He delights in the life, not in the death of His creatures, ”for GOD made not death; neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living.” When the new creation is complete, it will be said, as it was once before, ”GOD saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good.” But whereas it afterward ”repented the LORD, and grieved Him at the

heart," because of the fall of man, He will have no such sorrow and dishonour in the Resurrection, for His works of mercy and of justice will be both made perfect, in destroying sin and rewarding holiness, so that the glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever, as He is worshipped by His ransomed Saints, those works of His grace wherein He rejoices. And the FATHER, Who saved the world by the Incarnation and Passion of His SON, will look well pleased on Him, saying, "Behold Mine elect, in Whom My soul delighteth."

S. Chrysost. Wisd. i. 13. Gen. i. 31. Gen. vi. 6. 32 The earth shall tremble at the look of him : if he do but touch the hills, they shall smoke. Amongst those works of GOD wherein He delights, the conversion of sinners holds a high place, and He looks upon them when they are trusting in their own strength, till they tremble, and even the proud amongst them send up the smoking incense of confession and prayer from the height of their imagination to the footstool of His throne. The immediate reference is to the trembling and darkness on Sinai at the giving of the Law, and some commentators see therein and here a type and prophecy of the earthquake which shall precede the Judgment, and the fire, out of which the elect shall be saved, to which the smoke will be due. A. 33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live : I will praise my GOD while I have my being.

34 And so shall my words please him : my joy shall be in the LORD. A. Honorius. I will sing, denotes our due service of praise and worship during all this mortal life, as long, too, as we truly live by the SPIRIT of GOD; I will praise implies action, as the word signifies playing on an instrument, and tells us of the other service of good works, never to cease for the redeemed in this life, nor, perhaps, in that which is to come. Others, however, comparing that voice of the Prophet, "Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered;" explain the words here as denoting the mournful song of confession of sin. That song may be sung, observes the Carmelite, in bass, in tenor, in alto, as we pass from contrition to confession and thence to mortification. There are four chief faults in singing, remarks the Cardinal of S. Sabina; slurring over the notes, singing false, being flat, and being in discord; and we may commit all these in confession, by being silent about some of our sins, misrepresenting others, making excuses to palliate them, or not being penitent at heart.

Ricard. Victorin. de Exterm. Mali. i. 13. So shall my words please Him. More exactly, with LXX. and Vulgate, be sweet unto Him, for though confession is bitter to man, who offers it, yet it is sweet to GOD Who receives it. But, as a devout writer observes, "all is washed away in confession, the conscience is purified, bitterness is taken away, the waves are driven back, the calm returns, hope revives, and the soul becometh cheerful," wherefore is added here: My joy shall be in the Lord, when all pleasure in worldly delights has passed for ever from the soul. JESU, Thou joy of

loving hearts, Thou fount of life, Thou light of men, From the best bliss that earth imparts, We turn unfilled to Thee again. 35 As for sinners, they shall be consumed out of the earth, and the ungodly shall come to an end: praise thou the LORD, O my soul, praise the LORD.

The LXX. and Vulgate read this verse as a prayer, agreeing therein with the A.V. There is but one jarring note in the harmonious Psalm of creation, it is only man of all living things that can make GOD sad, and draw tears from the eyes of CHRIST. All true, all faultless, all in tune, Creation's wondrous choir, Opened in mystic unison To last till time expire. And still it lasts: by day and night, With one consenting voice, All hymn Thy glory, LORD, aright, All worship and rejoice. Man only mars the sweet accord, O'erpowering with harsh din The music of Thy works and word, Ill matched with grief and sin. And therefore the Psalmist prays that this discord may be amended; and that in one of two ways, either by the conversion of sinners, that burnt up with the fire of the HOLY GHOST, they may have no earthliness left remaining in them, but that all their ungodliness may come to end; or, if they harden themselves against the mercy of the LORD, they may be entirely taken away, that they be no longer a stumbling-block in the way of the elect.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. A dignified ending of the Psalm, as the like beginning of it is dignified, for we should ever be praising Him Who never ceaseth to bestow His bounties upon us. He is Alpha, and our life should begin with His praise: He is Omega, and it should close in like manner, for "the soul of blessing shall be made fat" with all the riches of GOD's house, when He shall have put away evil for evermore. And therefore, with deep significance, we have here as the final words of the Psalm, and for the first time in the Psalter, the cry of HALLELUJAH, Praise ye the Lord, celebrating His victory over sin, His judgments on the wicked; just as its first occurrence in the New Testament is in the vision of S. John, "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the LORD our GOD: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia."

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is clothed with majesty and honour; glory be to the SON, the Eternal Wisdom in Whom He hath made all things; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Author of the new creation, Who reneweth the face of the earth. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O glorious and Almighty GOD, Who hast satisfied the dry land with abundant fruit, grant us to contemplate with spiritual understanding Thy glorious Ascension, that while we look up to Thee in heaven, we may ever meditate on heavenly things. (5.) How magnified are Thy works, O LORD, in wisdom hast Thou made them all; but

fill us with the Spirit of guidance, Q A. that whilst we wonder at Thy works, our understanding may praise and magnify Thee in Thy works. (11.) O LORD GOD Almighty, Who hast commanded the evening, and the morning, and the noontide to be called one day, and hast bidden the sun to know his going down; pierce, we beseech Thee, the darkness of our hearts, that as Thou sheddest Thy rays, we may acknowledge Thee to be Very GOD and Light everlasting. (11.) O LORD GOD Almighty, Who makest Thine Angels spirits and Thy ministers a flame of fire, kindle in us, we beseech Thee, the flame of Thy love, which, by the word of the sacred mouth, Thou hast vouchsafed Thy promise to send, and let it glow in such wise within us by faith and works, that it may cut away all sins from us, and unite us with the heavenly citizens. (11.)

O GOD, Who lookest upon the earth, and makest it to tremble, send Thy wholesome fear into our hearts, that, abandoning the evil things whereby we have grievously offended Thee, our sinful face may be renewed by Thy Spirit within us, and we may ever cling to Thee in holy devotion, and sing to Thy praise in the pleasantness of salvation. (1.)

Psalm 105

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, the LORD GOD over all the earth, pronounces His judgments. The Voice to the Apostles concerning the Jews. The Voice of CHRIST to the Apostles concerning the Jews, and first, in the Confession of the Saints. The Voice of CHRIST to the Apostles concerning His praise and confession of sins. VEN. BEDE. Alleluia is a Hebrew word, which is interpreted Praise ye the Lord: and whenever it is placed in the titles, it teaches that the power of the Creator ought always to be praised. We say this once for all, and this is to be noted in all cases. In whatsoever Psalm Alleluia is marked first, it has Alleluia at the close also: which, many persons not knowing, think it to be the beginning of the succeeding Psalm. Further, you will often find two Alleluias prefixed in one Psalm, which means that one belongs to the end of the preceding, the other to the beginning of the following one.

The Prophet, knowing that the people of Israel were accustomed to rest their hope in temporal blessings, warns the faithful in the first part, that they should ever seek it out spiritually. O give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon His Name. Secondly, he encourages them by the examples of the Patriarchs, for they were not forsaken by the LORD, because they obeyed His rule. Remember the marvellous works that He hath done. Thirdly, he details the great things He did for their fathers, and how He preserved Joseph and bestowed honours upon him; and commemorates the entrance of the Hebrews into Egypt. When there were yet but a few of them. Fourthly, he tells how Israel was avenged of his enemies, by the divers plagues of the Egyptians: Whose heart turned so. Fifthly, he describes what great things He did for them in the wilderness; that they should not rejoice in temporal good things, but softened by His bounties, keep His statutes and law. He brought them forth with silver and gold.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. He discourses concerning the history, Fear not, Jacob, to go down into Egypt. At the same time he spiritually teaches us not to be afraid when any one goes forth to contend against evil spirits, for GOD is our

help, and fights for us. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. An instruction to the Gentiles concerning GOD's bounties to the former people. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of thanksgiving, describing a life endowed with excellent virtues.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Saturday: Matins. Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: II. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. As preceding Psalm. Monastic and Ambrosian. Let the heart of them rejoice * that seek the LORD. Parisian. Remember * the marvellous works that He hath done; His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth. Mozarabic. First portion: Seek the LORD, and be strong; seek His face evermore. Second portion: He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out: so that rivers ran in the dry places.

This Psalm is counted by the LXX. and Vulgate (which transfer the closing Alleluia of the previous one to the title of this) as the first of the Alleluiaic Psalms, the others of which are in the Hebrew text, 106, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 135, 146, 147, 148, 149, and 150; to which the LXX. and Vulgate add, 107, 116, v. 10, 118, 119, 136, and 147, v. 12. There is a tradition, preserved by the Pseudo-Epiphanius, that the custom of chanting the Alleluia at the beginning or end of a Psalm was introduced into the ritual of the Second Temple by the Prophet Haggai; and its adoption into the services of the Christian Church in its untranslated form is due to the Hebraistic tone of the Apocalypse. The present Psalm is an augmented edition of one composed by David on the occasion of bringing up the Ark into Jerusalem, as set down in 1 Chron. xvi. 8—22, which coincides almost word for word with the first fifteen verses of this one; the latter part of which is partly new, and partly a cento made up from other Psalms, notably lxxviii., which seems to have been produced somewhat earlier. It is by no means improbable that the reference to Joseph in the Psalm may glance at the analogous position of Nehemiah under Artaxerxes, and urge present obedience to the Persian rule in the hope of a new deliverance like that under Moses. And it is noteworthy that from the first emigration under Zerubbabel, encouraged by Cyrus, until the full establishment of the priestly kingdom of the Maccabees (the nearest reproduction of the original Mosaic polity in the history of Israel) is nearly four hundred years, a period sufficiently close to that of the sojourn in Egypt to bring out the analogy with much exactness.

In the account of the festival of the translation of the Ark, already referred to, the part of this Psalm which occurs is followed, without any break, by the first edition of Psalm xcvi., and there is a Jewish tradition that the two were sung daily before the Ark, this one in the morning, and Psalm xcvi. in the evening, until the dedication of Solomon's Temple. At a later time Ps. cv. was in use on the first day of the feast of Tabernacles. Besides its classification amongst the Alleluiatics, it is also marked

as the first of the Hodu, or ”O give thanks” Psalms, of which the remainder are cvii., cxviii., and cxxxvi. 1 O give thanks unto the LORD, and call upon his Name: tell the people what things he hath done. 2 O let your songs be of him and praise him: and let your talking be of all his wondrous works.

2 Tim. i. 8.

There are three ways in which man should open his mouth in the honour of God; first, in the utterance of His praise, O give thanks; secondly, in the accusation of self, call upon His Name; thirdly, in the edification of one’s neighbour, tell the people. And the various grades of such homage are here set down; for we may give thanks secretly in spirit, without voice, but call upon His Name adds utterance, songs implies cheerfulness, praise (or rather play instruments, LXX., Vulg.,) active works, talking of all His wonders teaches us that our laud is to begin with the very outset of creation, and to continue for all time. Yet it is clear that we cannot talk of all His wondrous works, for they surpass human knowledge and utterance. But the words teach us that we should not hold back or be silent about any of them which we do know. Thus, fear was unable to impose silence on Peter and John, when they said, ”We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard; shame could not stop Paul, who exclaimed, ”God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and warned his convert Timothy, ”Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our LORD, nor of me His prisoner. And whereas there are many wondrous works of the LORD JESUS, yet three stand out pre-eminently, in that He made GOD to be man, a Virgin to be a Mother, the heart to be faithful.

And accordingly, on the morning of the Nativity the Church cries aloud, ”O sing unto the LORD a new song, for He hath done marvellous things. And the music in GOD’s honour, they tell us, is made in three ways, with harp, flute, and voice, signifying action of the hand, breathing out the soul in devout prayer, uttering articulate praise, and that with a range of seven notes, beginning in the low tone of perfect submission, and then, in ascending concord, humility of heart, mortification of the flesh, compassion, consolation, prayer, and devotion.

3 Rejoice in his holy Name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. 4 Seek the Lord and his strength: seek his face evermore.

It is, observes an ancient writer, that first true joyous Alleluia which burst forth on the Day of Pentecost, when the inspired Apostles told the people what things their LORD had done, and counselled them, especially those who come from heathen countries, saying, ”Seek not to be praised for the power of your kings, or for the might of your wars, but laying aside ’the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle,’ take unto you peace, and unite unto your name CHRIST, Whom we preach unto you, that ye, who are now called Gentiles, may be called Christians, and be praised in His holy Name (Vulg.,) and your heart may rejoice because ye

have sought and found the LORD." So the Apostles themselves, after their imprisonment and scourging, "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name." The term seek the Lord implies something more than acknowledging Him as the true GOD, to wit, such a confession of Him as to induce the worshipper to obey the Mosaic rule, and make a pilgrimage to the sacred place where stood the Ark, where alone the sacrificial rites of the Aaronic priesthood could be performed, and where only in consequence, the strength and the face of the LORD could be known upon earth. To us, therefore, the words are an exhortation to seek CHRIST Himself, the Presence of GOD, in Whom alone we can be made strong, and even when we have found Him, to go on seeking Him for evermore, as in His infinity there is always fresh matter for love, wonder and devotion, and we can never exhaust His perfections. He is to be sought without end, because He is to be loved without end, and even when He is known to be present, He is to be longed after with perpetual affection, lest He should absent Himself.

A. S. Chrysost Z. S. Albertus Magnus. Wisd. i. 1, 2. The Gloss. A. Serm. in Cant. 84.

We may seek Him in many ways, but especially in meditation, prayer, Scripture reading, and those good works whereby we imitate His life on earth. "In simplicity of heart seek Him," the Wise Man counsels, for there is a seeking which is not good, as of Herod when he sought to slay Him, of Judas and the soldiers when they sought to lay hold of Him, but "He will be found of them that tempt Him not, and showeth Himself unto such as do not distrust Him. Wherefore "seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near; for His own promise to us is, "Seek, and ye shall find," as the shepherds found Him in the manger, His Mother in the Temple, the dying thief upon the Cross, Mary Magdalene in the garden, the disciples on the way to Emmaus. And observe, too, that it is said, Seek His Face; whereas He showed Moses only His back parts; in token that we are to look not to His mere temporal gifts, but to the glories which are beyond. So, if we do not wish to meet His rebuke, "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled," we must say with the Apostle, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

And then, whosoever once possesses GOD, cannot be tortured by fear, nor deceived by treachery, nor suffer want, nor can fail in fulness of love, for GOD will never forsake one that loves Him, nor suffer a stronger to overcome him. And observe that the word seek is thrice used here, for under the Law the Jews were obliged to present themselves thrice a year before the LORD, at the Passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. And we too should seek the face of the Everblessed Trinity, the Son in His own new Paschal oblation, the HOLY GHOST in the

fires of Pentecost, the FATHER when we enter into our Country, and bear the palm-branches there in token of victory and rest, of a conquered world, and an eternal inheritance. To the first seeking rejoicing is linked, to the second strength, to the third perseverance for evermore, and thus the state of beginners, advancers, and those made perfect in grace is shadowed forth, and we may well pray for continuance to the end in the way of salvation, taking as our own the words of one of the greatest of penitent Saints: ”O LORD my GOD, my one Hope, hearken unto me, lest I should be too weary to seek Thee, but let me seek Thy face with fervour evermore. Thou, Who hast made Thyself capable of being found, and hast more and more bestowed the hope of finding Thee, give me strength to seek Thee.

Faith has already found Him, but Hope seeks Him still, and Love, which found Him by faith, desires to behold Him in open vision. ”And I think,” comments S. Bernard, ”that there will be no end of that seeking Him when He is found. For GOD is not sought with footsteps, but with longings, And that happy finding does not crush holy longing, but increases it. For surely the consummation of joy is not the consummation of longing. And therefore Divine Wisdom saith, ”They that eat Me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink Me shall yet be thirsty.”

5 Remember the marvellous works that he hath done : his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth, 6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant : ye children of Jacob his chosen.

The Psalmist trains the babes in faith by recalling to their mind the mighty things done for the patriarchs their forefathers ; and as their unaccustomed eyes could no more look on the Face of God than on the sun in full orb, he bids them look at those great acts which shadow forth the LORD’s power and goodness. By wonders, they understand the miracles wrought on behalf of the children of Israel, and by judgments of His mouth the plagues sent upon the Egyptians ; or else the precepts of the Law, so that the power of God is set forth by the former term, and His wisdom by the latter. Under the covenant of grace the words are addressed to the Apostles, the true spiritual seed of Abraham, the friend of God, for the GOD-Man said unto them, ”Ye are My friends,” the true children of Jacob, a more glorious chosen twelve, who were to bear in mind the wonders of His Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension, and to preach the judgments of His mouth, as delivered in the Gospels, to all nations of the world. The words are spoken to us also, children of Abraham in faith, and as the Apostle teaches us, by the examples of Ishmael and Esau, that this is not enough, children of Jacob also, the wrestler against sin, who prevailed with God, and won the name of Israel ; for it is not enough to be children of Abraham by faith, unless we be also children of Jacob by works.

And those of us who are such, may well bear in mind CHRIST’s marvels of justifying grace, His wonders in raising dead souls to life, the judgments of His mouth in teaching us how mercifully He will judge repentant sinners, saying, ”Neither

do I condemn thee ; go, and sin no more. And in a special sense we may understand the seed of Abraham, who left his country and kindred at the call of God, and the children of Jacob, who served obediently in a strange land for a long delayed reward, to represent the votaries of the Religious Life, whose peculiar task is constant meditation on the wonderful works of God.

A. The word chosen does not refer, as it seems to do, to Abraham and Jacob, but is an epi- thet of the people addressed by the Psalmist, Ye, His chosen. Cf. 1 Chron. xvi. 13. 7 He is the LORD our GOD : his judgments are in all the world. C. Arnobius. A. Tostatus. He, Whom the Jews rejected and crucified, Whom they counted a mere man, is the LORD our GOD, and His judgments, no longer taught to the Hebrew race alone, no longer confined within the narrow limits of Judæa, are in all the world, because that Catholic Church which He has founded has spread amongst all nations. And yet this very fact has its terrors for us. His judgments, in the matter of punishment, were more frequent and heavy amongst the Jews than upon the Gentiles, because the latter were never chastised for breaches of the positive and ceremonial law, of which they were ignorant; but we, who have been taught the Gospel, are liable to be beaten with many stripes if we disregard it.

8 He hath been alway mindful of his covenant and promise: that he made to a thousand generations; 9 Even the covenant that he made with Abraham: and the oath that he sware unto Isaac; 10 And appointed the same unto Jacob for a law: and to Israel for an everlasting testament; The actual history of the Israelites, who did not enter on the possession of the land of Canaan till the fourth generation from the time of Jacob, and were deprived of it, after a comparatively brief enjoyment, for a season; and then, after a second trial, permanently exiled, teaches us that we must look for a more enduring covenant, a more precious and divine blessing, as signified here, made to a thousand generations, the number denoting multitude of offspring and fulness of time. That promise is the WORD (Heb. LXX. Vulg.), Whose throne is for ever and ever; made known unto Jacob, the struggling Hebrew people, only under the types and shadows of the Law, but to Israel, the name not of birth but of blessing, belonging to the Christian faithful, in the everlasting testament of the Gospel dispensation. And observe how fittingly CHRIST is revealed to these especial Patriarchs, of whom the first is a type of lowly obedience, the second of patience, the third of endurance of toil, all which qualities we find in the highest degree united in their mighty descendant. These Patriarchs are twice divinely singled out as representatives of all believers and Saints, once in the Old Testament, and again in the New. GOD spake to Moses, saying, ”I am the GOD of thy father, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob.” CHRIST said to His disciples, ”Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

And that because the first is a type of faith; the second, so unexpectedly bestowed on his aged parents, of hope; the third, who toiled so long and faithfully for Rachel, of charity. Moreover, God, in declaring Himself the God of these three, has revealed Himself as Trinity in Unity, which the several names indicate: Abraham, ”father of nations,” telling us of the First Person; Isaac, ”laughter,” of the Second, the Joy of the whole earth; Israel, ”prince with God,” of the Third, that Princely Spirit, Who is with God and is God. 11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan: the lot of your inheritance; Unto thee, for the promise was separately renewed to each of the three Patriarchs, and as the land of Canaan is a type of the heavenly country, so this word thee teaches us that the free gift is not merely a corporate one, but is proffered by God to each individual separately, inasmuch as each of us enters separately into covenant with Him in Baptism, and is promised such full and perfect possession that it can be truly spoken of by each Christian as though bestowed on him only as its sole possessor, while the notion of fellowship therein is recalled by the latter phrase your inheritance. And so S. Peter Damiani, singing of the joys of Paradise:

And though each for divers merits there hath won a various throne; Yet their love for one another maketh what each loves his own, Every prize to all is common, yet belongs to each alone. The Rhythm Ad perennis. For lot, the Hebrew, followed by LXX. and Vulgate, has cord, i.e. the measuring line with which boundaries are marked out. But one commentator tells us that it is a type of the tightly entwined sorrows of this world, which the LORD untwisted on the Cross. And note that Canaan means ”low-land,” a significant name, meaning that heaven is intended only for the lowly and humble of heart. 12 When there were yet but a few of them: and they strangers in the land; They were but three, when the promise was first given, with no settled habitation; they were, even under the leadership of Joshua, but a handful against the seven nations whom they overcame and drove out; well acquainted as these must have been with all the mountain passes and strongholds, whence advantage could be taken of the invader. And in like manner the scanty band of the Apostles, unlearned and ignorant men, driven out from Judæa, the country of their birth, and strangers in the land of the Gentiles, preached the Word in defiance of prisons, scourges, torture, and death, so that their martyrdoms did but increase the number of the faithful and bring the world into subjection to the Cross. And more wonderful than either is the manner in which GOD has chosen His little flock of the elect out of the world, and bestowed on them an eternal inheritance, and that when each one of us is, as it were, attended by very few companions, slenderly equipped with virtues and good works, and clinging to but a few great truths.

That we should look, poor wanderers, To have our home on high, That worms should seek for dwellings Beyond the starry sky! To all one happy guerdon, Of one celestial grace; For all, for all, who mourn their fall, Is one eternal place. 13 What time as

they went from one nation to another : from one kingdom to another people; 14 He suffered no man to do them wrong : but reproved even kings for their sakes; A. Isa. i. 4.

The literal sense refers to the journeyings of Abraham and Isaac in Gerar and in Egypt, to Jacob's wanderings in Padan-Aram, Edom, and Egypt also, and the manner in which Abimelech of Gerar and Pharaoh of Egypt were restrained from doing any wrong to them, while Abraham's defeat of the confederate kings, and Jacob's ultimate triumph over the artifices of Laban are also suggested to the memory. Mystically, the words teach us of the pilgrimage of the Saints towards the Land of promise, when, in the process of conversion and sanctification, they pass from the "sinful nation, a nation laden with iniquity," from the kingdom of the evil one, to another people, that "blessed people whose GOD is the LORD," "an holy nation, a peculiar people." And these GOD preserves, so that no efforts of the ungodly to root them out by persecution can avail, nor can even torture and death really harm such as have the doors of heaven thereby opened to them, since their enemies, who slew the body, have no power at all against the soul. He reproved even kings for their sakes, as when He smote Herod with worms; when, as Lactantius tells us, Nero was slain and left unburied; Decius defeated and killed in battle; Valerian made captive, mocked, and flayed alive; Aurelian murdered by his own domestics; Diocletian mad; Maximian strangled; Maximin Daia poisoned; Maxentius drowned in flying from the rout of his army; Licinius stripped of the purple by Constantine and put to death; without counting up the similar histories of succeeding ages.

15 Touch not mine Anointed : and do my prophets no harm. There is greater emphasis given to the first clause here by the Vulgate, which merely transliterates the LXX. and reads My Christs. As no literal anointing, either in the capacity of kings or of priests, was conferred on the three Patriarchs named, it is conceded on all hands that the word is used of them here in a spiritual sense only; either in their character of Prophets, or as being, by anticipation and vision, Christians, and thus having "an unction from the Holy One," and being made kings and priests unto Him, Whose day they saw, and were glad. The prohibition did not cease with the lives of these three, but extends through all time to the Christs of the LORD, all Christians, and especially priests and religious, vowed to Him by especial consecration. And do My prophets no harm. The title of Prophet is given to Abraham in the only passage which seems to embody the substance of this verse (which, as S. Augustine observes, is nowhere else written down in express terms, and must thus have been spoken secretly): "Now, therefore, restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet." Isaac's gift of prophecy appears in his blessings of Jacob and Esau; Jacob's in his benediction of Ephraim and Manasseh, and his dying charge to his twelve sons. They warn us that it is possible to break this commandment of the LORD even now, by wresting and misinterpreting, like Jews and heretics, the prophecies of Holy Writ.

A. 16 Moreover, he called for a dearth upon the land : and destroyed all the provision of bread; He called for dearth, as though it were a person, a servant waiting His bidding, for He ”calleth those things which be not as though they were,” albeit it may possibly imply an Angel of famine, like the Angel of pestilence of whom we read in Scripture; but in any case the word teaches us that all things which happen do so by the will and commandment of God, and not by hazard. And it is well for us to remember that He does not always summon an agent of punishment, for He says Himself in another place, ”I will call for the corn and increase it, and will lay no famine upon you.” All the provision of bread. More literally, as S. Jerome and A. V., the whole staff of bread, implying all the support and strength given to man by food, a notion sufficiently marked by the LXX. στήριγμα and the Vulgate firmamentum. It is here implied that the immediate object of this dearth was to bring about the migration of the Hebrews into Egypt, as a similar cause had previously influenced Abraham and Isaac. And note that in Holy Writ there are three kinds of famine mentioned; dearth of bodily food, dearth of the divine Word,

A. A. dearth in the pains of hell. God sometimes sends the first that men may, in their want, return to Him, as the prodigal son, when pressed by hunger, returned to his father, whom he had left when he had enough. So too, in the particular famine here mentioned, God brought Joseph’s brethren to see the crime they had committed in selling him. The second kind of dearth, is an eager desire of hearing God’s Word, or a lack of the preaching thereof. Whence Amos saith: ”Behold, the days come, saith the LORD GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.” Such a hunger was spread amongst all nations just before the Advent of the SAVIOUR, and the staff of bread, such support as Gentile philosophy had been able to give its wisest teachers and disciples, had broken down utterly before that great craving, and was confessed as a failure; until the Apostles came to give them the Living Bread, that they might not be left to the continued famine of the Word from which the Jews now suffer, nor yet undergo the last and worst of the three dearths, that everlasting hunger for a denied heaven and a withdrawn God, yea, even for annihilation itself, which they may not have who have once gone where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

17 But he had sent a man before them: even Joseph, who was sold to be a bondservant; The Psalmist does but repeat Joseph’s own statement, made thrice and again with emphasis to his brethren, that his going down into Egypt was divinely fore-ordained for their preservation. There is a special force in calling him a man, on account of the vigour, uprightness, and probity of his character; wherein he was, however faintly, a true type of CHRIST, the Man, Who was sent before His Apostles, Who took upon Him the form of a slave, and was sold, by one of His own brethren, into the hands of the heathen. 18 Whose feet they hurt in the stocks: the iron entered into his soul; We have here a severer picture of Joseph’s sufferings

in prison than that given in the Book of Genesis, probably embodying an early tradition, and certainly probable enough in itself. The now familiar and proverbial phrase, the iron entered into his soul, comes directly from the Chaldee and Vulgate, but is not the literal rendering, as it involves the collocation of a masculine noun with a feminine verb. The true sense is given by LXX. and A. V. margin, His soul came into iron. Again, it is spoken in type of CHRIST, bound with cords on the night of the betrayal, pierced in hands and feet with the nails of the Cross, transfixed at length with the spear of the soldier; and seeing too the sword of grief pierce the heart of that Mother who was to Him as His own soul.

19 Until the time came that his cause was known: the word of the LORD tried him. His cause was known. It ought to run, as in A. V. and all the old renderings, his word came, that is, until his predictions to the chief butler and chief baker were fulfilled, which appears to have been about twelve years. Till then, the Word of the Lord tried him, that is, most probably, those old dreams of promised exaltation, which had excited his brethren's wrath, and which were perhaps renewed in his prison, sustained his faith and tested his endurance till his release. The LXX. and Vulgate, however, instead of tried read inflamed. And this may be explained either of his being inspired with the power of prophecy, or again, kindled into such fervent prayer as to obtain his deliverance from GOD. But the Greek Fathers take it of the righteous indignation with which he was fired at the criminal proposal of his master's wife. Yet a better sense brings us back to the true meaning, by understanding inflamed to mean purged with fire, as gold cleansed of its dross in a furnace. And of the LORD JESUS the verse holds good, in that He patiently bore His servile condition and humiliation, until all the words of prophecy touching Him had fully come to pass, and His obedience to His FATHER's will had been tested by the final and uttermost proof of death.

20 The king sent, and delivered him: the prince of the people let him go free. 21 He made him lord also of his house: and ruler of all his substance; 22 That he might inform his princes after his will: and teach his senators wisdom. Instead of the stocks in which they had made fast his feet, he received a golden chain; instead of the garment which he left in the hand of the adulteress when he fled out stripped, he was clad by the judgment of GOD in vestures of fine linen; instead of his name of slave, he wears the royal ring, and in place of his lowly dungeon, sits upon the proud chariot of the kingdom. As victor and conqueror, he perseveres amidst this exalted honour and glory in his moderation and lowliness of mind. Thus is he a fitting type of CHRIST, whom the FATHER, King of kings, and Ruler of the peoples of the Heavenly Country, delivered in the Resurrection, what time He sent the Angel to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and when raising Him Who was made for a time lower than the Angels, to His right hand in power at the Ascension, He crowned Him with glory and honour, and set Him over the works of His hands, highly exalting Him and giving Him a Name which is above every

name; and bestowed on Him gifts for men, by sending down the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost, to teach and bind (A.V.) His princes, the Apostles, after His will (nay, as Vulgate and LXX. will have it, as Himself), to impart to the Senators of His kingdom that Divine and spiritual wisdom which is the peculiar inheritance of the Saints of GOD.

23 Israel also came into Egypt : and Jacob was a stranger in the land of Ham. It is noteworthy that only during the time of Joseph's sojourn in Egypt does that country appear as a type of good and spiritual things, but ever after it stands forth in Holy Writ as implying pride, darkness, and tyranny. If we are to see the two senses here, then Egypt, as the storehouse of plenty in the midst of a famishing world, will denote the full understanding of Holy Scripture, into which the Apostles, the true Israel, princes with GOD, Jacobs who wrestled with Him in prayer, and against the powers of evil, entered through their Master's teaching. And in the worse acceptation, the name will denote all Gentile heathendom, into which they went down as teachers, to reap the great harvest of souls, when they found that tares and weeds had well-nigh extirpated the wheat in the plains of Judæa, going as strangers and pilgrims, sent as they were "to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language."

24 And he increased his people exceedingly : and made them stronger than their enemies; The seventy-five that went down into Egypt so increased that in their coming forth, the able-bodied men, capable of bearing arms (usually counted at a fifth of a population) amounted to six hundred thousand; and in like manner the little band of disciples, which cannot have greatly exceeded five hundred at the Ascension, was augmented by three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost alone, and gradually spread to the vast numbers which now fill all the fairest regions amongst the most civilized nations of the earth, so that now the extent of territory throughout the world where Christians bear rule is enormously larger than that still under Pagan or Mohammedan dominion. Europe, America, both North and South, Australia, and the vast tracts of Asia under the sway of Russia and England, together with the great state pushing its frontiers ever inland from the south of Africa, acknowledge the supremacy of the Cross, leaving little save Persia, Tartary, China, Japan, and the Negro regions of Africa unsubdued;

while even there the Crucified is adored by unknown and increasing numbers of worshippers. So the Martyrs proved stronger than their enemies, who sought to slay them and to extirpate their faith by so doing, whereas they did but publish it more widely abroad. 25 Whose heart turned so, that they hated his people : and dealt untruly with his servants. Whose heart turned so. This is the reading of the Chaldee and Arabic, but LXX., Vulgate and A.V., rightly follow the Hebrew text, and translate He turned their heart, not, as has been well said, by making them evil, but by lavishing blessings on the Hebrews which excited envious feelings, which were

not then first produced, but merely showed themselves after having been latent for want of a cause. Rupert not inaptly compares the operation of God on such minds to the effect of the rays of the sun, which while bestowing life and health throughout the world, merely harden mud. And dealt untruly with His servants. This points to the latter part of the plot against the Israelites, when open violence had become impracticable, and the policy of wearing them out by excessive toil and imposts was adopted. Its parallel in the history of the Church, hated by the world, the flesh, and the devil, is the effort of Julian the Apostate, after the failure of the ten great persecutions, to overthrow the Church by the aid of heathen philosophers and of heretical teachers, put on terms of rivalry with the Catholic priesthood; thus carrying out the policy of the Chief Priests, who on finding that the LORD Whom they had murdered was alive again, set on foot the tale that His disciples had stolen Him away while the soldiers at the sepulchre slept.

A. Rupert. in Exod. 26 Then sent he Moses his servant : and Aaron whom he had chosen. 27 And these showed his tokens among them : and his wonders in the land of Ham. Moses, as the servant of God, here typifies the law of secular government and the active life, Aaron, the elected one, who took not the honour upon himself, but was called of God, denotes the priesthood, and the contemplative life, here united in the one task of showing forth the works of God. His tokens. More exactly, as LXX., Vulg., and A.V. margin, the words of His signs. That is, as some will have it, they first foretold the miracles they intended to work, and then wrought them; or again, they spoke with authority because of the signs which accompanied them, or yet again, the works which they wrought spoke for themselves. We are not inaptly reminded that there is probably a stress on S. Greg. Mag. Hom. in Evang. 29.

the word His, as denoting that the miracles were not the result of that Egyptian magic in which Moses was learned. Mystically, the whole phrase denotes the preaching of the lawgivers and priests whom CHRIST has sent with His commission into the world, whose very words are signs and wonders, because of the holiness which they display, the mysteries they disclose, and the loftiness of their precepts as to humility, patience, self-denial, love of enemies, and the like; while actual miracles attended, as we know, the first preaching of the Faith, and S. Gregory the Great has taught us that the moral wonders worked daily, as a matter of course, in the conversion and sanctification of sinners, belong to a higher order of things than the physical portents which cause more astonishment. 28 He sent darkness, and it was dark : and they were not obedient unto his word. A. S. Prosper. Rosenmüller.

The Prayer Book here follows the LXX., while the A.V., keeping to the Hebrew, translates, with the Chaldee, S. Jerome, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, they rebelled not against His word, to which the Vulgate comes near, as it retains the negative, while putting the verb exacerbavit in the singular. A question at once arises, Who are the persons spoken of? The most satisfactory reply seems to be

that the Egyptians are meant, taking the judgments patiently. And note that the order of the plagues in Exodus is not followed exactly (indeed the fifth and sixth are omitted) and the darkness, here put first, is precisely the calamity which extorted from Pharaoh, till then immoveable, nearly the whole demand of Moses, albeit on finding him resolved to take the cattle, the concession was rescinded. A second opinion is that Moses and Aaron are spoken of, as having faithfully discharged their appointed task, while a third holds that the darkness is declared to have been obedient to the command of Moses to spread itself over Egypt and to leave Goshen clear; and a fourth suggests that the children of Israel accepted Moses and Aaron as their delegates with full powers to treat with Pharaoh on their behalf. A further explanation is that Moses always spoke gently to Pharaoh, urging him to repentance, and that God dealt gently, not bitterly, by withdrawing each plague when intreated, without suffering it to do its worst. The difficult Latin reading is usually explained to mean that God did not allow His words to become void, but fulfilled them thoroughly, as otherwise they would seem deserving of being cast away, like unripe fruit, or else would have brought new bitterness upon Israel from Pharaoh; while the current Greek reading obviously points to the obstinate opposition of Pharaoh to the demands of God, though the older text seems to have substantially agreed with the Hebrew.

Haymo says very well that darkness is put first here, because it denotes blindness, since had it not been for blindness, none of the other plagues would have followed. Mystically, they explain the verse of the ”blindness in part which has happened unto Israel,” albeit the LORD did not make His words bitter, but sweet and gentle in preaching to them and warning them. If we follow the Hebrew instead of the Vulgate, it will tell us of the ”great company of the priests who were obedient unto the faith,” when ”the Word of GOD increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem,” in no long time after the mysterious darkness of three hours on Calvary, which told Israel that it was humbled like Egypt for rejecting that Prophet of the LORD, like unto Moses, for Whom their boasted lawgiver had bid them look. 29 He turned their waters into blood : and slew their fish.

Here the order of the plagues in Exodus is reverted to, and it is not unseasonable to cite some mnemonic verses which recall it: Sanguis, rana, cynips, insectum, pestis, et ulcus, Grando, locusta vorax, tenebræ, mors primisatorum. Blood, frogs, lice, flies, the murrain, and the blain, Hail, locusts, darkness, and the first-born slain. On the meaning of the plague of blood, the reader is referred back to what is said under Psalm lxxviii. 45. It is expedient to add here the tradition mentioned by Josephus, that the waters of Goshen were turned into blood as well as those of the rest of Egypt, seeing that no exception is named in Exodus, but when the Hebrews desired to use them, they then, and then only, returned to their natural condition, thus preventing the Egyptians from availing themselves of the supplies of their serfs. Two further mystical interpretations, besides those previously cited, are found, one

that the darkness is the effect of neglect and unfaithfulness of prelates and clergy, whose spiritual and temporal wealth is thereby turned into blood, that is, nepotism for the sake of their kindred, so that the laity and poor of the Church, typified by the fish, die of bodily and spiritual hunger, because the funds intended for teaching and alms are converted to private gain. The other view is that the plague of blood denotes the pollution by heretics of the pure waters of Christian doctrine, to their own destruction and that of their unsettled and wandering disciples.

30 Their land brought forth frogs : yea, even in their kings' chambers. To the expositions given under Psalm lxxviii. 46, two others may be added, that there is here a reference to the prating of false philosophers, such as the dilettante Pagans whom Julian the Apostate gathered in the Imperial Court; or that advocates and lawyers, employed by prelates to conduct suits regarding mere temporal possessions, instead of preachers of the Word, are here intended. No one who is familiar with the diocesan and monastic history of the thirteenth century will marvel at the two great French and German contemporary Bishops regarding the multiplication of lawsuits about ecclesiastical estates as an Egyptian plague of the Church. 31 He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies : and lice in all their quarters. A. Pseudo-Hieron. It is to be noted that here, as in Exodus viii. 17, and Psalm lxxviii. 46, the translation flies, albeit a very ancient one, with much authority on its side, is purely conjectural, as the word probably means simply a mixture; (Aquila, πάμμικτος) whence, as before observed, the oldest Jewish tradition is that the fourth plague was a mixed multitude of wild beasts. The Vulgate translates here the dog-fly and mosquito, and a favourite mystical interpretation is that they are types of pagan philosophers and subtle heretics, pricking and goading Christians with minute and trivial verbal suggestions of dialectic, and hovering round their victims with such craft that it is impossible to foresee their manner of attack, till they leave their poisonous sting behind. And another sees, not dissimilarly, biting sarcasm in the dog-fly, and petty scandal and detraction in the mosquitos. Again, the verse is explained of a multitude of petty anxieties and cares which beset the wicked, while a further view will have it that sins of the flesh are denoted.

32 He gave them hail-stones for rain : and flames of fire in their land. Whereas rain is intended to fertilize, and fire to warm, God in His vengeance sent them destruction under both forms, and He does the like when, for the sins of His people, He bids His prophets and preachers smite the wicked with words of alarm and threatening, and scorch them up with the terrors of judgment. And the teaching of heretics, leading to relaxation of morals, is hail, crushing, yet not refreshing, but arousing the fire of fleshly passion in their disciples. And it is also taken of the strife of the law-courts, attended by burning greed for the acquisition of riches, which is one of the forms of God's judgments on the ungodly, or, yet again, of violent oppression and tyranny, to which He delivers them up for a season. 33 He smote their vines also and fig-trees : and destroyed the trees that were in their coasts.

So the Prophet speaks of the judgment of GOD on the guilty nations, saying, ”The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field are withered; because joy is withered away from the sons of men.” And this comes to pass when the fruits of good works are blighted by the craft of evil spirits and the desire of human praise, and the covering or bark of humility is stripped off, so that the branches become white and bare, having the name of holiness in works, but in reality being dried up. The vine, which yields the wine of compunction; the fig-tree, whence we gather the sweet fruit of devotion; the trees of their borders, denoting that almsgiving which should attend a man till his death, according to that saying of a Saint, ”Mercy alone is the companion of the dead,” all these graces and virtues are destroyed in the hearts of GOD’s foes. Again, the vine may fitly denote the Doctors of the Church, who should give the people the wine of wise doctrine to drink, and the fig-tree the prelates and rulers, who should be gentle and protecting, feeding and overshadowing their flocks. But the former are apt to fall through pride, whence it is written, ”Behold, the vine-tree is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?” And the latter are apt to make great profession with little result, to be barren fig-trees, abounding in leaves, but with no fruit, and it is said of such, ”Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?” And when these chosen trees perish, the flock in general, those lesser trees that are in all the coasts, suffer too.

34 He spake the word, and the grasshoppers came, and caterpillars innumerable : and did eat up all the grass in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. For grasshoppers we should read with LXX., Vulg., and A.V., locusts, the well-known and terrible plague of the East, while the caterpillar is either the larva of the locust itself, or another variety of locust. There is a twofold explanation of the mystical intent, that the locusts and their larvae denote false teachers or flatterers, corrupting and destroying the truth, either by propagating countless heresies, so as to ruin the spiritual harvest, or acquiring for their own personal gain the wealth intended for teaching and feeding the poor. Or again, the locust, with its quick bounds and rapid flight, may denote the proud and presumptuous, and the wingless locust, seeming to remain quiet and harmless, while working much Joel i. 12.

A. S. Albertus Magnus. Hugo Card. evil, may signify hypocrites. Cardinal Hugo, who explains the verse of the flatterers and hangers-on of prelates, sums up the qualities which make locusts fit emblems of parasites: Many, winged, leaping, foe to crops, of larger size behind. Phil. iii. 13. That is, they are a very large class, they fly away in time of adversity, they aim at rank and power, they are hostile to all untried merit, the crop whence a future harvest may be hoped, and they care only for temporal wealth, the ”things which are behind.” 35 He smote all the first-born in their land: even the chief of all their strength.

L. Lyranus. There is a Hebrew tradition that at the time of the slaughter of the first-born, judgment went forth also against the idols of Egypt, that the stone images fell into powder, the wooden ones rotted, the metal melted away, and the bull Apis died in his temple; and that this is one sense at least of the phrase the chief of all their strength. So too, the Christian writers declare that when CHRIST went down into that Lower Egypt of Hades, He wrought destruction amongst the most powerful of the evil spirits, so that their dominion has ever since been sorely impaired and diminished. And by His precepts, whereby He warns His disciples against the first beginnings of sin, against a hasty word and an unchaste glance, as well as against murder and adultery, He slays the first-born of Egypt even still, as in His first victory He overcame sin, death, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. But in the case of sinners, He either destroys the principle of faith in such as give themselves over to heresy, and thus slays the chief of their spiritual strength; or charity, so that all the best of our remaining good things are of no avail, according to that saying, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Or again, not dissimilarly, the words denote that our first good works and efforts after holiness, are not counted any more if we relapse into sin; for the LORD hath said, "I have against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

36 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: there was not one feeble person among their tribes. The commentators are careful to point out that this silver and gold was not the fruit of extortion and robbery, but the wages for the labour of the Israelites, long due and unjustly kept back by their oppressive taskmasters. And further, the demand was made by the express direction of God, Whose property all the wealth of Egypt was, so that He did but reclaim His own from His stewards for another use. The mystical interpretation which is most favoured sees here the use made by Christians of secular learning and wisdom; the advantage they may derive from Pagan examples of truth, valour, lowliness and purity, and also the way in which the Church draws to herself from the world sinners whom she fashions into vessels of gold and silver for the house of God; in whom gold denotes heavenly wisdom, and silver eloquence in confession, praise, or preaching. And one very aptly points out that as the Hebrews were poor so long as they dwelt in Egypt, and obtained the wealth of that land only when they quitted it, so it is only in abandoning the world, of which Egypt is a type, that we can gain true riches, since we shall be bondslaves in want during our whole voluntary sojourn.

There was not one feeble person among their tribes. The Chaldee paraphrases thus, "And they were not condemned with the Egyptians to stumbling," that is, they did not suffer from any of the diseases which came upon their oppressors. So

we read in another place: ”The LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.” Euthymius points out the reason: that no one need be left behind because of incapacity to travel. Some writers have supposed that immunity from disease lasted all through the time of the wandering, but the Carmelite conclusively replies that as all but two of the whole adult multitude died in the wilderness, it is reasonable to suppose that illness and feebleness preceded death, as is usually the case. And hence the mystical exposition, that God gives those who come up out of sin not merely the gold and silver of spiritual riches, but strength enough to escape entirely out of the bondage of evil, because they can do all things in CHRIST, does not entitle us to assume the final perseverance of all so rescued, unless they keep in the King’s highway. But when we reach our true Country, where is no sickness or sorrow, then truly there will be no feeble person in all our tribes.

To their first estate return they, freed from every mortal sore, And the Truth, for ever present, ever lovely, they adore, Drawing from that living Fountain living sweetness evermore. And they drink in changeless being as they taste those waters clear; Bright are they, and swift, and gladsome, no more perils need they fear; There the youth can know no ageing, never cometh sickness near. S. Pet. Dam. The Rhythm Ad perennis. Hence they draw their life unending, passingness hath passed away, Hence they grow, and bloom, and flourish, freed for ever from decay, And deathlessness hath swallowed up the might of death for aye. 37 Egypt was glad at their departing : for they were afraid of them. A. There is a division of opinion here as to the point of time indicated. The most obvious sense, adopted by the Rabbinical interpreters, and followed by many Christians, is that the beginning of the Exodus is meant, when the Egyptians rejoiced in being freed from the terrors of yet further plagues. The other view, more current amongst the Fathers and Schoolmen, is that the time pointed to is that immediately after the disaster of the Red Sea; when the Egyptians feared lest the Israelites should return and devastate the country which had just lost its army.

Mystically, they remind us how, after the destruction of the herd of swine belonging to the Gergesenes, ”the whole city came out to meet JESUS: and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts,” and thus impress on us how eager the ungodly are to rid themselves of the presence of the Saints, whose life is a perpetual reproach to them; for ”a scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.” And thus the Jewish priests never relaxed their efforts till they drove out the Apostles. 38 He spread out a cloud to be a covering : and fire to give light in the night-season.

In the army of Alexander the Great, the march was begun by a great beacon being set up on a pole as a signal from headquarters, so that ”the fire was seen at night,

the smoke in the day-time;" and the plan is even still found in use amongst the caravans of Arabia. It is probable enough, in that unchanging land, that such may have been the custom at the time of the Exodus, and that GOD taught the people by parable in this wise, as well as by fact, that He was their true Leader, and Heaven the general's pavilion, whence the order of march was enjoined. The chief mystical interpretations have already been given under Psalm lxxviii. 14, and here may be added that CHRIST hides Himself in cloud from the wise of this world, who count themselves to be in the full light of day, but reveals Himself in brightness to such as acknowledge their darkness and ignorance. Not dissimilarly, the cloud is explained as the light affliction which GOD sends in the day of prosperity, lest man should be too proud, the fire, of the warm consolation bestowed in the night of sorrow. There is yet a further and beautiful sense: that the cloud of the Manhood of CHRIST, which hid from us the bright rays of His Godhead, was spread out upon the Cross, in the day of His visible sojourn amongst mankind, while in the night of His absence, He sent the HOLY GHOST, in the fires of Pentecost, to be our guide into all truth.

39 At their desire he brought quails: and he filled them with the bread of heaven. Beda, commenting on that place where it is written, "The LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full," reminds us that it was in the evening of the world when the WORD was made Flesh to be our food, and in the morning of His Advent, and still more of His Resurrection, we obtained that spiritual wisdom and knowledge of Holy Writ which was needed for the nutriment of our souls. He also points out another aspect of the two miracles, that the quails, given for a little time only, and then flying away, are the temporary laws and imperfect types of the Old Testament, intended for carnal minds, but that with the dawn of true faith comes CHRIST, the Bread of Heaven. Two other views about the quails are, that being winged, they denote heavenly thoughts, or winged words of preachers (yet flying low in humility,) sent to lift up our hearts to celestial things, and feed our hunger; or that as they were brought up by the south wind, they typify those graces of the HOLY GHOST, whereof the Bride exclaims, "Come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." And the reference to the Holy Eucharist as the Bread of Heaven is too obvious and frequent to need discussion here.

40 He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out: so that rivers ran in the dry places. When the side of the Rock of Ages was opened by the soldier with a spear, and there flowed out blood and water, typifying the Sacraments and graces of the Church; then the Hebrews refused to hear, and the Apostles turned then to the Gentiles, till then dry, as having neither the dew of grace, nor the rain of doctrine, and made the rivers of living water flow abundantly in Heathendom, so as to fulfil that prophecy of old: "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert; and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty

land springs of water." 41 For why? he remembered his holy promise: and Abraham his servant. It was not then for their merit, but of His own grace and Honorius.

faithfulness, whence we are taught that to us also the heaven which He offers is a free gift, not the prize of our merit; and that because the LORD remembers His Holy WORD, and bearing in mind the Atonement made by His beloved SON, the true Abraham, Father of many nations, brings, for His sake, His spiritual offspring into the Land of Promise. 42 And he brought forth his people with joy : and his chosen with gladness; The word gladness is, more exactly, singing, so that we have here a reference to the triumphal song of Moses and Miriam after the passage of the Red Sea; and some draw a distinction between the excited joy of the whole body of the people, and the deeper and more spiritual gladness of the elect, Joshua, Caleb, and the children of the murmurers, who alone were to enter into possession of Canaan.

43 And gave them the lands of the heathen : and they took the labours of the people in possession; The word labours implies more than the cultivation of the lands, and denotes the cities and all the accumulated wealth of the original possessors. Mystically, the reference is to the Apostles receiving all heathendom as their inheritance, and going to take possession of it, stored with the accumulated wisdom of the Old Testament, with all those types and prophecies, those precepts and statutes which had been the preparation for the Coming of that Messiah Whom the seers of the older covenant were not suffered to behold in the flesh; and also with all the learning and previous training whereby the greater philosophical sects had, in their degree, tilled the ground for the reception of the Gospel seed, wherefore the LORD said unto His disciples: "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

44 That they might keep his statutes : and observe his laws. [Alleluia.] This is the tribute or head-rent which GOD exacts in return for the bounties He confers, and it, in its turn, brings us on to the enjoyment of yet greater blessings. The statutes here refer to the positive and ceremonial, the laws to the moral enactments of the Pentateuch. For the very object of giving Canaan to the Jews was that they might there observe to the full GOD's laws with leisure and freedom impossible amidst the bondage and idolatry of Egypt. And thus similarly GOD bestows temporal subsistence on the priests of His Church, that they may not be obliged to toil in worldly concerns, but give themselves to the ministry of the Word A. and to prayer. Let Religious hear these words, and remember that the cloister is not intended as a place for idleness, luxury, or secular occupation, but for keeping the statutes, and observing the laws of God. Ye then, O children of God, who have the promise of life, here and in the world to come, if trouble oppress you, think of Joseph in prison, of CHRIST on the Cross. And in prosperity, deal not with God for its sake, but use it for Him, seeking "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these

things shall be added unto you," so that at the close of all you will join in the endless Alleluia.

A. Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD our GOD; glory be to the SON, His Anointed, the Bread of Heaven; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Fire that giveth light in the night-season. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O LORD, we beseech Thee, as we call upon Thy Name, that as Thou didst feed our fathers with Angels' food when the power of Thy Name went before them, so Thou wouldst cherish and renew us also with mystical dainties. (1.) Ludolph. Grant strength, O LORD, unto them that seek Thy Name, and pour into them alway the holy love of seeking Thee, that such as desire to see Thy face may not be held captive by the allurements of the world, but the light of Thy countenance may glorify them in bliss. (11.) Mozarabic. O LORD, make us to rejoice in Thy holy Name, as we tell of Thy wondrous works, grant us wisdom in seeking Thee, and power to find Thee, that we may attain to behold Thee, and to rejoice evermore in the vision of Thy countenance. (11.) Mozarabic. Increase Thy people exceedingly, O LORD, and exalt them either by merit or works, that we, who are gnawed by the teeth of the envious, may ever advance in happiness by Thy gracious goodness. (11.) Mozarabic.

We beseech Thee, O LORD, that Thou wouldst blot out the wicked nations before our face, and be Thyself the leader of our march, that evermore rejoicing in Thee, we may attain to be led into the Land of Promise, and enrolled in Thy kingdom, may with Thy Saints rejoice in everlasting gladness. (5.) Pseudo-Hieron. O GOD, Who showest Thyself sorely displeased at our wickedness, prick, we beseech Thee, our hearts into repentance, that we may intreat Thy mercy, and obtaining pardon for our sins, may give thanks unto Thee with a pure conscience, call upon Thy Name, and in return for the bounties we have received, unweariedly tell of Thy wondrous works. (1.) D. C. R

Psalm 106

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, sent as salvation by the FATHER, hath visited us by His Advent. The Voice of the Church to the Apostles and to the people. This Psalm is to be read with Exodus. The Voice of CHRIST to the Apostles or of the Apostles to the people, or the Voice of the confession of sins. VEN. BEDE. There is a brief prefatory counsel in the title, that the whole Psalm should be sung with rejoicing unto the LORD. The Hebrew people is introduced as giving thanks; because having abandoned the unfaithfulness of its fathers, it hath been led to the loving-kindness of the LORD by His mercy; so that we are to understand that, when they were converted, they fitly sang Alleluia for their redemption.

Therefore, in the beginning of his narrative, he prays that he may be joined to that well-pleasing people which was to be gathered out of the Gentiles at the coming of the LORD. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious. Secondly, he details the sins which his fathers had committed, by no means beholding with a right heart the LORD's wonders in Egypt, but that nevertheless the gracious LORD had delivered them from their enemies. We have sinned with our fathers. Thirdly, he relates that they returned to their love of sinning, but that the LORD was appeased by the prayers of Moses. But within a while they forgat His works. Fourthly, he declares that their iniquities were repeated; and that the impending wrath of the LORD was pacified by the supplication of Phinehas. They thought scorn of that pleasant land. Fifthly, he mentions that they provoked Moses at the waters of strife, and that after this they sacrificed their sons unto idols; wherefore the LORD, being very wroth, delivered them over to the bondage of their enemies. They angered Him also at the waters of strife. Sixthly, he prays for what he knew to be coming: that the Catholic Church may be gathered from all nations, and celebrate together the praises of the LORD with everlasting gladness. Deliver us, O Lord, our God.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. He urges them to keep the Commandments of the LORD: and teaches them that the more the Jews erred the more ought we to fear, lest we should talk together in church, or dispute with our brethren in any wise, and

especially when we are present at the time of the mysteries and prayer. When we sin, that we should repent. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. An instruction concerning the impiety of the Jewish nation. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm with confession.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Saturday: Matins. Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: II. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Monastic. Lyons. } Visit us * with Thy salvation, O LORD. Ambrosian. As preceding Psalm. Parisian. Visit us * with Thy salvation, O LORD, that we may see the felicity of Thy chosen. Mozarabic. First portion: Who can express the noble acts of the LORD, or show forth all His praise? Second portion: Deliver us, O LORD our GOD. This Psalm stands in close relation with the preceding one, and like it, is mainly historical in its scope. But whereas Psalm cv. deals with the manifestation of GOD'S goodness to the children of Israel, we have here the tale of their ingratitude for His mercy and loving-kindness, accompanied with a prayer for pardon and deliverance out of captivity, the form of which, at the close of the Psalm, seems to fix the date near the end of the seventy years' exile, perhaps in the interval between the first and second emigrations from Babylon.

1 [Alleluia.] O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious: and his mercy endureth for ever. This verse is borrowed directly from 1 Chron. xvi. 34, where it forms part of David's Psalm on the translation of the Ark. It re-appears in substance as part of the service on the dedication of Solomon's Temple, as a familiar liturgical formula in the time of Jehoshaphat and in that of Zedekiah, as revived by Ezra at the foundation of the Second Temple, and finally as in continued use under the Maccabees. It recurs, however, but once again in the Psalter, namely, in Psalm cxxxvi., which is made, to use a term of hymnology, super this phrase. One instance of its employment in the rites of the Christian Church is a memorable one, for on the occasion when Syrianus and his soldiers broke into the church of S. Theonas, where the Pope of Alexandria, S. Athanasius, was officiating, the Saint, remaining seated on his pontifical throne, bade the deacon commence the chant, "O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is gracious, because His mercy endureth for ever," and soon after, borne out by his monks in the midst of the tumult which ensued, escaped the hands of his enemies. The usual ambiguity of the LXX. and Vulgate word confess, in the first verse, has led the earlier commentators to point out that the words for He is gracious are applicable to either view. If we approach Him to give Him thanks, there are countless examples of His goodness to

A. C. 1 S. John i. 9. supply us with matter; if to acknowledge our sins, we know that "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And His mercy endureth for ever, the ever of this whole mortal life, inasmuch as He is always ready to welcome the returning prodigal, the ever

of eternity, because even in heaven it is simply His love and good pleasure that will sustain the Saints in immortality, sinlessness, and impassibility. 2 Who can express the noble acts of the LORD: or show forth all his praise?

Our sight fails us when we look upon the sun, overpowered by the splendour of his rays; and the mind's eye suffers the like in every meditation on GOD, and the more attention is bestowed in thinking of GOD, the more is the mental vision blinded by the very light of its own thoughts. For what canst thou say of Him, what, I repeat, canst thou adequately say of Him, Who is sublimer than all loftiness, and more exalted than all height, and deeper than all depth, and clearer than all light, and brighter than all brightness, and more splendid than all splendour, stronger than all strength, more vigorous than all vigour, fairer than all beauty, truer than all truth, and more puissant than all puissance, and greater than all majesty, and mightier than all might, richer than all riches, wiser than all wisdom, gentler than all gentleness, juster than all justice, more merciful than all mercy? And he saith powers (Vulg.) in the plural, because of the divers effects of that one undivided power which alone exists in GOD, and because of the mighty works powerfully carried out by GOD. For seeing that GOD is of infinite power, and is Almighty, no created thing can perfectly comprehend or express His power. Wherefore they are most insane of mind who are bold to measure the divine power with their intellect, declaring that GOD cannot act supernaturally, and that nothing is to be believed which exceeds the limits of human reason.

3 Blessed are they that alway keep judgment: and do righteousness. A. Bellarmine. The immediate and natural answer to the question put in the previous verse is "No one;" but yet there are some who, though unable to show forth all the praise of the LORD, may yet not inaptly lift their feeble voices in His honour, namely, such as praise Him by their lives as well as their tongue, who keep judgment by forming a right opinion as to their duty in every matter (because they do not swerve from GOD's laws as their rule,) and do righteousness by acting thereon unfailingly. We may keep judgment too, in another sense, by bearing in mind the second Advent of the LORD, and the necessity we shall be under of standing before His tribunal; remembering the counsel of the Wise Man, "Before judgment examine thyself, and in the day of visitation thou shalt have mercy." Something more than mercy; reward for those who have left all for CHRIST, and have not repented them of so doing. Yet again, we may keep judgment by holding in our hearts an assize of that contest between the spirit and the flesh, and giving sentence against the latter, which has nothing but passionate utterances to advance in reply to the wise pleadings of the judge, "for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." And we are bound to keep judgment not only as regards ourselves, but for others too, by avoiding all harsh decisions as to their merits, all false dealing, all untrue flattery, and similar offences against righteousness. Observe, moreover, that the blessedness is

only for such as act thus alway, who are just, not by fits and starts, but persevering to the end.

4 Remember me, O LORD, according to the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;

The LXX. and Vulgate read us in both clauses of this verse, but the Hebrew is more forcible, as it presents the Psalmist asking for himself that he may have his part in the mercies vouchsafed his nation. It was, most probably, at the first, the cry of a captive in Babylon, asking, it may be, freedom to join his happier brethren who had begun the new Exodus, and thus to be visited with God's salvation; albeit some hold that the latter clause of the prayer asks for a personal deliverer. And this latter is the sense put on the passage by the Christian expositors, who take the whole as a petition for the manifestation of CHRIST, according to the favour He should be pleased to show to His own people, when the Dayspring from on high should visit them. Some commentators, dwelling on the phrase the well-pleasing of Thy people (ἐνδοκία, beneplacito) suggests that instead of meaning God's favour, as most understand it, or that portion of His people which is obedient and faithful, as some explain, the word may be identical in meaning with the salvation of the latter clause, and point to that Beloved Son, in Whom the FATHER is "well pleased," in Whom alone others may become well-pleasing too. They are here agreed in alleging that the song of the Angels on the morning of the Nativity, when they chanted of "peace on earth to men of good will," (ἐνδοκίας,) bore special reference to this prayer of the Psalmist. There is an ancient Jewish gloss which is noteworthy, that the petition is for a share in the Resurrection in the days of Messiah, in order to see His wonderful restoration of His suffering people; a meaning apt enough for our use also, for the verse forms a V. and R. in the Responsory at Sext on the First Sunday in Advent.

A. S. Chrysost. A. Pseudo-Hieron. S. Luke i. 78. S. John Damasc. Honorius. A. 5 That I may see the felicity of thy chosen : and rejoice in the gladness of thy people, and give thanks with thine inheritance. Eph. i. 4.

The prayer is twofold, as regards this world, and that to come. We may see even here, in a glass, darkly, the spiritual happiness of the Saints who believe in CHRIST, and partake their continual joy in the love of GOD, and so learn to join in their acts of constant devotion and worship. We may, more blessedly still, be admitted to the glory of the Beatific Vision, wherein consists the gladness of GOD's ransomed ones, and unite in the perpetual thanksgiving of heaven. And we may note that the threefold nature of man prompts the union of the three petitions of this verse in one. That I may see, is the prayer of the body, desiring the open vision of GOD; and rejoice is the wish of the soul or mind, that the affections may likewise be gratified; and give thanks, as the spirit needs to pour itself out in worship. Further, there are three names here given to the Saints, each for a reason of its own. They are

GOD's chosen, because of His predestining grace, "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love;" they are His people, having one law and one worship under Him as sole King, "and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?" they are His inheritance, for it is written, "I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance." We are not left to conjecture the first meaning of this prayer as mentioned above, for the LORD Himself spake to His disciples, saying, "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them."

6 We have sinned with our fathers : we have done amiss, and dealt wickedly. The Rabbins tell us that there are three kinds and degrees of sin here set down in an ascending scale; against one's self, against one's neighbour, against GOD: sins of ignorance, sins of conscious deliberation, sins of pride and wickedness. S. Bonaventura alleges that these sins are distinguished here as severally committed against the several Persons of the Holy Trinity. And in these respects we sin with our fathers in three ways, by imitating their guilt, by inheriting their evil qualities, by our corporate identity with them in national existence. Cardinal Hugo bids us observe that when Prelates do wrong and sin, thereby leading the priesthood and the laity into evil, the latter have no right to lay all the blame on their erring superiors, but must take their own share of it. 7 Our fathers regarded not thy wonders in Egypt, neither kept they thy great goodness in remembrance : but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red Sea.

The belief that many of the Israelites lapsed into idolatry while in Egypt, encouraged as it is by other passages of Scripture, is supposed by some to gain consistency from this place also. But there seems no reason for holding it to imply more than their callousness to the teaching of the plagues, and their terror and murmur on the very brink of the Red Sea at the sight of Pharaoh's army, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" And that this is the true sense of the passage is clear from another place: "And Moses called unto Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles; yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." In like manner, we read that immediately after the feeding of the five thousand, when CHRIST came, walking on the sea, to the ship of the disciples, "they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered; for they considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened." Hence the Doctor of Grace enforces the lesson that Scripture treats the non-understanding of things which ought to be understood, the forgetting of things which ought to be remembered, as itself a sin, so that it cannot be justly

pleaded in excuse or mitigation of transgressions, albeit such is the usual custom of sinners.

8 Nevertheless, he helped them for his Name's sake : that he might make his power to be known. It was not for their merits, seeing that they were a perverse and stiffnecked generation, that He delivered them, but that they might serve as teachers to the heathen, by forcing on them the lesson of His irresistible might, and thus "to make Himself an everlasting Name." And therefore God's deliverance of sinners has always this end of instruction of the spiritual understanding of others. And this He effected most perfectly when He won the Gentiles by dying on the Cross for the Jews. 9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up : so he led them through the deep, as through a wilderness. A. A. He performs the like of this miracle still, when He rebukes, by the mouth of the preachers of righteousness, the bitter, angry and turbulent heart of man, a very sea of passions, making it red with the blush of shame, and drying up the billows of desire, the depths of sin, so that man can go through the midst of them, avoiding the extremes on either hand, as on solid ground, like a wilderness, in being sure under the foot, calm and quiet, the abode of fasting and temperance, shunned by evil spirits and bad companions, and therefore lonely amidst the rush and tumult of the world.

10 And he saved them from the adversary's hand: and delivered them from the hand of the enemy. 11 As for those that troubled them, the waters overwhelmed them: there was not one of them left.

It is the most usual of all interpretations to see in this passage of the Red Sea, and the consequent destruction of the Egyptian host, the Baptism of Christians in those waters which have been tinged with the precious Blood of CHRIST, whereby they are delivered out of the hand of Satan, and all their former sins, original and actual, are washed away in that cleansing tide, so that not one of them remains to be imputed. This interpretation is warranted by those words of the Apostle: "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." They raise some discussion on the phrase hand of the enemy, teaching us that of the two hands of our adversary, that with which he drove us by force, and that wherewith he draws by lure, the former has been utterly destroyed by CHRIST, and the other sorely weakened, so that it has far less power than of old to entice us; but that it is never so dangerous as when it is full of gifts. Reminding us also that the waters of penitential tears will wash away post-baptismal sin, they point out that the word overwhelmed shows that such tears, to be effectual, must be copious, and not a mere drop or two. Our eyes must "gush out with water," and "wash our bed" with the floods. A further interpretation sees here a reference to the history of the early Church, brought safely through the Red Sea of ten fierce persecutions, and that so triumphantly, that within a little while, the classical Paganism which had endeavoured to extirpate Christianity was itself

utterly abolished, so that not one of the old rites continued; but that thereupon the Church fell away from her first love, and lapsed into carelessness and sin.

12 Then believed they his words: and sang praise unto him. So it is written, ”And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and His servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea.” But we may note the hardness of heart which would not believe till then, till they had seen. And of such the LORD spake, ”Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe;” and they need His rebuke to His doubting Apostle, ”Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” And in the very brevity of this verse, the only one of its kind in the narrative portion of the Psalm, we may well see how short-lived were their gratitude, belief, and worship of GOD; as it follows at once,

13 But within a while they forgat his works: and would not abide his counsel. The first clause is given by A.V. marg., LXX., and Vulgate, They made haste, they forgat. The phrase does not imply only the shortness of the interval, although that notion is included, but the precipitance and recklessness with which the people altered their mind, acting like children on mere impulse, without due reflection. Their want of faith also is shown, in that they cried out for food before they experienced any scarcity or hunger, and they would not wait for GOD’s counsel, His foreordained plan for bringing them unto the Land of Promise. Hence, this haste is typical of all those who are eager to obtain their pleasure at once, and therefore snatch greedily at temporal things, forgetting that ”he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent,” and thereby refuse to wait patiently for the good things of Heaven, which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him. In this they are like Reuben, and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who said while in Gilead, ”Let this land be given unto thy servants for our possession, and bring us not over Jordan.” Once more, abiding His counsel may very well have reference to the act of consulting the divine will through the agency of Moses, for which the Israelites usually proved far too impatient, preferring to act on their own impulse.

A. 14 But lust came upon them in the wilderness: and they tempted GOD in the desert. Here there are two separate grounds of blame; first, that their desire was lust; that is, a craving for something not absolutely necessary, inasmuch as they were fed without stint already; and next, that this tempting of God was in the wilderness, precisely where the sense of utter dependence on Him, the absence of all human succour, ought to have exercised restraining influence upon them. To give thought to luxury in a monastery, to seek it in exile, to dwell on it during a pilgrimage, is an unbecoming thing, and the like of this was what the children of Israel did. The two words employed for the desert denote severally the loneliness,

and the unwatered place, where they take occasion to remind us that a heart given up to be a habitation for wild beasts, and unbedewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, is the usual scene of lust and temptation.

15 And he gave them their desire : and sent leanness withal into their soul. The Syriac, LXX., and Vulgate, all read satiety (πλησμονήν, saturitatem) instead of leanness, looking as they do to the historical narrative, "Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you." But the Prayer Book version certainly follows the existing Hebrew text, and gives a profounder meaning. The early versions are, however, so far right, that the Psalmist here seems to lead up to the phrase which they give, and by a sudden turn, with a play upon words, to substitute the vocable actually found. Here we have , leanness, but in Ps. cxlv. 16, where the exactly opposite idea is expressed, we have , desire, or plenteousness, a word scarcely distinguishable in sound. The turn might be imitated in English somehow thus: "And He gave a banquet to please them, and spread a fast for their soul," where the ear expects the word feast, and meets with sudden disappointment. The two readings, nevertheless, are not irreconcilable in their ultimate meaning. The Vulgate denotes the weariness and disgust which carnal gratification always brings with it, as gluttony often produces the same result as famine, by destroying the digestive powers, and thus causing utter distaste for food; while the other notion is that the Israelites were punished with phthisis, or some analogous wasting disease, that the food did not nourish them, and that leanness hints at the skeleton form of death, which ensued thereupon: whence the allegorical reference to spiritual things is equally clear.

Reinke suggests that the LXX. may have read , food, but the explanation above seems more satisfactory, and leaves the text untouched. 16 They angered Moses also in the tents : and Aaron the saint of the Lord. 17 So the earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan : and covered the congregation of Abiram. 18 And the fire was kindled in their company: the flame burnt up the ungodly.

Observe how GOD, Who passed over the murmuring of the people against Himself at the Red Sea, punished severely this rebellion against His servants. We may learn hence His wrath against such as, despising His priests, and withdrawing themselves from the fellowship of His people, form congregations of their own, set up altar against altar, and offer unlawful sacrifice instead of the true oblation of the LORD's Body. They too anger Moses in the tents, who make little here in the Church Militant of those baptismal waters out of which they have been drawn, and Aaron the consecrated one of the Lord, when they despise the "shining light" of Divine illumination vouchsafed through the sacramental acts of the Priesthood which GOD has hallowed for Himself; and would fain have as their prelates worldly and carnal men instead of saints, so that both they and their nominees perish, swallowed up

by the earth of secular cares and anxieties, devoured by the fire of covetousness, wrath, and luxury. The emphasis on Aaron, as the Saint of the LORD, points to his High Priesthood, not to any exceptional personal holiness, and has reference to the objection raised against his monopoly of office by Korah, on the ground that ”all the congregation are holy. There is, however, no mention of Korah in this place, a circumstance due most probably, to the position of his descendants, the Korhites, as Temple-singers;

for while we read of the destruction of the families of Dathan and Abiram, it is expressly stated that, ”notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not. They would naturally be reluctant to commemorate their ancestor’s sin in a psalm designed for public worship, and hence the omission; or, if they were not themselves its composers, their high position and character would have swayed its real author in like manner. The name Dathan probably means a ”fountain,” while Abiram is ”father of exaltation,” and we may then remark that we read of the LORD’s threat against Babylon, ”I will make her springs dry,” thus betokening the complete destruction of the prosperity of the wicked of this world, and the yet more total destruction of him who ”is a king over all the children of pride,” delivered over to everlasting burnings with all his congregation.

19 They made a calf in Horeb : and worshipped the molten image. 20 Thus they turned their glory : into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay. There is a peculiar stress on the words in Horeb, as denoting the very place where the great manifestation of God’s power and presence had been made, and where the Law had been given, whose very first words were a prohibition of the sin of idolatry. And the Prayer Book wording of the twentieth verse implies that while without doubt the Egyptian worship of the bull Apis suggested the form of the idol which Aaron made, the intention of the Israelites was to worship the true God under a visible symbol, not to substitute another deity for Him. But others interpret it, They bartered their glory for an ox, &c., which implies a change in the object of worship. Mystically, their guilt is repeated by all such as in the ”dry place” (Horeb) of a heart unwatered by the HOLY SPIRIT, turn from heavenly things to carnal ones, and barter their glory, the promise of a divine inheritance, for the gratification of the flesh, which is the devouring of grass, or who flatter and abase themselves before unworthy prelates and princes, instead of keeping their tokens of reverence for God only. And the Jews themselves repeated this sin, when at Calvary they rejected their Glory, and chose Barabbas, fit type of that coarse and sensual multitude of which the poet says,

We are a crowd, born but to eat of food. 21 And they forgat God their Saviour : who had done so great things in Egypt; 22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham : and fearful things by the Red Sea. The three epithets of God’s manifestations in these verses, rising to a climax, are intended to emphasize the incredible folly and

fickleness of the Jews, in that they not merely failed in gratitude, but were unable to retain such striking and important events in their memory. Disloyal Christians do the like, when they forget the great things of CHRIST's Incarnation and Nativity, the wondrous works of His miracles wrought in this dark world, the terrible things of the sanguine tide of His bitter Passion, which so many men fear to imitate, which caused such dismay to the evil spirits. Wherefore we ought not to forget Him, Who hath borne such things for us, "Forget not the friendship of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee." "So long as I live," exclaims a Saint, "I will remember the toils which the LORD endured in preaching, His weariness in going about, His temptations in the fasting, His watchings in prayer, His tears of compassion. I will remember also the sorrows, reproaches, spittings, buffetings, mockings, insults, scourgings, and the like; for if I do not, the Blood of that Righteous One, which was poured forth upon the earth, will be required of me."

23 So he said, he would have destroyed them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the gap : to turn away his wrathful indignation, lest he should destroy them.

Whilst they murmured only for bread and water, He bore with them as a nurse with her fosterchild, but when their madness reached such a pitch of wickedness as this, they were scourged. And GOD, very wroth because of their impious course, was minded to destroy them utterly, and spake to Moses, saying, "Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation. But Moses, the one whom He had chosen to deliver the people out of Egypt, like a valiant champion, standing in the very breach and gap of the shattered wall which they had broken down by their guilt, opposed himself bravely to the wrath of GOD, as it was rushing on the people, and repelled His advancing vengeance with prayers and supplication, saying, "LORD, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people? Therefore Moses fought with prayer, as the strongest of weapons against GOD, and blunted His shafts and swords, and that according to His own will, nay, His indirect suggestion. For He told Moses that He would destroy them, for that their deserving was such that they might be justly rooted out altogether. And so He complains by the mouth of Ezekiel: "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none; therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them.

A greater than Moses, One "drawn out" of the many waters of His sore tribulations, has taken His stand for us in the gap of that broken fence of mankind, His own most Sacred Body, broken by and for our sins, broken in the Blessed Sacrament, broken with nails and spear upon the Cross, to plead on our behalf. When, therefore, the Priest at the Altar makes the fraction of the Host, we may bear in mind the perpetual intercession which goes up for us before the throne of GOD, and take

courage; and all earthly deputies of our great High Priest may remember, that intercessory prayer will often effect the conversion of sinners, who have remained unmoved by the preaching of the Word.

24 Yea, they thought scorn of that pleasant land : and gave no credence unto his word; 25 But murmured in their tents : and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

L. Numb. xiii. 32. Josh. v. 6. Ezek. xx. 15. C. A. Honorius. Hugo Card. Arnobius. Le Blanc. S. August. Serm. 26, ad Fratr. in Eremo. These verses refer to the evil report brought back by ten of the twelve spies sent to search out Canaan, who said, "The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people we saw in it were men of a great stature. In the first of these charges, they showed disbelief of GOD's description of the land as one "flowing with milk and honey; in the second, equal disbelief of His power to overcome the giant inhabitants before the face of Israel. And the second of the two verses gives us some clue to their conduct. They were in their tents, therefore idle and inactive, not exercising themselves in diligent toil; they murmured, and so, busied in listening to their own voices, could not hear the still small voice of GOD. And all those who have become careless and cold in faith, and think but little of the promised glories of Heaven, believing not those things which are spoken by the LORD JESUS, the WORD of GOD, but murmur here in the tents of the body, in the hidden recesses of their inner thoughts, at every trial necessary to be endured before conquering that country, sin as did the Jews of old. We who do not believe GOD, murmur in the tabernacles of our minds;

and how is it that we have the boldness to say to GOD, "Hear my voice," when we do not hearken to the voice of the LORD? Wherefore S. Benedict laid down as one of the chief precepts of his Rule, "Above all, that there be no murmurings. An elder master of the Religious Life than he, S. Pachomius, was wont to relegate to the infirmary any monk guilty of murmuring, as suffering from disease, and needing especial tendance and regimen, under which he was kept until he gave proof of amendment. And that because, as S. Augustine observes, when himself preaching to Religious, murmuring is as contagious and fatal as leprosy, and affects not only the speaker, but all the hearers.

26 Then lift he up his hand against them : to overthrow them in the wilderness; 27 To cast out their seed among the nations : and to scatter them in the lands.

Then lift He up His hand, in the act of solemn asseveration with an oath, as the Chaldee paraphrase takes it; or else we may understand it of raising the arm in order to strike more forcibly, which is the usual exposition. But the correctness of the former is shown by two passages, Exod. vi. 8, marg., and Ezek. xx. 15, the latter of which runs: "Yet also I lifted up My hand to them in the wilderness, that I would

not bring them into the land, which I had given them." The close juxta-position here of the death in the wilderness and the dispersion of (seemingly) the next generation amongst the heathen, has led some Rabbins to see in the latter clause not the Babylonian captivity, far less the Roman extirpation, separated from the former event by many centuries, but the two raids of the Amalekites and Canaanites at Hormah, when Israel lost both spoil and captives. But it seems better to follow the other interpretation, looking at the nation in its corporate capacity as identical, even after a great lapse of centuries, with the rebels of Zin; albeit the distant posterity of these fell through transgressions of their own, and not by reason of merely inherited guilt. And He does the like to obstinate unbelievers or sinners still, whom He overthrows in the desert of this world, causing them to die in their sins, so as not to enter the rest of Paradise, casting out their seed, their followers and disciples, among the heathens, by classing them with pagans, ("if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican") and scattering them in the imagination of their vain hearts into the lands of darkness and the shadow of death.

28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor: and ate the offerings of the dead.

They joined themselves. More forcibly, they yoked themselves. The LXX. and Vulgate, with S. Jerome, read they were initiated or consecrated, that is, were taught the mystic rites of Baal-Peor, the Moabite god of fertility and generation, whose worship, like that of his analogue, the Western Priapus, was attended with much immorality, hinted at by the verb here employed, and plainly expressed in the Mosaic narrative. Offerings of the dead. That is, either sacrifices made to dead and lifeless idols, contrasted with the Living God; or, more probably, some necromantic rites, such as are twice alluded to as "seeking to the dead," and exemplified in the history of the Witch of Endor; possibly attended with oblations made to the departed. On this verse is based the Rabbinical prohibition of all meats offered in sacrifice to idols, as being equally polluting as contact with a dead body; and hence arose the case of conscience amongst the new Christian converts as to the lawfulness of such food, which the Apostle S. Paul resolved in a prohibitory sense; not unnecessarily, as is shown by a passage in the Apocalypse, where both these offences of the Israelites are named as current in the Church of Pergamum. The allegorical interpretation favoured by Christian expositors is that all persons who give themselves over to the gratification of the physical appetites are thereby joined unto Baal-Peor; and that whenever we either make evil men priests for money or favour, and suffer them to celebrate the Christian Sacrifice, or else accept gifts made to the Church by unrepentant sinners, dead in their sins, whom we have not endeavoured to bring to life again through repentance, we eat the offerings of the dead, and are partakers of their evil deeds.

29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their own inventions : and the plague was great among them. Numb. i. 23; xxvi. 14. The word plague is here used in the sense of any violent and sudden destruction; (here, of course, the slaughter of the twenty-four thousand offenders, and perhaps a pestilence also;) and there is a Hebrew tradition that the chief weight of the blow fell upon the tribe of Simeon, whose prince Zimri was slain by Phinehas; a notion which is supported by the twofold census of that tribe before and after the sin in Shittim. At first the Simeonites numbered fifty-nine thousand three hundred warriors; but afterwards only twenty-two thousand two hundred are reckoned. The Latins dwell on the word inventions, as signifying rites and deities adopted by the people at their own caprice, in contrast to the divine revelation of the Law, but there is no force of the kind in the Hebrew word, which is simply doings. And Arnobius, writing at the terrible crisis of the break-up of the Roman Empire, dwells on the words multiplied ruin here used by the Vulgate, as aptly depicting the destruction of cities and devastation of whole provinces, which followed on the relaxation of political, military, and above all, religious discipline.

30 Then stood up Phinees and prayed: and so the plague ceased. 31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness: among all posterities for evermore. C. Stood up, as valiantly to do his work of zeal, as Moses had done to discharge the office of intercession, and because he alone rose to set the example of resistance to the foul rites of Baal-Peor. And prayed. This is the sense given to by the Chaldee, Syriac, and by one of S. Jerome's renderings, exoravit. The LXX. and Vulgate both have appeased, (ἐξιλάσατο, placavit,) which comes to much the same thing; but the A.V. reading, executed judgment, is to be preferred, or else mediated, arranged the dispute between God and the people, which seems the force intended by S. Jerome's dijudicavit. Agellius. And so the plague ceased. As the slaughter performed by the Levites appears by the Mosaic narrative to have begun

This may very well be the Hiphil or Hithpael of the verb, but it is Piel here. by Phinehas smiting Zimri and Cozbi, this intimation of the cessation of the plague cannot refer to that, and we may therefore reasonably conclude that there was a divine pestilence at the same time as the execution by human justice, so that Phinehas on this occasion, like Aaron on a previous one, stood between dead and living to make propitiation, and stayed the plague. Hearken diligently to this, O Priest, remarks an ancient commentator, thou to whom souls are intrusted, unsheath thy sword, slay fornicators; that is, "preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine," that it may be counted unto thee for righteousness, for the LORD hath said, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them: and I will make thee to this people a fenced brazen wail." And with this sense agrees very well the meaning of Phinehas, which is "mouth of brass," as though a trumpet making proclamation before the LORD,

for the conversion of sinners, as it is written in another place, ”When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.”

And that was counted unto him for righteousness. Because the High Priesthood was not merely conferred upon himself, but though it passed for a little into the family of Ithamar as a punishment for the sins of Eli’s sons, yet the office was restored to the ancient line in the person of Zadok, a descendant of Eleazar, when Abiathar was deprived by Solomon. And we find on the one hand, the succession carried on in the house of Zadok till the Captivity, and on the other, Mattathias, father of the Maccabees, under whom the offices of King and High Priest were united, describing Phinehas as his ancestor. The Sacerdotal Kingdom lasted till the days of Herod the Great, when the Great High Priest Himself, from Whom Aaron derived the original commission of the Levitical order, appeared to resume the charge He had temporarily committed to His creatures. Faithful priests still obtain the reward of Phinehas, from the generation of this world to the generation of the Resurrection, and with the angels for evermore. But alas! exclaims S. Bernard, in words not less suited to our day, where are Prelates to be found, who will be as Phinehas to fornicators, as John to kings, as Elias to priests?

32 They angered him also at the waters of strife: so that he punished Moses for their sakes; 33 Because they provoked his spirit: so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. These verses clear up the ambiguity of the narrative in the Pentateuch, from which it is not quite evident why Moses was forbidden to enter the Land of Promise, and we learn that his hasty words, rather than the twofold striking of the A. S. Albertus Magnus.

rock, constituted his main offence. The Greek Fathers bid us remark that his fall occurred immediately after the death of his sister Miriam, and that it is quite possible that grief for her had so far disturbed him, that when the people broke in upon his mourning with their complaints, he lost patience altogether. This interpretation agrees with the clause they provoked his spirit, which appears to be the sense of the LXX. and Vulgate. But the verb never has this meaning, and the Chaldee is therefore to be followed here in its rendering, they resisted His Holy Spirit, referring the clause to GOD, and not to Moses; according to that passage of the Prophet, ”They rebelled, and vexed His HOLY SPIRIT,” the result of which was that Moses, in his haste, spake unadvisedly with his lips, saying, ”Hear now, ye rebels; though there is a doubt as to whether they is spoken of Moses and Aaron, or of the murmuring Israelites. It is to be noted further as a fresh difficulty in this obscure verse, that many commentators explain the last clause as spoken of GOD, translating it, He commanded with His lips, which is the Greek διάσειλεν, or He spake clearly, the Latin distinxit, His sentence against Moses and Aaron.

The more usual explanation of this phrase amongst the Latin Fathers, however, refers it to Moses, interpreting he made a difference with his lips, namely, that

whereas he had spoken in confident faith when about to work all his former miracles, a tone of doubt and hesitation creeps in here for the first time. The mystical interpretation is twofold. One sees in the doubting lawgiver, twice smiting the Rock, a type of the Jewish nation smiting the Rock of Ages in later days with the redoubled cry of "Crucify Him, crucify Him," amidst the strife which raged around Pilate's judgment-seat. The other view is that Moses is the type of any prelate in times of controversy, when disputes on matters of secular learning, veritable waters of strife, prevail in Kadesh, the "holy place" of the Church, so as to rouse him into indignant remonstrance, often beyond the limits of Christian charity.

34 Neither destroyed they the heathen : as the Lord commanded them; 35 But were mingled among the heathen : and learned their works. Bellarmine. L. Josh. xvii. 13. Judges i. 34. Some commentators prefix the last words of the thirty-third verse to these, and read the whole, "GOD spake plainly with His lips, saying, Neither destroyed they the heathen." It is evident from the narrative in Joshua and Judges that no motives of clemency induced the Jews to spare the Canaanites, but that either desire of gain by putting them to tribute, or else lack of valour and endurance in warfare, caused their disobedience. Mingled implies not merely familiar intercourse, but intermarriage with the heathen, such as we read of in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, as forbidden to the Jews, just as many councils prohibit Christians from marrying with pagans or heathens, while the result is added in saying that the Jews learned their works, namely, their superstitions and idolatries. They were types of Christians who do not extirpate the seven deadly sins altogether from their souls; for we often enter the Land of Promise in great force, strengthened with the inward hope of everlasting life, but after overcoming our greater sins, we keep the lesser ones, allowing them to dwell like the Canaanites in the land, under tribute indeed, because they are usually subjugated, but yet proving to be snares and traps and scourges in our sides, and thorns in our eyes, till, only too often, we perish off the good land which the LORD our GOD hath given us, weakened to our destruction by that very tampering and league with sin which we thought would have given us peace and strength. So it follows:

36 Insomuch that they worshipped their idols, which turned to their own decay: yea, they offered their sons and their daughters unto devils; 37 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters: whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was defiled with blood. 38 Thus were they stained with their own works: and went a whoring with their own inventions. To their own decay. It should be, as A.V., which were a snare unto them. The LXX. and Vulgate, reading a scandal, or cause of stumbling, give the sense, though not a literal version. There is no direct mention in the Pentateuch, nor yet in Joshua and Judges, of the special offence of human sacrifices here laid to the charge of the Jews, but as that sanguinary rite attended the worship of Baal and of Molech, the Ammonite god, and was certainly practised by Ahaz and other Hebrews during

the decline of the kingdom, it is not unlikely that the sin may have cropped up at intervals at an earlier period. The word devils, , occurring only here and in Deut. xxxii. 17, simply translates the demons of the LXX. and Vulgate. False gods would be a better rendering, but the literal sense of the term is ”lords” or ”tyrants,” from a root , to ”oppress” or ”destroy.”

As regards the rite of their human sacrifices, it is stated that the victim to be burnt was laid upon the outstretched hands of a gigantic brazen statue, beneath which the fire was kindled, or that it was compelled to pass between two blazing pyres, near enough to cause death before the passage was A. accomplished. A third view is that the normal rites of burnt-offering were observed, by the previous slaughter of the victim, and then the cremation of the body upon an altar. But the second of these theories is most probably the true one, because on the one hand, the phrase ”pass through the fire” to Molech occurs several times in Holy Writ, and on the other, the curious custom of dancing round a huge bonfire on the night of May Day or of Midsummer Eve, with occasional leaps of the dancers through the flames, was common not so very long ago in many parts of Europe (notably in Scotland,) and still lingers in a few remote places, just as Theodoret describes it in his day. The latter phrase, shed innocent blood, seems to point to a different form of mactation, common enough in Pagan rites, but put down with a high hand by the Romans wherever they became masters, at any rate, after the decree of the Senate in A.U.C. 657, prohibiting all such sacrifices. It is noteworthy that one place which seems to have clung most obstinately to the custom was Carthage, (itself a colony of the very Canaanites whom Joshua was instructed to destroy,) whereof we read that on one day three hundred human victims were offered to Saturn, and that Tiberius, Proconsul of Africa about two centuries after CHRIST, succeeded in suppressing the custom only by crucifying the priests who abetted it. Whence a Latin poet observes of Carthage:

Mos fuit in populis quos condidit advena Dido, Poscere cæde Deos veniam, et flagrantibus aris, Infandum dictu, parvos imponere natos. The nation roving Dido founded, erst was wont To plead with slaughter to the Gods for grace, And upon blazing altars to devote Their little children; horrible to tell. Minucius Felix, in his simple prose narrative, adds a fresh touch of horror to this account, by mentioning that it was the task of the parents to make the oblation, and that they caressed and kissed the babes at the moment of death, not out of tenderness, but to avoid the evil omen of a wail. Well might another early Christian writer observe that it were better to have no gods than such cruel ones. And the land was defiled with blood. The guilt and pollution of the inhabitants extended to the country itself, so (as many will have it) that it was cursed with sterility, after having been a marvel of fruitfulness. The reading interfecta, ”slain,” for infecta, ”tainted,” in the older Latin copies, following the LXX. ἰφανόκτονήθη, may be rendered, ”was a scene of murder,” or, as many take it, was a place where men by their crimes slew their

own souls. And in the closing verse of this paragraph we may note the notion of idolatry being an adultery of the virgin of Israel against God her Spouse, a type which impresses forcibly on us the close connection between error of doctrine and laxity of morals.

The allegorical expositions are numerous. There is first the tolerably literal notion that parents who bring their children up badly, who give them over to evil company, or who neglect them altogether, are in fact sacrificing them to devils, and shedding innocent blood. They do the like when they set them bad examples, a rule which holds good for prelates towards the clergy, and pastors towards their flocks. Again, our spiritual thoughts, studies, and pursuits, as the stronger, are denoted by sons; in secular ones, the weaker, by daughters, and a bad use of these is giving them over as sacrifice to demons, and then the land or earth of our bodies, wherein should stand the temple of the HOLY GHOST, becomes polluted by sin, and we are guilty of adultery against the Bridegroom of our souls, following our own inventions, rather than His precepts. 39 Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people: insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. 40 And he gave them over into the hand of the heathen: and they that hated them were lords over them. 41 Their enemies oppressed them: and had them in subjection.

In these and the following verses the Psalmist gives an abstract of the history of Israel under the Judges, with the view of reminding his countrymen that the disasters of the Captivity were but the repetition of earlier calamities, also penalties for national sin; and yet that repentance had invariably been followed by pardon and rescue, whence patient hope and steadfast prayer might again look for their reward. The judgments inflicted by God upon the Christian Church at various times of laxity and coldness, the giving up clergy and laity alike to the dominion of those sins with which they had tampered, so that they became their bondslaves; the bridling, as a Saint puts it, with the curb of servile fear those boastful, proud, and vain-glorious idolaters, so as to check their madness, and inspire them with horror and disgust of the evil ways of their oppressors, form the sum of the allegorical interpretations in this place.

42 Many a time did he deliver them: but they rebelled against him with their own inventions, and were brought down in their wickedness. 43 Nevertheless, when he saw their adversity: he heard their complaint. 44 He thought upon his covenant, and pitied them, according unto the multitude of his mercies: yea, he made all those that led them away captive to pity them.

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jeph-thae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight,

turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ”And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. He pitied them. More exactly, with LXX., Vulg., and A.

V., He repented, not that GOD is subject to passions and to change of purpose, but that He looks mercifully on penitents and does not exact the punishment He threatens; and thus, when He finds us repentant, He shows Himself to us according as we have conducted ourselves towards Him. To pity them. All this was fulfilled in the later history of the Jews. There is no trace of any such compassion on the part of their earlier conquerors, but it appears again and again under Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, Alexander, and even the earlier part of the Roman dominion. And that this is the true sense of the passage appears from its exact parallelism to the language of Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the Temple: ”Forgive Thy people that have sinned against Thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against Thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them away captive, that they may have compassion on them. But the Vulgate rendering, He gave them unto mercies in the sight of them that captured them, is sometimes explained as referring only to GOD’s dealings with Israel, and His miraculous deliverances of them out of the hand of their enemies, so as to impress these latter with His irresistible power and His unchanging care of His people.

The former exposition is, however, much to be preferred, and it also yields the fuller typical meaning, as showing how the Jews, the most despised of all people, long regarded as the superstitious followers of an obscure and ridiculous belief, were accepted in the persons of the Apostles and Evangelists as teachers of all nations, and furnished the first examples of those Martyrs and Confessors who begat such countless generations of spiritual children. So too, interpreting the Psalm of the early struggles of the Christian Church, we may bear in mind that the greatest missionary success, at any rate, the most striking and durable, was the conversion of the barbarous nations who overthrew the Roman Empire, and shared its provinces into kingdoms for their petty chieftains. Nay, there are examples, such as that of S. Nina in Georgia, where a solitary Christian slave, acting like Naaman’s little handmaid, proved the means of bringing the tidings of salvation to

a whole people. There is a tropological exposition also, referring all this latter part of the Psalm to God's dealings with individual souls, which need hardly be dwelt on, save in the one place where S. Albert the Great and Cardinal Hugo, apparently quoting in common some earlier writer, dwell with their usual wealth of Scriptural illustration on the phrase brought down in their wickedness. For the sinner is humbled, or brought down, as they tell us, in many ways. From a son of God he becomes a son of the devil. "If God were your Father, ye would love Me;

ye are of your father the devil. From rich he becomes poor. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. From a king he becomes a retainer. "He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle. From a freeman he becomes a slave. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. From an heir he is disinherited. "No whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of CHRIST and of GOD. From a soldier he becomes a clown. "He took away his purple, and rent off his clothes, leading him through the whole city. From a priest he becomes degraded: "I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me. From a temple of God he becomes a fane of Bacchus: "I will lay this temple of God even with the ground, and I will break down the altar, and erect a notable temple of Bacchus. From the member of God he becomes the member of an harlot: "Shall I then take the members of CHRIST, and make them the members of an harlot? From healthy he becomes sick: "He fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. From comely he becomes hideous: "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, . . .

their visage is blacker than a coal. From strong Lam. i. 6.

Lam. i. 8. he becomes weak: "They are gone without strength before the pursuer." From stable he becomes unsettled: "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed." In all such ways as these is a sinner brought down and made to sit in the dust till he repent. 45 Deliver us, O LORD our GOD, and gather us from among the heathen: that we may give thanks unto thy holy Name, and make our boast of thy praise. 46 Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel from everlasting, and world without end: and let all the people say, Amen. [Alleluia.]

These verses, with slight verbal changes, are found as the closing part of David's Psalm at the bringing-up of the Ark, but appear to be there added liturgically by the compiler of Chronicles, as there is no historical appropriateness in them to the events of that king's reign, nor is the Dedication Psalm itself prophetic in tone, so as to justify us in accepting the view that the Prophet-King foretold the Captivity in these words, as the Rabbinical commentators will have it, and as he might readily have done, with the warnings of Moses before his eyes. These words point evidently

to an existing condition of things, and may very well have been composed for the restored Temple-worship by the earliest band of emigrants as a prayer on behalf of their still exiled brethren, or by the yet captive exiles themselves, intreating for a share in the partial deliverance already vouchsafed. There is thus a special fitness in the words, O Lord our God, because they had abandoned for ever the idolatry which had proved the besetting and deadly sin of the nation, and had clung faithfully to the worship of JEHOVAH in the midst of Babylonian heathenism. But inasmuch as they could celebrate no sacrifices, save the Passover, and had but the imperfect ceremonies of the Synagogue for their spiritual aid, it is added, that we may give thanks unto Thy holy Name, by making thank-offerings and peace-offerings, as of old, in the central shrine of Jerusalem.

A favourite exposition of these verses, with the Latins, is to couple them with the last clause of verse 44, and to explain them as denoting the three stages of Christian perfection. GOD first gives us mercies in the sight of the heathen, by granting repentance to us, which looses the bonds by which the evil spirits hold us captive: this is the purgative way. Next; He gathers us out of the nations, by separating us from the world and all evil companionship, making us a chosen generation to Himself. This is the illuminative way. And finally, He brings us into the glories of His everlasting kingdom, where we make our boast of His holy Name JESUS, whereby He has saved us, and boast in that alone, joining in the great doxology of the ransomed multitude, "as Rev. xix. 6. the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Amen, Alleluia: for the LORD GOD Omnipotent reigneth," that Song of praise which, as it is that to which the four Gospels lead, fitly closes the fourth book of the Psalter.

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of Israel; glory be to the SON, our SAVIOUR, Who hath visited us; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the gladness of the people of GOD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
Remember us, O LORD, according to the favour Thou bearest unto Thy people; and setting us free from the bondage of sin, save us by the visiting of Thy salvation. Save us, O LORD our GOD, and visit us with Thy salvation; and let the teaching of Thy fear, not the punishment of our iniquity, humble us, that we may make our boast in Thy praise, and give thanks unto Thy Name, that Thy goodness may cause us to see the felicity of Thy chosen, and the inheritance of Thy kingdom admit us to praise. (11.) Remember us, O LORD, according to the favour Thou bearest unto Thy people; and visit us with Thy salvation, that we who, with our fathers, have done evil before Thee, may be delivered, by Thy restoring grace, from condemnation of original, and the taint of actual sin. (11.) Save us, O LORD, Who art the author of our salvation, and gather us out of the nations, Thou Who art the freedom of Thy

redeemed and the ransom for their freedom. Grant us, therefore, that we who now sorrow at our mingling with evil, may by Thy protection and decree, rejoice in that peacefulness into which Thou bringest Thy saints. (11.)

Bless us, O LORD GOD of Israel, from everlasting and world without end. Thou Whom the manifold creation praises in manifold variety of nature, remember Thy holy covenant, and let it repent Thee according to the multitude of Thy mercies, that we may wash away with rivers of tears and groanings of heart the wickedness we have committed, and the sin which we have incurred with our fathers through the transmission of guilt. Deliver us therefore, O LORD, out of the hand of the spirits that hate us, and redeem us from the craft of our enemies, that we who believe in Thy Word, may be defended by the strength of that our belief, and thus the confession of the lowly may ascend to the heights of heaven, and the salvation poured upon us by Thy Word may come to our aid. (11.) Gather together in mercy, O LORD, Thy scattered people, which Thou didst once deliver in the might of Thine arm, wherewith Thou camest to redeem the world, wherefore Thou art much invoked by them Thou didst redeem; that Thou Who didst vouchsafe to be made weak as man for our sakes, mayest stablish us men with the protection of Thy Godhead. (11.)

O GOD, Who purifiest the hearts of them that confess to Thee, and loosest the self-accusing conscience from every bond of sin, grant pardon unto Thy servants and bestow upon their bodies the wholesome medicine of heavenly grace. (11.) Remember us, O LORD, with Thy favour, and teach us to do righteousness always, and make us ever to boast in Thy praise, and to bless Thee, O GOD of Israel, from everlasting and world without end. (1.)

Psalm 107

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST the WORD, sent by the FATHER, healed us from the destruction of everlasting death. The Voice of CHRIST concerning the Jews, who forsook GOD in prosperity, and called upon Him in adversity. This Psalm is to be read with the lessons of Judges and Numbers. The Voice of CHRIST concerning the Jews, forsaking Him in prosperity, and in trouble calling upon the LORD; and a confession of the might and mercies of the LORD. The Voice of CHRIST concerning the Jews. To be used with the book of Judges and Numbers. He prophesies concerning the Advent, the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. VEN. BEDE. In the first Alleluia (Ps. cv.) the Jewish people, against which there is no complaint, is praised. In the second, he makes mention of those of that nation who had erred by very frequent offences, and had returned to the LORD'S favour by His mercy. Here, moreover, the Christian people is exhorted to give praise to GOD for the benefits He has bestowed. Otherwise: The first Alleluia means, that believers should be baptized. The second, that penitents should be reconciled; there, He received "His people with joy and His chosen with gladness;" here, "He hears them and gives them mercies in the sight of them that led them away captive." In the third, our daily use is repeated, and the Novatian heresy is condemned.

After the confession of the Hebrew people, of which the previous Psalms have spoken, the Prophet comes to the Christian people, which was roaming and wandering in the wilderness of superstition throughout the regions of the whole world; exhorting them, in the first section, to give thanks unto the LORD, redeemed by Whose Blood, they who had been led away with foolish error by the altars and groves of demons, have received the Churches: O give thanks unto the Lord. In the second part, he saith that thanks should be paid to the LORD, Who satisfied with the abundance of His religion the souls of the Gentiles, hungering for the food of truth, and burst the bonds of their sins with His irresistible might: O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness: for He satisfieth the empty soul. Thirdly, he enjoins thanks to be offered to the FATHER, because CHRIST hath come and bro-

ken the devil's gates and bars: O that men would therefore praise the Lord . . . for He hath broken the gates of brass. Fourthly, he urges that the sacrifice of praise should be offered to the LORD by the priests, who preside over the governance of the Church amidst the waves of the world, describing how the LORD vouchsafes to aid them in temptations: O that men would therefore praise the Lord . . . and offer unto Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Fifthly, he again saith that priests and elders should praise the LORD, Who by His heavenly bounty hath changed into the most genial pleasure the world which was foul with the drought of sin, which the right of heart beholding shall rejoice. These sections begin with similar verses, which are called intercalary. O that men would therefore praise the Lord, . . . exalt Him also in the congregation of the people.

STRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. It is uttered concerning Joel and Abiah, sons of Samuel, who recited the Commandments of the LORD. GOD gathered the Jews out of captivity, and brought them out of Babylon. And JESUS CHRIST, the Only-Begotten SON of GOD, gathered the nations from the four quarters, by preaching, unto Baptism. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A prophecy concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the prayer of the righteous, and of the taking up of the WORD of GOD to the heavens. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm with confession.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Saturday: Matins. Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. [Easter Eve: Matins.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian. As preceding Psalm. Monastic. From my distress * deliver me, O LORD. Ambrosian. O that men would praise the LORD for His goodness. [Easter Eve: For He hath broken the gates of brass; and smitten the bars of iron in sunder.] Parisian. He helpeth * the poor out of misery: the righteous will consider this, and rejoice. Mozarabic. First portion: Let them give thanks whom the LORD hath redeemed: and delivered from the hand of the enemy. Second portion: The LORD sent His Word, and healed them: and they were saved from their destruction.

This Psalm, though separated from its immediate predecessor in the Hebrew distribution of the Books of the Psalter, is closely related to it and to the 105th in scope and diction. Its language points clearly to the end of the Babylonian exile, and yet there is a certain vagueness of expression, a lack of direct statement either of absolute deliverance, of the restoration of the Temple worship, or of the name of Jerusalem, which so far militates against its character as a post-Captivity Psalm, that some critics have denied it any specific historical character, and regard it as little more than generally didactic. There is one item of internal evidence which is tolerably conclusive against a post-Captivity date, which is that in the third verse, where the four quarters of the horizon are named, the sea stands for the south, a sufficiently correct description of the Persian Gulf for an inhabitant of Babylon,

but impossible to a Jerusalemite speaking of the Mediterranean, always the sea in Palestinian language. It would seem then that the present Psalm is a hymn of thanksgiving composed for the use of the synagogue in Babylon, after the decree of Cyrus had been promulgated, and while the exiles were gathering together from all quarters of his empire, probably at Babylon itself, for the homeward march of the first caravan under Zerubbabel. This hypothesis seems to reconcile the difficulties, and to account for the absence of any name for the city referred to in the fourth verse. Babylon itself, with its large Jewish population, and the regular services of the Great Synagogue, would seem almost home to the Jewish pilgrims from the borders of India, or the frontiers of Scythia, cut off as they had been from all religious fellowship with their people, and the worship they found there established would lead them to look onwards to a dearer and more sacred city, towards which they were at last, by Divine mercy, suffered to direct their steps.

1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious : and his mercy endureth for ever.
The HOLY GHOST begins the Fifth Book of the Psalter with praise, and ends it with praise, because they who spiritually observe the Pentateuch of the Law shall, with the Angels, praise GOD for evermore. These three Psalms (cv., cvi., cvii.) begin in the same fashion, for the three orders in the Church praise in like manner the Holy Trinity. The first, personifying both peoples (Jewish and Christian) sings of the Advent of CHRIST, and afterwards of the blessings of the faithful, which GOD conferred materially on the elder people, and spiritually upon the new. The second, personifying the Church, sings in confession of the sins of the Jews, telling of what the people in its unfaithfulness committed before CHRIST's coming, and how, afterwards, in its unbelief, it repaid the LORD. The third, personifying the Church of the Gentiles, sings joyfully of how the merciful LORD delivered the captive bondsmen out of the hands of the enemy, and the Good Shepherd gathered His scattered sheep from many lands into one flock.

2 Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed : and delivered from the hand of the enemy ; 3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west : from the north, and from the south.

In this Psalm we have set before us four temptations, four invocations, four deliverances in answer to these, four acknowledgments of the mercies of the LORD. The first temptation is error and lack of GOD'S Word; the second is the difficulty of overcoming the passions of former habit; the third is weariness and disgust at the Word of GOD; the fourth is storm and peril in the guidance of the Churches. And while the primary reference is to the release of the children of Israel from captivity, and to their assembling to the Holy City from their various places of exile, yet a wider gathering, a greater redemption, the overthrow of a more formidable enemy, is spiritually foretold. It is the redemption with the Precious Blood of CHRIST from the dominion of Satan, the gathering of the Catholic Church out of all nations of the

world, from the rising of the sun, the Jews, on whom GOD had bestowed the dawning light of knowledge of the Law, the actual presence of the Sun of Righteousness Himself, to the sunsetting, the Gentiles lying in actual darkness and ignorance; from the cold north of sin and carelessness as to religion, to the bitter and stormy sea of passionate unrest, into the one fold where He cherishes the wanderers. And we can use in our day with yet more effect Tertullian's argument that the Christian faith is the only one which can make its way and win disciples everywhere; "In whom else have all nations believed, save in CHRIST Who now hath come?

Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, and the inhabitants of Pontus and Asia, and Pamphylia, the sojourners in Egypt and the part of Africa which is beyond Cyrene, the citizens and strangers at Rome, the Jews too and other nations in Jerusalem, the various tribes of the Getulians and borders of the Moors; all the limits of the Spains, and divers tribes of the Gauls, and the regions of Britain untrodden by the Romans, but now subdued to CHRIST, and the lands of the Sarmatians, and Dacians, and Germans, and Scythians, and many hidden races and provinces and many islands unknown to us, which we are utterly unable to enumerate, in all which places the Name of CHRIST has already found its way and reigns. But the song which befits this "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," who "shall come from the east and the west and from the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of GOD," is only for the redeemed, for those who know themselves to have been led

A. R. Rom. vii. 14. captive by the enemy, and "sold under sin," but now to be 1 S. Pet. i. "redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, 18. but with the Precious Blood of CHRIST." Those who choose to abide in the prison of their sins, and they who do not confess that they need a SAVIOUR, must be silent when this Isa. xxxv. chant is raised, when "the ransomed of the LORD shall 10. return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." 4 They went astray in the wilderness out of the way : and found no city to dwell in; A. C. The Gloss. S. Bernard. Serm. 1, de SS. Pet. et Paul. L.

The Targum restricts the historical sense of this verse to the forty years' wanderings of Israel in the desert of Sinai, while the Greek Fathers extend it to the sufferings of the later Jews in exile after Nebuchadnezzar's conquests, and to the toils of their homeward journey. But the deeper meaning tells us of those who wander in the wilderness of this world, unwatered by the rivers of grace, by the rain and dew of the HOLY GHOST, by the tears of penitence, who have strayed far from the Way, which is CHRIST, and have lost the track which leads to the Heavenly Jerusalem. The words hold good especially of all such as are selfishly intent on themselves alone, and thus, disregarding all social claims upon them, separate themselves not only from the fellowship of the Saints, but from all intercourse with others whom

they may help, or who may help them. Such as these find no city to dwell in, they are at war with society, and alien from the example of Him, the Way, Who taught in the streets of Judea, and they have no peace here, since, as the Preacher saith, "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the City."

5 Hungry and thirsty : their soul fainted in them. "Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD." And observe that the words imply eager longing, and cannot therefore be applied to such as are content to remain in ignorance. Rather we may take them of those Gentile philosophers, notably Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who laboured diligently to find the truth, And reasoned high Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate, Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute, And found no end, in wandering mazes lost. Of good and evil much they argued then, Of happiness and final misery, Passion and apathy, and glory, and shame, Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy. Wherefore their soul fainted in them, not because GOD was hard and stern, but that in His love He suffered them to fail, that they might call to Him in their need, and hearing His reply, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," they might learn to love their Helper.

6 So they cried unto the Lord in their trouble: and he delivered them from their distress. 7 He led them forth by the right way: that they might go to the city where they dwelt.

What counsel loosed them from such difficulties and straits, from wandering, from the wilderness, from that sore drought? O wondrous thing! one cry sent up to God from the heart, changed all for the better. "Truly," as one has wisely said, "troubles are the spurs to make us run to God. And observe, remarks a third Saint, they did nothing whatever but cry, exactly as they had done in Egypt; they performed no admirable actions, they merely called with their whole heart, and told their trouble plainly out to God, and at once their trials vanished, and the sorely needed help was given. And we may well believe that the prayer of many a Gentile, crying in the night, like Cornelius, through the prevenient grace of God, went up in this manner, that the preachers of the Gospel might come over and help them. He led them forth by the right way; by the way of holiness and truth, by the personal guidance of the LORD JESUS Himself, and by the teaching of the Apostles. He did not merely show them the way, as one might point out a distant city from the summit of a lofty mountain, so that the wayfarer might miss the track when he descended into the plain, but He led them forth, and was Himself the guide and pattern of their journey, as well as their Teacher. And observe it is said by the right way.

A sage once said to a king, who desired to avoid the toil of study, that there is no royal road to mathematics; the Evangelists and Apostles tell us, in the clearest language, that there is no crooked road to heaven. If the way be not straight, it

leads not thither, for the one use of that way is that fallen men may recover Paradise, may once more go to the city where they dwelt, for "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

A. Le Blanc. C. L. A. 8 O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness: and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men. The goodness (LXX. and Vulg., mercies) of the LORD denotes that He has called us to the Faith, that He has waited patiently for us, that He has lovingly converted us, freely justified us, made us to advance in holiness, and to persevere in good. The wonders are His Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, mission of the HOLY GHOST, and all the miracles He hath wrought Himself or by the hands of His servants. These ought to be the theme of thanksgiving in private, of proclamation in public, for they are not meant for a single nation, but for all the children of men. This intercalary refrain recurs four times in the Psalm, at the eighth, fifteenth, twenty-first, and thirty-first verses. A mystical reason is given for the three former collocations, that as the eighth Beatitude re-echoes the first, so the eighth verse repeats the praise of the opening words of the Psalm; the number fifteen suggests the Psalms of Degrees, the steps of ascent to Heaven, and twenty-one denotes the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit bestowed by the Holy Trinity. And we may add, in the same strain, that thirty-one denotes the final reward of heaven, that which remains over and above for those who have fulfilled the moral law of the Decalogue in faith, hope, and charity. Or again, keeping the same thought in mind, we may note that Joshua did not finally conquer Canaan till he had overthrown and slain one and thirty kings.

9 For he satisfieth the empty soul : and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. Honorius. Targum. Beliarmine. A. This is the second temptation from which God delivers, by His second act of mercy, delivering us from the habit of sin and the difficulty of doing well; because there are many who, after being rescued from unbelief, are from evil habit unable to do right, because the embers of sin and the enticement of the flesh remain in them. The first reference is to the manna wherewith the Israelites were fed in the desert, a type of better things. The souls which were given over to idolatry were empty, because God was not in them, and they were bare of grace and spiritual gifts. These He satisfies with repentance, a bitter but necessary diet, while He leaves cloyed and full ones to themselves, for "the full soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." He has something better than this in store, however, as He hath said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," here but gradually and according to the needs and powers of this life, but perfectly and absolutely in their Country, for as much as each soul truly, earnestly, purely, and reasonably longs for, whether of grace here or of glory hereafter, so

much does God freely bestow, according to the measure of each one's capacity, till all are satisfied with the plenteousness of His house.

10 Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death : being fast bound in misery and iron; 11 Because they rebelled against the words of the LORD : and lightly regarded the counsel of the most Highest; 12 He also brought down their heart through heaviness : they fell down, and there was none to help them. The Chaldee paraphrast interprets these words of Zedekiah, King of Judah, a captive and blind; who, according to a tradition mentioned by S. Jerome, was not only, as we read, chained with brazen fetters, but put into an iron cage at Riblah, and carried thence in the train of Nebuchadnezzar, like a wild beast, to Babylon, where, "bound in fetters, and holden with cords of affliction," he died after four years of suffering, into which hunger itself entered as an ingredient, because he lightly regarded the counsel which God sent him by the prophet Jeremiah.

The words set us before us in type the condition of the Gentiles before the coming of the LORD, for they did sit in darkness, lacking the light of faith, and blinded by unbelief. And in using the word sit, the Psalmist points out that they had been for a long time in this condition. The shadow of death was the corrupt life of this world, a terrible picture of the death to come. They were fast bound, who were held entangled in the cords of sin under the rule of the devil. Beggary (Vulg. mendicitate) refers to the scarcity of good, the sorest penury of all, which afflicts, not the body, but what is far worse, the soul; and iron denotes the hardness of the sufferings, and also the difficulty of breaking the chains of old habits of unbelief and sin. "I was bound," remarks S. Augustine in his Confessions, "with no external iron, but by my own iron will. Thus the whole passage may fitly be explained of the condition of sinners, who sit, because of their determined perseverance in wickedness, in darkness, as being either ignorant, or because "the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," so that "their foolish heart was darkened," in the shadow of death, as separated from GOD, who is the light and life of the soul;

fast bound in poverty, because lacking the power to do good, and in iron, because chained so as to be unable to flee from danger or evil, and that not because of any irresistible might in their enemies, but solely because of their own refusal to accept the light yoke and easy burden of the LORD, to give heed to His warnings and chastisements, and to listen to His preachers of righteousness and faith. Thus He also brought down their heart with labour (A.V., LXX., Vulg.,) so that even the dungeon was not a place of rest, but of toil, in that the captives suffered as their fathers had done in Egypt; that is, bondage to Satan does not involve mere incapacity to do good, but the necessity of doing evil, and that at the cost of far more labour than GOD exacts from His servants. And it

Targum. Jer. xxxix. 7, marg. S. Hieron. in Esai. 15. Job xxxvi. 8. Jer. xxxvii. 2. A. Hugo Card. Rom. i. 21. is well added, there was none to help them, none of the allies to whom Zedekiah looked, none of the false gods to whom his subjects prayed; for while we have CHRIST and His holy Angels to aid us in all things righteous, the devil and his agents, after luring men into sin, leave all the toil of it to them, as well as the remorse and punishment to come. Wherefore it is truly said, "The wages of sin is death." But when it is added, there was none to help them, that held good only so long as they continued to sit and keep silence. The moment they knelt in prayer, a Helper came: 13 So when they cried unto the LORD in their trouble: he delivered them out of their distress.

14 For he brought them out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death: and brake their bonds in sunder. 15 O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness: and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men! S. Luke i. 79. For this cause was He born, and came into the world, "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house," "to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet unto the way of peace." And this He fulfilled in that He brought, leading with His own Hand, and sending no messenger in His stead, men out of darkness into the clear light and true knowledge of GOD, out of the shadow of death, by showing them the glory of a holy life, and brake, not merely loosed, but brake, with speedy deliverance and irresistible might, their bonds asunder, by destroying the tyranny of Satan, and giving men instant power against evil habit, as he did to Levi the publican, who rose up at once at His call, and left everything behind to follow Him. Wherefore here follows the second exhortation to thanks-giving for so great benefits; and because of the magnitude of them, the Psalmist returns to amplify further what he has already spoken, and adds:

16 For he hath broken the gates of brass: and smitten the bars of iron in sunder. Here we are taught that the obstacles in His way were no small ones. No slight doors, no slender cords held the captives prisoned, but gates of brass, and bars of iron. The use of these same words in describing the victorious progress of Cyrus, of whom the LORD saith, "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight, I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron," shows us that the primary reference here is to the strong fortifications of those great Eastern cities which formed the strength of the Babylonian empire, seemingly impregnable, but yet doomed to fall before an invader. And the citation (as it probably is) of the passage in Isaiah here, makes in favour of the view that this Psalm was composed in honour of the decree of Cyrus in favour of the Jews. The favourite interpretation of the passage is that which has fixed this Psalm for the Matins of Easter Eve in the Ambrosian Use; namely, that it tells of the victory over Death and Hell wrought by the Passion and Resurrection of CHRIST, and of

His bearing away with Him to Paradise the once imprisoned Patriarchs. And this idea is repeated in more than one hymn, as thus:

Solus ululet Tartarus Raptâ prædâ vacuus, Fractos vectes et ferrea Strata ploret mœnia, Quæ subruit Rex gloriæ Cum laude victoriæ. S. Pet. Dam. The Hymn, Paschalis festi gaudium. Let Tartarus alone lament, Spoiled of the booty from it rent, For broken bars complain in woe, And iron ramparts levelled low, Which, in His victory renowned, The King of Glory cast to ground. The simile is often heightened by reference to the history of Judg. xvi. 3. Samson ending his sleep at Gaza by carrying off the gates, posts, and bars of the city to the hill before Hebron. Applying the words to the deliverance of the soul from sin, a devout writer observes that we block the entrance of a passage with gates, and make these gates fast with bars, which severally denote, therefore, contradiction and rebellion, the former brazen as being pertinacious, the other of iron, as bold and daring. Another will have it that the gates of brass are evil habits, and the bars of iron the promptings of the devil, which keep those gates fast, lest we should go free.

17 Foolish men are plagued for their offence: and because of their wickedness. Compare Virgil's picture of the shrine of War: Sunt geminæ belli portæ (sic nomine dicunt,) Relligione sacræ, et sævi formidine Martis, Centum ærei claudunt vectes æternaque ferri Robora. There are twin gates of war (so runs their name,) Hallowed by faith and dread of cruel Mars, A hundred brazen barriers close them up, And iron's strength enduring. Æn. vii. 607. 18 Their soul abhorred all manner of meat : and they were even hard at death's door. 19 So when they cried unto the LORD in their trouble : he delivered them out of their distress. A.

Here in the third place the Psalmist sets down those on whom God sends sickness, often fatal, as a punishment for sin; and especially the sin of spiritual pride and self-consciousness. Thus Elihu speaks, teaching that it is idle to resist God, for those who say, "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me," find that God, "that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man, He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing with the sword; he is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat; yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. And in like manner, when the LORD had healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, and found him afterwards in the Temple, He said unto him, "Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee. So too, we are warned by the Apostle that such as treat the Divine Food of CHRIST's Body and Blood with irreverence, are punished with incapacity to eat those carnal dainties which they prefer. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the LORD's Body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. But the LXX.

and Vulgate, reading in the first clause of v. 17, He took them out of the way of their iniquity, do not lend themselves altogether to this exposition; though the suggested meaning that He takes them into His hands for the purpose of chastising them, comes very nearly to the same thing, though the more usual interpretation accepts the words as speaking directly of God's merciful purpose. The third kind of temptation is here put before us, namely, weariness and loathing of good. For after a man has come from ignorance to truth, from error to the Way, from famine of wisdom to the word of faith, and has overcome all difficulties, so that he might live in peace, there yet remains weariness, so that he can take no delight in reading or in prayer. And therefore it is said, all manner of meats, because men get tired of the quiet and decorum of holiness, and long for something different, by way of change; just as Adam turned from all the trees of the garden to the one forbidden fruit, and as the Israelites rejected the manna, saying, "Our soul loatheth this light bread; despite the

Perhaps reading , or , instead of . There are several other conjectures offered by the elder Hebraists. tradition that it supplied all lack of other food, because it tasted to each as his favourite dainty "and serving to the appetite of the eater, tempered itself to every man's liking." And observe that there are three kinds of spiritual food which foolish men loathe, the Word of God, the Body of CHRIST, and good works, because their palate is dulled, tainted, and diseased through sin, so that they can relish only the highly-seasoned dishes of the evil one, avarice, luxury, pride, and the like. Yet even for this disorder of the soul there is a physician, and once again the LORD heard and delivered; for 20 He sent his word and healed them: and they were saved from their destruction. 21 O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness: and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men.

They refer the primary meaning of this clause to such examples of Divine power put forth in healing as that of the brazen serpent, "for it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaister, that restored them to health, but Thy word, O LORD, which healeth all things." And S. Peter Chrysologus compares the mere spoken word wherewith CHRIST the LORD healed the centurion's servant, as illustrating the verse. But the highest interpretation of all, and that which has been most generally followed by the Fathers, is to see here the mission and Incarnation of the Eternal SON, the WORD of the FATHER, at once the Great Physician and the salutary Food of a dying world. And a later commentator very happily cites here a further portion of that address of Elihu, wherein he describes GOD's visitation by sickness, and goes on to paint His mode of curing the wound He has inflicted: "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man His uprightness: then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: he shall pray unto GOD, and He will be favourable unto him: and

he shall see His face with joy: for He will render unto man His righteousness." And that healing from destruction which GOD the WORD bestowed when He walked on earth, He still vouchsafes by the word of His preachers, whom He empowers to pour into the soul's wounds the wine of rebuke and the oil of consolation.

O that men, &c. Nowhere does this joyous verse chime in more fitly than here, where we are told of health bestowed, of life restored, above all, the life of the spirit. No work makes GOD more loved than the redemption of mankind, for this is the sum of all His goodness and wonders, not merely L. Numb. xxi. 9. Wisd. xvi. 12. Serm. xv. Origen. S. Athanas. ad Marcell. S. Greg. Nyss. Haymo, &c. because of the redemption itself, but the manner of it, by the Incarnation and Passion of the Son of God, that God became Man for men, that He, one and the same, is Physician and medicine, SAVIOUR and salvation, Shepherd and pasture, Redeemer and redemption, and the ransom too, the price of that redemption. 22 That they would offer unto him the sacrifice of thanksgiving : and tell out his works with gladness ! A.

In the translation of Aquila, the phrase for thanksgiving is Sacrifice of Eucharist, (θυσίαν εὐχαριστίας), whence the Greek Fathers expound this place as a prayer for the abolition of the carnal sacrifices of the Law, and the substitution for them of the unbloody oblation of the Gospel. The immediate reference in the text seems to limit the verse to the newly-recovered patients, for whom the Psalmist prays that they may not fail to perform the pledges they made to God when they called on Him for help; according to those words of the rescued Prophet, "When my soul fainted in me, I remembered the LORD; and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thy holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy; but I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving, I will pay that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD." There are many spiritual sacrifices which Christians may offer in union with that one Oblation; that of our own flesh, by fasting and mortification; as it is written, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice;" that of our spirit, by contrition, for "the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;" of our possessions, by almsgiving, for "He that giveth alms sacrificeth praise;" of our mouths, in prayer, for "whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me." It is added, tell out His works, because they are to let other sick men know the marvellous power of their Physician, Who has given them the true medicine for their souls, and that with gladness, because the coldness and torpor of their sometime indifference has passed away, and they are whole again, rejoicing in the LORD.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships : and occupy their business in great waters; 24 These men see the works of the LORD : and his wonders in the deep. A.

Here is the fourth reason for praising God, because He delivers mariners from the perils of the sea; and there may be a literal reference, as already noted, to the experience of some of the Jewish exiles, making their way homeward from the Per-

sian Gulf and the Red Sea; so that the view of some Greek Fathers, that the whole description is but an allegory of deliverance from the troubles of captivity, and the return to the haven of the native land of the voyagers, need hardly be dwelt on. The word business seems here taken in its widest sense, including fishing, trading, and the like, as well as the management of vessels by the sailors. And, as was to be expected, the graphic touches of the picture have had their fruit in an abundant crop of allegorical interpretation. First may stand that which sees here the Apostles and other great teachers, coming down from the heights of contemplation to the stormy and bitter sea of active labour amongst unrestful sinners, (of which their descent from the Mount of Transfiguration to the plain of the demoniac was a type,) and that in ships, each labouring in some one part of the Church, each, too, trusting in the Cross of CHRIST, not afraid to "commit their lives to a small piece of wood," for they, "passing the rough sea in a weak vessel are saved; for blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh," a ship whereof CHRIST is the Pilot;

they labour for Him, and occupy their business in the great waters of many nations, of fierce persecutions, in the copious floods of Baptism, in the abundant tears of penitence, and see the works of the Lord in the conversion of souls, His wonders in the deep of those buried in sin, but now restored by grace, in the deep sayings of that Holy Writ which is their commission. And there appears to be a very curious Rabbinical tradition which makes in favour of this first exposition. It is to the effect that the Word of GOD, mentioned in the twentieth verse, is some messenger or preacher whom He will send, and who will be honoured when he does come, because he will heal and deliver from their plagues all who believe in him; but as they will be few, and of dull understanding, and fishers by trade, whose business is in the waters, it is said that He will heal them, so that these very persons will be chosen to see the work of GOD, for which their mental slowness seemed to unfit them. A second exposition takes the ships to be the Religious Life, whereby men glide safely over the stormy billows of the world; but a yet more ingenious one sees in them a type of penitence, narrow as they are at stem and stern, but wide in the middle, as repentance is harder for children and old persons, at the beginning and close of life, than for those of middle age;

it receives persons of all ranks and conditions, and characters; it is subject to great perils, which may be escaped by starting cargo overboard, by stopping leaks, by pumping out water, by casting anchor. And a fourth view is, that a ship is an emblem of a righteous soul, for the subjoined reasons: As a ship is made of light materials, which float easily, so a holy soul does not burden itself with worldly fardels, but keeps the world beneath it. It sails on to its haven, as the soul makes pilgrimage to Paradise. It is laden with valuable merchandise, the soul with grace and virtues bestowed by GOD. It is watertight and closed below, but open above, as the soul ought to be impervious to the world, and hide its own good works therefrom, but open to heaven with affection and desire. It is narrow at the ends, wide in the

middle, as the soul is austere and self-denying to itself, but broad in its charity for others. It is constantly moved by the waves, and easily impelled by the wind, and so the devout soul progresses through toil and adversity, under the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. Yet again, there are sinners who, like Jonah, fleeing from the face of GOD, go down to the sea, to the cares and pleasures of the world, away from the solid land of humility, quiet, and grace.

They occupy themselves in many waters, in needless toils and excessive pleasures, and yet even there GOD does not leave them, but causes them to see His works and wonders even in the deep of their sins, by giving them timely and sufficient warnings, and alarming them with fear of the abyss.

25 For at his word the stormy wind ariseth: which lifteth up the waves thereof. 26 They are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep: their soul melteth away because of the trouble. There are many similar passages in the poets, of which one of the briefest will suffice as an example: Tollimur in coelum curvato gurgite, et iidem Subductâ ad manes imos descendimus undâ. Raised to the sky upon the curving wave, We sink with it to ocean's lowest grave. A. They take the allegorical sense variously. And first; the trials and persecutions which burst upon the Church, amidst which the loftiest examples of holiness and constancy in the martyrs, the lowest proofs of timidity and self-seeking, and even of sin and apostasy, might be observed simultaneously in the Church, while outside of it, in the very same way, some of the heathens, fired with hate against the Cross, rose in their blasphemy against heaven itself, and others, touched by the grace of GOD, humbled themselves, like the gaoler of Philippi, in the lowest humility of confession at the feet of those they had before oppressed. A very curious interpretation, limiting both phrases to the Martyrs, is, that they were carried up to the heavens when brought before kings and rulers in public to trial, and down again to the deep when thrust into dungeons and chains. Secondly; S. Augustine understands the words as referring to prelates and other rulers of the Church, alternating in boldness and timidity, in confidence and despair, in contemplation and action, while another, adopting a part of this typology, explains the whole passage of the storms and vacillations of thought within the hearts of all men, now elated, and now despairing, till their soul melteth away because of the trouble and anxiety.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man: and are at their wit's end. 28 So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble: he delivereth them out of their distress. These words are taken by the expositors as marking the effects of passion, such as the vacillation of judgment, all violent disturbance of the balance of mind, over-eagerness in curiosity, the indulgence of desire, of anger, of revenge. Or, on the other hand, in a good sense, they may denote such as are shaken and detached from the sins in which they once, as it were, stood rooted, when they have become full of the new wine of the HOLY GHOST, which excites them to a

total change, to abandonment of their own carnal wisdom, and to reliance on GOD alone. Are at their wits' end. This phrase, common to both the English versions, is far weaker than the Hebrew idiom, faithfully preserved by LXX. and Vulgate, Their wisdom is swallowed up, words denoting their confusion of mind in the face of peril, which brings out the true faculties of each man into strong relief, so that such as appeared to be wise in time of quiet and security, now lose their head, and are proved incompetent. Or, in that better sense already mentioned, their carnal wisdom is swallowed up by the wisdom of GOD, as the rod of Moses swallowed up the rods of the magicians of Egypt. This picture also is common in the Latin poets. One example will, as before, suffice:

Nil ratio, et usus audet in magnis malis; Tenet horror artus, omnis officio stupet Navita relicto, remus effugit manus. Reason and wont dare nought in mighty ills, Dread grasps the limbs, and the dazed sailor shrinks From every task, the oar escapes his hands. So when they cry, &c. A Basque proverb says, "Let him who knows not how to pray, go to sea." They cry, not merely for safety, but for the wisdom of GOD to replace their own drunkenness, for calmness of judgment, and for the cessation of troubles and persecutions in the Church. They cry, that if they have forgotten Him while all seemed safe and prosperous, He may not forget them in peril: JESU, bless our slender boat, By the current swept along; Loud its threatenings, let them not Drown the murmur of a song Breathed Thy mercy to implore, Where these troubled waters roar. A.

SAVIOUR, for our warning seen, Bleeding on that precious Rood, If, while through the meadows green Gently wound the peaceful flood, We forgot Thee, do not Thou Disregard Thy suppliants now. Guide our bark among the waves, Through the rocks our passage smooth, Where the whirlpool frets and raves, Let Thy love its anger soothe; All our hope is placed in Thee, Miserere Domine! 29 For he maketh the storm to cease : so that the waves thereof are still. 30 Then are they glad, because they are at rest : and so he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be. 31 O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness : and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men! Song of Three Child. 27.

The Vulgate has kept much more exactly and happily to the original, which runs: He stayed the tempest into a gentle breeze, and the waves thereof were silent. And they tell us that GOD does this whenever He quells the violence of diabolic temptation and persecution, and sends in its stead the tender grace of the HOLY GHOST, stilling all the tumult of the world and the wild commotions of the heart of man. Again; they remind us of how often the power of the torments inflicted on the Martyrs was stayed, so that they felt no pain on the rack or amidst the flames, because GOD dealt with them (save in the matter of preserving the life of their bodies) as He did with the Three Children, when He "made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither

hurt nor troubled them. Once more; He stayed the rage of the heathen against the Gospel, by the might of the preachers of the Word, and converted their fierce passion into calm zeal, as He did with Saul of Tarsus, when his persecuting temper was changed into burning love for souls; for then, as on the Lake of Gennesaret, JESUS ”arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. He does the like too, when after bringing men through the storm of unwilling conversion, He grants them spiritual peace, following on repentance and amendment.

Then are they glad, because the fierce billows are at rest, and so He makes them enter into the haven of their desire. What that haven is, they describe variously. One takes it to be the calm of prayer; another the Cross; a third the Church. The most frequent exposition of any is, that it denotes tranquillity of soul; another again takes it of everlasting salvation, or of the Heavenly Country, reminding us that hell, depicted as the bottomless abyss, has no haven where anchor may be cast; but best of all is that simplest and fullest view which tells us that CHRIST is Himself the harbour of safety for all tempest-tossed souls;

”the Pilot and the Haven,” as the Cluniac calls Him. O that men, &c. For the fourth time the cry of thanksgiving goes up, and on this occasion with a twofold force; because the previous verses tell us of the total failure of human wisdom, and the gladness of unexpected deliverance from imminent peril. A. Safe home, safe home in port! Rent cordage, shattered deck, Torn sails, provisions short, And only not a wreck; But oh! the joy upon the shore, To tell our voyage-perils o’er! 32 That they would exalt him also in the congregation of the people: and praise him in the seat of the elders! The Chaldee paraphrases the former of these clauses as denoting the full assembly of the children of Israel, and the latter as the chair of the wise men, that is, the Sanhedrim, or sacred council. The more usual Christian exposition is nearly identical, for it takes the terms as signifying the laity and clergy. There are, however, two further comments; one, that the first half of the verse refers to the Gentile Church, and the second to the Jewish Synagogue, its elder in the knowledge of God. Cardinal Hugo, dealing in his wonted fashion heavy blows at the secularity and nepotism of his time, draws another lesson from the Vulgate wording, Church of the commons (ecclesia plebis), and stall of the elders (cathedra seniorum), and bids us note that the Psalmist speaks of the commons, but says nothing of princes, because they are wont to exalt themselves instead of God, and that he speaks of the stall of the elders, because mere boys ought not to be promoted to cathedral dignities.

33 Who turneth the floods into a wilderness: and drieth up the water-springs. 34 A fruitful land maketh he barren: for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. At this point the tone and character of the Psalm changes, Bellarmine. and from the contrast between the sufferings of men and God’s mercy in deliverance, the singer passes to the praise of the providential government of the world, and of the manner

in which the LORD exercises His omnipotence by changing the condition of things, in proof of His sole lordship and mastery. And the first example given has most probably a direct reference to the destruction of the cities of the plain, so precisely does it answer to the twofold description of the surrounding country before and after that terrible visitation: ”And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest to Zoar.”

Later, we read: ”The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim.” S. Basil. M. S. Chrysost. S. Hieron. A.

The mystical interpretation here usually found is the rejection of the Jewish people, the drying up of the springs of spiritual grace, the disappearance of the fruit of good works, the cessation of prophecy, the overthrow of their national polity, the abolition of the Mosaic worship; and that because of the guilt of the Scribes and Pharisees. For barren the literal rendering is saltness, A.V. marg., or salt-marsh, LXX. ἅλμην, Vulg. salsuginem; and one commentator tells us that this epithet here implies that the punishment of the Jews is meant as a condiment for our souls, to correct their folly and guard them from decay. We are justly reminded by another that such judgments have not fallen upon the Jews alone, but that Christian Churches too have had their candlestick removed. We know how Persia, once rich in Martyrs, how Egypt, the fruitful mother of ascetic saints, how Asia Minor, formerly diademed with a starry crown of famous Churches, have all bowed before the Koran; how the Church of Libya and Mauritania has left no trace behind; how the great Nestorian community, whose missions once stretched from Siberia to Ceylon, from Antioch to Pekin, has dwindled to a few scattered families; how the sun of the Faith in Japan set in blood; how Holland, and Scandinavia, and much of Germany, and Switzerland, and Scotland, have ”forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water,” that cannot retain the great doctrines of the Christian Faith, but pass, by inevitable steps, from denial of the Church, to denial of her Founder; from insulting the Bride, to crucifying the Bridegroom afresh, and putting Him to open shame. And none can read the ecclesiastical history of these latter countries for the period immediately preceding the religious convulsion of the sixteenth century, without confessing that it was indeed for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein that God sent upon them that terrible disaster.

35 Again, he maketh the wilderness a standing water: and water-springs of a dry ground. 36 And there he setteth the hungry: that they may build them a city to

dwell in; 37 That they may sow their lands, and plant vineyards: to yield them fruits of increase.

Here we have the other side of the picture, the calling of the Gentiles, and the spread of the knowledge of God throughout the earth, as the waters cover the sea. It is not impossible that the literal reference may be to the resettlement of Canaan by the returning Jews, when the long deserted fields were again brought under tillage, the tanks, reservoirs, cisterns, conduits, and general system of irrigation put once more into working order, and, above all, Jerusalem itself rebuilt. And this would seem to square with the primary and literal sense of certain prophecies of Isaiah. Mystically, they tell us that the standing waters are the fonts of Baptism, filled with calm pools for the laver of regeneration, or else resident pastors, as distinguished from the water-springs, which are the itinerant preachers of righteousness who go forth into heathen lands, dry ground, where the rain of doctrine is unknown; that the city is the Church, given as a home to them that hungered and thirsted after righteousness, where they may sow the land with the seed of the Word of God, and plant the vineyards of the local Churches, while they are engaged in raising up the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Another interpretation, not very different, sees in the standing water Holy Scripture, made over to the Gentiles as a vast reservoir of spiritual wisdom, whence the springs, the preachers and expounders, derive those waters wherewith they irrigate the gardens of the Church, the souls of the faithful. Yet again, it is explained, but less happily, of floods of penitential tears, and the whole passage is accommodated, by more than one writer, to the circumstances of the Religious Life.

38 He blesseth them, so that they multiply exceedingly: and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. They multiply exceedingly in holiness and good works, and when this is the case with the teachers and pastors of the flock, God does not suffer their cattle, that is, those simple and less cultivated souls to which they minister, to be made a prey of by heretical teachers, whose surest wile to lead the uneducated astray is to point out the shortcomings of their lawful pastors. He does not suffer them to decrease; nay, He makes them to increase more than any others, for ”hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that A. S. James ii. 5. 1 Cor. i. 28. love Him?” ”And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath GOD chosen.” He hath not made them less, because persons of no great ability are not worse off under the Gospel than they were under the sects of philosophy, but better, for GOD has a particular care for those on whom men look down, and finds work and dignity for them in His Church, because the heart is mightier than the brain, and love greater than faith, and hope, and wisdom. So we are taught by the beautiful legend of the eloquent Bishop, who doubted if a poor beggar who sat at the foot of the pulpit could understand the periods wherewith the preacher held and swayed the minds of his congregation, but who was instructed in a vision

at night that he owed his very power, and the success which followed its exercise, to the beggar's intercessory prayer on his behalf, which had gone up and been accepted at the throne of GOD.

39 And again, when they are minished and brought low: through oppression, through any plague, or trouble; 40 Though he suffer them to be evil intreated through tyrants: and let them wander out of the way in the wilderness; 41 Yet helpeth he the poor out of misery: and maketh him households like a flock of sheep. A. A. C.

After the Christian Church had been multiplied exceedingly from the Twelve and the Seventy into vast numbers of disciples, it began to be minished and brought low in two ways; first, by persecution thinning the ranks sorely with martyrdom and with apostasies; and next, by internal heresies, schisms, and divisions; which sometimes, as in the days of Arian success, have reduced the Church to a few, and will do so again in the last days, during the manifestation of Antichrist. In periods of strife and unbelief such as these, He poureth contempt on princes, (A.V., LXX., Vulg.,) because revolt against justly constituted authority, whether in Church or State, simply because it is authority, is one of the marks of the schismatic temper, and always goes hand in hand with false doctrine, though the rulers of the Church may indeed have earned that contempt by their luxury and worldliness. Or, again, these words may bear a meaning closer to that of the Prayer Book version, and tell us of the manner in which GOD laughs to scorn the attempts of tyrants to uproot and extirpate His Church. Several of the commentators, while keeping with sufficient closeness to the main scope of this exposition, take the passage not as immediately descriptive of the Church weakened by heresy, but of the heretics themselves considered apart, and called few (Vulg. not because of actual paucity of numbers, but because of their spiritual unimportance as compared with the wide extent of the Catholic Church (an interpretation which holds good even for these days.

And in that case the contempt poured on their princes will denote the constant multiplication of schisms from the sects founded by heresiarchs, whose influence is inadequate to retain permanent hold over their disciples; and to the low esteem in which the ministers of all such sects are sooner or later held by their flocks, who quickly learn that they have no Divine commission, and may therefore be treated as man's servants, not as God's ambassadors, inasmuch as by their departure from Catholic unity and tradition, and by their conflicting interpretation of Scripture, they cannot serve as leaders to the Land of Promise, but only wander out of the way in the wilderness. And in this wise, "He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged: He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty. Yet even in such times of rebuke and blasphemy, God does not forget His suffering people, but makes the very

prevalence of error a lesson of warning to them, that they may desire the true riches, after having had some experience of the poverty of schism, its few and feeble tenets, its meagre worship, its lack of depth and fervour; and then He makes their families like a flock, (A.V., S. Hieron,) because while His pastors sorrowfully look at the diminished number of the faithful, and lamenting over the seceders, say, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us;

He answers on the other hand in words of encouragement, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd. Thus, the conversion of Northern Europe repaired the breach made by the progress of Islam in Asia; thus, the missionary successes and the great Religious Houses of the tenth century counterbalanced the sin and ignorance of that truly Dark Age; thus the Martyrs who died on the Cross in Japan made reparation to their LORD for the sin of the European traders who trod that Cross under foot, that they might have licence to traffic with the heathen.

Two other expositions of the passage may be cited. One is, that it is to a great extent a brief recapitulation of what went before, and describes the overthrow of the Jews by the Romans, and the substitution of the Gentiles in their stead as the spiritual children of God. The other sees in it the spread of the Religious Life, despite the fewness, obscurity, and poverty of its followers; nay, the manner in which that very poverty served as the strength of the cloister, and multiplied Houses of many a famous Order throughout the wide pastures of the Church. 42 The righteous will consider this, and rejoice : and the mouth of all wickedness shall be stopped. 43 Whoso is wise will ponder these things : and they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD. The Psalmist, after describing the proud abettors of heresy, now returns to the lowly Catholics, whom in their poverty God, leaving the princes of the sects to their hunger, refreshes with heavenly aid. And the preachers of righteousness, seeing the conversion of the nations brought about in this wise, rejoice, whereas the voice of unbelief, Jewish, sectarian, and infidel, is silenced, because unable to resist the mighty advance of the Word of the LORD.

A. Whoso is wise will ponder these things, and prefer to be ranked amongst the poor of CHRIST, than amongst the princes of the sects, and will rather choose to knock at the door of the King of Heaven than teach words which do hurt. And so humbling themselves they will understand, not their own merits, strength, or power, but that whatever good they possess is bestowed on them by the mercies of the Lord, Who led the wanderers into the right way; and fed the hungry; loosed and freed him who struggled against the force of sin, and was bound in the chains of habit; Who, sending the medicine of His WORD, healed him who turned away from the Word of GOD and was at the point of death through weariness; Who calmed

the sea and brought into the haven of rest him that was in peril amidst wrecks and storms, and set him amongst a lowly people, that He might bring His sheep into the fold of Paradise. He who remembers and understands all this is wise, though he may not have the learning of this world, and for this cause the LORD Himself hath said, "I thank Thee, O FATHER, LORD of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, FATHER; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

Glory be to the FATHER, the Most Highest; glory be to the SON, the WORD sent to heal us, and save us from destruction; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the gentle wind which stilleth the tempest of our souls. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Collects.

We confess Thy mercies, O LORD, which Thou constantly displayest towards our need, beseeching Thee, that Thou, Who art exalted in the Churches, and sittest at the right hand of the FATHER on His throne, mayest grant us to understand and ponder the secret of such great compassion. (5.) Deliver us, O LORD, out of our distress, and feed the hunger of our souls with the fatness of Thy Word, and shine with Thy clear light on them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. (11.) Let us confess unto Thee, O LORD, Thy mercies, wherewith Thou savest us from destruction, and gathering us out of the lands of error, unitest us with the bond of charity in the harmony of faith. (11.) Send Thy Word, O LORD, and heal us, and deliver us from the destruction to which we are urged forward by the weight of our sins; that as we bear in mind that we have been made by the operation of Thy Word, so we may be made anew by His power. Hear Thou us when we are in trouble and call upon Thee, and grant us freedom from our perilous distress; that praise may go up to Thee from our confession, and we may take delight in telling Thy wondrous works before the children of men. (11.)

Our LORD JESUS CHRIST Thy SON, Who alone ruling all things by the Word of His power, and bearing all the scars of the Cross, brake the iron bars, and smote in pieces the fastenings of the gates of brass, descended to the depths of Hell, shone with the brightness of light unknown on them that sat in the shadow of death, and, Sun of Righteousness, proceeding with quickened Body from the grave, wondrously enlightened our darkness with His rays. (11.) At Thy command, O LORD, let the waves of the storms of our life be silent, and stay Thou our tempest with a breeze of calm and gladness, that guided by Thee as Pilot into the haven of salvation, we may give thanks unto Thee for the works of Thy mercy. (1.)

Psalm 108

TITLE. A Song or Psalm of David. ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, exalted above the heavens, extends His glory over all lands. The Voice of one that feareth GOD. The Voice of the Church at the placing over. And a confession made amongst the people at deliverance, or the Voice of any that feareth. VEN. BEDE. Song refers to the contemplation of Divine things, Psalm to actual works, which, however, accord with Divine commands, which he testifies himself in the first verse: I will sing Ad superpositionem. Perhaps it means the enthroning of CHRIST as King. T and give praise to the Lord. David, moreover, signifies CHRIST the King, Who is to speak in this Psalm. Throughout the whole Psalm the LORD speaks. In the first place He gives thanks to the FATHER, because after the triumph of His Passion He rose again unto everlasting glory: O God, my heart is ready. Secondly, He humbles Himself in His Manhood, wherein He nevertheless displays the power of His own majesty, that thou mayest understand that there are truly two Natures in the one Person of CHRIST the LORD: That Thy beloved may be delivered. It is however to be observed that the 107th (108) Psalm is made up of the closing portions of two other Psalms; because the LORD by His Passion and Resurrection joined to Himself two peoples in one faith, made them fruitful with one grace of the SPIRIT, lifted them up with the same gift of everlasting life. The number one hundred denotes the life which is in the right hand, seven denotes the HOLY GHOST. And these numbers are suitably conjoined in this Psalm, made one out of two, because only spiritual persons merit to receive life everlasting.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when he was ready with glory for the ministry and psalmody of the House of the LORD. And concerning the calling of the Gentiles. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. The calling of the Gentiles. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm setting forth Providence with a song.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Saturday: Matins. Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: III. Nocturn.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Monastic. Lyons. } I will give great thanks unto the LORD * with my

mouth. Ambrosian. As preceding Psalm. Parisian. My heart is ready, O GOD; I will arise early, * I will give thanks unto Thee, O LORD. Mozarabic. I will arise early, * and will give thanks unto the LORD. This Psalm, being merely a cento, made up of Ps. lvii. 7—11, and lx. 5—12, has been already treated in those two places, so that it remains to add here only a very few additional comments. 1 O GOD, my heart is ready, my heart is ready: I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have. C. The words are spoken by the LORD JESUS, Who alone can truly say with this double repetition, My heart is ready, because He, being free from all taint of sin, is ever in perfect conformity with His FATHER's will, and able to praise Him perfectly in word and act; which, however, we also can do, when our sins are remitted through His bounty. My heart is ready, for My will is prepared to undergo the Passion for the salvation of mankind, and that not by force or compulsion, but freely and voluntarily. I, the Shepherd, will die for My sheep; and not with grief, but with cheerfulness; and then I will give praise with My glory, (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) in the brightness of My Resurrection, for which I am ready, as I was ready for the Passion which preceded it.

2 Awake, thou lute, and harp : I myself will awake right early. Here the FATHER answers the call of the SON, or else the SON Himself, in His Godhead, addresses His human Body. In the former view the soul of CHRIST is compared to the psaltery, (LXX., Vulg.) the sound of which comes from above, and His Body to the harp, whose strings are vibrated from below. In the latter, the two epithets are applied to different aspects of CHRIST's humanity, as the psaltery, with its ten strings, denotes His holiness of life in perfect fulfilment of the precepts of the moral law, while the harp is taken as typifying His sufferings; or, as another will have it, the psaltery is the dogmatic teaching of the Gospel as to divine mysteries, the harp its moral precepts, and the example of CHRIST's life and Passion. And to this call, the SON answers, I myself will awake right early. And that not merely in reference to the Resurrection before the dawn, as they mostly take it, but because CHRIST, as the Sun of Righteousness, ever arises on the Christian soul, so that there is never night there, but always day.

3 I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the people : I will sing praises unto thee among the nations. I will give thanks, (confitebor) denoting personal speech. CHRIST declares that He will give thanks amongst the people, because He sojourned in bodily presence amongst the Jews: I will play (psallam) among the nations, tells us that He dealt not in this direct fashion with the Gentiles, but made the music of His Gospel audible to them by His instruments, the Apostles: and again, while the Jews merely listened to His words, the Gentiles carried them out in action. 4 For thy mercy is greater than the heavens : and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. His mercy is greater than the heavens, because it is only by His sustaining grace that the Angels themselves are preserved in holiness and security; His truth reacheth unto the clouds, far beneath those heavens, because He intrusts

the doctrines of His revelation to the preachers of the Word, that they may pour them down in rain upon the earth, to make it fruitful in the harvest of souls. And CHRIST, Who is the FATHER'S mercy and truth, once lower than the Angels in His humiliation, is now greater than them all in majesty, and hath come to His clouds, the Apostles, to fill them with all divine mysteries. His mercy, in salvation, exceeds the deservings of the righteous; His truth, in punishing, awaits those who abide in wilful darkness.

5 Set up thyself, O God, above the heavens : and thy glory above all the earth. 6 That thy beloved may be delivered : let thy right hand save them, and hear thou me. It is not only a prayer for the glorification of CHRIST (whence the use of this Psalm on Ascension Day in the Church of England), but for His manifestation of that glory, for some proof of His might which may help His suffering and timid sheep. When He was exalted upon the Cross, He drew all men to Him, but it needed His exaltation to heaven to deliver His beloved from doubt, and fear, and carnal views of His kingdom, to permit the Pentecostal descent of the HOLY GHOST, to inspire those preachers who should make His glory known, not merely in the narrow circuit of Judea, but over all the earth; that all His beloved, in any distress or anxiety, might call on Him, the Right Hand of the FATHER, to save them with His own Right Hand of atoning propitiation, hearing their prayer at every time of the day.

7 GOD hath spoken in his holiness : I will rejoice therefore, and divide Sichem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. CHRIST divided Shechem, the "shoulder," after His Resurrection, when, bestowing the keys of the kingdom of heaven on the College of the Apostles in the person of S. Peter, He shared with them that government of His Church, that key of the house of David laid upon His shoulder, which He had previously retained in His own hands. He meted out the valley of Succoth, or of "booths," or "tabernacles," when He bestowed on the lowliest Christians, in their earthly bodies of this mortal warfare, a portion of the gifts and graces of the HOLY GHOST. 8 Gilead is mine, and Manasses is mine : Ephraim also is the strength of my head.

9 Judah is my law-giver,
Here we have the twofold possessions of Israel, the cis-Jordanic and trans-Jordanic regions, described by the names of their most powerful occupants, typifying the union of active and contemplative Saints, and of Martyrs and Confessors in the one Church. Gilead, the "heap of witness," besides denoting the Martyrs, as already mentioned under Ps. lx. 7, also stands for the Doctors and teachers of the Church, who bear testimony by their discourses and their lives to the Gospel of CHRIST; while Manasses, "forgetfulness," represents that Jewish people which forgat CHRIST, and all His benefits, but yet remains His, and will one day return to Him; and the name also denotes those sinners who, like the prodigal son, forget for a while their FATHER which is in heaven, but come back at last, weary of

their profitless wanderings. Ephraim, ”fruitfulness,” is the strength of His head, because those who are abundant in good works and humility become the diadem of CHRIST, ”for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign in His land.” Judah is My King. They point to the meaning of Judah, ”praise,” as showing that the Confessors, who praise God by their lives, rule His Church; or, they take it as ”confession,” as teaching us that none are dearer to God or more honoured in heaven than truly penitent sinners, who make confession and strive after amendment. And one will have it that the description of the prowess of Judas Maccabeus is an apt type of the effects of confession: ”for he pursued the wicked, and sought them out, and burnt up those that vexed his people; wherefore the wicked shrank for fear of him, and all the workers of iniquity were troubled, because salvation prospered in his hand.”

Moab is my wash-pot : over Edom will I cast out my shoe; upon Philistia will I triumph. The figure is that of the conqueror, returning from battle, and using Moab as the foot-bath wherein he washes off the blood and dust and sweat, while he flings his shoes to Edom, waiting humbly, as a slave, upon his orders, and utters a shout of victory as the Philistine captives are marched past. The whole verse relates to CHRIST’s conquest of the Gentiles, as the previous ones set forth His hereditary claim upon the allegiance of the Jews. S. Basil the Great suggests that the wash-pot denotes that Moab, once under the ban of exclusion from the congregation of the LORD unto the tenth generation, should be washed clean from all pollution in the laver of Baptism; while another Greek Father, taking Moab as the type of all heathens, declares that they shall be made to glow and boil with the fervour of Divine grace. The change in the condition of Moab may not Mal. i. 11.

inaptly be illustrated by that story of Amasis, king of Egypt, who found himself treated with some disrespect because of his lowly origin, and by way of showing his subjects their folly, cast an image of a god out of the metal of a golden wash-pot which he had used for his feet, which image they worshipped with great reverence, and were then reminded by him that as it was now a sacred idol, not a menial vessel, so he had ceased to be a plebeian, and must be honoured as a king. Over Edom, the ”red land” of sinful heathenism, CHRIST casts abroad the knowledge of the Gospel, the mystery of His Incarnation, so that the aliens became His friends (Vulg.) and are subject unto Him (LXX.), for His ”Name shall be great among the Gentiles.” 10 Who will lead me into the strong city : and who will bring me into Edom?

It is spoken in the person of CHRIST, in His desire to spoil Hell, to enter the strong man’s house, breaking the gates of brass, and smiting the bars of iron in sunder, and then returning thence to Edom, back to the Gentile earth, to have it for His own as a possession. 11 Hast not thou forsaken us, O GOD : and wilt not thou, O GOD, go forth with our hosts? We should do better to read, in the first clause, (with A.V.,

LXX., and Vulg.) Wilt not Thou, O God, Who hast cast us off? The Head, speaking in the person of His members, answers His own question, alleging that none but GOD can achieve the task of conquering hell and converting heathendom. So He spake by the Prophet: ”I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Me; and I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me.” GOD, Who once cast us off, (Vulg. A.V.) driving us from Paradise, and suffering us to be persecuted by tyrants in later days, will not reject us now, but will go forth with our hosts, co-operating in all our strivings after good, enabling His preachers to force their way into the strongly-fenced city of a sinner’s heart, to conquer the Edom of earthly passions, in themselves and others, that they may enter as conquerors also into another and mightier City, ”with a wall great and high, having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels,” into a Land purchased by the red Blood of JESUS.

12 O help us against the enemy : for vain is the help of man. 13 Through GOD we shall do great acts : and it is he that shall tread down our enemies. For against the enemy the A. V. here reads, agreeing with LXX. and Vulgate, and with the Prayer Book version of Ps. lx. 11, from trouble, whence the commentators take occasion to tell us that trouble itself is often the source whence God helps us, when we least suppose so. The whole passage may be taken either of CHRIST, praying to the FATHER for the victorious termination of His Passion, or else of the Church, asking for deliverance from persecution, and freely trusting in His help only, as amply sufficient to achieve triumph, after all human aid, arms, warriors, allies, had been proved of no avail. But He will tread down our enemies, our sins and evil habits, when we call Him to our aid; as He will surely tread down all the enemies of righteousness, devils, and wicked men, in His final judgment.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who delivereth His beloved; glory be to the SON, His Right Hand, set up above the heavens; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, through Whom we shall do great acts. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Make ready our heart, O LORD, to give thanks unto Thy Name; that knowing Thee to have arisen right early, we may journey in good works thither where Thou art set up as Conqueror in the Kingdom. (5.) Fill our ready heart, O LORD, with that gift whereby Thou mayest be pleasured, that we may praise Thee with knowledge of the truth, and formed anew for the better, may rejoice in Thine honour. (11.) O GOD, Who lovest all that is sincere and pure, and dwellest of Thy bountiful goodness in the chaste souls of the faithful; purify us from all taint of sin, that we may alway have our heart ready for Thee, and sing and play worthily unto Thee in Thy glory. (1.)

Psalm 109

TITLE. To the Chief Musician: A Psalm of David. LXX. and Vulgate: To the end, a Psalm of David.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST lay under a curse, that He might deliver us from the curse of the Law. The Voice of CHRIST concerning the Jews and the traitor Judas. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, concerning the Jews, and a curse on the traitor Judas. The Voice of CHRIST concerning Judas and those like him, that vengeance may come upon them, and a summing-up of the Passion of CHRIST. On warning one's neighbour. VEN. BEDE. This well-known title refers to CHRIST the LORD. In the first part the LORD rebukes the Jews, who chose to pay evil for good to their Maker: O God, my praise. Secondly; the wickedness of the traitor Judas, and of the faithless people is narrated, and what things should come upon them for such guilt: Set Thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him. Thirdly; He prays that delivered from the peril of the Passion, He may quickly attain the glory of Resurrection.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when without his knowledge they made Absalom king, who was slain for that reason. To us it sets forth the sufferings of the LORD'S Anointed. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The sufferings of CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm in solitary address.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Saturday: Matins. [Seven Dolours B.V.M.: III. Nocturn.] Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. [Monday before Easter, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve: Matins.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian, Monastic, and Lyons. As preceding Psalm. Seven Dolours: He hath filled me with bitterness * He hath made me drunken with wormwood. Ambrosian. As Psalm 107. [Monday before Easter: Help Me O LORD, my GOD. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Maundy Thursday: They have rewarded Me evil for good, and hatred for My good will. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Good Friday: The mouth of the ungodly * yea, the mouth of

the deceitful, is opened upon Me. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Easter Eve: Judas, when he saw that He was condemned, said, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.] The occasion of this Psalm is unknown. If it be Davidic, it may apply to Doeg, to Shimei, or as the Syriac Psalter seems to hint, to Ahithophel. If it be a Post-Captivity Psalm, which its position in the fifth Book of the Psalter makes at least probable, it is perhaps directed against some leader in the conspiracy against Nehemiah, or against one of those apostate High Priests who brought about the Maccabee revolution. But the use made of it by S. Peter, who expressly declares it to have been prophetic of the treason and punishment of Judas Iscariot (Acts i. 16, 20,) leaves no doubt as to its true intention, which can be evaded only by rejecting the authority of the New Testament in the exposition of the Old.

1 Hold not thy tongue, O GOD of my praise: for the mouth of the ungodly, yea, the mouth of the deceitful is opened upon me. O God of my praise. So Aquila, Symmachus, and S. Jerome treat the words, regarding them as an epithet of God, but the LXX. and Vulgate both take praise as the accusative after the verb, and read, O God, be not silent as to my praise. That is, as they explain it, CHRIST, beset by slanderers on all sides, beseeches the FATHER to bear witness to Him by hastening the glory of the Resurrection, and causing His Gospel to be preached throughout the world, although His voice be drowned for the time by that of Judas, sinner and traitor, handing Him over to His enemies, and saying, ”What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?” And not Judas only, but the unbelieving chief priests and Pharisees, bribing the soldiers who watched at the sepulchre, and telling them, ”Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept.”

A. Honorius. S. Matt. xxvi. 15. 2 And they have spoken against me with false tongues : they compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause. They spoke with false tongues, when they said, ”Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth; tell us, therefore, Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?” They compassed Him about with words of hatred when they said, ”Behold a Man gluttonous, and a winebibber;” ”Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil;” and above all, when they raised the shout, ”Crucify Him, crucify Him,” and joined in the revilings of those who mocked Him on the Cross. Without a cause. And therefore the LORD Himself saith, ”Many good works have I showed you from My FATHER, for which of those works do ye stone Me?” and again, ”If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My FATHER;” but this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ”They hated Me without a cause.”

3 For the love that I had unto them, lo, they take now my contrary part : but I give myself unto prayer. 4 Thus have they rewarded me evil for good : and hatred for my good will. The first words of the Vulgate translation are therefore Deus laudem,

not laudum, as usually printed in our Prayer Book, seemingly to bring the Latin into accord with the English, for it does not exist as a variant. A.

He shows that their sin was greater than that of persecuting an inoffensive and guiltless person, in that they were guilty of black ingratitude to a benefactor. The first grade in wickedness is failing to repay good for good; the second is to repay evil with evil; the third is to repay good with evil. And, contrariwise, the lowest form of righteousness is to repay good for good; the second, not to repay evil for evil; the third and highest kind of virtue is to repay good for evil. And whereas the Jews were determined to adopt the most evil of all these ways, so the LORD opposed them with perfect loving-kindness, and prayed upon the Cross for those who had deliberately doomed Him to death. It was truly evil they gave Him for good, mockings and insults for His preaching, vinegar and gall for His miracles of feeding and His turning water into wine, stripes and wounds for His marvellous cures, crucifixion and death for His raising the dead to life. Hatred for His good will, when, after hearing Him cry, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do; they replied, "He saved others, let Him save Himself, if He be CHRIST, the chosen of GOD. And this is the thought which, expanded from those words of Micah, "O My people, what have I done unto thee? or wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me," has been wrought out into the wonderful Good Friday Reproaches, in use throughout the Western Church.

But I give myself unto prayer. We may take this as denoting merely that prayer was the LORD's sole weapon of defence against His enemies; or we may add, with the Syriac Psalter, for them, and apply it to His intercession on behalf of His foes, and that, we may well believe from the tenor of the prayer He taught His disciples, not once only, but at all times when they took His contrary part, or, as LXX. and Vulgate have it, slandered Him; doing worse thereby, as S. Augustine remarks, than in slaying His Body.

5 Set thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. A. Lyranus. D. C. Ps. xvi. 9. A.

Here commences that terrible series of maledictions, unparalleled in Holy Writ, as directed against an individual sinner, albeit it is little more than a special republication of the national woes denounced in Leviticus xxvi. and Deuteronomy xxviii. S. Chrysostom suggests, with much probability, that the original application is to Jason or Menelaus, the supplanters of Onias in the High Priesthood, whose treason and apostasy brought about the great persecution of Judaism by Antiochus Epiphanes. There are two current Christian expositions of this verse; the more common referring it to Judas Iscariot, a less frequent one to Caiaphas. And whereas a Saint may say, "I have set GOD always before me; for He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall; here Satan takes that place beside the sinner, to insure his fall. The ungodly was over Judas, because he yielded himself up to his rule, Sa-

tan was at his right hand, when he preferred covetousness to wisdom, and money to his salvation. When Satan stood at the right hand of Joshua the High Priest to resist him, ”the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; but no such check took place on behalf of Judas, for he could not have his right hand set free, because he was wise only in the guiltiness of the left hand, and never attained to be saved by confession, but died a despairing suicide.

Satan was at his right hand, or at that of Caiaphas, as a comrade, as his helper and chief strength in the work of betraying and crucifying the LORD, and will stand again at his right hand as accuser in the Judgment to draw down a penalty on the very crimes he suggested. And observe, that as Judas stands for a type of the unbelieving Synagogue, as Peter of the believing Church; so the Jewish nation, having rejected CHRIST as King, had in His stead an ungodly man, the heathen Cæsar, and Pilate as his vicegerent, to be ruler over them, and Satan, instead of GOD, as master of their hearts. Another, adopting in the main the same allegory, takes Barabbas to be the ungodly man of the Psalm. Cardinal Hugo explains the epithet as denoting evil prelates, of whom he distinguishes three classes—covetous, stupid, and mischievous. And he further points out that Satan occupies various positions with regard to different men. He is sometimes on the left hand, when he persecutes in temporal things; sometimes on the right, when he opposes in spiritual matters; he is before the face of those who beware of his wiles, behind the back of such as do not foresee his plots; he is over those whom he rules, and under such as have trampled him beneath their feet.

6 When sentence is given upon him, let him be condemned: and let his prayer be turned into sin. Let him be condemned. The LXX. and Vulgate, closer to the Hebrew, read, Let him go out condemned, that is, leave the court with the sentence of ”Guilty” recorded. They remind us that this doom fell in twofold wise upon Judas. First, when the LORD said, ”Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, answered, and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.” ”And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop, Satan entered into him. He then having received the sop, went immediately out;” out of the fellowship of the Apostles, out of the Catholic Church, out of the state of grace. Again, Judas gave sentence upon himself when he brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests, ”saying, I have

A.

D. C. sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent cast down the pieces of silver in the text and went and hanged himself; going to token of abandonment of religion, and then unto his own place. They discuss a question of prayer of Judas which was turned into that it was that clause of the Our FATHER give us our trespasses, as we forgive against us; inasmuch as he who betrayed good, fell very far short of excus-

ing his order to refer it to the turn his remorse took, indeed of repentance, since there is no doubt of more fatal to his soul than his treason, have surely pardoned had He been introduced. The words also apply to the Jewish name in exile, condemned by the just sentence refused to hear His Son, and whose prayer inasmuch as it clings to a dead and abolished Law, and does not ask in CHRIST'S Name; nay, by using in its services this Psalm and many other like passages of Scripture denouncing woes against the unbelievers, it curses itself, especially when invoking those very woes upon the heads of Christians; and further, by praying for another Messiah than Him Who hath come, it is in fact asking for the manifestation of Anti-Christ. And therefore the Wise Man's sentence falls on them, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

The words have yet a wider range, for they apply to all those who, at the Last Judgment, instead of being greeted with the welcome, "Enter thou into the joy of thy LORD," shall hear the doom, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," and shall be cast out into outer darkness. The prayer of such as these is turned unto sin for other causes besides that first and principal one of not asking in CHRIST'S Name: namely, unreasonable requests, "Ye ask, and have not, because ye ask amiss; human impatience, "Jonah wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live; unbelief, "They pray unto a God that cannot save; carelessness, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD negligently; unworthiness on the part of the officiant, "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself. But the penitent sinner is always heard, like the publican in the temple; and prayer such as that is of much avail for the remission of sins.

7 Let his days be few : and let another take his office. Acts i. 20. S. Hieron. A. This is the verse which S. Peter applies to Judas, and it was fulfilled to the letter, whether we take the first clause as referring to the briefness of his life, or to that of his apostleship, and to the small interval which elapsed between his treason and his suicide. And S. Matthias, being, so far as we know, unconnected with him by any tie of kindred, or even of close acquaintanceship, and altogether unlike him in life and conduct, was in the fullest sense, another, not a second self. The word , here translated office, is more exactly oversight, exactly rendered by the LXX. ἐπισκοπήν, while the Vulgate and the A.V. in the parallel passage of the Acts, translate bishopric. And, as Judas here too represents the Synagogue, we are fitly reminded that its days were very few, for it fell for ever in forty years from the Crucifixion, and the Aaronic priesthood gave way to that of Melchisedek, renewed, as it had begun, amongst the Gentiles. The application of the text to evil rulers in the Christian Church, is sufficiently obvious, and is enforced by several commentators.

8 Let his children be fatherless : and his wife a widow.

A widely current view, based on this passage, is that the money which Judas stole from the bag, and the sum he received in payment of his treason, were intended for the support of his wife and children, who were consenting parties to the means he employed, and were therefore involved in his guilt and punishment. Some, however, dwelling on the absence of any hint to this effect in the Gospels, refer the prophecy to one of the intrusive High Priests of whom mention has been already made, and assume that it was fulfilled in him. Others, following the constant reference to the Israelites as God's children, and to the Jewish Church as His wife, in Holy Writ, say that by refusing CHRIST and taking the side of Judas, the Synagogue became divorced from God, and attached herself to Judas, bringing him a dowry of thirty pieces of silver; and the Israelites, by complicity in his treason, and by imitating his example, became his children, and by reason of their unbelief, can claim him only, and not the Patriarch, son of Jacob, as their ancestor, whence they take the name of Jews. Cardinal Hugo, applying the psalm to wicked Bishops, observes that it is far better for a See to be widowed and the flock pastorless, than to be under the rule of an evil Prelate. But one ancient commentator takes the words in a good sense. Let the children of Satan be orphaned by their father's overthrow, and consequent desertion of them, and let his wife, to wit, any Church which has fallen into unbelief or heresy, be widowed, that, like Ruth, she may be wedded anew to the Prince of Bethlehem. Further, the soul and the works of each man may be styled his wife and children, and yield a similar meaning. It may be added that this verse, taken in connection with the parable of Dives and Lazarus, has served as an argument

A. A. A. The Gloss. for the consciousness of the departed as to the state of their kindred, as it seems to imply an aggravation of the curse on the dead sinner. Yet, in truth, it need not denote so much, but only the increased pain at the time of death on the one hand, and also the more solemn warning thus afforded to other sinners by seeing the iniquity of the father thus visited upon the children. 9 Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread : let them seek it also out of desolate places. A. Whether Judas had children, we know not, but it is certain that if he had, his descendants must have been involved in the common ruin and exile of the whole guilty nation, of which Cain, "a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth," because of the slaughter of righteous Abel, was a type. So Medea, in the tragedy, imprecates curses on her faithless husband:

Seneca. Medea, i. 19. Mihi pejus aliquid, quod precer sponso malum : Vivat : per urbes crret ignotas egens, Exul, pavens, invisus, incerti laris. Worse evil yet I pray for on my spouse, Let him still live, through strange towns roam in want, Exiled, suspected, cowering, with no home. Out of desolate places. The A.V., adding the word their, clears up the meaning of this clause; which is, that they are not only to be exiled beggars, but to leave their home behind in ruins; a terrible judgment, slurred over by the LXX. and Vulgate, which merely read, Let them be cast out of

their dwellings. How bitterly the judgment of mendicancy was fulfilled, we may learn from one scornful line of the great Roman satirist (not the sole testimony of the kind extant,) where he depicts them as occupying the place of the modern gipsy: Arcanam Judæa tremens mendicat in aurem.

Judea, crouching, begs in the private ear. S. Hieron. in Sophon. And S. Jerome draws a vivid picture of the scene on the last day of the siege, when the city was actually taken, and the multitude assembled, of both sexes and all ages and ranks, to lament over the ruined Temple, and were obliged to purchase even that sad gratification with bribes to the Roman soldiery. Even in his own day, the Saint adds, the same rule prevailed. No Jews entered Jerusalem save to mourn, and they had to pay heavily for licence to do even that, so that they who had in that place bought CHRIST's Blood, were now compelled to buy their own tears; thus giving a new and yet more terrible reading to the lament of their fathers on the fall of the first Temple, "We have drunk our water for money." 10 Let the extortioner consume all that he hath : and let the stranger spoil his labour.

They raise here again the question concerning Judas, how this curse can apply to him, if he shared in the common poverty of the Apostles, having left all to follow CHRIST. And the suggested answer is that he merely transferred his possessions to his family, and followed CHRIST in the hope of stealing from the contributions made to the common stock. The word translated consume ought rather to be lay snares for, entangling the debtor in the meshes of bonds and obligations. The LXX. and Vulgate however read search out, and we are reminded of the avidity with which the soldiers of Titus ransacked the most unlikely places of the captured city in search of gold. The mystical interpretation sees the devil in the usurer of this verse, because he gives but scanty and deceitful loans, intending to exact in return the true riches of the soul with heavy interest. "Beware," observes a Saint, "of that usurer, who searches out the substance of thy soul, if thou have incurred the debt of any graver sin, who shuts thy heart up in the ground, and buries thy soul under that turf wherewith thou didst hide thy gold. There are four ways of escaping this extortioner. First, to acquire holiness, not earthly riches. Secondly, to store one's treasure in heaven, not on earth. Thirdly, to be merciful to our own debtors. Fourthly, to take refuge with CHRIST, Who will pay our debt, or punish our remorseless creditor. And let the stranger spoil his labour.

Literally, the money which Judas earned by his treason was not saved even for his family, but expended upon a field "to bury strangers in. Spoken of the Jews, we may remember not only the vast spoils carried off by the army of Titus, (so great that the value of gold was for a time depreciated one-half throughout Syria by the sudden influx), and the legal alienation of the soil of Jerusalem by Hadrian's erection of it into a colony, but the cruel exactions, banishments, and massacres to which they were subjected again and again: as during the march of the First

Crusade; in France under Philip Augustus, S. Louis, and Philip the Fair; in England under Richard I., Henry III., and Edward I.; in Spain from the establishment to the fall of the Inquisition, and their subtler, but not less real loss of nobility of character, by the constant exercise of sordid methods of gain. The allegorical exposition takes the spoiling strangers to be evil spirits, who plunder the spiritual riches of the soul.

A. S. Ambros. lib. ii. in S. Jacob. cap. 5. Reading for . 11 Let there be no man to pity him : nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children. It was so, when the chief priests turned with a sneer from the miserable Judas in his hour of remorse; and from looking at his fate, again our eyes are directed to the unparalleled disasters of the Jews. No ally dared to join himself to them against Titus; even Agrippa forsook his kindred to secure himself with the Romans. Titus, powerful in all else with his soldiery, could not check their savage cruelty in the siege and sack of Jerusalem; no deliverer ever presented himself, save that false Messiah, Bar-cochab, who renewed for his people, under Hadrian, the ruin which had fallen on the previous generation under Titus; no Prophet from then till now has arisen to bring a word of comfort to the hapless race; while history records for us the fact that such children as were not involved in the well-nigh indiscriminate slaughter of their parents by Titus, were sold into slavery by the conquerors.

12 Let his posterity be destroyed : and in the next generation let his name be clean put out. In the war which closed with the capture of the Holy City and the massacre in Cyrene, the number of Jews who perished in time of battle, exclusive of the victims of famine and pestilence, was one million three hundred and fifty-six thousand, of whom eleven hundred thousand fell in Jerusalem alone. In the next generation, the revolt of Bar-cochab cost, in like manner, five hundred and eighty thousand lives, and terminated for ever the national polity of the Jews. Mystically, they tell us of the cessation of the Aaronic priesthood, and the transfer of religious supremacy from the lineal to the spiritual descendants of Abraham, ”which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” But amongst that new spiritual offspring, no children of Judas in the faith are reckoned, so that he alone of the Apostles begat no sons in the Gospel. There is probably a reference here to the genealogical records and pedigrees, now so far lost by the Jews that they are unable to trace their descent with accuracy, or else to the census of the population of Canaan, whence the names of the Jewish exiles were at once expunged, in a single generation, by the Roman authorities. They tell us that a spiritual warning may be drawn from the verse, urging us to cut off the earliest suggestions of temptation and evil thoughts, that perishing in the first generation, they may be unable to give birth to a progeny of sins.

S. John i. 13. 13 Let the wickedness of his fathers be had in remembrance in the sight of the LORD : and let not the sin of his mother be done away. 14 Let them alway be before the LORD : that he may root out the memorial of them from off the

earth; The wickedness of previous generations was an ever accumulating mass, ready to fall at the given time upon their guilty descendants, and therefore the LORD said, ”That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the porch and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.” The sinful mother of that evil race was the Synagogue, or else Jerusalem itself as the metropolis of the Aaronic polity, whereof Jeremiah saith, ”Jerusalem hath grievously sinned.” And the curse here imprecated does not contradict that other saying, ”The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son,” since the Jews perished for their own sins, for their imitation of the guilt of their forefathers, whereas such as turned to the LORD were saved, as in that marvellous escape of the little band of Christians from the siege of Jerusalem.

Their guilt shall be ever before the Lord, either in the sense of His not forgetting them, or in that of standing in His presence as an object of punishment. Again, it may be taken of the obstinate resistance of these sinners to GOD, that they, as it were, oppose Him face to face. And there is a sense in which the imprecation has been thoroughly fulfilled, for the Church in her recitation of the Creeds, and her lection of the Gospels, as well as in her commemoration of the Martyrs, makes daily mention before GOD of the sin perpetuated in the rejection of CHRIST; and in her prayer for the conversion of Israel, implores that the name of Jew and the memory of the Law may be blotted out for ever by the absorption of the whole race into the Christian fold. 15 And that, because his mind was not to do good : but persecuted the poor helpless man, that he might slay him that was vexed at the heart.

The suggestion that we may have here a primary reference to the murder of the High Priest Onias III. at the instigation of Menelaus, one of his supplanters in office, (as S. Chrysostom appears to think), is encouraged by the play upon his name discoverable in the Hebrew word for needy (A.V.) in this place, ’oni. But in the deeper sense, they take the words as descriptive of the conspiracy against CHRIST; Who, Lam. i. s. A. 2 Cor. viii. 9. ”though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich;” Who was vexed at the heart, when He wept over Jerusalem, and when during the Agony in the Garden, He said, ”My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” The word man too, may be emphatic, reminding us how Pilate said, ”Behold the Man,” and the people replied, ”Crucify Him, crucify Him.”

16 His delight was in cursing, and it shall happen unto him : he loved not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him. 17 He clothed himself with cursing, like as with a raiment : and it shall come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

Bellarmine. Judas, who chose to gratify his avarice, and the Jews, who invoked the vengeance of CHRIST's Blood on themselves and their children, alike loved and invited a curse, and put themselves far from Him Whom they did not love, the Blessing of the whole universe. The story of the apostasy, in the very moment of consummating his martyrdom, of the priest Sapritius, who had valiantly endured torture for the Name of CHRIST in the persecution of Valerian, but obstinately refused to pardon his former friend Nicephorus, who vainly besought him by letter, by the intercession of common friends, and finally by kneeling to him as he went from the rack to the block, furnishes another example of one who loved not blessing, and therefore found it far from him when it seemed within his grasp. He who loves sin, the parent of a curse, loves the curse too. And therefore Moses said to the children of Israel, "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your GOD, which I command you this day : and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your GOD, but turn aside out of the way. And it shall come, &c. This rendering, which is also that of the A.V., is incorrect, as the tense is past, as rightly translated by LXX. and Vulgate, It came, &c.

The latter part of the seventeenth verse therefore carries on the idea in the first clause, and depicts sin as the garment, water, and oil of the offender. The majority of the commentators take these three words as denoting various degrees of persistency in guilt. Thus a Greek Father tells us that raiment denotes the continual clinging of sin; water, its vehement contact, as of a drenching torrent; oil, the difficulty of washing away its effects. Another, not very dissimilarly, bids us observe the complete and close external pressure of the first, the internal diffusion of the second when swallowed, the penetration of the third. Not a few have supposed that the words It came into his bowels like water, bear a reference to the "water of jealousy," of which the priest had to say to a suspected adulteress, "This water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels to make thy belly to swell and thy thigh to rot. But there then arises the difficulty of finding any similar allusion in the raiment and the oil, and it seems therefore better to understand all three as denoting the acquiescence and pleasure of the sinner in his iniquity, so that it not only covers him, but is as drink to his thirsty soul, or as anointing to his body, or marrow to his bones. So Apollinarius translates it:

Fell cursing he put on, like to a robe, It came as water to a thirsty man Into his bowels, fattening his bones As suited him, like oil. And then the words will severally denote the corruption of the body, which is outward, the depravation of the soul, flooded internally with sin, the delight of the senses and will in that sin, signified by the oil, penetrating to the very bones, or strongest faculties of the soul, enervating and corrupting them; while Christians, on the other hand, have put on CHRIST, drink from Him the living water of the Rock, and have an unction from the Holy

One. 18 Let it be unto him as the cloke that he hath upon him : and as the girdle that he is alway girded withal.

This is the clinging vesture of sin, more fatal than that fabled shirt of Nessus which ate into the mighty form of Hercules; "the cloke, rolled in bloodshed, which shall be for burning, fuel of fire," of which the Prophet speaks. It is not merely to envelop the sinner, but to be closely bound about him with a girdle, the girdle of an evil will, which makes him prompt and succinct for running the race of iniquity. Some have taken the word, with a quaint literalism, as denoting that the girdle of Judas was the instrument of his suicide by hanging. We have a plentiful choice of other girdles than this one of sin : for there is that of which we read, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." There is the girdle of penitence, that leathern belt which the Baptist wore, in token of mortification of the flesh; that of continence, whereof the LORD saith, "Let your loins be girded about;" the girdle of might, "Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty;" and the girdle of humility, the towel wherewith the LORD girded Himself when He washed the feet of His disciples. Any of these will serve to fasten closely to us that righteousness of CHRIST which we must needs put on.

19 Let it thus happen from the LORD unto mine enemies : and to those that speak evil against my soul. L. The Vulgate, apparently from a trifling error in reading the LXX., turns the former clause here, This is the work of them that slander me unto the Lord, and the commentators have been at some pains to explain the passage. But as they agree, for the most part in taking work to mean reward, or hire of work, and interpret the remainder as equivalent to the latter part of the verse in meaning, there is little difference between the Latins and Greeks in their exposition. D. C. Stress is, however, variously laid on the word soul, some taking it, and rightly, as meaning life, and the words therefore A. C. as referring to the false charges against CHRIST, while others prefer to point to various heresies as to the Person of CHRIST, Hugo Card. such as those of the Docetæ, the Arians, Eutychians, &c., and one expositor supposes that the word is used in contradistinction to body, because the charges against our LORD's poverty Haymo. and the like, having reference to His human form, were true D. C. in fact, however hostile in application. But one moral lesson applies to all the interpretations alike, the deadly peril of joining Satan in his office of accuser, and slandering the righteous.

20 But deal thou with me, O LORD GOD, according unto thy Name : for sweet is thy mercy. Bellarmine. Here the tone of the Psalm changes, and the LORD turns from the thought of His enemies to make prayer to His FATHER for Himself and His Body the Church. Deal Thou with Me. The LXX. and Vulgate, better, act with Me, (ποίησον μετ' ἐμοῦ, fac mecum,) that is, help Me, take My part, by granting Me a speedy and glorious Resurrection. And while CHRIST can say, in His manhood, Act with Me, so all His disciples can do, because GOD and they are fellow-workers ; S.

John v. 19. He only can say it as GOD too, for "what things soever He Bellarmine. [the FATHER] doeth, these also doeth the SON likewise." Ay. For sweet is Thy mercy. If CHRIST, Who suffered all the bitterness of the Passion for us, can use these words, much more we, whom He has redeemed by His free grace alone, D. C. for whose sake He took upon Him our flesh, and gave Himself a ransom for us. His justice is terrible, but His mercy is sweet.

O the depth, the breadth, the height, Of Thy love's extension, JESU, O the wondrous might Of Thy condescension; Innocency's purest bloom, All Thy foes refuting, Bearing all our sorrows' doom, All our sins' imputing. Mine the while the joys of life, Thine its tribulation; Mine the glory of the strife, Thine the consternation; Mine the banquet's sweetness all, Thine the self-devotion, Thine the vinegar and gall For Thy bitter potion. The Hymn, Jesu mi dulcissime. 21 O deliver me, for I am helpless and poor : and my heart is wounded within me. There would seem here, when we take the verse as spoken in the Person of CHRIST, a special reference to His words on the eve of the Passion: "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? FATHER, save Me from this hour." The Psalmist, by applying to himself the same three epithets as those in the fifteenth verse, identifies himself as the object of the persecution there described.

And My heart is wounded within Me. Therefore, as His heart could be wounded, or troubled, as LXX. and Vulgate take it, we are assured that He was very Man, and can trust in His entire sympathy. His heart was wounded, not only by the sorrows of the Passion, but with the wound of love, as well as with the spear-thrust on the Cross. And we have a further reference, it may be, to the cause assigned by modern science as the immediate one of His death, "rupture of the heart from agony of mind." When the Church, His Body, adopts these words as her own, or any suffering member thereof does the like, the answer is clear and consoling, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word;" fitly said, because nought so troubles and wounds the heart of man as the thought of his own sin and God's judgment.

C. The Gloss. Stroud, Physical Cause of CHRIST' Death. Agellius. 22 I go hence like the shadow that departeth : and am driven away as the grasshopper. The LORD, when seized by the soldiers in the garden, was carried away from the very midst of His disciples, as swiftly and silently as the clouds depart when the sun breaks out; or rather, as the shadows at sunset lengthen out and melt away into the darkness. And as the grasshopper, or rather locust, is easily driven from place to place, either by the wind, or by beaters with a stick, to force it off plants, so CHRIST was hunted S. Greg. M. Mor. iii. 12. The Gloss. S. Bruno Carth. Job xxxix. 20.

from Bethlehem and Nazareth into Egypt, pursued by enemies in Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Jerusalem, dragged on the very night of His arrest to Annas, and Ca-

iaphas, and Pilate, and Herod, driven out again, bearing His Cross, to Calvary, thence removed again to the grave, whence, as a locust saves itself from its foes by a sudden spring, the LORD escaped by the power of His Resurrection. And we may also take the words as spoken by Him on behalf of His Body, and specially with regard to the manner in which all His Apostles, "afraid as a grasshopper," forsook Him and fled, according to that saying, "Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are." And, having regard to the speed with which sudden swarms of locusts vanish, they apply the verse also to the Martyrs of a somewhat later day, at times fleeing from city to city, but also swept by multitudes into destruction by the fierce storms of persecution; and we may take it of a single soul also, startled out of its fancied security by the sudden thought of GOD's righteousness.

23 My knees are weak through fasting : my flesh is dried up for want of fatness. A. We have here a brief account of the suffering and sorrowful life of CHRIST, Whose ministry began and ended with a long fast, that of the temptation in the wilderness, and that which lay between the Last Supper and the meal of broiled fish and honeycomb of which He partook after His Resurrection. The second clause may refer either to the wasting of His Body from long toil and austerity, as the reading above given and the A.V. both imply, or with LXX., Symmachus, and Vulgate, for lack of oil, disused in time of mourning; as we read, "Put on now mourning apparel, and anoint thyself not with oil;" so that the phrase will denote the continual grief of Him Whom we know as the Man of Sorrows. S. Augustine finds a mystical reference to the Apostles, wavering in their faith at the time of the Passion, because of their sudden loss of spiritual refreshment, and the withdrawal of the Bread of Life from them, and from the lack of that which later refreshed and strengthened them, the unction of the HOLY GHOST. There is, however, another interpretation, taking the words as those of the Church, asking to be heard, because she makes her prayer in precise accordance with GOD's command, "Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning."

24 I became also a reproach unto them : they that looked upon me shaken their heads. One citation from the Gospels exhausts all the needful comment on this verse: "And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross." 25 Help me, O LORD my GOD: O save me according to thy mercy; 26 And they shall know, how that this is thy hand: and that thou, LORD, hast done it.

Herein CHRIST prays for His own speedy Resurrection, and for His Church in all time of her need; and in this latter sense He rightly says, According to Thy mercy, not Thy justice, as teaching us never to trust in our own righteousness, or ability to

stand before the searching judgment of God, but in His grace and loving-kindness only. In the former sense, one special object of the Resurrection was to teach the Jews that they had been but the instruments of God's will in bringing the Passion about, for it was His hand; even as CHRIST spake to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above," and that He died, not because they were able to slay Him, but because He had power to lay down His life, and to take it again. Others refer the hand more especially to the deliverance in the Resurrection, for it was no theft of the disciples, but a divine miracle, which caused the disappearance of the sacred Body from the tomb. Yet again, these considerations were to lead them to a further one, that the Man they had rejected was indeed the Right Hand of God, made in time according to His humanity, but the eternal Creator by Whom the FATHER made and did all things, especially the salvation of mankind. And one at least did know that, even in the darkest hour of the Passion, exclaiming, "Truly this was the Son of God."

A. S. Prosper. Ric. Hamp. 27 Though they curse, yet bless thou: and let them be confounded that rise up against me; but let thy servant rejoice. A very ancient explanation of this verse is that its first clause has special reference to the denunciations in the Synagogue worship directed against CHRIST and His disciples, contrasted with the songs of praise and benediction of His Name in the services of the Church. But we may keep closer to the former verse by continuing to interpret this one of the Passion, of the blasphemy then spoken against CHRIST, and above all, of His Crucifixion ("for he that is hanged is accursed of God,") wherein He was "made a curse for us," and of God's reversal of that curse by the Resurrection and Ascension of His Son; so that all those Jews who rose up against Him were confounded, some with that evil confusion which comes of refuted falsehood and vain resistance to overwhelming chastisement, others with that godly "shame which is glory and grace," working repentance unto salvation, so that CHRIST, the Servant of GOD, Who fulfilled His will as none others can do, rejoices in the increase of His Church, blessed by the FATHER with all spiritual might and benediction.

28 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame: and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a cloke. A cloke. This word sufficiently represents the Hebrew, which denotes a large mantle worn over other raiment. But the LXX. and Vulgate translate it a double garment, διπλοΐδα, diploide, that is, either lined, or so large as to be capable of being folded about the person. And the commentators, besides the obvious sense of the completeness of the shame invoked, dwell particularly on this notion: Let it be double, observes one, because the Jews are now made naked to their shame, but if they be clothed with a knowledge of their own Law and also of the Gospel which has succeeded it, they will repent. If not, their confusion will still be double, before GOD and man, in this world and the next, in soul and body, by the loss of temple and country, for Jerusalem "hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins." Double also shall she receive

in reward for repentance, when it shall be said to her, "Put off, O Jerusalem, the garment of thy mourning and affliction, and put on the comeliness of the glory that cometh from GOD for ever. Cast about thee a double garment of the righteousness which cometh from GOD, and set a diadem on thine head of the glory of the Everlasting." And that because GOD saith unto all such as have been put to this shame and confusion, "For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them."

29 As for me, I will give great thanks unto the LORD with my mouth: and praise him among the multitude; Compare Horace, Ep. i. 17. Contra, quem duplici panno patientia velat, Mirabor. On the other hand, I will admire him, Whom patience clothes in double-folded robe. 30 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor : to save his soul from unrighteous judges.

This is spoken in contrast to the confusion of the ungodly. While they are awed and dumbfounded, CHRIST and His elect will give great thanks to the FATHER, and praise Him among the multitude that cannot be numbered, in the Heavenly Jerusalem, as well as in the midst of countless faithful hearts even here; and that for the great unlikeness between Him and the false judge at whose right hand Satan stands, for while the one seeks to slay the poor helpless man, the other saves him from his judges. And from this verse Cardinal Hugo takes occasion to blame such as recite their office in private only, and inaudibly, instead of joining with clear utterance in the public service of the Church. There is a difference, moreover, in the Hebrew of the two verses where the phrase at his right hand occurs, which is lost in all the versions. In the former, verse 5, it is -, "against his right hand," implying opposition, while here it is , "at the right hand," denoting co-operation, which the FATHER gave His Son, the Poor, as He stood before Caiaphas and Pilate, witnessing His good confession, and as the Son Himself does now, as from His throne on the right hand of God He aids every one that is poor in spirit, to save them from the judges of their soul, (as the A.V. margin rightly translates the closing words of the Psalm,) those emperors and rulers who endeavoured to stamp out Christianity of old by fierce persecutions, those unbelievers and false brethren of a later time who equally strive against the inner life and soul of the Church, those evil spirits who are the suggesters and assistants of both one and the other conspiracy against the Faith.

Glory be to the FATHER, the God of our praise; glory be to the Son, the Poor Man, Who is the right Hand of God; glory be to the Holy Ghost, the sweet mercy of the Lord. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O God of unequalled mercy, Who didst vouchsafe to undergo a curse, that Thou

mightest save us from the curse of the Law, we beseech Thee that dealing with us in mercy for Thy Name's sake, Thou wouldst deliver us from the sins which pursue us and the ungodly which molest us. (5.) Thine enemies spake evil against Thee, O Lord, then too when with crafty flattery they praised Thee as a good Master. Thou Who didst endure to be compassed and beset U A. with their words of hatred, receive now, we humbly beseech Thee, the prayers of our confession. (11.) O CHRIST, unutterable WORD of GOD the FATHER, with Whom the tongue of the ungodly was deceitful, committing a heinous crime, that they might shed innocent blood, grant Thy Church the word of peace, that we who strive to conquer the world after Thine example, may attain after our departure to behold the heavens. (11.)

Only-begotten SON of GOD, Whose knees were weak through fasting, and Whose flesh was changed for lack of oil, cause us to run effectually after Thee for the perfume of Thine ointments, that Thou Who wast a reproach unto our enemies, mayest become the power of our salvation. (11.) Mozarabic, for S. Leocadia, M. Glorious and merciful LORD, Who didst grant unto blessed Leocadia to give great thanks unto Thee with her mouth, and didst will to be praised by her confession in the midst of the righteous, that Thou mightest glorify her, making her both confess Thee on earth, and rejoice in the assembly of the Saints; we beseech the gift of Thy bounty, that Thou wouldst grant us through her prayers to be purged from the taint of sin, to be delivered from everlasting burnings, and to attain the bliss of Thy glory. (11.) Thou, O LORD, Who art sweet in mercy, and makest glad with Thy good Spirit our heart troubled within us by the motions of our sins, mercifully help and save us, that Thy servants may rejoice in Thee, and cause us to give great thanks unto Thee, O LORD, for evermore. (1.)

Psalm 110

TITLE. A Psalm of David. ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST was born from the spiritual womb of GOD the FATHER, before the morning star. The Voice of the Church and of CHRIST to the FATHER. The Voice of the Church concerning the FATHER and the SON, or concerning the Nativity of CHRIST. The Promise of the FATHER to the SON. A prophecy of future victory, and concerning the Advent or Incarnation of the LORD. The Voice of the Church praising GOD. It is sung concerning CHRIST the LORD, as He Himself explains to the Pharisees. Concerning the Birthday of the LORD. VEN. BEDE. This Psalm sings most fully and briefly of the Incarnation and Godhead of the LORD. In the first verse the Prophet narrates what the FATHER said unto the SON, showing at once the nature of Godhead and Manhood, The Lord said, &c. In the second division, the FATHER, to some extent, according to the measure of our capacity, declares the nature of that Godhead: With Thee the beginning. In the third part, the Prophet again speaks until the end, again showing the form of His Manhood, The Lord sware, &c.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, concerning the throne of the LORD, and His glorious power. A prophecy also of CHRIST, and of His triumph over the adversary. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The Victory of CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm in narrative; also, a Psalm of statement with prophecy.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Sunday: Vespers. [Feasts of Our LORD, Corpus Christi, and Feasts of Saints: Vespers. Common of Apostles: II. Vespers.] Parisian. } Sunday: Vespers, and II. Vespers of Festivals. Lyons.

Antiphons.
The Festival Antiphons to this Psalm in the Gregorian and Monastic uses are for the most part much varied, and borrowed from the first Lauds Psalm, that is, Psalm 93, so that it will suffice to give the chief deviations from this rule. The first verse of the Psalm is the normal Sunday Antiphon in all the rites. Gregorian. [Christmas Day: II. Vespers. With Thee is the beginning in the day of Thy power, in the splendour of the Saints; from the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. Corpus Christi: CHRIST the LORD, a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, offered

bread and wine. Common of Apostles: II. Vespers. The LORD sware and will not repent. Thou art a Priest for ever.] Ambrosian. [Christmas Day. From the womb * before the morning star have I begotten Thee.] Mozarabic. With Thee is the beginning in the day of Thy power.

The character of this Psalm, as a Messianic prophecy, has no parallel throughout the Psalter. In the case of all the others, even such as are most exalted in their language and imagery, or closest in detail to the incidents of the Gospel, there is always some historical groundwork, known or presumable, constituting the primary application of the poem, as in Psalms ii., xxii., xlv., lxxii. and lxxxix. But in this instance no such reference can be extracted by any ingenuity from the course of Israelite history. To take one point only, the union of the kingdom and priesthood in one person does not occur till the reign of John Hyrcanus, or perhaps his successor Aristobulus, and those eminent persons were, on the one hand, not descendants of David, nor on the other, priests of an order differing from the Aaronic, inasmuch as they were of the house of Phinehas. And the citation of the Psalm by Our LORD to the Pharisees establishes incontestably that in those days no idea that there was a past S. Just. Mart. c. Tryph. xxxiii. 83. Tertuli. c. Marcion. v. 9. S. Chrysost. R. Ishaki. De Muis.

2 Sam. vi. 17, 18, comp. 1 Chron. xvi. 1. 1 Kings viii. 14, 62. 1 Sam. xvi. 13. 1 Kings i. 34, 39.

historical application of it possible was current. No doubt existed then of the Davidic authorship, nor of the Messianic intention. The early Jewish testimonies to the latter of these facts are abundant and emphatic. Thus the Talmud quotes this Psalm to prove that ”GOD placed King Messiah at His right hand; so too in the Midrash Tehillim, no fewer than three times, the same use is made of it. Also R. Barachias, R. Jonathan, R. Moses Hadarschan, R. Moses Nachmanides, R. Levi, R. Saadias Gaon, R. Simeon (who sees here the union of Jews and Gentiles in one realm under Messiah), the books Zohar and Bereshith Rabba, adopt the same view. But the exigencies of controversy soon drove the Jews to find another explanation, and, accordingly, in S. Justin Martyr’s time the current Rabbinical view referred the Psalm to Hezekiah. Somewhat later, without actually abandoning this theory, they set up others, as that Abraham, David, or Zerubbabel was intended; and that David is the object of the Psalm is the present most authoritative theory amongst them, defended by the argument of R. Kimchi and Aben-Ezra, that the title must be understood as meaning ”A Psalm for, or concerning David.

This is the opinion maintained by a school of modern criticism which represents David as having actually been the head of the Priesthood as well as of the temporal kingdom, as it is at least certain that he lifted the former out of the depressed condition into which it had sunk after the slaughter at Nob in Saul’s reign, and that he reconstructed, amplified, and ritualized the Levitical ceremonial. But this very

circumstance, when more closely examined, makes against the theory. All experience points to the fact that a powerful temporal ruler, when desirous to subject the religion of the State to his purposes, depresses, instead of exalting the priesthood, to avoid the chance of rivalry, as may be clearly seen in a remarkable example which at first seems to make the other way, the dealings of Louis XIV. with the Church of France; not to cite those of Peter the Great in Russia, far less of Henry VIII. or Elizabeth in England. There appears, no doubt, a highly religious sanction and character investing David and Solomon, who are described as the principal officiants at great religious festivals (though the words do not fairly imply that they were the actual ministers of sacrifice on such occasions), and in a less degree to Hezekiah and Josiah as religious reformers.

But in the case of the two former monarchs, it is to be observed that they had both been anointed by persons recognized as seers, to wit, Samuel and Nathan, the latter of whom is expressly coupled with Zadok, the actual conferrer of Solomon's regal unction, and were thus regarded as having a specially sacred character, further increased by their own prophetic rank. But no trace of this ecclesiastical authority is discoverable in Saul, nor yet in Rehoboam or his successors, and the history of Uzziah teaches us that this is no accident, and we must therefore look to the Prophetic office, not the priestly one, as that which meets us in the case of David and Solomon. It is clear from the action of Elijah at Carmel, and perhaps from Samuel's conduct at an earlier date, that extraordinary representatives of GOD were not debarred from discharging sacerdotal functions, albeit they were of other tribes than Levi. The one matter of importance was, that no one should usurp this office; but a man undoubtedly "called of

Because he is styled "My Lord" in Gen. xxiii. 6.

GOD," who was able to prove his commission by prophecy and miracle, could not be put on a footing with Korah or Uzziah. And hence we may fairly conclude that no claim to be a Priest was likely to be put forward by David himself, or by any one else on his behalf; while the further argument from the inapplicability of the lofty expressions of the first verse to him, is pressed by S. Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost. The sixfold citation of the Psalm in the New Testament, thrice in the Gospels, once in the Acts, and twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (besides three additional references, distinct enough, though not verbal quotations,) gives it unusual prominence and importance, and has led to much ingenuity on the part of modern rationalists in order to avoid admission of its prophetic and Messianic character. In particular, it is argued against the use made of the Psalm by CHRIST, that in citing it as David's, and in the special sense in which He did so, He may either have employed the word David in the same technical and indeterminate sense which is still current when the phrase "Psalms of David" is used as equivalent to the Psalter; or Hemay have been simply accommodating Himself to the current

view of the time, without in any way pledging Himself to its correctness, but taking the Pharisees on their own ground, and routing them there;

or lastly, that as He has clearly stated that in His human nature He does not possess the faculty of omniscience, and was not habitually conscious of facts which did not come within the sphere of His human knowledge, He may therefore have erred on a point of literary criticism such as this. But the first and second of these views are contradicted by the singularly explicit language of one of the Gospel citations, where CHRIST says, "For David himself said by the HOLY GHOST, The LORD said unto my LORD," &c., words which cannot be diluted in any vague fashion. And as regards the third, those critics who, accepting the truth of CHRIST's Godhead, nevertheless advance the theory of His fallibility, confound two perfectly distinct ideas, limitation of knowledge, and error by reason of such limitation, albeit the one does not in the least connote or involve the other. There is no hint discoverable in the New Testament that CHRIST did not know perfectly and unerringly all that He professed to know, and there is only one point which He excludes from the compass of His knowledge, at the same time that He gives many details on the subject of which it is part which are undiscoverable by human investigation. But one difficulty connected with His use of the verse remains unsolved, that is, why His question should have put the Pharisees to silence;

as the current Messianic theory of that day recognized Messiah as a lineal descendant of David, who was to surpass His ancestor in prowess, empire, and spiritual gifts; and it seems not a little strange that they should not have offered this solution of the question, as He does not here raise the far more important debate as to His own claim to be the Messiah. It may be that the key to this problem lies in the narrative of our LORD's trial before the Sanhedrim, for in reply to His saying, "Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of GOD; then said they all, Art Thou then the Son of GOD? using a title which He had not employed, and charging Him with blasphemy for accepting it. Hence we may not unreasonably conjecture that at least some leading Rabbins may have reached that stage of the

Acts ii. 34. S. Matt. xxii. 43. S. Mark xii. 36. S. Luke xx. 42. Heb. i. 13: v. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Heb. vii. 17, 21. Messianic idea which recognized a divine element in the coming Prince of the House of David, some intimate union of Him with the Memra-Jahvêh, the WORD of GOD; while the remainder looked only for a temporal king and victor. And the object of the question would then be precisely analogous to S. Paul's availing himself of the rivalry between the Pharisees and Sadducees: namely, to force on the Rabbins an admission that they were not agreed amongst themselves on the character and prerogatives of Messiah, all-important as such an inquiry was, and had therefore no right to claim submission to their interpretation of Scripture, or to test orthodoxy thereby. It is precisely because the union of the

kingly and priestly offices in Messiah is a phase in the gradual development of the whole doctrine of the Anointed One apparently much beyond the stage it had reached in the time of David, that historical doubts have been raised as to the date of this Psalm. But it is sufficiently evident that the Pharisees and the Apostles had by no means assimilated this particular tenet even after Psalm 110 had been, to say the least, some centuries in use, and therefore we are not entitled to do more than say that the prophecy in question, whenever delivered, had not seized hold of the national mind.

1 The LORD said unto my LORD: Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool. S. John i. 1.

The opening words of this revelation to the Psalmist, literally rendered, are, the oracle of Jehovah unto my Lord, (Adoni,) a sudden winging of the Prophet's flight to the loftiest mysteries of Divine contemplation, only to be paralleled by that like commencement, "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with GOD, and the WORD was GOD. The FATHER saith unto the SON that which the one did not utter with the mouth, nor the other hear with the ear. The FATHER willeth, and the SON knoweth it; the SON willeth, and the FATHER knoweth it. The Rabbins, noticing the difference of the titles used, Jehovah and Adon, paraphrase thus: "The higher degree spake unto the lower, Sit thou on My right hand; and hereupon also the Arians and Eunomians based an argument for the subordination of the SON. But the answer is, that the address is not to the Eternal WORD in respect of His Godhead, for then there would be no question of His dignity, but to Him incarnate in time, and therefore inferior to the FATHER as touching His manhood. And the Great Name itself is expressly attributed to CHRIST in Holy Writ, as Jehovah-Tsidkenu, "The LORD our Righteousness," when the doctrine of His Godhead is to be enforced. The Psalmist calls Him my LORD, by reason of His manhood, because He is our flesh and blood, our Brother, our very own in right of His Mother.

Paternity does not except David from subjection to his Son, any more than in an elective monarchy, the citizen father of a new king can demand independence on the ground of relationship. Sit Thou on My right hand. The first and obvious sense of these words has regard to the place of the chief minister of a kingdom at the right hand side of the king in council, whence the Arab title, "Vizir of the right hand," given to the Radaf, or first officer of state. But that a still higher application of the phrase is possible, in the case of a son associated by his father in the sovereignty, cannot be disputed. And in truth an argument against the Arians was based on this very fact. At a time (A.D. 385) when the leaders of that heresy were exceedingly powerful, and great efforts were being made to secure the patronage of the State for them, S. Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, headed a deputation of Catholic prelates to Theodosius the Great, to counteract the scheme. The young Arcadius, who had been lately proclaimed Augustus by his father, was seated beside the

Emperor, but the aged Bishop omitted him altogether when paying the customary marks of respect to the sovereign. Theodosius, believing this to be an oversight, desired the Saint to salute Arcadius. The old man drew near, and caressed the boy, saying, ”Good day, my son.

Theodosius, much incensed, and thinking that an insult was intended, gave orders that the Bishop should be driven out of the hall of audience, but he, turning to the Emperor as the guards were about to execute the mandate, cried out, ”See, Emperor, you cannot bear any disrespect shown to your son, but are exceedingly wroth with those that are insolent to him. Believe then that Almighty God also hateth them that blaspheme His Only-begotten Son, and is indignant with them for their ingratitude towards their SAVIOUR and benefactor. And Theodosius, struck by the cogency of the argument, withdrew his protection from the Arians and Eunomians. That this notion of association in the kingdom is in fact the fullest sense of the Psalm appears from the similar prophetic language of Daniel: ”I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And Our LORD Himself twice refers to this prophecy, once to His disciples, saying, ”They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and again, before the High Priest, where He comprises the language of the Psalmist and of the Prophet in one sentence:

”Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. The word sit itself

A. Honorius. Eichhorn. 1 Mr. Perowne, in his note on this verse, observes as follows: ”Similarly the Greek poets spoke of their Gods as σύνεδροι, πάρεδροι, σύνθρονοι with Zeus. So Pindar (Fragm. Ed. Schneider, p. 55.) A. C. S. Matt. i. 25.

denotes, observe some of the commentators, the human nature of CHRIST, inasmuch as sitting cannot be predicated of the incorporeal Godhead, and in contrast to the prominence of standing, it implies His present invisibility. Sit Thou, not only on high, but also in secret, exalted that Thou mayest rule, hidden that Thou mayest be the object of belief. For what reward could there be for faith, unless that which we believe were hid? But that reward of faith is to behold that which we believed before seeing it. And it also denotes His perfect rest after all His sufferings, in contrast to the time when ”being wearied with His journey,” He sat upon the well of Sychar, and still more to that when He was exalted on the painful throne of the Cross, so that He whom the Synagogue, and also His Virgin Mother called Benoni, ”Son of my sorrow,” is called by His FATHER Benjamin, ”Son of My right hand. Sit

Thou, rest Thyself beside Me, rule with Me, reign, enjoy My glory, be nearest unto Me, be partaker of My good things, My power and majesty, be above every virtue and principality, be superior to all created things, be close to Me in the highest, mightiest, and most honoured place, reign with Me in equal power, as to Godhead, with like and nearest as to Thy manhood, exercising all power in heaven and earth. Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.

The word until is not infrequently used in Scripture without implying cessation when the point of time indicated as future has been reached. Thus we meet such expressions as ”I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. ”There shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. ”His heart will not shrink, until he have seen his desire upon his enemies; and above all, ”And knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born Son. But in this particular instance there is a comment which plainly shows that a limit of time is intended. S. Paul, speaking of the Second Advent,

speaks of Minerva as associated with Zeus in his sovereignty, and receiving his commands from the other gods: δεξίαν κατὰ χεῖρα τοῦ πατρὸς καθεζομένην, τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῖς θεοῖς ἀποδέχεσθαι [sitting at the right hand of the Father, to receive his commands for the gods] on which Aristides observes that Minerva was ἀγγέλου μείζων, [greater than an angel] and that she τῶν ἀγγέλων ἄλλοις ἄλλα ἐπιτάττει, πρώτη παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς παραλαμβάνουσα [gives various orders to various angels or messengers, receiving them first herself from the Father.] And Callimachus (Hymn. in Apoll. ver. 28,) says that Apollo is able to reward the Chorus if they sing to please him, because he sits at the right hand of Zeus, δύναται γάρ, ἐπὶ Διὶ δεξιὸς ἥσται. In both these passages it is clear that this session at the right hand of Zeus indicates not merely a mark of honour conferred, but actual participation of the royal dignity and power.” He might have strengthened this by pointing out that both Minerva (or rather Pallas Athena) and Apollo embody, in Greek mythology, the idea of Divine Wisdom.

tells us: ”Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the FATHER; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the SON also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all. On this text two insufficient and hasty conclusions have been based, either that CHRIST’S Manhood will then be entirely absorbed in His Godhead, or else that He will cease to bear rule, whereas it is said of Him, ”Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever. The true meaning is that His mediatorial office, and task of administering the government of the Church Militant will then

cease; as there will be no more sin requiring His priestly intercession, no more war demanding His invincible leadership. His enemies, evil spirits and wicked men, shall be made His footstool, whether trodden in His anger, and trampled in His fury, as in the case of the finally impenitent, or voluntarily humbling themselves to ”worship at His footstool, for He is holy,” as in that of returning sinners.

The figure is taken from the usage of Eastern conquerors; of which, besides the Scriptural example of Joshua and the five confederate kings, two noteworthy instances are recorded in history. First is that of Sapor, king of Persia, whose custom it was, whenever about to mount his horse or his chariot, to cause the captive Emperor Valerian to be led forth, chained, but also clad in the purple and other imperial insignia, and to be made lie down on his face upon the ground, when the insulting victor used him as a step by which to mount into his seat, treading on the captive’s head or back, and alleging that such a real triumph was worth all the Roman paintings of imaginary victories. The second instance, almost exactly parallel, is that of the treatment of Sultan Bayazid by Tamerlane. Note too that the FATHER says: Until I put Thine enemies under Thy feet, not as implying that the SON cannot do it for Himself, since whatever the FATHER doeth, the SON doeth likewise, but because this is part of the SON’s reward, in so far as He is man, for His obedience, ”Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted Him. By reason of the close union between the members and their Head, we may read this Psalm of the victory of any Saint of GOD, set at His right hand in the judgment, and given victory over all his foes.

And that we may attain this triumph in the world to come, we must sit at CHRIST’S right hand here too in rectitude of intention, avoiding all sinister doings, for ”a wise man’s heart is at his right hand, but a fool’s heart is at his left,” but sitting, by persevering in holiness, by humility, by calmness and tranquillity in prosperity

Ps. xcix. 5, A.V. and in trouble: sitting, like Mary of Bethany, at the feet of Jesus, to hear His Word. 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion: be thou ruler, even in the midst among thine enemies. CHRIST is Himself the ”Rod out of the stem of Jesse,” but as He in His Manhood went forth not from Sion, but from Bethlehem, the expositors prefer to take the words generally of the Gospel Law, preached first from Jerusalem, and more specially of the Cross, the sceptre of CHRIST’s Kingdom, His ”strong staff and beautiful rod,” wherewith He, as with a bar of iron, bruises His opponents to make their hearts contrite, wherewith He, by the hands of His Apostles, subdued the world. A rod of greater power this than the one which Moses wielded, for that did but part the sea, while this one brake in pieces the wickedness of the world; it converted sea and land, and filled them with mighty power, beginning at Jerusalem, ”for out of Sion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” So runs the hymn:

The Hymn, Salve crux, arbor. The Cross is the balance Of all our right, The sceptre of kingship, The rod too of might. Be Thou ruler, even in the midst among Thine enemies, extending Thy dominion gradually over all the unbelievers who surround Thee and Thy Church on every side, Jews, Pagans, heretics, and false brethren alike, till Thou rulest even in their midst, in the very hearts of those who were once Thy bitterest foes. And therefore it is said, Rule, not slay, because the Kingdom of CHRIST is enlarged not by the destruction, but by the conversion of sinners. And of this a token was given when He, surrounded by His enemies as He hung upon the Cross, bore even in that hour of supreme humiliation the kingly title over His head, and converted the thief and the centurion in the very act of His dying. 3 In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offerings with an holy worship: the dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning.

This exceedingly difficult verse is so variously treated by different expositors by reason of its obscurity, that it is necessary to set forth in full some of the diverse renderings before proceeding to annotate it. First let us take the A.V. (1) Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning [or, more than the womb of the morning,] Thou hast [or, shalt have] the dew of Thy youth. Modern critics take it thus, with but little deviation, (2) Thy people are ready volunteers in Thy battle-day [literally, army-day] in holy vestments [or, according to a variant here, on the holy hills; from the womb of the dawn Thou hast Thy young men [like] dew. The LXX. and Vulgate have, (3) With Thee [is] the beginning [LXX. rule, ἀρχή] in the day of Thy power, in the splendours of the Saints, from the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Syriac, combining some of the peculiarities of all these, reads, (4) Thy people shall be glorious in the day of power; in the beauties of holiness I have begotten Thee, as a youth, from the womb of old time. There are additional varieties created by other versions, but these are enough as specimens. Let us then take first that which seems to be the most exact rendering of the Hebrew, (2.

We have pictured before us, in this wise, the same wonderful vision as that which the Beloved Disciple beheld in Patmos, when he ”saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth He judge and make war. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. It is the gathering together of the hosts of the LORD for the combat against sin, of whom is said, as of those ten thousand who went down from Tabor with Barak against Jabin, that they ”willingly offered themselves” for the avenging of Israel; willingly, because of the voluntary pledges in Baptism, when they were clad in the holy vesture of purity and grace (reminding us of that army of British Christians which, arrayed in the white chrisom-robes, routed the heathen hordes of Picts in the famous Alleluia battle,) and put on the whole armour of GOD. These flow together to the standard of the King like drops of dew from the womb of the morning, because

the propagation of the Faith is silent, unseen, unheard, not in the full blaze of morn, but in the milder light of dawn, as the Daystar arises in the hearts of men; and also because of the countless multitudes of the Saints, who can no more be numbered than the minute drops of the dew;

and yet more because dew is a gift of GOD, not a thing which man can obtain at his will, for it is written, ”And the remnant of

1 instead of , a variant found in many MSS. 2 Reading , I have be- gotten, instead of , thy youth. S. John i. 13. Kay. Neander, Mem. of Christian Life, 4. Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men;” since it is true of the sons of GOD, the young warriors who join His great host, that they ”were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD.” They are at once warriors and priests, like their Master, Who is King and Priest too; and they can maintain their fight only so long as they are self-dedicated with priestly hallowing; while, on the other hand, priests can maintain their purity only so long as they are actively engaged in combat. Not only here on earth, but in the glory of the Resurrection, the elect of CHRIST shall be quickened by His heavenly dew, as it is written, ”Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead.” Such appears to be the true mystical meaning of this abstruse verse, though the word youth may also be taken as singular; and thus the phrase, Thou hast the dew of Thy youth, will refer to the perennial vigour of CHRIST. But the exegesis of the Greek and Latin Fathers is necessarily quite different, and dwells mainly on the doctrine of the eternal generation of the SON of GOD.

With Thee, O LORD, paraphrases a great Eastern Saint, is the dominion, (ἀρχή) not accidental, and bestowed on Thee in time, not depending on an army, soldiers, or wealth, but inherent in Thee by nature, in the day of Thy power, when taking flesh upon Thee, Thou shalt give many proofs of Thy power and might, and that in the splendours of the Saints, when Thou shalt give light unto the world by the beauty and radiance of Thine Apostles and disciples; or when Thou shalt come to judgment and display Thy force and power in marvellous fashion, and make the splendour of Thine arising Saints brighter than that of the sun, not in one form and measure, but manifold; and therefore it is said splendours, not splendour, for one star differeth from another star in glory. And it is not incredible that such exalted power should be in Thee, nor is it alien from Thy nature and essence, seeing Thou art consubstantial with Me, and partaker of the same nature, seeing that I begat Thee from the womb before the morning star, that is, before the morning star was created, I produced Thee by true generation; denoting thereby, as another Greek Father observes, that CHRIST is before all time, and of the same nature

with the FATHER. And in this sense the word womb, in its strictness inapplicable, yet denotes that the Sonship of CHRIST is not adoptive, but natural and inherent. Other Easterns, following the versions of Aquila and Symmachus, very nearly that of the Prayer Book, see here a reference to the Immaculate Conception of CHRIST, born of the womb of Blessed Mary by the operation of the HOLY GHOST descending upon her as the dew on Gideon's fleece. His birth was in the splendours of the Saints because of the glorious vision of those angelic hosts which proclaimed His nativity to the shepherds of Bethlehem.

The Latin Fathers, owing to the additional error by which the LXX. ἀρχή (itself no exact, though a possible rendering of , free-will offerings,) was translated principium, beginning, instead of principatus, dominion, have departed yet further from the Hebrew. The explanation of S. Augustine is that the Beginning means the Eternal FATHER, as the Source of all things, even of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and that His union with the Son, always perfect, though hidden, will be disclosed and revealed in the day of the Son's power at the Judgment, amidst the glories of the risen Saints, and he takes the last clause of the verse to denote not only the eternal generation of the Word before the creation of the stars of heaven, but also the miraculous birth of CHRIST in the early morning of Christmas Day, or as others will have it, of her "who looketh forth as the morning" in her beauty and purity.

A. 4 The LORD sware, and will not repent : thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

To this verse, the central revelation of the oracular Psalm of which it is a part, we possess the inestimable key of an Apostolic comment. First, on the opening words, The Lord sware, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews dwells on the exceeding solemnity of this rite of inauguration, distinguishing CHRIST from the Aaronic ministry : "For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by Him that said unto Him, The LORD sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; by so much was JESUS made a surety of a better testament. Next he emphasizes the words for ever, as forming another ground of distinction : "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood : wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto GOD by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

And thirdly, the mystical character of Melchizedek, and his superiority over Abraham himself, are pointed out, in that his name and office indicate him as King of Righteousness and King of Peace, as being a type of an eternal Priest having no earthly origin, no beginning nor ending, and that as receiving tithes from the ancestor of Levi, he must of necessity rank above the Levitical priesthood, which can have no rights superior to those which it inherited by reason of the appropriation

to it of a special part of the promises made to Abraham by GOD; and therefore, being himself a Gentile, and yet ranking above the Jews, Melchizedek typifies that King and Priest Who should be the Ruler and Pontiff of a Church made up of both Jew and Gentile, of universal extent. Bearing in mind the express statement of the Pentateuch that ”Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God; the ancient Rabbins, holding him to be a type of the Messiah, taught that in the days of the latter there should be no sacrifice known save that of bread and wine, to the exclusion of all animal oblations. Hence the obvious reference to the Eucharistic Sacrifice is common to the Fathers of East and West from the earliest to the latest times, and it would be superfluous to multiply quotations with the end of establishing so simple a proposition.

The Hymn, Hoste dum victo triumphans. When the Patriarch was returning Crowned with triumph from the fray, Him the peaceful King of Salem Came to meet upon his way; Meekly bearing Bread and Wine, Holy Priesthood’s awful sign. On the truth thus dimly shadowed, Later days a lustre shed; When the Great High Priest eternal, Under forms of Wine and Bread, For the world’s immortal Food Gave His Flesh, and gave His Blood. Wondrous Gift!—the WORD Who moulded All things by His might divine, Bread to be His Body maketh, And His very Blood the Wine; What though sense no change perceives, Faith admires, adores, believes! It is to be noticed that some controversialists, anxious to avoid the conclusion forced on us by this verse, argue that Melchizedek was merely bringing food for the refreshment of Abraham’s retainers, and not performing a sacrifice. But this view is refuted by Gen. xiv. 24, wherein Abraham, saying, ”Save only that which the young men have eaten” of the spoil, shows that they had made their repast before their encounter with the Priest-King: while others dwell on the silence as to this point in the Epistle to the Hebrews, forgetting that the writer

himself supplies the key to his omission, saying, ”Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing,” and telling them that he cannot give them the ”strong meat,” whence S. Jerome (ad Evagr.) declares that he was unwilling to expose the Sacrament to their unbelief. And the mystery in which it was shrouded by the early Church is matter of notoriety, and is illustrated by the very cautious hint S. Augustine lets fall in his comment on this very verse. He Who once to die a Victim On the Cross, did not refuse, Day by day, upon our altars, That same Sacrifice renews; Through His holy Priesthood’s hands, Faithful to His last commands! While the people all uniting In that Sacrifice sublime, Offer CHRIST to His High FATHER, Offer up themselves with Him;

Then together with the Priest, On the living Victim feast! 5 The LORD upon thy right hand: shall wound even kings in the day of his wrath. The Psalmist here directs his words to the Eternal FATHER, at Whose right hand is the Lord (Adonai)

CHRIST Who is to do these wondrous things, so that although many kings of the earth may conspire against His priesthood, and endeavour to overthrow His Church, yet He will rout them, as in truth He did those Pagan emperors who strove throughout the ten persecutions to blot out the very name of Christians, and as He will do again in the Last Day. S. Chrysostom, however, and the other Greek Fathers, followed by not a few Latins, with several modern critics, assume the Lord of this verse to be the FATHER, and explain the apparent discrepancy of the session of the king on the right hand of GOD, in the first verse, and the converse standing of GOD at the king's right here, as being no real contradiction, but denoting two distinct conditions, the one pointing to the king's exaltation in time of peace, the other to the divine aid given him in the day of battle; while the closeness of connection between JEHOVAH and the King is such that each does what the other does, and there is thus no specially abrupt transition, even were that what it by no means is, an unusual thing in Hebrew poetry. Both interpretations, therefore, are fairly open, and practically converge in the same idea.

6 He shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies: and smite in sunder the heads over divers countries. A critical argument in favour of this view is that the plural form , Adonai, here found, is limited in the Bible to GOD, and is never given to Messiah. But S. John xii. 43, explains the Adonai of Isaiah vi. 1, to be CHRIST, Who is Elohim in Ps. xlv. 6, and Jehovah in Jer. xxiii. 6; while, conversely, GOD is called Adoni (a title of Messiah in this Psalm) in Zech. iv. 13. There is thus not much weight in it. A. Bellarmine. Cocceius. Theodoret. Z. S. Chrysost. Rev. xi. 18; xix. 21. A.

Besides the ambiguity as to the Person here intended, common to this verse with the preceding, there is a further divergence of interpretation, as to the time of fulfilment of this prediction. Some of the Greek Fathers take it to be the Day of Judgment, a view which squares exactly enough with more than one passage of the Apocalypse; while others, and most of the Latins, following the lead of S. Augustine, prefer to understand it of the dealings of GOD and CHRIST with the enemies of the Church in this world. And they take the verse almost unanimously in the mildest sense, explaining the Vulgate reading (which is, He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the ruins, He shall dash to pieces the heads in the land of many) as denoting His work in the conversion of souls. They explain the first clause of CHRIST's rule over Jews and Gentiles alike; not judging them, but judging and overthrowing Satan's power among them; the second of His restoration of His ruined Sion, whether by building up again those who level themselves low in humility, or by filling up anew with ransomed men the heavenly ranks left vacant by the fall of the rebel angels; while the last paragraph is taken as meaning that He makes Himself the one Head, overthrowing all rivals, whether evil spirits or human self-will, which set up many heads other than Himself in the world.

But the Hebrew undoubtedly depicts the carnage of a victorious battle, with great piles of dead bodies lying on the battle-field, and single headless corpses strewed here and there, marking where a fugitive had been overtaken and slain in the widespread rout. The last clause, however, may with much probability be translated, He hath smitten through [him that was] head over a wide land, just as in another place we read, ”Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages,” and in that case the mystical import will be that the Divine Conqueror not only overcomes lesser forms of evil, but inflicts a deadly wound upon the head of all, the old dragon, who was once prince of this world.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up his head. Here there is no doubt as to the person intended. The Rabbins and those modern critics who agree with them in taking the two previous verses as spoken of GOD only, admit that the King is again brought on the scene in this last verse. The literalist notion is obviously that he is ”faint, yet pursuing,” but that he may not ”die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised,” he stoops for a moment to drink of an opportune stream in his road, and immediately rises up again with renewed vigour and uplifted crest, to continue the chase till the last invading foeman is driven across the frontier in total rout.

There is absolute unanimity in the broad outline of the mystical interpretation, amidst some variety of minor detail, inasmuch as all take the verse to denote CHRIST’s humiliation followed by His exaltation. For brook the LXX. and Vulgate both read torrent, that is, an intermittent water-course temporarily swollen by storms which bring down the rains from the hills. And this is explained as typifying the hurried, turbid, noisy, yet brief course of human life, to which the LORD bowed Himself by His Incarnation, from His throne on the right hand of the FATHER; drinking of the troubles of our mortal condition, truly in the way, for He was a stranger and pilgrim on earth, far from His country: nay, going down by His Passion into the lowest depths of the torrent, so as not to drink for refreshment and pleasure, but swallowing the waters like a drowning man, so that ”they came in, even unto His soul; when His head was lifted up on the Cross as He drank the last drops of that cup which His FATHER had given Him, and for His obedience thus carried out, GOD also hath highly exalted Him, first in the Resurrection, and then in the Ascension, and hath given Him a Name which is above every name. The Chaldee, which here paraphrases, ”He shall drink wisdom out of the mouth of the Prophet,” supplies us with a key to the tropological sense;

which is that Christians derive all their strength and refreshment from the waters of the mystical Rock which follows them, so as to be always in the way, accessible along the road of their pilgrimage to the very end, supplying its living streams of holiness. And a recent commentator very aptly cites in illustration a saying of one of the early synods of the Gallican Church: ”Whatever of truth and righteousness

man has, is from that fountain, after which we in this desert ought to thirst, in order that, bedewed as it were with a few drops from it, we may not faint in the way."

Glory be to the FATHER, Who hath said unto my LORD, Sit Thou on My right hand; glory be to the SON, my LORD, Who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the heavenly dew of our youth. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD, begotten before the morning star, Who wast before the beginning of every creature, we pray and beseech Thee that as Thou, sitting at the right hand of the FATHER, hast put Thine enemies under Thy feet, so Thou mayest make us meet for Thy service, doing away with the dominion of sin. (5.) Almighty GOD, FATHER of Glory, Who hast raised from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, setting Him at Thy right hand above every principality and power; arouse in us the love of all manner of holiness, that the first-fruits of our spirits may be assigned to Him alone, Who arising from the dead overcame with His own might the power of death. (11.) JESU, SAVIOUR of the world, made for ever a King and Priest after the order of Melchizedek, set us, of Thine unspeakable mercy, at Thy right hand in the Judgment, and numbering us amongst the blessed of Thy FATHER, cause us to possess the kingdom of heaven. (5.)

Psalm 111

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST bestows the spiritual food of His Word on them that suffer hunger. The Voice of the Church concerning CHRIST, with praise. Of penitence with praise. VEN. BEDE. His people praiseth the LORD, because freed from the destruction of the world, it knows not how to endure the slavery of sins. This is the first Psalm with the Hebrews which goes through the whole course of the Alphabet, although there are many persons who suppose that other previous ones are written in alphabetical order, for in them there are either some missing or some superfluous letters, and sometimes when one verse is short, another is extended to inordinate length. Whence I imagine that this arises rather from the observation of readers than the intention of the writer. And further, the Seventy translators, because some scruple arose in them, did not choose to insert the Hebrew letters in their version.

The nation of the blessed gathered from various parts of the world, at the first outset of the Psalm saith that it confesseth unto the LORD in the congregation of the righteous, where laud is everlasting, and praise without end: I will confess unto Thee, O Lord. Secondly, it says that the faithful have been satisfied with an abundant gift, promising at the same time the Advent of the LORD, that they may search after the promised inheritance with most eager intentness: He hath made a memorial of His marvels. Thirdly, it declares that Christians have been redeemed, in the New Testament hallowed by everlasting grace: He sent redemption unto His people. The first part contains six letters: the second ten: the third, six. And just as little children are taught by letters that they may advance to wisdom, so psalms of this kind This observation of Beda is in the main correct. This really is the first accurately alphabetic Psalm, and moreover one in which the verses are carefully

adjusted to consist each of about the same number of words. The same holds good of Psalm 112, obviously the fellow of this one. are given to the uninstructed and beginners, that their first attempts may be guided, as though with certain rudiments. SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. Concerning the excellency of the works

of GOD, and enjoining us to give thanks unto CHRIST. Spoken in the person of the Apostles. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A thanksgiving to CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A psalm having a mingled confession, and a narrative with praise.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Sunday and Festivals: Vespers. [Corpus Christi: Vespers.]

Antiphons.
The same rule holds for the Festival Antiphons of this Psalm as for the preceding. Gregorian and Monastic. Sunday: Faithful are all His commandments: established for ever and ever. [Christmas Day: Redemption the LORD hath sent unto His people, He hath commanded His covenant for ever. Corpus Christi: The merciful LORD hath given meat to them that fear Him * in remembrance of His marvels.] Ambrosian. Great are the works of the LORD. [Christmas Day: Redemption the LORD hath sent unto His people. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr.] Parisian and Lyons. As Gregorian. Mozarabic. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom * a good understanding have all they that do thereafter. 1 [Alleluia.] I will give thanks unto the LORD with my whole heart: secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation.

That man gives thanks unto the LORD with his whole heart who does so unfeignedly, and not for any present advantage or gain, but heartily and entirely, for he who praises GOD with half his heart, is deceitful, and not single-hearted. We ought not then to praise Him with one part of us, and allow the other to incline to sin; lest while we are lifting one foot of the soul up to holiness, we should suffer the other to remain in the mire of sin. Secretly among the faithful. This is rather a paraphrase than the precise translation, which is in the council of the upright, but the Hebrew word for council also means secret, implying a small number of trusty advisers distinct from and higher than the general congregation. And thus the notion implied is that of conversing with those of tried piety and wisdom on the deeper mysteries of the Faith, while joining also in the public worship of the less instructed A. flock. S. Augustine accordingly explains the former term C. as denoting the college of the Apostles, the latter as designating the whole Church; and his exposition is generally followed, with the extension of the council to all able Hugo Card. teachers of righteousness. Cardinal Hugo, looking to the word confess, suggests that we have in this verse a recommendation to choose wise and pious confessors to guide us in holiness, and then to make full and public satisfaction in presence of the Church for any faults we have committed.

2 The works of the LORD are great : sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. R. Kimchi. This is the true sense of the passage, signifying that eager zeal in the study of the deep things of GOD which characterizes His true followers. And that because, as a Saint teaches us, knowledge goes before the cultivation of virtue, because no one can heartily desire that of which he is ignorant, nor can he

fear an evil unless it be known. Another interpretation, which comes practically to the same thing, translates the second clause, sought out because of all their pleasantness, which may be especially taken of the words and acts of CHRIST when He was in bodily presence on earth. But the LXX. and Vulgate turn the clause, sought out for all His wills; that is, that every part of creation, everything which exists, has its divinely appointed task and place in working out some purpose of GOD; and that even in the case of such things as seem most adverse to Him, man's free-will, sickness, sin, death, and the like, they do but carry out His higher designs. All GOD's works, both of the first and second creation, of nature and of grace, are great; but a favourite application of every verse of this Psalm to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, has made some commentators dwell on it here particularly, as that which has been devised by His love for the sanctification of men. And we then get another sense of for all His wills, that such works of GOD as this and other acts of His grace, dispose all devout and wise persons to do His will with all their might.

3 His work is worthy to be praised, and had in honour : and his righteousness endureth for ever. Honorius. Here the LXX. and Vulgate read in the first clause, Confession and magnificence are His work. And they take it as well in the literal sense of the glorious beauty of creation, affording matter for our acknowledgment and praise of His power, as in a more spiritual sense : namely, that the conversion of sinners, leading them to confession of their own sins, and of the glory of the Holy Trinity (as in the case of S. Paul,) together with the bright purity of soul (and in some cases the shining gifts of miraculous power) vouchsafed to penitents, are God's work, not man's; spring from His love and grace, not from their strength and merit; and then His righteousness, whereby He rewards such confession and magnificence, endureth for ever, in that His promises can never fail, His justifying grace cannot be overruled, His sentence at the Last Day is irrevocable, whether for the doomed or the blessed.

A. 4 The merciful and gracious LORD hath so done his marvellous works : that they ought to be had in remembrance. The Prayer Book here misses the force of the Hebrew, nor is the A.V. more exact. The LXX. and Vulgate are precisely right in translating, He hath made a memorial of His wonderful works. Yet this may be taken, if considered apart from the succeeding verse, as denoting much what the Prayer Book version suggests, that God's dealings with His people and against their enemies were so conspicuous and memorable, as well in the days of the Patriarchs, Judges, and Kings of Israel as in those of the Apostles and Martyrs of CHRIST, that they became a monument for the gaze and instruction of posterity. But when we carry on our eyes to the succeeding words, we come to a yet deeper meaning: 5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him : he shall ever be mindful of his covenant.

The word memorial in the previous verse is , that which is used of the Passover in Exodus xii. 14 and xiii. 9, which gives us one reference to the meat here mentioned, while there is, in all probability, a further allusion to the manna in the wilderness; for the word , here translated meat, is more exactly rendered in the A.V. margin as prey: either spoil in battle, or more probably, the flesh of beasts taken in hunting, of course in uninhabited places like the wilderness. Hence we have, as the idea present to the mind of the Psalmist, the great Festivals of the Jewish Church, and the feast on the attendant sacrifices, (which may very well be called ”prey” in the sense of being the produce of a land conquered by force of Hebrew valour in old time), the food given to the worshippers, whose share in the service proved their fear of God. And thus we come at once to the sense followed by all the greatest Christian expositors, that we have here a prophecy of the Holy Eucharist, of which its Founder spake, saying, ”Offer this for a Memorial of A. Me; a gift which none could have bestowed save a merciful and gracious LORD.

Nor does the word ”prey” make this application less suitable, for in that adorable mystery we proclaim the death of CHRIST, remembering how His persecutors pursued Him upon the mountains, and laid wait for Him in the wilderness, till ”the breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the LORD, was taken in their pits,” and given to us thenceforward to be our food, ”for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Or, if we take ”prey” as the spoil in battle, so this holy banquet, like the bread and wine Melchizedek gave to victorious Abraham, is meant only for those that overcome their spiritual foes. And as He fulfilled His covenant to Abraham and Moses, in giving the land of Canaan to the children of Israel, so, because the cup of this most holy Sacrament is the New Covenant in His Blood, He is reminded of His promises in that Testament every time we celebrate the Christian Sacrifice, of His oath to us to give us a better country, where we shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of our FATHER, be as the Angels of GOD, and because servants of CHRIST, be where He is also.

6 He hath showed his people the power of his works : that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. The first reference is to the ejection of the seven nations from Palestine before the face of Israel, aided by the mighty hand of GOD; and then, by a simple and obvious transition, the words denote the subjugation of the heathen to the law of CHRIST, by the spreading of His Church; and finally, they mean the conquest of heaven by the Saints, and their occupation of those seats whence the rebel angels fell. In connection with the previous verse, and still keeping to the idea of the Holy Eucharist, we may remember, on the one hand, that the memorial character of that sacred rite causes it to bring before us all the power of the LORD’s work in His Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, besides the spiritual miracle of change wrought upon the elements themselves; while in its strengthening properties, as conveying to us the grace and might of CHRIST, it makes us vigorous enough to take the kingdom of heaven by storm. A reference to

the power of CHRIST displayed in the Resurrection, is the probable reason of the Anglican use of this Psalm on Easter Day.

7 The works of his hands are verity and judgment : all his commandments are true.

Here again the first reference is to the punishment of the Canaanites: and God's dealings with them, in depriving them of their settlements and transferring them to another people, are vindicated on the score of justice; because the seven nations had transgressed His plainest commandments, such as are familiar even to natural religion, and therefore God, after enumerating the horrible crimes which were prevalent amongst them, spake to Israel by Moses: "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these things the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity of the land upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. And in His conquest of the heathen by His Church the same rule holds, for although He suffered His martyrs to be haled to prison and to judgment, yet His truth prevailed by that very persecution, so as to become known and dear to countless thousands. His work in the soul is truth, in teaching us to love that which is right and holy; it is judgment, in showing us how to sit in trial upon our doings, and to condemn our sins. And He will show His verity again in the Last Day by rewarding according to His most true promise them that have kept His commandments faithfully, and His judgment by condemning such as have continued obstinately in rebellion against Him.

One commentator tells us that we have the method of true penitence, which is God's commandment, set forth plainly in the first clause of this verse: verity, implying candour of the mouth in acknowledgment of our sins; judgment, the genuine contrition which condemns them in the heart, so as to forsake them altogether; works of the hands, the acts of satisfaction in reparation of our past misdoings. And, continuing the Eucharistic gloss, they remind us that the Sacrament is the work of Christ's hands, as He is its sole Institutor; it is verity, because of the Real Presence, being no mere figure of an absent Person: and judgment, because of the condemnation of unworthy communicants.

A. 8 They stand fast for ever and ever: and are done in truth and equity. The vindication of God's ways continues. It may not be pleaded by sinners that new laws and conventional statutes can set aside His moral commandments, since these are for ever and ever, and thus, if man's enactments profess to legalize aught which He has condemned, as adultery and divorce, they are inherently void, and carry no sanction with them. His laws have truth on their side, because God will most certainly fulfil what He hath spoken concerning them; they have equity, because they are no mere positive and variable rules, but based on the profoundest morality. And because of their efficacy and power, it is well said, that they are done, not spoken, in truth and equity. The Carmelite, continuing his reference to the Blessed Sacrament, declares it to stand fast for ever and ever, by reason of the

indelible character of the priesthood, and the impossibility of any other oblation supplementing the Eucharist till the end of time, while he takes truth, as before, to denote the Real Presence; since in the Holy Eucharist an evil priest and an evil communicant can neither of them prevent the power of the Sacrament from being there, whereas in Baptism an insincere catechumen derives nothing whatever from the rite. And equity he goes on to explain as that property of the Holy Eucharist by which it precisely adapts itself to each communicant, being profitable to the devout, and more than perilous to the impenitent.

The Se- Bad and good the feast are sharing: O what diverse dooms preparing, Endless death, or endless life! Life to these, to those damnation: See how like participation Is with unlike issues rife. 9 He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever; holy and reverend is his Name.

The deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the giving of the Law, the proclamation of the Divine titles to Moses, form the first meaning here. But the Psalmist is looking forward to much more glorious events than these: even to those which God Himself foretold by the mouth of the Prophet: ”Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” And that was fulfilled when ”the LORD GOD of Israel visited and redeemed His people,” and ”CHRIST, being come an High Priest of good things to come, obtained eternal redemption for us;” and commanded His new covenant, appointing it by the hands of His Apostles, after it had been ”established upon better promises” than the former one, which, decayed and waxed old, was then ready to vanish away, whereas this one is to abide for ever-

S. Luke i. 6s. A. more, in the power of that Name which is holy and beloved by the Saints, but terrible (LXX. and Vulg., rightly,) to the wicked, remembering His office and title as Judge of the whole world. In like manner, as in the previous verse, we are reminded of the perpetual duration of the Holy Eucharist, and its twofold effect on those who eat thereof. 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom : a good understanding have all they that do thereafter; the praise of it endureth for ever.

As there are two ways of fearing GOD: a servile dread and a filial reverence, it is needful to inquire which is here intended. And on this S. Thomas says: The beginning of wisdom is a term which can be used in two ways; one, that it is the beginning, as regards the essence of wisdom; the other, as regards the effect of it. Just so, in any art, its essential beginning consists of the principles whence it is derived; but its effective beginning is that whence the exercise of the art begins. So we may call a foundation the beginning of architecture, because the architect begins to rear his work thereon. But seeing that wisdom is the knowledge of divine things, we look at it in one way and metaphysicians in another. For as the end of our life is the fruition of GOD, and is guided in accordance with a certain share of divine nature, bestowed on us by grace; we do not consider wisdom merely as having to do with the knowledge of GOD, as the metaphysicians regard it, but also in so far as it is the guide of human life, which has to be regulated not only by human reasons but by divine ones. As then the beginning of wisdom according to its essence is the first principles of wisdom, which are the articles of faith, in this respect we call faith the beginning of wisdom.

But so far as the effect of wisdom is concerned, its beginning is that whence wisdom begins to work, and in this way fear is the beginning of wisdom. But servile fear is this beginning in one fashion, and filial fear in quite another. Servile fear is a kind of outward beginning, urging towards wisdom, in so far as any one departs from sin through fear of punishment, and is in this wise got ready for the operation of wisdom, as it is written in Ecclesiasticus: ”The fear of the LORD driveth away sins. But pure or filial fear is the beginning of wisdom, as the first effect of wisdom itself. For as it is part of wisdom that human life should be regulated according to divine reasons, it ought to have its beginning from this, that man reverence GOD, and submit himself to Him. But even this filial dread is no more than the beginning of wisdom. Perfect wisdom is love, which casteth out fear. And because of all the good things which flow from the fear of GOD, which the Wise Man enumerates for us, including honour, glory, gladness, a crown of rejoicing, long life, peace, and perfect health, with much

Ecclus. i. 21. Honorius. i S. John iv. 18. Ecclus. i. 11-21. A. R. Kimchi. Arnobius. Ps. lxxxiv. 4. Bellarmine. besides, a good understanding have all they that do thereafter. Not, be it observed, they who know and are learned in the theory, but they that do, for it is written: ”To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin,” and, moreover, ”Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.” The praise of it endureth for ever. That is, in this way of reading the words, the praise of such understanding as prompts a man to keep God’s commandments, and therefore the praise of that man himself, shall endure for ever, because he shall dwell in the house of the LORD always, and join in the millenary song of heavenly praise; and will, moreover, himself be praised and commended by his LORD as a good and faithful servant, and will hear the words of eulogy echoed by all the Saints and

Angels. But it seems better to take the clause, with A.V., His praise endureth for ever; that is, the praise of the LORD, our Redemption, Whose Name is blessed to ages of ages. His praise can have no end, because His bounties are inexhaustible. We praise Him here on earth, because He rescues sinners; we shall praise Him in the world to come, because He crowns His Saints; and thus this Psalm, which begins with Alleluia, fitly ends with the declaration that this song of laud shall resound for evermore.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who hath sent Redemption unto His people; glory be to the SON, Who hath given us the meat of His new Covenant as a memorial of His wondrous works; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Spirit of understanding and of the fear of the LORD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD, glorious confession of all Saints, grant us the fear of Thy Name, which Thou hast declared to be the beginning of wisdom, that joined to the councils of Thy servants, we may be filled with the banquet of Thy mercy. (1.) Great are Thy works, O LORD, sought out for all Thy wills. Grant us, Thy servants, while we admire the greatness of Thy works, to praise with due confession the glory of the Creator, and search out with reverent wisdom Thy faithful commandments, and achieve with obedient fear the perfect comeliness of understanding. (11.) O merciful and gracious LORD, Who with Thy wonted goodness hast long spared us sinners; fill us at length with a good understanding, and pour into our minds fear, the beginning of Thy wisdom, and make us to please Thee by living henceforth a sober and godly life. (1.)

Psalm 112

TITLE. LXX: Alleluia. Vulgate: Alleluia. Of the return of Haggai and Zechariah.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is the distributor of heavenly prizes to the poor, and their rewarder. Also the Voice of the Church concerning CHRIST with praise, and of the fruit of the fear of the LORD. The Voice of them that fear GOD. VEN. BEDE. Haggai and Zechariah were Prophets, who, after the carrying away to Babylon, returned to Jerusalem in the time of King Darius, long after those words (Ps. cxi.) were sung; and when they saw the Temple restored, poured forth praises to GOD with great joy. In likeness whereof this Psalm also is constructed with all the letters of the alphabet; and a Christian ought to sing it with perfect readiness after the absolution of his sins. The Prophet speaks throughout the Psalm. In the first exhortation he shows what a blessed man will do, and what good things he shall attain: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord. Secondly; he declares the LORD's coming, by Whom men will attain to everlasting blessedness, from having been sinners and ungodly: There ariseth up light in the darkness. Thirdly; he witnesseth that the reverse will come upon the wicked: The ungodly shall see it. The first division contains six letters; the second, thirteen; the third, three. Two verselets herein fill up the measure of the verse which forms the construction of Psalm cxviii. (cxix.) so that what one letter does there, here two different ones, following each other in order, do.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. Wherein David giveth instruction to Solomon his son, Keep the commandments of the LORD, and serve Him. Also the calling of the Gentiles and the righteousness of CHRIST. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. The teaching of CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm proclaiming blessedness; Also, describing a life endued with holy virtue.

Various Uses.
This obscurely worded sentence merely denotes that each verse of this Psalm is marked by two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, one for each hemistich; whereas in Psalm 119 one letter stands at the head of each section, and each verse of every section; and the next letter does not form part of the acrostic till another section

begins. Gregorian and Monastic. In His commandments he hath great delight. [Christmas Day: There ariseth up light in the darkness unto the godly; merciful, loving, and righteous is the LORD.] Ambrosian. Merciful, * loving, and righteous is the LORD. Parisian. } He that feareth the LORD * hath great delight in Lyons. } His commandments. Mozarabic. Merciful, and loving, and righteous is the LORD : a good man is merciful. 1 [Alleluia.] Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD : he hath great delight in his commandments.

We have in this opening the continuance and further exposition of that beginning of wisdom of which the closing verse of Psalm cxi. told us. There is enough in that fear, which S. Chrysostom calls the golden gate of happiness, to make a man blessed, not indeed with the bliss that belongs to our Country, but with such a measure of gladness as befits pilgrims in the way. And there are two distinct stages of progress set before us, that fear of the LORD which causes men to reverence and observe His negative precepts, by abstaining from sins which He has forbidden; and then that higher obedience which consists in carrying out with loving zeal His positive injunctions, that learning to do well which follows ceasing to do evil. For He hath great delight the LXX. and Vulgate wording is He shall will excessively; that is, as one tells us, his will is greater than his power; and instead of resting satisfied with the impossibility, his eagerness and longing does but the more increase, and his hunger and thirst after righteousness become intensified. We may lay stress on the phrase The Man, and so explain it of CHRIST, the type and example of all His Saints, or we may, besides the obvious reference to each righteous person, see the whole Christian Church here denoted as a single individual, to express the notion of absolute unity. Eusebius, pointing out that the expression fear God is often used in Scripture to signify the imperfect worship paid to Him by Gentiles unversed in the Law (as in the case of the Assyrian colonists sent by Shalmaneser into Palestine,) argues thence that the Christian Church, as made up chiefly of Gentiles, is here intended, and its zeal in GOD’s commandments contrasted with Hebrew apathy.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth : the generation of the faithful shall be blessed. There is more promised here than that fruitfulness to which the Jew looked as among the chief of blessings; namely, spiritual increase of converts and disciples for the teachers of righteousness; increase in good works, as a vigorous and numerous progeny, on the part of these disciples themselves, if they lay to heart the lessons of their teachers. Whoso delights in willingly obeying God’s commandments, is worthy to become the father of Saints, as S. Paul was of Timothy, Luke, Titus, and many more, and as S. Peter spiritually begat S. Mark the Evangelist and S. Cornelius. And each such Saint gives birth to many works of righteousness for God, mighty even here upon earth in the strife against evil, blessed in their results; but mightier in the land of the living, more blessed when those words are spoken, ”Come, ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” To both the one and the other class the promise holds good that ”they shall not labour in

vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them."

Pseudo-Hieron. S. Hieron. in Esai. C. Ric. Hamp. 3 Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever. In the lower sense, we may read these words literally of abundant wealth bestowed on the righteous by God, and used, not for pride and luxury, but for continual works of mercy, whence it is said of the person so enriched, that his righteousness endureth for ever. But the higher meaning bids us see here those true spiritual riches which are stored up for the poor in spirit, often most needy in the prosperity of the world; and we may come at the truest sense by comparing the words wherein the great Apostle describes his own condition, "As poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." For who can be richer than he who is heir of God, and joint heir with CHRIST? If we take the Man to be CHRIST, then the Church is that house of His wherein spiritual riches are stored; if we take the phrase of any faithful servant of the Master, then his heart is the dwelling wherein, as in an earthen vessel, he stores this treasure, his righteousness, because it is God's free gift to him, and "godliness with contentment is great gain."

Agellius. S. Chrysost. Didymus. 2 Cor. vi. 10. Hugo Card. A. S. Bruno Carth. 1 Tim. vi. 6. 4 Unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness: he is merciful, loving, and righteous.

The use of this verse as the Antiphon to the Psalm in the second Vespers of Christmas supplies us at once with the highest sense of the words, as denoting the revelation of CHRIST to the world, a light shining in the dark places of the earth, on them who aforetime sat in the shadow of death, and that light Himself, merciful, loving, and righteous. He comes still, in continual Advents, arising in the dark hearts of men as the Day-star, the Sun of Righteousness, so that they who were sometime darkness are now light in the LORD. And in a sense only lower than this, it is true that the godly are not left without guidance here amidst the perplexities and dangers of the world, but when all is most gloomy and doubtful, then comes a ray of light from GOD, to show them the path wherein they must walk to be in safety; a light to cheer and encourage them in trouble. And although it is best to take the three epithets which here follow as applying to GOD only, Himself the Light for the godly, inasmuch as all three words are in the singular, whereas godly is plural; yet it is possible that there may be a sudden transition here back to the "man" of the previous verses, or else we may have three classes of the godly described, for each of whom the light springs up. But in that case it would be better to understand these qualities as the result of the light, whereby that which was darkness became shining with holiness; not because it had any inherent brightness of its own, but by reason of reflecting the rays of that divine splendour poured upon it by the revelation of JESUS.

5 A good man is merciful, and lendeth : and will guide his words with discretion. Ecclus. xxxv. 9. A. It was a saying of Ptolemy Lagi, King of Egypt, that it is better to enrich than to be rich (ἄμεινον εἶναι πλουτίζειν ἢ πλουτεῖν) a maxim on which he acted by a liberal distribution of his wealth; showing himself in this wise a type of the cheerful giver whom GOD loves, who follows the counsel of the Wise Man, "In all thy gifts show a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness." But S. Augustine, noting that almsgiving is mentioned in a later verse, prefers to understand this passage of the free forgiveness of injuries, which as we learn from the Our FATHER, is a kind of spiritual alms. We may, however, keep to the literal sense, yet without dwelling too forcibly on the word lendeth, as though implying expectation of repayment, for it is written, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again." And it may be well understood of words of wisdom spoken to the unlearned by such as have no gold or silver to bestow, but who can lead their hearers to the true riches of the Gospel.

And will guide his words with discretion. There are several ways of understanding this sentence, the connection of which with the previous part of the verse is not at first sight very clear. It may mean, as the Prayer Book version implies, prudence in language, carefulness to avoid offence; so that the good man is not only ready with his purse, but shows such courtesy in his discourse with the poor as to add a fresh grace to his charity. Next, it may stand as in the A.V., He shall guide his affairs with discretion, where the LXX. word οἰκονομῆσαι, he shall regulate household matters, gives a sufficient sense. The notion then will be that of his judicious management of his wealth, regarding himself merely as God's steward, and assigning to each person with whom he has to do a fair proportion of that riches, so as not to waste it by thoughtless lavishness on the one hand, nor to display narrow parsimony on the other.

But the LXX. and Vulgate translate, with greater exactness, He shall regulate his words in judgment. And this is taken by most of the commentators to mean, He shall so conduct his life with charity and almsgiving here, that when he stands for judgment before CHRIST's tribunal, he will have a clear defence and statement to make against the adversary, and when asked to account for the wealth of which he has been steward, will reply, "LORD, Thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. Or we may take the words to denote a like success when appearing at any earthly bar, that he shall in all cases maintain his cause and prevail. Yet again, some would fain interpret them not as a promised blessing but as another proof of kindliness. He will not only give his money to the poor, but will plead his cause as an advocate. Or if we return to that notion of lending already referred to, the words may denote the discretion of Christian preachers, not casting their pearls before swine, nor giving that which is holy to the dogs, but wisely apportioning their instructions according to the capacity of

their hearers. Yet a further idea is put forward in this connection, that the Saints who have freely taught the Faith to CHRIST's poor, shall maintain their cause in judgment; that is, will be able, like Athanasius, to carry victory from councils where all the craft and power of heresy is arrayed against the Gospel.

And finally, we may take the whole verse of our LORD Himself, Who in His goodness had pity on us, and lent us all the grace and strength we need for salvation, of which He will demand repayment with interest when He, Who spake ever with divine wisdom, Who overcame when He was judged, shall guide His own words in the Judgment, words of reward to His faithful stewards, words of condemnation to such as have wasted His goods.

S. Chrysost. A. Isa. i. 17. 6 For he shall never be moved: and the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Here is the reason why he shall maintain his cause in judgment, because he is steadfast and firm in his resolutions, and takes careful foresight, leaving nothing to accident, that he may not be unexpectedly moved; and because hereof, recognised as a wise counsellor and a liberal benefactor, his A. C. D. C. Cocceius, Pachymeres. memory shall be endeared and durable amongst his people; and then, in a yet higher sense, he shall never be moved from his place at CHRIST's right hand, where he is founded upon the Rock, and his name shall be written for ever in the Book of Life. We may take the words also of the human nature of the LORD JESUS in this sense, although it seems better to apply them to His Body the Church, unshaken through the lapse of ages, always, day by day, making memorial of Him, the Righteous One, and commemorating in her services His great Saints, while no such religious observance honours the memory of the chiefs of sects and heresies.

7 He will not be afraid of any evil tidings: for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the LORD. He will have no cause to fear aught that slanderers or ungodly enemies may utter against him in this world, he need not dread in the Judgment Day those far more evil tidings bidding him depart into everlasting fire. Nor will he fear those who can kill the body, and who threaten him with death, unless he apostatize, and abjure CHRIST. There is a further interpretation whereby we can connect this verse more closely with the preceding ones: He will not be afraid of any news of the loss of his wealth, because he does not "trust in uncertain riches, but in the living GOD," and is confident that He will not suffer him to want. In this wise, as in the others, his heart standeth fast and believeth in the Lord, and because it is looking steadfastly at Him, it does not suffer its gaze to be diverted by aught of less importance.

8 His heart is established, and will not shrink: until he see his desire upon his enemies. And so the Apostle tells us, "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace," sufficient to keep the believer undismayed amidst all temporal and spiritual perils, until he look down upon his enemies (Heb., Vulg.) from a high and

safe place. That is, until in this world he succeed in overcoming the evil spirits by the power of CHRIST, the Rock on whom he is set; until in the Judgment he see the foes who oppressed him here, persecutors, slanderers, unbelievers, false brethren, cast down while he is exalted. And observe that until, here as elsewhere, does not imply that he will begin to fear after his enemies have been defeated, but rather his everlasting immunity from alarm. 9 He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor: and his righteousness remaineth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

The Apostle S. Paul, in quoting this verse with reference to the contributions for which he was asking the Corinthians, prefixes some words of his own which serve as a comment on the latter part of it: ”God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. Then follows the quotation from the Psalm, and the connection makes it clear that the intention in this place is to represent the endurance of righteousness and the exaltation of the horn as God’s reward for charitable dealing towards the poor. Accordingly, the words are used as the V. and R. to the Hymn in the office of S. Laurence, famous in ecclesiastical history for his distribution of the treasures of the Church amongst the needy. The word dispersed implies the extent and freedom of bounty, like the rays of the sun on the drops of the rain. But it was actually perverted by certain Talmudists to mean turning a small sum of money into coins of the lowest value, and bestowing these upon a large number of persons, so as to spread the parsimonious gift over the widest area. Far better is the counsel of the Angelic Doctor, who lays down two simple rules for almsgiving, that it is to be regulated by one’s own means and the need of the person to be helped.

And that not recklessly, but with clear recollection that we are acting as stewards, and are bound to be careful with our Master’s property. And in this wise a poor man may buy with a cup of cold water what costs a rich one all his wealth. The LORD Himself dispersed abroad the rich gifts of the HOLY GHOST, giving them to the poor fishermen whom He chose to be His Apostles, and He still showers down like blessings, because the horn of His kingdom is exalted with honour, so that He has power to do so, and His righteousness endureth for ever, so that He has the will too. And those Apostles in their turn dispersed abroad and gave to the poor, not silver and gold, for such gifts were not in their power, nor yet the Gospel only, precious as that was, for in giving it they did not take aught from themselves; but that they might go forth to preach the Word, they forsook houses and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and lands, and life itself, for the sake of CHRIST’S Name; and thus most truly flung all these to the winds, and gave them to the poor, wherefore their righteousness remaineth for ever in heaven, and their horn shall be exalted in honour, because they are to sit on thrones as assessors of the King Himself in judgment.

10 The ungodly shall see it, and it shall grieve him: he shall gnash with his teeth, and consume away; the desire of the ungodly shall perish. The Greek Fathers for the most part take the ungodly here to be Satan, in his impotent rage at seeing the triumph of the Saints, here when they are victorious over his emissaries, and still more as they ascend in glory after the Judgment, and he sinks to his appointed place. Others extend the notion to Antichrist, or to any of the finally impenitent, and they urge, for the most part, that envy at the happier fortune of the elect will be one cause of this gnashing of teeth and wasting away; in that the total destruction of their own hope leaves them nothing to which to look forward. But we may also take the verse in the milder sense of the agonies of repentance, not too late, when tears and mortification, and the total disappearance of all former evil lusts, slain by the sword of the Spirit, shall bring the sinner to the foot of the Cross, to the grave of CHRIST, to be raised up thence again in newness of life.

Glory be to the FATHER, merciful, loving, and righteous; glory be to the SON, Who hath dispersed His bounties abroad, and given them to the poor; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Light which ariseth in the darkness. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD, everlasting light of the upright in heart, grant that we may love Thee; and make us glad with Thy glory, and so disperse abroad in this world, that we may hear no evil tidings in that which is to come. (1.) O merciful and righteous LORD, make us ever to be merciful, and with all readiness to minister to one another's needs, nor dismay us with evil tidings when Thou shalt judge us, but set us in glory on Thy right hand. (11.) O merciful LORD, Thou art the beginning of fear and wisdom, instruct us therefore with the former, and stablish us in the latter; cause us to begin with fear, and make us perfect in the fulness of wisdom. (11.) Make us mighty upon earth, O LORD, in works pleasing unto Thee, and let our soul live in Thy righteousness by Thine aid; grant us, we beseech Thee, that we may ever run the way of Thy commandments, by Whose grace we may obtain all that we ask. (1.)

Psalm 113

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST turneth the Church, long barren, into the fruitfulness of holiness. The Voice of the Church with praise. The Voice of the Church which she utters to her faithful children, who are born again in the holy font, whatever be their flesh or age. The Voice of the Church to GOD. The Voice of the Church concerning her faithful ones. VEN. BEDE. The following Psalm explains the words of the title: for as it is Alleluia, Praise ye the Lord, so the Psalm itself begins. The Prophet David in the first part exhorts the devout always to offer praise to GOD, and to proclaim Him in all the world: Praise the Lord, ye servants. Secondly, he does himself what he exhorts others: Who is like unto the Lord our God? SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. It is spoken as an earnest warning touching the ministry of the LORD to be performed by the priests at the morning season. It urges us, a new people, born again of water and the SPIRIT, that we should be ready to minister, with hearts sprinkled and washed by the HOLY GHOST, and with pure minds.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. The calling of the new people. S. ATHANASIUS. A psalm uttering praise.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Sunday and Festivals: Vespers. [Feasts B.V.M., Common of Apostles: II. Vespers.]

Antiphons.
The Sunday Antiphon in the chief Uses is, Let the Name * of the LORD be blessed for evermore. Gregorian and Monastic. [Common B.V.M.: His left hand is under my head, and His right hand shall embrace me. Common of Apostles: That He may set him with the princes, even with the princes of the people.] With this Psalm begins the Hallel, or "Great Alleluia of the Jews," (although this latter name is sometimes restricted to Ps. cxxxvi.) namely, the group of Psalms cxiii. to cxviii. inclusive, which was sung at the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Dedication, and on all the New Moons. At the Passover it was divided into two

parts, the first consisting of Pss. cxiii., cxiv., sung before the second Cup at the Paschal Supper was passed round, and thus consequently before the meal itself, which began immediately after that ceremony: the second consisting of Pss. cxv.—cxviii., sung after the filling of the fourth Cup, and supposed to be "the hymn" which CHRIST and the Apostles are stated to have sung after the Last Supper, before they went out to Gethsemane, (S. Matt. xxvi. 30; S. Mark xiv. 26.) It is interesting in another aspect, from forming the intermediate link in Hebrew poetry between the Song of Hannah and the Magnificat, with each of which it has something in common.

1 [Alleluia.] Praise the LORD, ye servants : O praise the Name of the LORD. A. The threefold utterance of the Divine Name, the triple call to praise it, veils here the mystery of the Holy Trinity. A certain ambiguity in the LXX. and Vulgate, which have boys or children (παῖδες, pueri) for servants, has led not only to the use of the Psalm in the Latin office for infant baptism and burial, but also to much comment on the word in question. S. Augustine, followed by several others, bids us note that it is purity, innocence, and docility, not a special time of life, which we have to look to as here denoted; citing various Scriptures in illustration, as thus: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." But as we have to enter in at the strait gate, it behoves us to be like children, who can readily pass through a narrow entrance; and therefore the LORD saith, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is out of the mouths of such babes and sucklings as these, that He hath perfected praise, as He accepted that of the children in the Temple, when the voices of men were silent.

2 Blessed be the Name of the LORD : from this time forth for evermore. A. Isa. xivi. 4. Hence we learn that GOD's praises are not to cease with our advancing years, for He hath said, "Even to your old age I am He," and therefore His claim to our worship is unceasing. From this time forth does not mean that He begins to be praised only now, but that each of us makes a beginning of joining in the hymn of creation; while, if only we persevere in His service, our song shall go on for evermore in the ceaseless melody of heaven. 3 The LORD's Name is praised : from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same. Here is a further instruction. GOD's praise is not merely to be ceaseless, but universal; not restricted by the limits of Judea, but extending to the utmost bounds of the earth. And so He speaks by the mouth of the Prophet: "From the rising up of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering; for My Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of Hosts." In which prophecy note that there is exactly the same threefold proclamation of the Holy Name as in the Psalm, pointing to the same sacred mystery. And we too, in life and in death, in the morning and

the evening of our mortal career, praise the LORD JESUS for His arising as the Sun of Righteousness in His Nativity, His setting in the ruddy glow of His Passion.

Mal. i. 11. 4 The LORD is high above all heathen : and his glory above the heavens. This points without doubt, say the Greek Fathers, to the preaching of the kingdom of CHRIST, for the obvious sense here of the LORD being high above all heathen is, not merely that He is of course so in His essence, which would be a bare truism, but that He is the object of love and adoration among the Gentiles, which did not begin to hold good till the Gospel brought the nations to the knowledge of GOD. Up to that time, His worship was practically confined to Palestine, and to those scattered synagogues of Jews who looked to Jerusalem as their centre of worship, but effected very little in bringing proselytes to kneel before the LORD. And in adding His glory is above the heavens, we may see a reference to the Angel carols at the Nativity, and again to the renewed song of triumph at the Ascension, as well as to His mission of the Paraclete thereupon to those lower heavens, the Apostles, who brought the Gentiles to confess His Name.

A. 5 Who is like unto the LORD our GOD, that hath his dwelling so high : and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?

The Psalmist magnifies the unapproachable majesty and exaltation of GOD, by depicting Him as so highly enthroned that He looks down, not only upon the earth, but over heaven and all therein, as something beneath His feet. And this Solomon expressed, saying, ”Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee. The LXX. and Vulgate turn the sentence a little differently, and read, Who beholdeth the lowly things in heaven and in earth. Hereupon several of the Latins have raised a needless difficulty, urging that lowly cannot be predicated of things in heaven, and desiring to read the passage as though it meant sitting in S. Bernard. heaven, and beholding the lowly things on earth. This will not stand with the LXX. reading, which has both in heaven and in earth, and does not weaken the force of the sentence. One however points out that the loyal angels may well be styled humble in contrast to the rebels who fell by pride. A. But the best comment on the verse is to be found in the LORD’s own words spoken by Isaiah: ”For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Isa. lvii. 15.

And the Saint of GOD, having his conversation in heaven, while here on earth in the body, dwells with GOD in both places, and is alike lowly and contrite, alike looked on by Him with favour in his spiritual and temporal capacity. Much more are the words true of Him Who as GOD ceased not to be in heaven, while as Man He was sorrowful and rejected on earth; and therefore it was most fitting that His Blessed Mother should adapt this Psalm to herself, saying, ”He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden; as He hath done ever since to His humble Saints,

whether engaged in the heaven of contemplation, or the earth of active life. L. Honorius.

6 He taketh up the simple out of the dust: and lifteth the poor out of the mire; 7 That he may set him with the princes: even with the princes of his people. 1 Sam. ii. 8. These words are taken, with but little variation, from the Song of Hannah, and are recalled, though not exactly cited, in the Magnificat. There are several mystical ideas brought out by the expositors, who understand the simple or the needy of the first clause, (inopem, A. V. poor) as CHRIST Himself, taken up first into mortal existence from the pure earth of His Virgin Mother, taken up again in the Ascension from earth to heaven; while we may read the words also, together with those that follow, as denoting His deliverance of mankind from the dust of earthliness and the mire, or rather, with LXX., Vulgate, and A. V., the dunghill, of pollution. Some take the dust, or earth, as LXX. and Vulgate read, to be the Jews, and the Gentiles as the dunghill, because of their coarser vices, and tell us that CHRIST chooses His elect from both these indiscriminately, to set them with His Angels and Saints in heaven. Or we may apply both epithets to the Gentiles alone, the first one denoting the meanness and poverty of their notions about GOD; the second, the foulness of their idolatrous rites, and then we are taught that GOD puts them on a level with the Jews, truly the princes of His people, for Israel denotes a ”Prince with GOD.” In the reference to CHRIST, more than one Saint reminds us Hugo Card. A. S. Chrysost. Ay. Ric. Hamp. Elias Cre-tensis. Honorius. S. Chrysost.

that by His birth in the manger-stable, He was literally brought down in His humiliation to the dunghill, whence He was exalted again to riches and honour, whereof holy Job was a type. And as regards His members, they tell us that voluntary self-abasement and penitence, typified by the dunghill, (”behold, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,”) is the first step towards being lifted up by the LORD, and set with His princes; not taking that honour to ourselves, till He call us, lest He should say: ”They have set up kings, but not by Me: they have made princes, and I knew it not.” S. Bernard. Serm. 6, in Vig. Nat.

8 He maketh the barren woman to keep house: and to be a joyful mother of children.

To keep house. That is, not merely to have a settled position and dwelling, as possessing a family, but also in the colloquial sense in which we use this phrase. For a barren wife was often divorced, or made inferior in the household to another who had borne children, albeit brought in at a later date, and it is not improbable that a claim to hold the position of domestic authority as the mother of Abraham’s first-born is implied in the words used of Hagar, that ”her mistress was despised in her eyes. There is a three-fold interpretation of this verse in a mystical sense. The first, and that most followed, takes it of the Gentile Church, raised to a position

of superiority over the Jewish, according to the words of Isaiah, adopted later and republished by S. Paul: ”Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame:

for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His Name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The GOD of the whole earth shall He be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken, and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy GOD. Next, they take the verse of a soul heretofore unfruitful in good works, but wedded to CHRIST by repentance and love, and bringing forth abundant progeny to Him; and finally, it is understood of the great company of the Virgin Saints of the Church in the Religious Life, having many more spiritual descendants, many more children of Paula, and Scholastica, and Clara, and Teresa, than can be numbered by the most

Gen. xvi. 4. Cf. Deut. xxi. 15. A. fruitful progenetrix of secular races, even as the Blessed Mary herself, though ever-Virgin, is, by her Son, the Mother of all Christians. So runs the hymn in honour of S. Clare, dwelling on her house and her children alike: Generat virgo filias, Mentis maternæ conscias, Christi sponsas et socias, Corruptionis nescias. A virgin mother daughters bears, Who know her true maternal cares, CHRIST’s brides, and partners of His reign, Who know not foul pollution’s stain. Now far and wide through many a land The rising convent buildings stand, And clearly shines the mother’s fame, As throngs of sisters bear her name.

Wherefore:
Glory be to the FATHER, Who is high above all heathen; glory be to the SON, Who humbled Himself to behold us on earth, and lifted us up from the dunghill; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who maketh the barren woman to keep house. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
Almighty GOD, we who praise Thy holy Name, beseech Thee that as Thou hast placed us in the bosom of our Mother, the Church, so Thou wouldst unite us in steadfastness of love. (1.) O LORD, Who dwellest on high, and beholdest the things in heaven and earth; graciously bow Thyself down to us, and as Thou hast promised men the bliss of the Angels, vouchsafe to mould us to angelic obedience. (11.) O LORD most High, Who beholdest the lowly, grant us lowliness that we may please

Thee, nor suffer pride to remain within us, which Thou throwest afar off and destroyest when near; that, of Thy mercy, the haughtiness which casteth down may depart from our mind, and contrition which bringeth glory may abide in our heart. (11.) O GOD, Whose Name is blessed from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same; fill our heart with knowledge, and commit the service of Thy praise to our mouth, that as Thou art blessed with due homage throughout the ages, so Thou mayest be praised from sunrise to sunset with the harmonious voice of all men. (11.)

O LORD, Who art high above all nations, and dwellest gloriously in the heavens, look down mercifully from Thy lofty place on our humility, and as Thy Church, which was once afflicted with barrenness, now believing in Thee is full of the merits of holiness and fruitful in sons; so our soul, barren by reason of unfruitfulness in works, may of Thy bounty both receive the seed of the Word, and abound with plenteous fruits, and zealously strive to love Thy mighty Name with unanimity of heart from the sun-rising to the sun-setting, and to praise it with agreement in faith. (11.) O our GOD, Whose dwelling is on high, and Who liftest the poor up from the dunghill, mercifully look upon us Thy humble servants on earth, and raise us to the heights of holiness, that we may advance therein daily, and persevere without fainting. (1.)

Psalm 114

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. The Voice of the Apostles with the Jews, rebuking idols. The Voice of the Apostles to the Jews, rebuking idols, and narrating the wonders wrought for the Jews. The Voice of them that praise GOD. It forbiddeth idols. VEN. BEDE. As the praise of GOD is gathered from His various doings, so also Alleluia is applied to different suitable narratives and matters. The design of this Psalm is to declare that fulfilling of the Law (which is CHRIST the LORD) vouchsafed to the world by mighty miracles from the beginning of the Hebrew people; by which similitudes it proves that to-day also every Christian is set free. Throughout the Psalm the Prophet speaks. In the first part he commemorates the miracles which the LORD wrought for the Hebrews and the Christian people: When Israel came out. Secondly; he saith, with a question, why the sea fled, why Jordan stayed his course, adding the joyous answer that the earth was moved at the face of the LORD: What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thirdly; he shows that the idols of the Gentiles are useless to their worshippers, and explains thereupon how quickening and healthful is the religion of the LORD to its disciples: Their idols are silver, &c.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. From the old Scriptures, concerning Moses, who uttered praise by the sea. For us, the calling of the Gospel, by which we, aforetime barbarians, were made a new people, spiritual unto GOD Incarnate, JESUS CHRIST, Who redeemed us by His Blood from the curse of Scripture, and cleansed us from sin by His SPIRIT. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. An instruction of the new people. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of narration. Also; Hortatory, and, as it were, commanding.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Sunday: Vespers.

Antiphons.
We who live * bless the LORD. Mozarabic. Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise. 1 When Israel came out of Egypt: and the house of Jacob from among the strange people; 2 Judah was his sanctuary: and

Israel his dominion. The LXX. begins the Psalm with a more familiar phrase: In the Exodus of Israel. And the Psalmist tells us how this very act was the true beginning of the national life of the Hebrews, their consecration as a special people to the service of GOD. They went down merely as the house of Jacob, members of a single family, if not actually a single household; and while in Egypt itself, they were on the one hand mixed up with the native population, and on the other, were serfs and bondslaves, with no independent polity. That they continued, however, to be radically distinct from the Egyptians appears from the word strange, translated by the A.V. of strange language, (Aquila, ἐτερογλώσσου), but by Chaldee, LXX. and Vulgate barbarous. It is more precisely ?, "stammering," that is, unintelligible; a sense in which S. Paul employs the corresponding Greek expression, saying, "If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me."

Judah was His sanctuary. Judah here does not stand for the royal tribe, still less for the Patriarch, but for the whole land of Judea, a meaning fixed in Hebrew by the feminine form of the verb. But the earlier commentators do take it of the tribe, pointing out that even before the reign of David it had acquired a certain priority; inasmuch as it led the van 1 Similarly, the Russians call the Germans Njemetz, which means "dumb."

of march in the wilderness, and was divinely selected to begin the attack on the Canaanites after the death of Joshua. There is a Rabbinical legend that this leadership was conferred as a reward upon Judah, because when all the Israelites hung back in alarm at the brink of the Red Sea, Amminadab, prince of that tribe, caught up the standard of his house and passed first between the waters. But there are two sufficient reasons, independently of the grammatical one, for taking Judah to mean the whole country. First; the parallelism between the two strophes of the verse is thus exact, and Israel precisely balances Judah. Next; no place specially sacred in Jewish history lay within the limits of the tribe of Judah. Shiloh, in Ephraim, was the earliest shrine of the Ark after the conquest, and Jerusalem lay within the actual boundaries of Benjamin. And, finally, the epithet sanctuary is twice applied to the whole of Palestine in other parts of Scripture; once in the Song of Moses: "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which Thy hands have established;" and once in the Psalter: "And brought them within the borders of His Sanctuary." And Israel His dominion. This points to the establishment of the Theocracy, in that Israel was the only nation whose King was the LORD Himself, and wherein He habitually displayed His providence by miraculous acts of power.

The Paschal character of this Psalm, and its triumphant accents, have led to its use primarily as an Easter Psalm in the Christian Church, and then its employ-

ment on every Sunday, the festival whereon a weekly commemoration is made of the Resurrection of CHRIST our Passover. This use is emphasized by the custom of the modern Roman Breviary, which deviates so far from its normal custom of employing the same Psalms for Sundays and festivals, as to substitute Ps. cxvii. for this one on feast-days which have not a specific Sunday rite of their own. The connection between Israel's passage of the Red Sea, led by Moses with his rod, and the march of the Christian people out of the bondage of sin through the ruddy depths of the Passion, following the Cross of CHRIST, is forcibly brought out by one word, whose force is lost in the A.V. In S. Luke's narrative of the Transfiguration, it is said, "And behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish in Jerusalem." The word here translated decease is Exodus, and the notion it involves has been embodied in well-nigh every Paschal homily and hymn of the ancient Church. It was then, in the LORD's own Exodus, in the coming of His people out of the midst of His enemies, that Judah became His sanctuary, because He consecrated His Jewish Apostles to the office of discipling, baptizing, confirming, and teaching

Numb. x. 14. Judg. i. 2. Gerbert. de Mus. Sacr. i. 5. S. John Damasc. Canon for Low Sunday. the Gentiles, so that, in His own words "salvation is of the Jews." And then His people, no longer a mere house of Jacob, wrestling against sin, became Israel His dominion, because, prevalent with GOD, they are also able in the power of His might to resist all sins and temptations, while they hallow His Name in their capacity as Judah, giving Him continual "praise." The idea of the march of Israel out of Egypt, as typical of the Christian pilgrimage, has been for many centuries musically suggested by the employment throughout the Western Church of the Tonus Peregrinus, or "Pilgrim's Chant," (an irregular form of the eighth Gregorian tone,) for this particular Psalm, a custom said to be immediately derived from the traditional use of the Synagogue, and thus blending, even more than in any other use of the Psalter by Christians, the most august and victorious memories of the Old and New Testaments.

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain, Of triumphant gladness! GOD hath brought His Israel Into joy from sadness: Loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke Jacob's sons and daughters; Led them with unmoistened foot Through the Red Sea waters. 'Tis the Spring of souls to-day, CHRIST hath burst His prison; And from three days' sleep in death As a sun, hath risen. All the winter of our sins, Long and dark, is flying From His light, to Whom we give Laud and praise undying. One other peculiarity of the second verse requires attention. It twice uses the word His, without naming any one. There are two theories to account for this circumstance. One is that Psalm exiv. was always sung in immediate connection with exiii., in which the Name of GOD occurs no less than six times, so that the continuance of the train of thought made a fresh repetition of it here unnecessary. But this view, to be fully consistent

with itself, must assume that the two Psalms are really one, with a merely arbitrary division, which does not, on the face of the matter, seem by any means probable, as the scope of thought in the two is perfectly distinct. The other, which is more satisfactory, regards the omission of the Holy Name in this part of the Psalm as a poetical artifice to heighten the effect of the answer to the sudden apostrophe in verses five and six. There would be nothing marvellous in the agitation of sea, and river, and mountains in the presence of GOD, but it may well appear wonderful till that potent cause is revealed, as it is most forcibly in the dignified words of the seventh verse.

3 The sea saw that, and fled : Jordan was driven back.
Two miracles of the same class, though parted from one another by an interval of forty years in time and a wide distance in space, are here coupled, to teach us that God's power extends everywhere, and is not tied down by any limits of space or time, and also because they mark the beginning and end of the Hebrew pilgrimage. The word fled, refers to the passage, "The LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided;" while driven back, applied to Jordan, tells that "the waters that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off." In the one particular of the pathway between two walls of water to allow the passage of Israel, the two miracles precisely agree, and find a partial parallel in classical poetry, as when Cyrene makes a road through a river to her palace for her son Aristæus :

Simul alta jubet discedere late Flumina, qua juvenis gressus inferret, at illum Curvata in montis speciem circumstetit unda, Accepitque sinu vasto. Meanwhile, she bids the deep streams widely part, Where the youth's steps should enter, and the wave, Curved like a mountain, compassed him about, And took him to its bosom vast.

Mystically, the fleeing of the sea is explained as the alarm of sinners, and especially of Gentile heathens, at the Gospel tidings, and their consequent abandonment of their former habits. There is more variety in the treatment of the latter clause of the verse. Some, pointing out, truly enough, that Jordan means "the descender," and that its course terminates in the Dead Sea, take it as a type of those who sin, not from ignorance, but from passion, and from being hurried along, like a swift river, by the cares and temptations of the world. These are suddenly stayed in their course, and are driven back, that is, converted by penitence to God, from the headlong descent into the abyss of death to which they had been hurrying, according to His own call, "Turn ye unto Him from Whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted." And in this special sense many of those who interpret the sea as the Gentiles will have it that Jordan has special reference to the Jews. Others bring in the idea of Baptism, as connected with the Jordan, and treat it variously. Thus it

is sometimes combined with the exposition just given above, and interpreted of the conversion and baptism of those who were hurrying into the bitter sea of Gentile idolatry from terror at the sufferings of the Martyrs, but who retraced their steps to Bethabara, to receive the baptism, not of John, but of Jesus. Or again, it is taken without this special limitation, of all penitents who are converted and received into the Church. A further interpretation is that the river stands for the whole tide of human passions and affections, and that this tide is driven backward, and made to rise "upon an heap" when men abandon earthly thoughts, and set their affections on things on high; not fleeing from God, like the sea, but to Him, because of love which casteth out fear.

4 The mountains skipped like rams: and the little hills like young sheep.

Here the Psalmist turns to the earthquake when the Law was given on Sinai. But there is a curious Hebrew tradition to the effect that when the children of Israel were in the valley of Arnon, between Moab and the Amorites, the mountains on the further side bent down to allow them an easy passage; and in this sense they interpret that verse from the lost Book of the Wars of the LORD, "what He did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, and at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab. If we take the words as denoting the terror and dismay of the mountains ("I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly,") we may very well explain the verse figuratively of the dread which fell upon the Canaanite chieftains at the news of the advance of Israel, according to the Song of Moses: "Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold of them, all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away; and may carry on this reference further to the alarm of the kings and great ones of the earth at the coming of CHRIST, when Herod, and at a later day, Pilate, feared greatly, and when the Roman Empire put out all its strength ten times from its seven-hilled capital against the Faith.

But the majority of the commentators, looking to the idea of rejoicing which the Hebrew may imply here, as it certainly does in Eccl. iii. 4, and which is undoubtedly included in the LXX. ἐσκίρησαν, the Vulgate exsultaverunt, the English skipped, prefer to take the words first as a personification of the gladness of Canaan at the coming of GOD to overthrow the idol shrines on many a hill, which they may be regarded as eager to shake off, and then as denoting the exultation of the Apostles, those great mountains of GOD, rams, as leaders of His flock; and that of the inferior disciples, (little, indeed, in comparison with giants like Peter and Paul, James and John, but yet hills, raised above the ordinary level of earth, and young sheep of His pasture Who carries the lambs in His bosom,) in the grace, mercy, and truth of JESUS CHRIST.

Ipsi lætitia voces ad sidera jactant Intonsi montes: ipsæ jam carmina rupes, Ipsa sonant arbusta, Deus, deus ille. With joy the shaggy mountains send their voice

Up to the stars, the rocks break out in song, The very copses echo, He is GOD! 5 What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest: and thou, Jordan, that thou wast driven back? 6 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams: and ye little hills, like young sheep? The bold personification and address here, which constitute the chief beauty of the Psalm, have not been lost sight of by the commentators, who explain the first verse of the astonishment of the world at the sudden cessation of the fierce pagan assaults on Christianity, when the Empire bowed to the Cross just ten years after Diocletian had proclaimed his successful extirpation of the hated creed, and the still greater bewilderment which seized on Gentile philosophy in seeing Saints, even according to the view of enlightened heathens, made out of the unpromising material of harlots, felons, and outcasts of society. Still more happily they take the second verse of the astonishment of the persecutors at the joy with which the Christian Martyrs received sentence of death, and went to the rack, the stake, the arena, and the scaffold, as though to a bridal or a throne, as indeed they were going to both, had their judges but known it, ”rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name.”

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the LORD; at the presence of the GOD of Jacob; 8 Who turned the hard rock into a standing water: and the flint-stone into a springing well. Here is the answer to the question in the previous verses: Nothing but the presence of GOD Himself could so have wrought on the mightiest of inanimate things, sea, and flood, and mountain, as to cause them to flee and shake, as the Greek tragic poet sings: The mountains quake, and earth, and the abyss Of mighty ocean, and the lofty hills, When the LORD’s awful eye but looks on them, For the Most High in glory hath all might.

Do not these words, asks S. Clement of Alexandria, seem a paraphrase of The earth was shaken at the presence of the Lord? (LXX.) It is well said the earth here, for if the mountains, themselves but a small part of the earth, skipped at the giving of the Law, far greater wonders accompanied the revelation of CHRIST in the Gospel. And He showed His face in four ways, living, dying, judging, reigning. The first is the face of His poverty, in lowly birth and sorrowful life: the second of His sorrow in His Passion; the third of His wrath against sin; the fourth of the delight which the open vision of Him shall give His elect. And each of these aspects of His countenance appeals to men that they may be moved from mere earthly things and turn to Him. The last verse is variously explained, and first, accepting S. Paul’s gloss, that the smitten Rock was CHRIST. He was a Rock whence no streams appeared to flow to His doubting disciples, when He revealed to them the mystery of the Real Presence of His Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar, and they answered, ”This is a hard saying, who can hear it?” But after He was smitten with the rod of the Cross, and rose again, He opened to them the Scriptures, and by showing them the types concerning Him in the Law and the Prophets, writings confined to the narrow circle of the Jewish nation, He turned Himself, the Rock, into that standing water; but by

sending the Paraclete on the Apostles, and giving them knowledge of all tongues, that they might preach Him in all lands, He made Himself into a springing well, and lo, His brook became a river, and His river became a sea.

Again, they take the rock to be the hard hearts of the Jews, converted into the calm stillness of Christian belief, and the flintstone the equally indurated Gentiles, nevertheless brought to be preachers of that very Word to which they were at first insensible. And finally GOD turns the stony heart of the sinner into a heart of flesh, and causes it to shed copious floods of penitential tears, and turns all the hardness and suffering of earth into the abundant joys of heaven; truly a standing water, because it is an exhaustless reservoir, an unruffled ocean of bliss, and a springing well, because it has no monotony, but is ever fresh and new. Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of Jacob; glory be to the SON, the Prince of Judah, His Sanctuary; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is those rivers of living water which spring up within the Saints unto everlasting life.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen. O GOD, unspeakable Name of Trinity, Who didst awe the Ludolph streams of Jordan with the aspect of Thy light, grant that Thou mayest never suffer those whom Thou hast washed and renewed in Holy Baptism to be defiled with the idols of image-worship. (5.) O GOD, mightiest of all beings, Who turnest the rock into standing waters, let the earth of our bodies be moved to repentance at Thy presence, that there may thence be glory to Thy Name for mercifully granting us salvation in everlasting blessedness. (1.)

Psalm 115

This Psalm is reckoned in Syriac, Æthiopic, LXX., and Vulgate, as part of the preceding one, is numbered therefore as 113, and has no separate Antiphons nor Uses in the office-books. This peculiarity is found even in some Hebrew MSS., though there can be no reasonable doubt of the completeness of Ps. cxiv. in itself. 1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praise : for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake. The Psalmist begins with a prayer that GOD will put forth His might, for the vindication of His Name, and of the Law which He gave, against the scoffing idolaters who despised the feeble remnant which returned out of exile to Jerusalem. It is, in fact, asking Him to fulfil the promise that He made by the mouth of Ezekiel, when, declaring the terrible overthrow of the armies of Gog, He added: "And I will set My glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see My judgment that I have executed, and My hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their GOD from that day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against Me, therefore hid I My face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies; so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness, and according to their transgressions, have I done unto them, and hid My face from them. Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD, Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy Name."

The words Not unto us are doubled, in order to express the S. Chrysost. Y deep sense of personal unworthiness entertained by the suppliants; and we may take them also as denoting the blended prayers of the two great constituent elements of the Church, Jew and Gentile. The words befit us now as much as they did the struggling Hebrew Church. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise, is the cry of this time, when the Angels are crying "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." And the LORD saith, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My FATHER." He is the FATHER's glory, and He saith, Touch Me not. Seek not glory here, shun it rather, and see that ye touch Me not till we come unto the FATHER, where all glorying shall be secure. For there

”my soul shall make her boast in the LORD, the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.”

For Thy loving mercy and for Thy truth’s sake. God’s honour is concerned in delivering His people, in order to show that loving mercy, and not the caprice of a despot, has been the motive of His dealings with them; and His truth is no less concerned in fulfilling His promises made to them, and in executing His threatened judgments upon the heathen who have not called upon His Name. By vindicating Himself in these two fashions, He gives glory to that Name, because He moves His people through gratitude, and His enemies through fear, to worship Him; and that for the dear sake of His mercy and truth, which are JESUS CHRIST. 2 Wherefore shall the heathen say: Where is now their God? This is ever the scoff, open or secret, of the persecutors of the righteous, of the slayers of the Martyrs; and is again and again urged on God by His prophets in the Old Testament as a reason for His deliverance of Israel out of each fresh calamity which sin had brought with it. So Moses pleaded with Him after the false report of the spies; so Joel bid the priests cry weeping between the porch and the altar; so Daniel besought in his petition to the LORD. And there is a peculiar force in the verse, remembering, as we may, that the charge of Atheism was brought against both Jews and Christians by the Pagans, on the ground of the absence of all images from their places of worship. So the Proconsul, Statius Quadratus, addressing Polycarp, when endeavouring to persuade him to apostasy, said, ”Repent, and say, Away with the Atheists;” words which the aged martyr did thereupon utter, but in a very different sense, and without the denial of CHRIST which was urged on him at the same time.

3 As for our God, he is in heaven: he hath done whatsoever pleased him. In heaven, not as limited there, for in truth most copies of the LXX. and the Roman Psalter add and in earth, but as denoting His invisibility, His majesty, His holiness, and His power; while as for us, who recite daily in the Creed that CHRIST ascended into heaven, we can use the words literally and in a local sense impossible to the Jew. He hath done whatsoever pleased Him, for all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth, and whatsoever the FATHER doeth, that the Son doeth likewise; in contrast to the heathen idols, mere powerless creatures of man’s imagination and skill, of which the Psalmist now begins to speak. A. 4 Their idols are silver and gold : even the work of men’s hands. 5 They have mouths, and speak not : eyes have they, and see not. 6 They have ears, and hear not : noses have they, and smell not. 7 They have hands, and handle not; feet have they, and walk not : neither speak they through their throat.

Silver and gold. By singling out these metals, the most precious materials of which the idols were framed, and pouring contempt upon even these costly images, the Psalmist heightens the scorn which he implies for such as were of inferior price, and which had not the one element of costliness in their favour. And when we bear

in mind the Apostle's saying that covetousness is idolatry, we shall be warned that we too may need this lesson against worshipping silver and gold; or the worldly wisdom and specious eloquence which may be compared to these metals. They have mouths, and speak not. It is noteworthy that we do not find here taste not, which we should expect from the parallelism of the other organs of sense, and which is alleged against idols in Scripture, and it is not inaptly observed that the omission is due to the impossibility of predicating the act of eating of the True God, with Whom the idols are here contrasted, though we may speak of Him as speaking, seeing, hearing, and smelling. Cardinal Hugo, who explains the silver and gold to mean simoniacal, luxurious, and ostentatious prelates, carries on his gloss with unsparing vigour, in which he is supported in well-nigh every particular by S. Albert the Great, saying that they have mouths, and speak not, because they always get some one to preach in their stead; they have eyes and see not, because they employ Archdeacons and other officials, oculi Episcoporum, to do their visitations for them, or rather to collect money, and neglect the real work of souls; they have ears, no doubt, for money accounts; and for gossip, A.

Rom. i. 25. and flattery, but not for hearing the reading of Scripture, nor for advice, nor for listening to rebuke, nor for hearing the cry of the poor and oppressed; and they have noses, to smell good dinners and wines, but not the sweet savour of CHRIST, nor the fragrance of Paradise; they have hands too, chaplains and other instruments, which they do not employ to heal the wounds of the sick, nor to lift off the burdens of the oppressed, but merely to handle money, and get rich benefices; feet have they, but not for walking after GOD, in the footsteps of CHRIST. Neither speak they through their throat, which is not wonderful, seeing that it is too full with the dainties they are tasting, to allow of speech. Of this remarkably plain-spoken piece of testimony Lorinus briefly observes, "It is worth while to read it, but unnecessary to copy it out." A third great preacher, however, takes nearly the same line as the Bishop of Ratisbon and the Cardinal of S. Sabina, comparing to an idol that ecclesiastic who has knowledge, but will not preach, who is careless and lacking in circumspection, who is not obedient, though he can hear a command, who has no delicate sense of discernment of the odours of good and evil, who has the power of doing active good, and neglects it, who makes no advance in holiness, and who employs a deputy in choir and pulpit.

Returning to the literal sense, it is desirable to cite some few words from the powerful attack here made on idolatry by S. Augustine. "The workman is better than they are, for he was able to make them by the movement or action of his members, and yet thou wouldst be ashamed to adore that workman. Thou art better too, though thou didst not make them, for thou canst do what they cannot. A beast is better also *. Those people think themselves to be of a purer religion who say, 'I do not worship the image, nor a demon, but I look on the bodily effigy as a sign of that thing which I ought to worship.' And therefore they explain the images, saying

that by one of them the earth is signified, whence they call it a shrine of Tellus; by another the sea, as an image of Neptune; another the air, which is Juno; another fire, as Vulcan; the morning-star, as Venus; the sun and moon, to whose statues they give the same kind of names as to that of the earth, and so with this and that star, this or that creature, for we cannot go through with the whole catalogue.

And when they begin to be cross-examined as to why they worship bodily things, especially the earth, and sea, and air, and fire, all of which are at our disposal to use, (for they are not so much ashamed of heavenly things, because we cannot bodily handle nor reach them save with the glances of our eyes,) they are bold enough to reply, that they do not worship these bodies themselves, but the divinities which preside over their governance. Therefore the Apostle in one sentence witnesseth to their punishment and condemnation, in that he saith, 'Who changed the truth of GOD into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever.' For in the first part of this sentence, he condemned the images, and in the latter, the explanation of the images. And that because by calling the statues made by a workman by the names of things which GOD has made, they change the glory of GOD into a lie, and by accounting and worshipping as gods the things themselves, they serve the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. And S. Ambrose, arguing against the gods of Rome, very aptly remarks: "Geese saved the Roman Capitol from the foe: it is to them, O Rome, that thou truly owest thy dominion. Thy gods were asleep, and the geese kept watch, therefore in those days thou sacrificest to geese, not to Jupiter.

For your gods yield precedence to geese, by whom they knew that they were defended, lest they too should be captured by the foe," for they spake not through their throat, or, as the Hebrew strictly implies, could not even make a low articulate murmuring, whereas the geese had voice enough to raise an alarm.

8 They that make them are like unto them : and so are all such as put their trust in them. These words are read by most of the ancient versions as an imprecation: Let those that make them be like unto them, which, as Cardinal Bellarmine justly says, is a prayer that Pagans cannot complain of, without yielding the whole point in dispute. Following the English version, we see a deep truth set before us, that there is a close relation between the object of worship and the worshippers, so that one must react on the other. They who adore Mars, will be warlike and predatory; those who serve Venus, effeminate and profligate; those who reverence Molech, will be cruel and blood-thirsty. And without looking exclusively to this aspect of the matter, which is forcibly urged against Paganism by some of the early Christian apologists, we may remember how Scripture charges the apostates to idolatry with having "become vain," with having eyes and seeing not GOD's truth, with having ears, and being deaf to His Word, as we find in that saying by the mouth of Isaiah, cited by CHRIST and by S. Paul, "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand

not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." They that put their trust in them. This is a far lower depth than making the idols, as even a Pagan can tell us:

Who moulds in gold or stone a sacred face, Makes not the god; but he who asks his grace. They who persevere in such fashion, when they have had access to the truth, whether we take the words of literal idolaters, or of those who appoint, elect, or pay court to evil prelates, according to the allegorical sense, shall be made at last like unto the idols, bound hand and foot, so that they cannot move, cast into outer darkness where they cannot see, and where no pleasant thing shall present itself to their other senses. And yet CHRIST is able of these stones, these perverse idolaters, to raise up children unto Abraham, to turn these stony hearts to flesh by the operation of His SPIRIT, to turn them "from these vanities unto the living GOD, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein."

9 But thou, house of Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their succour and defence.
10 Ye house of Aaron, put your trust in the Lord: he is their helper and defender.
11 Ye that fear the Lord, put your trust in the Lord: he is their helper and defender.

It appears almost certain, from the structure of these three verses, with their recurring refrain (which is identical in all, and not varied as above,) He is their help and their shield; that a change here was made in the musical and liturgical use of the Psalm, as the first eight verses seem to be intended to be sung with a full choir, and then the first strophe of each of the three succeeding ones as a solo, with full response from the choir again. The references to the whole Hebrew nation in the ninth verse, and to the Priesthood in the tenth, perhaps also the entire Levitical body (as in Ps. cxxxv. 20,) by reason of its peculiar dignity, are obvious enough; but there is some variety of interpretation as to the persons meant by the phrase, Ye that fear the Lord. One view is, that it is merely complementary of what has gone before, and expresses that Israel and Aaron, the laity and priesthood of the Jewish Church, make up the sum of all the true worshippers of GOD. A second opinion extends the meaning to all devout persons of Gentile origin, such as Melchizedek, Job, Naaman, and others, who served the LORD faithfully, albeit not under the Law; and that it thus looks forward to the wider Church of later days, embracing Jew and Gentile alike within the fold.

And thirdly, some believe that the proselytes of righteousness, Gentiles who conformed in all particulars to the Jewish creed and polity, and were enrolled in Israel, are alone intended. The second of these interpretations agrees best with the words of S. Peter, "Of a truth I perceive that GOD is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. The Christian expositors allegorize the verses as denoting all the Catholic Church, as

that which ”sees GOD,” and then especially its prelates, priests, and religious, with those especial servants of the LORD whose zealous ministry classes them as those that fear Him. The fear and hope ascribed to these last are, as one remarks, the two mill-stones between which man’s heart should be ground into fine flour for a thank-offering of pleasant bread for the LORD, twin stones which should never be parted one from the other. And we are bid to take notice how GOD is thrice named as our help and shield, because He is our defender against those three bands of the Chaldeans which slay and spoil the soul; namely, lust, the special temptation of the young; covetousness, the besetting sin of the old; and pride, which often survives when both the others are dead, and is more perilous than either, according to that proverb:

Cum bene pugnaris, cum cuncta subacta putaris, Quæ magis infestat, vincenda superbia restat. When thou hast fought a good fight, and thinkest all bowed to thy might, A sorer foe yet for thy pains, pride still unconquered remains. And it is written in another place, that ”the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies,” which are the world, the flesh, and the devil; against all of which the LORD is a help and a shield to such as fear Him and put their trust in Him. 12 The LORD hath been mindful of us, and he shall bless us: even he shall bless the house of Israel, he shall bless the house of Aaron. 13 He shall bless them that fear the LORD: both small and great.

These two verses, as well as the two next following, seem to be the answer of the officiating Priest to the chorus of the Levites, declaring GOD’s gracious acceptance of the sacrifice and praises they have just been offering, and His favourable regard to each of the other three classes which were called to prayer by the voice of the choir. The LORD hath indeed been mindful of us, and hath blessed us by coming in the flesh, whereby, as being born of Hebrew race, He blessed the house of Israel; He blessed the house of Aaron, by conferring new dignity upon the sacerdotal office, in condescending to be made Himself a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; He blessed all that feared Him, both small and great, choosing lowly fishermen for His Apostles, taking little children in His arms and blessing them; yet not despising nor rejecting the princes and great men who then or later humbled themselves to Him. He was mindful of us after He quitted earth in His Ascension, and blessed us by the mission of the HOLY GHOST, a blessing on Israel and Aaron, because He thereby made the members of His Church kings and priests with GOD. He blessed both small and great in the wide embrace of His love, ”where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but CHRIST is all, and in all.” He blessed them not with one blessing, but with two, ”blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep which lieth under,” blessing for contemplative and for active spirits, for time and for eternity.

14 The LORD shall increase you more and more : you and your children. 15 Ye are the blessed of the LORD : who made heaven and earth. Deut. i. 10. A. Honorius. R. There is an obvious reference in these two verses, forming the close of the priestly benediction in the Psalm, to the two great tests of divine favour in Jewish eyes, fruitfulness in progeny, so as to ensure national strength, and fertility of the soil, to provide abundantly for the wants of the people. So for the first part Moses addresses the children of Israel: "The LORD your GOD hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. The LORD GOD of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as He hath promised you." And the meaning of the reference to heaven and earth may be found in the blessing of Isaac to Jacob: "GOD give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." But having regard to the denunciation of idols in the former part of the Psalm, it is probable that the title of Maker of heaven and earth is here given to the LORD to distinguish Him from the false deities of the heathen. And this is in close keeping with the tone of that passage of Jeremiah which is written in Chaldee, as though to prevent any risk of Hebrew being too difficult for the sons of the exiles in Babylon, "Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens," a lesson which Israel learnt thoroughly in the hard school of the Captivity.

The blessing has come in a fuller sense upon the true Israel, in that GOD has increased it more and more, raising up fresh children to Abraham from the dead stones of Gentile heathenism, children in true spiritual descent from those Prophets and kings who desired to see the day of CHRIST; and He increases more and more, as the ages roll on, the faithful preachers of His Word, and the number of the converts they draw into the body of His Church, the chosen sanctuary of Him Who hath made heaven and earth, Who hath made those holy teachers who pour down the refreshing rain of the Gospel, and the faithful flocks who receive it, and bring forth fruits abundantly to the LORD, and also minister unto them that teach them, in all good things. 16 All the whole heavens are the LORD's: the earth hath he given to the children of men.

Here, as it would seem, the congregation chimes in with its choral response at the close of the priestly blessing. The first clause of the verse is somewhat paraphrased by the Prayer Book. The Hebrew may stand, as LXX., Syriac, and Vulgate take it, The heaven of heaven is the Lord's; or, as A. V., The heavens, even the heavens are the Lord's; or lastly, as modern critics prefer, The heavens are the Lord's heavens. There is, however, no great difference of meaning, as the intention is to magnify the LORD by representing the highest heavens as His palace and dwelling-place, whence He looks down upon the earth, and the men whom He has made to serve Him therein. Mystically, the heaven of heavens, the full attributes of Godhead, are the possession of the LORD JESUS, Who hath given the Church on earth to us

for our guidance, and the holy earth of His most sacred Body as the food of the children of men in that Church. The heaven of heavens, too, the highest Saints, those Apostles and Evangelists who derived their teaching directly from Himself, whom He adorned with the sun of wisdom, the moon of eloquence, the stars of miracles and holiness, are His; as are likewise those lower heavens of great Saints of later days, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, whose knowledge was less directly obtained;

while the whole expanse of His Church is not kept merely for those eminent in wisdom and virtue, like these, but is thrown open to the children of men, to all that are willing to enter in. It is told of Nivard, youngest brother of S. Bernard, that when all the elder sons of the family had resolved to enter the monastic order, Guy de Fontanes, the senior amongst them, said to the boy, ”Farewell, my little brother Nivard, you will have all the estates and lands to yourself; and the lad answered, ”What, you take heaven for your portion, and leave me only the earth! The division is too unequal. Hence we are taught, that though the earth is given by GOD to the children of men, yet He has a better country, even heaven, to give to such as will seek it, who are sons of GOD, not mere children of men, and who can win heaven by exchanging earth for it, in contempt of riches and luxury, of lands and houses, and all things which are not of the Gospel.

17 The dead praise not thee, O LORD : neither all they that go down into silence. In the mind of the Jew, with his very imperfect realization of the life of the world to come, one main reason for being zealous in the praise of the LORD was the thought that this life might be, and probably was, the only one in which He could be fully worshipped by men, and that it therefore behoved them to be frequent in their attendance on His public service, and ready with their voices and instruments to join in the Psalmody of the Temple. The word dead, however, may very possibly here have reference to the eighth verse, in which the worshippers of idols are said to be like unto them; and as the idols themselves are most probably intended in the mention of ”offerings of the dead” in a previous Psalm, we may fairly take the contrast here in the two last verses to be not between living and dead Jews, but between worshippers of the LORD and worshippers of idols. But the deeper Christian sense explains it of sinners, dead even while living, through lack of grace and spiritual vitality, in this world; and cut off in the next, if finally impenitent, from all share in that praise of GOD which rises eternally in heaven. There are, however, dead who can praise the LORD, those blessed ones who have died in Him, whose death is precious in His sight, who are dead indeed to sin here: ”buried with Him by baptism into death,” or who, killed for His sake in the body, are yet alive to Him in soul and spirit. To these, and such as these, the last verse belongs:

18 But we will praise the LORD : from this time forth for evermore. Praise the LORD. The LXX., Arabic, and Vulgate, fill in the suggested idea, reading, as they

do, But we who live, will praise the Lord; for ”GOD is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living;” that is, not of those who possess mere physical vitality, but of such as live the life of grace, who shall praise Him, from this time forth, beginning at once in faith, good works, and holiness, and persevering to the very end, to that other life of glory, where for evermore the unceasing Alleluias of the conquerors ascend to their King. Glory be to the FATHER, Whose are the heavens of heavens; glory be to the SON, Who is our help and shield; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who increaseth us more and more. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Be Thou, O LORD, our helper and defender, as we put our trust in Thee, and remembering that Thou hast made us of the earth, grant that we may ever live in heavenly praise. (1.) Remember us, O LORD, and bless us, and lest we should turn from Thee in forgetfulness of mind, bring us back to think on Thee, and as Thou didst deliver Israel out of Egypt in type, so vouchsafe to separate us from the pollution of the world. (11.) O LORD, Who sitting on high in the heavens, holdest and guidest the powers of earth, give glory to Thy Name, give pardon to sinners, and whatever we dare to hope from Thy mercy, let us drink in verily that we ask, that Thy mercy may keep idols afar from the congregation of Thy Church, and Thy truth may convert doubting hearts to the knowledge of Thy worship. Add, we pray Thee, O LORD, Thy blessing upon Thy people, and on their sons’ sons, Who art salvation unto life eternal to them that fear Thee; grant the crown which Thou hast promised, that we may not be cast out from Thy blessing, as dead in sins, but made partakers of life, may praise Thy Name for evermore. (11.)

Psalm 116

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. First Section: That CHRIST delivers our souls from the perils of hell. It is the Voice of CHRIST. The Voice of CHRIST as King to be delivered out of trouble and pain by humility, and also of His members. He giveth thanks to GOD, Who always healeth them that ask in prayer. Second Section: That we shall especially pay our vows to CHRIST in the Heavenly Jerusalem. The Voice of Paul the Apostle. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST by the Prophet concerning the death of the Saints; or the Voice of Paul the Apostle and those like unto him. He shows, moreover that no payment can be made for divine benefits, save with the Cup of the LORD which is drunk in the precious death of His Saints. The fifth and sixth edition couple this Psalm with the preceding, but Symmachus and the Seventy interpreters divide it. The Voice of the Martyrs to CHRIST.

This Psalm is divided at verse 9 in the LXX. and Vulgate reckoning, and numbered as 114 and 115. It has thus double Arguments, and distinct Uses, as noted above. VEN. BEDE. First Section: A solemn and truthful warning rouses us from the sleep of this world. The Prophet, delivered from the deep pit of sins, and set, moreover, on that rock of mercy, in the first part gives thanks because he knows that he has been heard; and declares that he effectually called upon the LORD against all perils of death: I am well pleased that the Lord hath heard, &c. Secondly, he cries again unto the LORD, that being set free he may attain that everlasting rest which he promises to the faithful, as certain to be conferred by the LORD’s bounty: O Lord, deliver my soul. Second Section: Throughout the Psalm the words of the unconquered Martyrs are referred to. In the first portion they commemorate the benefits of the LORD, and when they feel doubt as to what worthy return can be made for these, there occurs truly that glorious cup of martyrdom, which however is bestowed by the LORD’s bounty: I believed, &c. The second choir confesses itself the LORD’s servant, and the son of the Catholic Church, lest thou shouldst suppose that the martyrdom of heretics is also pleasing unto the LORD: O Lord, how that I am Thy servant, &c.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. The advance of the new people returning to the Christian religion like a child to understanding. And it is spoken, literally, of the time when Saul came and tarried at the mouth of the cave where David and his men lay hid. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. First portion: The improvement of the new people. Second portion: The perfection of the new people. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of thanksgiving.

Various Uses.
Gregorian and Monastic. Monday: Vespers. [First portion, 1—9. Office of the Dead: Vespers. Second portion, 10—16. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Corpus CHRISTI, Five Wounds, Spear and Nails: Vespers. Common of Apostles: II. Vespers. Common of One and Many Martyrs: II. Vespers.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. First portion: The LORD hath inclined His ear to me. Second portion: I believed and therefore I spake. [Office of the Dead: I will please the LORD in the land of the living. Maundy Thursday: I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the LORD. Corpus CHRISTI: I will receive the cup of salvation, * and offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Common of Apostles: Thou hast broken, O LORD, my bonds; I will offer Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.] Ambrosian. First portion: In my days * I will call upon the LORD. Second portion: I believed and therefore I spoke. Parisian. First portion: Turn again then unto thy rest, O my soul, for the LORD hath rewarded thee. Second portion: First verse. Lyons as Gregorian. Mozarabic. First portion: Gracious is the LORD, and righteous, yea, our GOD is merciful. Second portion: I will please the LORD in the land of the living.

There is a Jewish tradition that this Psalm was a thanksgiving of Hezekiah after his recovery from sickness, and there are so many parallelisms of language between it and the story of that event as recorded by Isaiah, that no reasonable doubt remains that the Psalm is directly based on the Prophet’s narrative. But the Chaldee forms with which the Psalm abounds make the diction of the two far less alike in Hebrew than in English, and fix the date of the composition at a much later period, most probably immediately after the return from the Captivity. It is possible that the Psalm is purely typical, and that the Jewish nation is personified as the speaker; but there is no improbability in the supposition that the primary sense implies a thanksgiving for the recovery of some eminent Hebrew chief, prince or priest, from a dangerous illness. 1 I am well pleased: that the LORD hath heard the voice of my prayer;

I am well pleased. The Hebrew is stronger, and is rightly translated by LXX., Vulgate, and A.V., I love. The Syriac and Arabic Versions interpret this as meaning, I earnestly desired that the LORD would hear my prayer, but it is far better to take the sense with A.V., I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice. Let this be

the song of the soul which is in its pilgrimage, afar from GOD; let this be the song of that sheep which was lost, let this be the song of that son who was dead and is alive again, who was lost and found; let this be the song of our own soul. It is enough for the Psalmist to say, I have loved, without naming any object, for only GOD, or that which is loved for His sake in His way can be the object of true love. GOD heard the voice of His Saints under the Law, desiring the Incarnation, and He hears us still under the Gospel, as we pray for everlasting salvation. The Latins dwell on the form of the tenses here in the Vulgate, I have loved, for the LORD will hear, as denoting, on the one hand, not merely the affection born of benefits, such as even the heathen entertain, but that deeper, surer, truer love of GOD, which turns to Him even in trouble, with unswerving faith. It is thus no promise for the future, but a declaration of a fully formed habit, namely, that love and obedience which is the fulfilling of the Law.

Most fitly, then, may the words be taken as those of the LORD JESUS, Whose love for His FATHER and for mankind led Him to undertake the work of our redemption, and to bear all the bitter sorrows of His Passion, in order, to use A. His own language, ”That the world may know that I love the FATHER, even so I do;” and again, ”Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Wherefore GOD heard the voice of His prayer, and granted Him that He asked, His own victorious Resurrection, and the salvation of them that believe in His Name. 2 That he hath inclined his ear unto me: therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The Incarnate SON can use these words, for He hath Himself said, ”FATHER, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me always;” and He did call upon Him continually, not only on earth, but still continues to do so in His intercessory office as our High Priest in Heaven.

As long as I live. The literal Hebrew, followed by LXX. and Vulgate is, In my days. And, spoken of Our LORD, the Apostle will gloss them for us, ”Who in the days of His flesh, 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; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.” As for us, the LORD Himself stooped down His ear to us by His Incarnation, bending, like the good Samaritan, over the half-dead body of man, who had fallen among spiritual thieves when he turned his back on Jerusalem, and was stripped and wounded by them. And the sinner, remembering this great mercy, says, I will call upon Him in my days. Not in His days, but my days; days which I have made my own by my own sin, filling myself with my own devices, and thereby bringing trouble, perplexity, and distress upon me. And because my sin is so frequent, those days are all the days of my mortal life. The Carmelite, reminding us that our prayers are all made through CHRIST JESUS, and that wisdom cometh by hearing, tells us that He, the Eternal Wisdom, by Whom we make our supplication

known, is Himself that ear which the FATHER bent down to earth to hear the faint murmur of suffering which was all that feeble man had strength to utter.

3 The snares of death compassed me round about: and the pains of hell gat hold upon me. The snares of death. More exactly, with S. Jerome, the cords of death, a reference, doubtless, to the ropes with which persons doomed to execution were bound, and therefore represented sufficiently by the LXX. Vulgate, and A.V. pains. We may then take these cords of death to be the qualities of mortality and passibility which we inherit naturally, and which the LORD voluntarily accepted for our sake, and we may understand them literally of the ropes with which He was bound in the garden, when the pains of hell, or with LXX. and Vulgate, perils of hell, the near approach of the agonising death of the Cross, found Him. Another view, however, is that the perils of hell is a metaphor for sinners in danger of being lost, and that these, the harlot in the city, the woman in adultery, the thief on the cross, found CHRIST, and finding Him were saved. One commentator explains the torture of the rack as the idea intended by cords of death, and in that case we may very well read the verse as the cry of the Martyrs in their passion, as they hung extended on the ”little horse,” with all their bones out of joint, while they awaited the yet more horrible tortures to which it was but the preliminary.

The sinner, too, may use the verse most truly, not only of those bodily disorders which hurry him to the grave, but of the sorer spiritual maladies which sin has brought upon him. The cords of death are any mortal sins, evil thoughts, and carnal indulgence. And it is well said that these cords compassed me round about, for sin attacks man on every side; in front, by making him careless of things eternal; behind, by causing him to love things earthly; on the right hand, lulling him by prosperity; on the left, crushing him by adversity; above him, by tempting him to vain-confidence; below, by goading him to despair of pardon. The pains of hell are temptations, ignorance, suggestions of the enemy, and evil works. The word in Hebrew is neither pains, nor perils, but straits, narrownesses, and implies the extreme difficulty of extrication, the closeness with which the peril draws near, as in the case of a path of a few inches in breadth along the edge of a precipice. Gat hold upon me. The LXX. and Vulgate, rightly, found me. Where note that the peril of hell because of sin finds a man who has lapsed without deliberate purpose, through ignorance, or sudden temptation, but man himself finds sin when he offends deliberately and against knowledge.

4 I shall find trouble and heaviness, and I will call upon the Name of the LORD : O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. There are many who, though compassed by the cords of death and threatened by the perils of hell, give no heed thereto, busied as they are with worldly concerns, and lulled , found only in Ps.cxviii. 5, and Lam. i. 3. Hupfeld, thinking the term inapt, suggests , ”nets,” as in Job xix. 6

and Eccl. vii. 26, but he seems to have forgotten the precisely analogous use of the Latin angustia.

into dangerous security by their prosperous condition; but the Psalmist is wiser, and looking forward to peril and suffering, beseeches the LORD to deliver him in the evil day. S. Basil. M. Or we may take it, if we understand the previous verse as a confession of deadly sin, that this one is a promise of penitence and self-infliction, of lamentation for the guilt committed, followed by a prayer to GOD for pardon. And in this sense the Psalmist rightly says, I have found trouble and heaviness, for grievous as they are, yet no small treasure lies hid in them for the penitent soul; or, if you prefer it, they are the physicians whom the penitent needs to seek out that he may be healed of his disorder. A Saint does not wait for tribulation to find him out, but seeks it voluntarily, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST which is given unto us. And then we may most fitly apply the words I shall find to Him Who deliberately sought the shame and agony of the Passion, as the only road by which He might recover the lost sheep; but Who, nevertheless, prayed to His FATHER to deliver His soul from the grave by the might of the Resurrection. Rom. v. 3. "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed;

because the love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST which is given unto us. And then we may most fitly apply the words I shall find to Him Who deliberately sought the shame and agony of the Passion, as the only road by which He might recover the lost sheep; but Who, nevertheless, prayed to His FATHER to deliver His soul from the grave by the might of the Resurrection. C. We, when we use this prayer, confess that our soul is held captive by sin; and in that the Psalmist asks for rescue of his soul, and not of his body, it appears that the trouble and heaviness of which he complains are spiritual, and not temporal afflictions. Honorius.

5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous : yea, our GOD is merciful. A. There are two epithets here to denote GOD's mercy, and but one for His justice, which is set in the midst of the two others, as fenced by them on each side, in order to teach us that GOD's mercy prevaleth against judgment, and the present tense is used, because this is always so with Him, not a matter of the past or the future only. The LORD is gracious, because He inclines His ear to the sinner calling on Him; He is righteous, because He chastises him; He is merciful, because after chastisement, He receives him again to pardon and favour. And though GOD's mercy be greater than His judgment, yet the position of the words here teaches us that all true mercy must have justice in the midst of it, and therefore that GOD is bound by His own laws to deal justly with the sinner even in the very act of showing mercy to him.

The Greek Fathers bid us see a special stress in the phrase Our GOD, as contrasting His love and righteousness with the capricious and wanton cruelty ascribed by the heathen to their gods. And we may put the whole verse into the mouth of our LORD upon the Cross, addressing them to His Mother and His disciples to comfort them in their affliction, and to infuse the hope of His Resurrection into their hearts.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple : I was in misery, and he helped me. The simple. That is, such as are unversed in worldly artifices, and unable by any mental power of their own to foresee and guard against the snares of the devil, those cords of death and straits of hell which compass them about. Such as these are not left to the wiles of their enemies, for GOD preserveth them. The LXX. and Vulgate, instead of simple, read little children (νηπια, parvulos), but there is no great difference of interpretation, as the commentators agree that the word is not to be limited to its literal construction, but to be extended to all those who, born again in the laver of regeneration, have become as little children in docility and guilelessness, that they may enter into the kingdom of GOD. Such as these, little in their own sight, but increasing in stature through the bounty of GOD alone, He preserves, like a good shepherd, from the jaws of the ravening wolf; and not only them, but such as are mere beginners in the way of godliness, and have as yet no spiritual vigour to defend themselves. And the Psalmist adds that humility, the act of submitting himself, was the means of his deliverance, saying, I was brought low (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), and He helped me. So it is told of S. Antony that seeing in a vision countless snares and pitfalls made ready against men by the enemies of the soul, he asked in terror, ”LORD, who can escape all these?” and that he received in answer, ”The humble.”

7 Turn again unto thy rest, O my soul : for the LORD hath rewarded thee.

It is probable that the primary intention in this verse has reference to the return of Israel from captivity into the Land of Promise, which is actually styled ”rest” in one place, while in two others the notion is coupled with that of deliverance from exile: ”I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. But there may very well be a larger sense, applicable to all believers, of discarding their anxiety and doubt, and returning to complete tranquillity of mind, as being sensible of GOD’s bounty in past deliverance, and hopeful of it for the future, in the full spirit of that saying, ”Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. And a favourite interpretation of the verse is that it describes the death of the righteous, who leaves the trouble and discord of this world to enter into the rest which remaineth for the people of GOD; first in Paradise, and then in the more perfect repose of the heavenly Jerusalem; whence that refrain in the Office of the Dead, ”Eternal rest grant unto them, O LORD, and light perpetual shine upon them.

But whether on earth, or in the grave, or in heaven itself, the source of the rest is one and the same, the only perfect repose is the LORD JESUS, Who saith, ”Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. For the Lord hath rewarded thee. So S. Jerome and the Targum, implying that the recovered rest is GOD’s recompense for the humble trust in Him and the zealousness in well-doing which the suppliant has displayed. But the A.V., following LXX., Syriac, and Vulgate, reads hath dealt bountifully with thee, words which denote only the magnitude of the benefit conferred, with no reference to man’s deservings.

8 And why? thou hast delivered my soul from death : mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. Here are set before us the three chief qualities of the life of the blessed, that bountiful gift of the LORD; immortality, in that we are delivered from death; impassibility, since there can be no more sufferings, for ”the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away,” because ”GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;” security, in that fall is thenceforward impossible, as it is written, ”Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My GOD, and he shall go no more out.” It may be taken also of GOD’s dealing with His elect even in this world, whom He saves from death, that is, from mortal sin, by His justifying grace; from tears, by delivering us out of temptations; from falling by protecting us from the overthrow plotted against us by our invisible foes. Again, we may read the verse of the Gentile Church, delivered from death, when brought out of the worship of lifeless idols and from the grave of sin into the knowledge of GOD and holiness of life; rescued from tears, when carried safely through the ten fierce persecutions into a time of peace, and from falling, when the slippery wiles of the heretics who endeavoured to supplant the Gospel were defeated in the early General Councils. And finally, we may understand the passage as spoken of the Resurrection and Ascension of CHRIST the LORD, whereby He was released from the pain and sorrow of His life on earth.

9 I will walk before the LORD : in the land of the living. The LXX. and Vulgate give the force, rather than the literal meaning of the Hebrew in the first clause, translating I will please the Lord. It is a vow on the part of the returning exile, coming back to the Holy Land, to the sacred City, that he will there steadily set his face to serve God, in obedience to the Law, in regularity of worship, in frequent offerings, in holiness of life. But the literal Hebrew is here plural, the lands of the living, looking forward in prophecy to a wider and more embracing creed than that of the elder dispensation, whence it is explained of the Christian Church, diffused through many lands, and in each of them being the true Eve, the Mother of all living a new life in the LORD. And finally, they all take it of the Church Triumphant, in the highest sense the land of the living, since death cannot by any means enter therein, where the elect shall walk before the Lord, ever well-pleasing in His sight,

ever gladdened themselves by the Beatific Vision; a sense which has pointed the use of the Psalm with this verse as Antiphon in the Vesper Office for the Dead.

10 I believed, and therefore will I speak; but I was sore troubled : I said in my haste, All men are liars. The Apostle S. Paul, citing the former part of this verse according to the LXX., which is exactly the same as the A.V., I believed, therefore have I spoken, teaches us that the Psalmist's meaning is that devout utterance is a necessary outcome of true belief: "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." It appears then that the immediately preceding words are referred to, and that the utterance of faith is "I shall walk before the LORD in the land of the living." But there is a grammatical difficulty in this construction of the Hebrew, which is somewhat obscure, and various explanations (none of them, however, excluding the Pauline connection between faith and speech,) have been suggested. One takes the particle to mean although, and translates, I believe, although I say, I am sore troubled. That is, while human weakness forces a cry of pain from me, my faith in God remains unshaken. Or again, may be when: I believe, when I say, I was sore troubled; which means, Every time I recall my past sufferings, and remember how God delivered me out of them, my faith in Him is quickened anew. Once more, it may be explained of God's method of teaching by adversity: I learnt to believe, when I was compelled to say, I am sore troubled. I trusted in myself, and in my fellow-men, and found neither of any avail, and was therefore driven back upon God for A. Honorius.

succour, and found Him alone true. I said in my haste. That is, in the confusion and bewilderment brought on me by the pressure of my sufferings; whence the Chaldee explains the word as meaning, during my flight, although several of the Greek and Latin commentators, looking to the LXX. ἐκστάσει and the Vulgate excessu, take it as also denoting a rapture of divine contemplation, during which the speaker observes—not, All men are liars, thus bringing an untenable charge against the Saints of God, but—All mankind is untrustworthy, that is, "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field," all men are fleeting, unstable, vanishing like a dream, and therefore there is none save God on whom we can place reliance. Wherefore the Apostle saith, "Let God be true, but every man a liar;" and therefore too, as the Prophet said long before him, "The Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." And as the favourite explanation of the Psalm with the Latins is that it denotes the constancy of the Martyrs, who believed, and spoke boldly in the Name of CHRIST, so they take this clause to be a confession on the part of each Martyr of his own frailty and liability to fall, confessing that in as far as he is man, he too may be false to his LORD, and give way under torment, but that if he conquer, it is God's victory and might, not his own, which has overcome the enemy.

11 What reward shall I give unto the LORD : for all the benefits that he hath done unto me? 12 I will receive the cup of salvation : and call upon the Name of the LORD. Origen. S. Chrysost. A. S. Hieron. &c. S. Matt. xx. 22.

The Greek and Latin Fathers, with singular unanimity, understand by the Cup here mentioned as the one act of gratitude to God for all His benefits, the chalice of suffering and martyrdom, whereof the LORD JESUS spake to the sons of Zebedee, ”Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of? because nothing less than blood for Blood, our own life in repayment for the life which CHRIST gave up on the Cross for us, appears in any degree an adequate acknowledgment of His unspeakable goodness. I will receive (Heb. lift up) the cup of salvation. The direct reference is to the cup of wine used in the benediction at the Paschal meal (a rite not named in the Old Testament, but introduced amongst the Jews between the Captivity and the destruction of the Temple,) and thus denotes a promise on the part of the Psalmist, to observe the Passover with true devotion, just as a little later he pledges himself to ”offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Of this ”cup of blessing” the Rabbins say, in explanation of this passage, ”I will elevate the chalice of salvation; that is, when I keep festival and rejoicings, I will lift up a cup of wine, I will give thanks to Him over it in the presence of many, and will make mention of the salvation wherewith He saved me. And this he calls the chalice of salvation.

To us, the words have an especial force, remembering that this Psalm was part of the Hallel sung by CHRIST and the Apostles on the night of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, when He gave them the Cup of Salvation in His Blood; whence this Psalm is used in the West on Maundy Thursday and Corpus Christi as well as on Festivals of Martyrs. The two ideas blend in one, as we recognize in that commemoration of the LORD’s dying the source of the valorous daring of His Saints, ready to press after Him through the Red Sea of Martyrdom. Therefore, one who was himself eminent amongst the Martyrs, says of his true yoke-fellows, ”Believing that they daily drink the Blood of CHRIST’s chalice, that they too may be able to shed their blood for CHRIST’s sake. And, as another Saint observes, ”The holy Martyrs glowed with this spiritual wine of the HOLY GHOST, when casting away and throwing behind them all the seductions of the world, they went to their passions, forgetting goods and affections, inheritance and marriage, and overcoming the very love of their infant pledges aimed against them with weeping and casting of dust on the head, and that of the mother rending her face and tearing her hair. But they, like men intoxicated, saw not all this, nor recognized their own kindred, because having the HOLY GHOST poured into their hearts, they hastened to execution, as though to comforts and rewards.”

At the Lamb’s high feast we sing Praise to our victorious King, Who hath washed us in the tide Flowing from His pierced side. Praise we Him Whose love Divine Gives His sacred Blood for Wine, Gives His Body for the Feast, CHRIST the Vic-

tim, CHRIST the Priest. Where the Paschal Blood is poured, Death's dark angel sheathes his sword; Israel's hosts triumphant go Through the wave that drowns the foe. Brev. Rom. The Hymn, Ad regias Agni dapes, for Eastertide. And in this sense the meaning given to the passage by modern critics holds good, that the best way of showing gratitude to GOD is to accept in humble thankfulness the blessings He bestows, chief amongst which is this most holy Sacrament of His love. Wherefore this verse is appointed in the Latin Church to be recited by the Priest before he communicates himself with the chalice at Mass. So runs another hymn:

The Hymn, Eja, dulcis anima. He who ever fully loves Whereso He is present, He Whose friendship always proves Of all gifts most pleasant : He with thee would gladly rest, In thy heart remaining, Fain would sit with Thee as guest, There His food obtaining. Arise, for He is very near, And swiftly run to meet Him, And let thy heart be pure and clear, That it may fitly greet Him. And call upon the Name of the Lord. So, in one of the most ancient liturgies of the Church, at the elevation of the Divine Mysteries, the people responded when the Priest had exclaimed, "Holy things for holy persons," with the cry, "One Holy, One LORD, One JESUS CHRIST to the glory of GOD the FATHER, blessed for evermore. Amen. Glory be to GOD in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the LORD: GOD is the LORD, and He hath appeared unto us. Hosanna in the highest." And the Martyrs too, when about to drink of that other cup of His, invoked Him to be their strength, as S. Laurence cried, "LORD JESU CHRIST, GOD of GOD, have mercy on me Thy servant."

13 I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people : right dear in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. 1 S. Pet. i. 18. Delitzsch. The literal sense here is a public thanksgiving for deliverance, and the meaning of the latter clause is that GOD holds His Saints far too dear to expose them lightly to death, but that He jealously guards them from harm. Those who interpret the whole Psalm of the Martyrs, understand this verse as a promise on their part to confess CHRIST openly before all men; not secretly, but where the act may bring with it the cup of martyrdom; knowing that their voluntary oblation, permitted by GOD, is a glorious and precious jewel in His sight; precious, because they are "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious Blood of CHRIST." And it is recorded of S. Babylas, the great Bishop of Antioch, who attained his crown in the Decian persecution, that he recited these words as he went to the place of his passion. They are also appointed by the Apostolical Constitutions to be used at Christian funerals, and they are recited as a versicle and response at the end of the Martyrology in the conventual office of Chapter. S. Basil the Great S. Basil. M. dwells on them as enforcing the lesson of the sacredness of those bodies which had been the temples of the HOLY GHOST, observing that whereas, under the Law, any who touched a dead body was held unclean; under the Gospel contact with the relics of a Martyr is counted a blessing and privilege.

The words may further be explained of the Baptismal vows, which include proceeding to reception of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; and then of enduring all troubles and trials to the very end of life; nay, if need be, at the cost of it; and finally, of faithful acquittal of all pledges made by any of us to the LORD, remembering those words of the Wise Man, "When thou vowest a vow to GOD, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." And by imitating the Saints of GOD, even without winning the glory of martyrdom, we may die to the world, a precious thing, and bountifully paid by GOD, to Whom we may say, as we vow this daily death, "Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the King; and why should the King recom- 2 Sam. xix. 36. pense it me with so great a reward?"

14 Behold, O LORD, how that I am thy servant: I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. There is no pride in the Martyr's vow, as he offers himself in sacrifice to GOD; for he acknowledges it to be but the debt of his bondage to Him; and according to the LORD's own precept, when he hath done all things commanded him, he confesses that he is an unprofitable servant. The humility is great, but the dignity is greater, to be the servant of GOD, a title wherewith Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Paul, and even the Master of them all, was styled, instead of being the servant of sin. He calls himself servant twice, in delight at the name, having no shame, but rather exultation in it; he repeats it twice, because he has given himself to GOD's service first in belief and then in good works; and styles himself the son of His handmaid, as one born in His house and service, never having had independent rights from the first moment of existence, but yet closer and dearer to his LORD from that long familiarity. It is said handmaid, not servant, because where slavery exists, the child follows the status of the mother, and a noble father does not cause the child of a bondwoman to be born free. There is, further, a special fitness in the title as given to Him Who had no earthly father, but Whose Virgin Mother styled herself "the handmaid of the LORD;" while all Christians may call the Church, bought with their LORD's Blood, their Mother, Bellarmine. Pseudo-Hieron. Z. D. C. R. Shelomo. L. S. Luke I. 38. C.

and Religious can apply the title to the particular Order in which they have vowed themselves to GOD. And in each of these latter cases there are certain attributes of a good handmaid which should be found in a pure Church or a zealous community. A handmaid should be lowly in conversation, active in work, steadfast in patience, ready in service, fruitful in gain, notable in saving; and the son of such a handmaid should possess his mother's attributes. Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. All may say it of the effect of justifying grace in loosing us from the fetters of sin, Religious may take it of the snapping of those ties which bound them to secular life, and the Martyrs of that rending asunder of their mortal bodies which set free

the soul to wing its way to CHRIST, Whose yoke is easy, Whose burden is light, Whose service is perfect freedom.

15 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving: and will call upon the Name of the LORD. This is, in the literal sense, a promise to make the Levitical thank-offering of fine flour, which answers to the festival cup named earlier in the Psalm, and represents for us the remaining species of the Eucharistic Oblation; whence this Psalm, from verse 10 to the end, is one of those appointed to be recited by Priests of the Western Church before saying Mass. But the early commentators prefer to understand it still of the complete surrender of body and soul to GOD in one final act of self-dedication, especially martyrdom (a sense in which many of those who themselves sealed their faith with their blood have taken it,) and then of the continual praise in heaven which follows such devotion upon earth; and S. Ambrose dwells on the future tense here, I will sacrifice, as implying so much, because there can be no perfect praise and thanksgiving offered to GOD on earth. Observe too, that as so often in the Psalter, the mystery of the Holy Trinity is here veiled, by a threefold invocation of the Most High, as the words I will call upon the Name of the Lord have twice before occurred in the course of this Psalm, a point lost by the division followed in LXX. and Vulgate.

16 I will pay my vows unto the LORD, in the sight of all his people: in the courts of the LORD's house, even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD. There is some little variance here as to whether the verse is to be understood of the Church Militant, with its various local Churches, which are its courts, in the midst of that peaceful vision wherein the Bride looks for and to her Spouse, or whether (and far more beautifully) we should take it of the Martyr, who has already paid his vows on earth in the presence of a multitude, and is now declaring that he will again, on the last Great Day, in the sight of all men and Angels, renew his faithful vows to the LORD, and be lifted up as a choice, precious and lively stone, to be compacted into the walls of the wide courts of that building made without hands, eternal in the heavens; and that in no obscure or lowly place of glory, but in the midst of the Heavenly City, where the Beatific Vision is its light and glory for ever, where our Miserere will be turned into an endless Alleluia.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is gracious, righteous, and merciful; glory be to the SON, from Whom we receive the Cup of Salvation; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who hath broken our bonds in sunder. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O LORD, washer away of sins, Who quickly comfortest the soul that faithfully calleth on Thee, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst deliver us from the peril of hell, and doing away with the death of sin, restore us to the land of the living. (1.) Let the life of Thy humble servants, O LORD, be as precious in Thy sight as is the death

of Thy Saints, that loosed from the bonds of sin, we may attain a foretaste of the joys of Jerusalem to come. (1.) O most merciful and righteous LORD, deliver our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling, and keep Thy gentleness for us in both respects, that if we be chastised by Thy justice, we may be guarded by Thy mercy. (11.) What can Thy creature, O LORD, repay Thee for the benefits of redemption which Thou hast bestowed upon him, who feeleth that he hath escaped the sentence of death by receiving the Cup of Salvation, solely that he may pay his vows unto Thee for Thy faithful redemption, and offer Thee loyal service in the courts of the house of GOD, when the deeds of darkness have been destroyed? Grant us soundness, O LORD, that breaking the bonds of our sins, we may do the work that pleaseth Thee, and in the midst of Jerusalem offer Thee an acceptable sacrifice in Thy praise, to the end that they whom the excitement of their mind makes to be liars may be brought in safety to behold Thee, by the truth of the Catholic belief. (11.)

O GOD of heaven and earth, graciously hearken to the voice of the prayer of them that love Thee, incline the ear of Thy mercy to the petitions of them that call upon Thee, Z deliver us from all trouble and sorrow, and when we pass away from this life, give us life everlasting. (1.) O LORD, receive the prayers of Thy people which believeth in Thee, and grant that we may ever offer Thee the sacrifice of praise; break asunder the bonds of our sins, that we may worthily pay Thee the vows of Christian faith. (1.)

Psalm 117

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, by the Coming of the HOLY GHOST, hath stablished His mercy upon us. The Voice of the Apostles to the Gentiles. The Voice of the Apostles, inviting all the Gentiles to praise the LORD with belief of heart and confession of mouth. A speech of the Prophet concerning His praise. VEN. BEDE. There are but two verses, but nevertheless the full honour of a title is prefixed, that we may understand that words, however few, in praise of the LORD are always most full. And we should apply this Psalm also to the person of the Martyrs, who now having as it were achieved their glorious passion, arouse all nations to the praises of the LORD; Who hath done such things for His servants, that they may the rather be imbued with His example. SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. It is spoken of the company of Ananias when they came out of the furnace. It also foretells the calling of the Gentiles by the preaching of the Gospel.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The calling of the Gentiles. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm uttering praise.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Monday: Vespers. [Easter Eve: Vespers. Festivals of our LORD and of Apostles: I. Vespers. Ascension: I. and II. Vespers.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Praise * the LORD, all ye nations. Monastic. As preceding Psalm. Ambrosian. The truth of the LORD * endureth for ever. Parisian. Praise the LORD, * all ye peoples, for His merciful kindness is stablished upon us. Lyons. As Gregorian. Mozarabic. Stablish Thy mercy upon us, O LORD. 1 O praise the LORD, all ye heathen : praise him, all ye nations.

The Rabbinical interpretation of the Psalm is completely in accord with the Christian view, inasmuch as it is taken to be a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles in the days of Messiah; for, as a famous Rabbi comments, ”This Psalm consists of but two verses, and belongs to the days of Messiah. And by making it consist of

only two verses, the Psalmist implies that all nations shall be put into two classes: Israel, who will abide in their own Law, and the Gentiles under a separate division, in the seven precepts, and both together shall worship Jahveh. It is very noteworthy that this opinion recognizes that the conversion of the Gentiles to the true faith will be unattended by any obligation to the ceremonial law, for the ”seven precepts” referred to are those alleged by Talmudists to have been laid down by the sons of Noah as a guide for their posterity, and are as follows: To be righteous in judgment, to praise GOD, to refrain from worshipping idols, to avoid incest, to shed no blood, to commit no robbery, and to maim no living animal.

With this distinction of Jew and Gentile the two words employed in the verse seem to accord, as the former of the two, , is that always used in Scripture of the idolatrous Gentile heathens, while the second, , strictly ”children of one mother,” can be used to denote the twelve tribes of Israel, each, in a sense, a separate nation, a distinction made by the Apostle in reference to the similar wording of Ps. ii. 1. They draw attention also to the different words employed to express the worship paid by each of these classes, as implying a further shade of distinction, for , hallelu, the word of especial rejoicing in the LORD, and of liturgical praise in Divine worship, is that ascribed to the Gentiles, as having peculiar reason for gladness in being brought out of misery and darkness into the Gospel of light, (a meaning much enforced by the great prominence of the word Alleluia in the rites of the Catholic Church), while the less exultant phrase , implying simple acknowledgment of merit and goodness in any person or thing, is assigned to the Jews, who up to the present time deny the mission and holiness of CHRIST, Whom they will at last confess and adore. And thus, as the Gentiles form the more numerous and more zealous portion of the Church, they are placed before the Jews in the order of the verse. The Christian explanation Rom. xv. 11. of the Psalm is Apostolic, for S.

Paul cites this verse when arguing for the union of Jews and Gentiles in one Church, prefacing his quotation with a gloss on the following verse, and an old commentator bids us note that the first part of the injunction began to be fulfilled when the Wise Men came with their gifts to Bethlehem, and the latter when the trilingual inscription, proclaiming the Kingship of the LORD, was set up over His Cross. It is fulfilled continually by three classes of worshippers: devout pilgrims here on earth, the faithful departed who are being purified in the middle state, and by the blessed in heaven, all of whom join in the chorus of praise to GOD.

2 For his merciful kindness is ever more and more towards us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise the LORD.

Agellius. The Rabbins, dwelling on the word us, argue that while the former verse embraces both Jews and Gentiles, this one can refer only to Israel; and it is true that such is the primary sense, for S. Paul, in his comment on the Psalm, observes: ”Now I say that JESUS CHRIST was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of

GOD, to confirm the promises made to the fathers. But he goes on to show that the Psalmist used the word us in a wider and more loving sense, identifying Jews and Gentiles as one new people, for it continues: ”And that the Gentiles should glorify GOD for His mercy. Is more and more to us. The LXX. read, hath been strengthened, the Vulgate, is confirmed. But the Hebrew Gen. vii. 18 is much more than this. It means to prevail like a flood above us, and is the word used thrice in this sense to describe the force of the Deluge. It is not then the mere strength, but the unbounded vastness of GOD’s mercy which the Psalmist would fain describe, poured out in such abundance upon the Gentiles as to whelm them in a fathomless deep, covering all their sins, and all their good works, and leaving nothing visible save the mercy of GOD; for ”not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. ”Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail;

and the mountains were covered” in the Flood of old, but the mercy of GOD prevails not by cubits, ten or fifteen, above us, but whelms us with its measureless height, for ”Thy mercy, O LORD, reacheth unto the heavens, and Thy faithfulness unto the clouds; filling the whole space which lies between earth and heaven, and inundating it with a deluge of loving-kindness. ”For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth; so great is His mercy also toward them that fear Him. Gen. vii. 20. Tit. iii. 5. Gen. vii. 20. Ps. xxxvi. 5. Ps. ciii. 11. C. And the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. That Truth is the Eternal WORD, Who in His incarnate form said, ”I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. And that the Jews in His day had arrived at the knowledge of the eternity of Messiah, appears from their own saying to Him; ”We have heard out of the Law that CHRIST abideth for ever. That truth, too, which came by JESUS CHRIST, that Gospel which is the substance of the shadowy Law, endureth for ever, for He hath said, ”Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away. And the mercy which began in His Incarnation, was confirmed in His Passion, when He said, ”It is finished,” for then the gates of Eden were again thrown open, and the fiery sword of the cherubim withdrawn.

It is further to be observed that the Apostle, when saying that the Gentiles are to praise GOD for His mercy, and that truth belongs to the Jews, because GOD confirmed for them the promises made to the fathers, does not mean that the Jews have no part in that mercy, but that mercy alone is shown to the Gentiles, to whom GOD had made no promises whatever; whereas, in sending the Messiah to the Jews, according to His promise, He gave them both truth and mercy, for the promises were not due to any merits of their own, but solely to the clemency of the LORD. His mercy and truth will endure for ever in yet another sense, in the abiding results of His final sentence at the Last Day, when He will save or condemn according to the deservings of those who stand at His judgment seat. Then, when the Church is finally united, will the symbolism of this Psalm with its two verses be made clear, as

the building rises with its double wall, cemented by the two Testaments, clamped with the twin precepts of love to GOD and to one's neighbour. And the four strophes of which the two verses consist, denote the quadruple cardinal virtues, drawn from the fourfold stream of the Gospels, which shall adorn the Saints who assemble in Jerusalem to praise the LORD.

And therefore: Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD; glory be to the SON, Who maketh Jews and Gentiles praise Him in one Church; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Whose merciful kindness floodeth our souls. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O most Almighty LORD GOD, Who art praised by the mouth of all nations, we beseech Thee to enlarge our soul with Thy truth, and to confirm Thy mercy upon us. (1.) Confirm Thy mercy upon us, O LORD, that with all nations we may praise Thee in Thine own presence for evermore, and saved by Thy truth, may alway abide with Thee in Thine eternal Kingdom. (11.) O LORD, the FATHER Almighty, cause us ever to offer fitting praise unto Thy majesty, confirm Thy mercy upon us, lest any taint of sin should corrupt our soul, that Thy Truth, Consubstantial with Thee, may abide with us for ever. (5.)

Psalm 118

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is the Corner-stone and the Day of our illumination. That man may be shown the Way, that is, CHRIST, the gate whereby there is entrance, which cannot be shut, The Voice of CHRIST speaking of Himself, and throwing open the way to man, entering on which he may reach the gate, passing through which he will utter Alleluia to the LORD, that is, the praise of heart, voice, and righteous deed. The Voice of the Prophet concerning persecution. The Voice of CHRIST against the Jews. The Voice of the Apostles to the Gentiles. Of the trouble of the enemies. VEN. BEDE. This Psalm closes its four first verses with a similar ending, as counselling in fourfold exhortation that the whole world ought to give praise to the One GOD in the Gospel number. The faithful people, loosed from the chains of sin, makes a general exhortation in the first section that all should give thanks unto the LORD; because it has found, from being heard in trouble, that man need not be feared: O give thanks unto the Lord. Secondly, it saith that trust should be placed in the LORD only; by Whom the people is shown to have escaped the hostility of the Gentiles, and to have attained the medicine of the truest life: It is better to trust in the Lord. Thirdly, it saith that the gates of righteousness are to be opened for it; adding further concerning the Cornerstone, that is, the LORD the SAVIOUR: Open me the gates of righteousness. Fourthly, it urges on other Christians the duty of frequenting the courts of the LORD, rejoicing with sweet delight in the coming of the Holy Incarnation: Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. It is literally spoken of Asaph the Recorder, and of the Priests ministering unto the LORD. It also prophesieth of the conquering warriors and of CHRIST. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The Victory of them that fight in CHRIST, and a prophecy of CHRIST. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm with confession; also, Betokening a ready mind together with song.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Sunday: Prime. [Septuagesima to Easter. Sunday: Lauds.]

Antiphons.
Parisian. With my whole heart * have I sought Thee, O LORD, O teach me Thy statutes. Mozarabic. The LORD is my strength, and my song, and is become my salvation. This Psalm, from internal evidence, is certainly one of the Post-Captivity series, composed for some festival of the highest importance. There are at least four occasions to which it appears suitable, but two of them take rank above the others in probability, namely, the Dedication of the Second Temple (Ezra vi. 15, 18) and the first great Feast of Tabernacles held in the new Temple after its consecration (Neh. viii. 13—18.) The two other views put forward by modern critics, that the Psalm refers to the erection of the altar, and the Feast of Tabernacles kept then (Ezra iii. 1—4,) or else to the laying of the foundation-stone of the new building (Ezra iii. 8—13,) are both quite untenable in the face of expressions which clearly imply the completion of the restored erection, whose gates, corner-stone, altar, and whole circuit are directly named in successive verses. On the whole, the balance of evidence is in favour of the Feast of Tabernacles recorded in Nehemiah viii.

13. In the first place, as already mentioned under Ps. lxxxi. 3, when we find ”the feast” mentioned by itself with no further detail, it always means that of Tabernacles, the greatest holyday of the Law; which accords with the phrase, ”This is the day,” in verse 24. Secondly, we know as a fact that this Psalm was actually used upon that festival in the ritual of the Second Temple, though the modern Jewish use of it, as part of the Hallel, upon every great feast and on the New Moons, prevents this argument from being conclusive. Thirdly, the mention of tents or ”tabernacles” in verse 15 may very probably have reference to the booths made by the people to keep that feast in, for the first time since the days of Joshua, whereupon, ”there was very great gladness,” (Neh. viii. 17,) a phrase incidentally agreeing with the same connection of ideas in the Psalm. But it must be allowed that there are isolated passages in the course of the poem which severally favour the views which place it earlier than the completion of the Temple, albeit the entire scope is subversive of them, and there is thus no improbability in an ingenious suggestion that the Psalm grew with the Temple itself, and that we have it now in the final shape it took after successive recastings to fit it for use at each stage of the restoration. It has been in use as a Sunday Psalm in the Western Church, with special reference to the weekly commemoration of Easter, from a very remote time, a view foreshadowed by the Rabbinical application of it to Messiah, as testified by RR. Shelomo and Kimchi.

1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious : because his mercy endureth for ever. 2 Let Israel now confess, that he is gracious: and that his mercy endureth for ever. 3 Let the house of Aaron now confess: that his mercy endureth for ever. 4 Yea, let them now that fear the LORD confess: that his mercy endureth for ever.

We read in the Revelation of the Apostle John that a great multitude sings Alleluia in heaven, which the four living creatures also and the four-and-twenty elders utter as they worship the LORD, which the whole of that host of heaven joins in singing with melodious gladness to the sound of the clear-toned trumpet. Wherefore let us too haste with eagerness to this duty of praise. For if we sing with a pure heart, we join with those saintly powers in their loving devotion, and that which we know to make the bliss of heavenly beings becomes the honour and grace of earthly ones. Wherefore let us gaze on this Psalm shining with its beauteous opening, for at the very beginning it terminates four verses with the same ending, to teach us by this fourfold exhortation that the whole world ought to praise the one GOD with the Gospel number. The Psalm is wrought with a texture of glowing colours, setting the Four Gospels at its head in the four similar verses. And as the High Priest's vesture shone, wrought with threads of gold and variegated needlework, having bells upon the hem, so this Psalm, composed with beautiful variety, contains in its beginning, in its end, and scattered throughout it in diverse places with harmonious words, the praise of CHRIST our true High Priest, and sounds like a cymbal with its golden bells. The same persons are invited to unite in the strains of praise as were enjoined in a previous Psalm to trust in the LORD as their help and shield; first of all, the whole Hebrew nation; secondly, the chiefs of the national religion; thirdly, the believing Gentiles. And thus we are taught the progress of the Christian Church, when it began with the twelve Apostles, when, a little after the LORD's Resurrection, "a great company of the priests were obedient unto the Faith," when, finally, the multitudes of the Gentiles were brought into the fold.

In the first purport of the Psalm, as celebrating the worship of GOD in the revived Temple, it is the precise fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy: "Thus saith the LORD, Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast, the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD." And the strain began when the builders under Ezra laid the foundations of the house of the LORD, when the priests with trumpets and the Levites with cymbals revived the ancient ceremonial appointed by David, as they were imitating the memorable event of his translation of the Ark to Jerusalem out of a Philistine household.

The double meaning of the LXX. and Vulgate word confess, (which has been here employed by the Prayer Book to represent a different word, say,) as denoting acknowledgment of sin as well as ascription of praise, is dwelt on by more than one commentator, though they agree that jubilant praise is the chief intention in this

case. And they remind us that the reason for praise is of the briefest, that the Lord is good, for ”none is good, but one, that is, GOD,” and that He does not limit this attribute to Himself in His essence, but diffuses it at all times and everywhere, because His mercy endureth for ever. Let us therefore now, in the time of grace, in the full knowledge of the Incarnation, praise Him for that His mercy, Who came to our rescue, and Who abideth LORD and King for evermore. A. Hugo Card. 5 I called upon the LORD in trouble: and the LORD heard me at large.

All the old versions except the Syriac have missed the force of contrast in the Hebrew wording of this verse, where strait or narrowness (exactly the Greek στενοχωρία and Latin angustiae) is the word for trouble, answering to the large place (A.V.) πλατυσμόν, latitudine, of the second strophe. The primary notion is that of passing through a narrow defile into a wide plain, and it is not impossible that there may have been a blending of literalism and symbolism intended here at the first use of the Psalm, in procession to the new Temple, as the line of worshippers emerged from the close streets of the city into the open square in front of the building; no unfit emblem of their passage from the restraints of captivity into the recovered freedom of their own land. The verse is then taken in threefold reference to CHRIST, to the Church, and to the faithful soul. The LORD JESUS called upon His FATHER in the Agony of the Garden, in the Passion of the Cross, in the narrow prison of the grave, and the FATHER heard Him in the wide place of Heaven, setting Him free in the Resurrection, exalting Him in the Ascension. The Church, too, calling upon the LORD out of the narrow limits of that cradle of the Faith, the upper chamber in Jerusalem, was made to extend far and wide over the face of the earth, and was brought safely through the sore straits of the ten persecutions into the full enjoyment of liberty and peace. And, finally, the soul, after much suffering and trial, is brought by God into that ”exceeding broad commandment” which is the knowledge of Divine love; is brought out of the narrow scope and petty details of earthly things into the boundless expanse of heavenly contemplation.

6 The LORD is on my side: I will not fear what man doeth unto me. 7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon mine enemies. The Psalmist, in the former of these verses, contrasts the mighty aid of God with the feeble assault of men, to show his just ground of confidence. Yet he does not therefore say, I shall not suffer, but, I will not fear. Suffering he may have in abundance, but the saying of the LORD JESUS is in his ears, ”Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.” And it is added, The Lord taketh my part with them that help me, as showing, that although He alone is our true defence and shield, making all other allies superfluous, yet it is His pleasure to work as it were unseen, and with instruments, often compelling the bitterest foes of His Church to do her work in the very act of endeavouring to subvert her; just as the very hatred of the Jews forced Christians out of the position of a subordinate school

of Hebrew thought into an independent creed, loosed from the veil and yoke of the Law, and capable of conquering the Empire, a result mainly contributed to by the Pagan subversion of the Jewish polity and worship. So one of the last champions of classical heathenism, in the days of its miserable death-bed under Honorius, complains:

Atque utinam nunquam Judæa subacta fuisset Pompeii bellis, imperiove Titi! And would that Jewry had not been in war By Pompey conquered, or by Titus ruled, The taint of that slain plague now creeps more far, The vanquished nation hath its masters schooled. So that in truth, the Martyrs and Confessors, thus overcoming by endurance, saw their desire upon their enemies in their conversion, as their LORD had seen His victory over the foes of mankind, as every steadfast Christian resists still the sons of wickedness, saying to himself in every time of need, ”Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the LORD thy Maker?” The Vulgate translates, not incorrectly, I shall look down upon mine enemies, as the LORD did first from the Cross, and then from the height of heaven, converting the thief from the one watch-tower, and the persecutor Saul of Tarsus from the other. The enemies on whom we, lifted up on the Rock, have to look down, are the world, the flesh, and the devil; despising the first for its vanity, the second for its vileness, the third for his malice. And we may also include all our ghostly foes under this head, for the Church has to fight not only against man, ”against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

A. 8 It is better to trust in the Lord: than to put any confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the Lord: than to put any confidence in princes. The history of the court intrigues which hampered for so long a time the execution of the edict of Cyrus, a dead letter during the whole period of the reigns of Cambyses and Smerdis the Magian, and not really carried out till the sixth year of Darius Hystaspes, a delay of full twenty years, obviously explains the allusion in the text. They take the counsel, besides its literal meaning, as a warning to man not to trust in his own free-will and powers for good, nor even in the princes of God’s Church, the saints and angels, but in God alone; for, as one who is himself ranked amongst the Saints comments, however valuable their prayers may be to us, there is this one fact to be borne in mind, that God can help us without them, but they cannot be of the least help to us without God.

A. 10 All nations compassed me round about: but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them. 11 They kept me in on every side, they kept me in, I say, on every side: but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them. 12 They came about me like bees, and are extinct even as the fire among the thorns: for in the Name of the Lord I will destroy them.

Once again, there is a direct historical reference here to the coalition against Israel in the earliest days of the return, which issued in the counter-decree of Artaxerxes, forbidding the erection of the Temple; and to the final victory over this opposition, won by the faith and perseverance of the Jews. The words are applied also to the conspiracy against the LORD JESUS, and then to the persecutions endured by His Body the Church. The Gentiles, in the persons of Herod, Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, encompassed Him; the Jews too buzzed around Him with their angry murmurs, and blazed up against Him with their fierce but short-lived rage: and in the very act of stinging Him, the bees made His honey spread all over the world. The LXX. and the text which S. Augustine had before him read here, As the bees the honeycomb, so that the angry Jews, toiling in their anger around the LORD, were but making Him, by His Passion, sweeter and dearer to all His Saints, and they did but perish themselves, leaving their stings behind them. Further, their malice, while it raged against His mortal body, destroying it, as fire does the thorns, left the Root of Jesse still uninjured, to spring up again with the green foliage and fragrant blossoms of the Rose of Sharon, in the glad spring-time of the Resurrection.

So too, the persecutions which the Church suffered at the hands of the Pagans did but pour into the Saints the honey of virtue, making them sweeter and more fitting examples of imitation, while the flame kindled by their enemies consumed their faults and errors, utterly abolished by their valiant endurance of torture and death, sufferings most brief in duration, but rewarded with a blessed eternity. Applied to the soul, they remind us how our tempters, suggesting the idea of sweetness and enjoyment to us, leave behind them a deadly sting, while they are so far from conferring any real honey upon us that they strive to suck out of the flowers of our hearts all the sweetness of the HOLY SPIRIT, so as to leave us dry. Yet again, as the chief rage of bees is directed against any who approach the hive to obtain honey thence, so we read that when the Israelites attempted to enter the land that floweth with milk and honey, the Amorites came out against them, and chased them, ”as bees do,” and destroyed them; and in like manner our spiritual foes sally out and chase any of us whom they see bent on forcing our way into the true Land of Promise, flowing with that milk and honey which CHRIST gives His children for their food.

13 Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall: but the LORD was my help. This apostrophe to the enemies of Israel, here looked on as one person, is paraphrased by the Chaldee in reference to spiritual troubles, My sin pressed me hard to overthrow me. And the Carthusian reminds us how the LORD JESUS was dealt with in Nazareth, when ”all they in the synagogue were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong; but He, passing through the midst of them, went His way,” a type of His own Resurrection later and of the de-

liverance He grants to His people when similarly beset; as He saved Peter when he was sinking in the waters, lifting him with His hand; and again, even more lovingly rescuing him from the fall of his soul after the threefold denial: ”for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked shall fall into mischief.”

14 The LORD is my strength, and my song: and is become my salvation. Who then are they that fall when they are thrust, save those who choose to be their own strength and song? No man falls in a struggle, save he whose strength and praise fall with him. Wherefore he whose strength and song is the LORD, can no more fall than the LORD Himself. We may note in the use of these words, already familiar as part of the hymn of victory chanted by Moses at the Red Sea, and prophesied by Isaiah as to be heard again in the mouth of the chosen people, the feeling amongst the worshippers in the new Temple that the festival they were keeping was indeed ”like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.” We may use the words for our own, because the LORD is our strength, in that it is in His might, not our own, that we conquer; He is our song, because we make Him the theme of our praise, and He suffers those of us who conquer to join in the song of Moses and the Lamb, and He is our salvation, our JESUS, Who hath ransomed us from destruction. And therefore it follows aptly:

A. 15 The voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD bringeth mighty things to pass. 16 The right hand of the LORD hath the pre-eminence: the right hand of the LORD bringeth mighty things to pass.

For health and dwellings, we should read with the more exact and emphatic A.V., LXX., and Vulgate, salvation and tabernacles. It is most probable that we have here a reference to the great rejoicings at the Feast of Tabernacles held immediately upon the dedication of the second Temple, with a retrospective allusion to the passage of the Red Sea. The Church of GOD on earth is said to dwell in tents, as marking her condition of warfare, and also that the Saints ”here have no continuing city, but seek one to come,” and beset as they are on all sides by their enemies, yet their battle-cry evermore is, ”In the Name of the LORD I will destroy them,” and therefore the shout of victory, of joy, and of security goes up incessantly from the camp of the host of GOD. The world has its voice of joy, but not the voice of salvation, penitent sinners have the voice of salvation, but not the voice of joy; but Saints made perfect have both together here in the way, and more fully when glorified in their Country. For what must be their joy in their country when they can be so glad even in a strange land? What their delight at home, who are thus cheerful in exile? What will they do in the peace of life everlasting, whose joy is thus abundant even in their pilgrimage?

And the Greek Fathers, applying the verse especially to the Religious Life, and to the humble cells of the Lauras in the Thebaid, speak of the uniform cheerfulness of their monastic inmates, who acted up to the spirit of that precept of one of

their own superiors, the Abbat Apollonius, who was wont to say, ”We, by reason of salvation, ought not to be sad, seeing that we are to be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Gentiles will be sad, Jews may weep, sinners mourn; but the righteous shall be joyful. They who busy themselves with earthly thoughts in their mind rejoice in earthly things, but we, who have been accounted worthy of so great a hope, how should we not alway rejoice, seeing that the Apostle exhorts us to rejoice alway and to give thanks in all things? In the threefold mention of the right hand of the Lord which follows, the mystery of the Holy Trinity is veiled. The right hand of the FATHER, mighty in creation, formed man in His own image, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. The right hand of the Son exalted (LXX. Vulg. man, uniting mortality to Godhead, lifting man from the grave in the Resurrection, from the earth in the Ascension, so that Man hath now the pre-eminence, because He is the right hand of GOD. The right hand of the HOLY GHOST showered down abundant gifts of grace and power upon the Church in the day of Pentecost.

17 I shall not die, but live : and declare the works of the LORD. 18 The LORD hath chastened and corrected me : but he hath not given me over unto death. This is the voice of joy and health, the victorious shout from the camp of the righteous, going up in honour of the LORD’s Resurrection, when, as we sing in Paschal-tide— The Sequence, Victimæ Paschali. Death and life, in wondrous strife, Came to conflict, sharp and sore, Life’s Monarch, He that died, now dies no more.

And then the words may be taken of His Martyrs also, dying cheerfully for Him, sure of a blessed arising, insomuch that the Church styles the anniversary of their passions not by the title of death, but of birthday, as denoting that they are born thereby into a happier life. All the persecutions which the Church endured, even when she seemed at the last gasp of existence, were in vain to overthrow her, and she was merely purified, not destroyed, by suffering. It is not only illustrious Saints who may take these words upon their lips, but every faithful disciple of CHRIST, for He hath said, ”I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” I will declare the works of the Lord. It is the promise of the Church, that the more fiercely she is persecuted, the more will she spread abroad the news of the Gospel, the more boldly will she preach the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming of CHRIST. It is the voice of the Martyrs, each of them declaring that his own endurance of torture and death for CHRIST’s sake will be noised everywhere and recognized as the work of the LORD’s might, not of man’s weakness, and thus each of them, ”being dead, yet speaketh.” It is the voice of every ransomed sinner, calling to others, and saying, ”O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear GOD: and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul;” for He hath not given me over unto death, because ”Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt Thou suffer Thy holy one”—holy in virtue of CHRIST our Righteousness—”to see corruption.”

19 Open me the gates of righteousness: that I may go into them, and give thanks unto the LORD. 20 This is the gate of the LORD: the righteous shall enter into it. At this point in the Psalm, it would seem that the procession at last reaches the porch of the Temple, and calls to the warders to throw the gates open in order to allow its passage. Then a voice from within chants a response, warning the advancing throngs of the sacredness of the shrine they have reached, and the holiness which befits those who would fain enter its hallowed precincts. For us a more beautiful gate into a more holy shrine is open, as we seek the kingdom of GOD and His righteousness, for we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the Blood of JESUS, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His Flesh." And the LORD Himself bears witness to His Apostle, saying, "I am the Door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." This is the gate which the Church desires to be thrown open for her, and for the thronging crowds which come thither, by the preaching of the Apostles and other heralds of the Gospel, to whom the LORD hath committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And as the LORD JESUS Himself entered the gates of heaven by His Passion, so "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of GOD," so that we may take these words as addressed by the

A.

Martyrs to their executioners, beseeching them so to conform them to their Master's sufferings, that they may follow in His train, while the chorus of angels obedient to His command, Open Me the gates of righteousness, addresses the janitors of heaven: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in;" and not only the King, but His true followers, for it is written in another place, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." And we may note, that while the call from without is, "Open me the gates," the answer from within is, This is the gate, but one; one LORD, one faith, one baptism; for the numerous minor entrances, the twelve apostolic porches, all must be reached by one road only, and afford no separate and independent access into the courts of the LORD. So, when the unlearned ask that the Doctors of the Church may expound the Holy Scriptures, those gates of the LORD, to them, by opening their sense, the answer of a wise teacher will be, that they all converge to one entrance into the kingdom of heaven, the LORD JESUS; so again when the penitent ask for absolution from the Bishops and Priests of the Church, and desire to make confession to the LORD, they are warned that there is but one gate through which they can gain access, and that however various the ministers may be through whose agency they seek reconciliation, yet their confession is to GOD alone, and from GOD alone comes their absolution; wherefore, in the spirit of hope aroused by such a thought, this is one of the Psalms appointed by the Western Church in the office for the commendation of a departing soul, as

though putting words into its mouth, wherewith encouraged, it may knock boldly at the gates of Paradise.

21 I will thank thee, for thou hast heard me: and art become my salvation. B. This is the devotion paid by him who has found the gate he sought, and has known that gate to be JESUS his SAVIOUR, Who heard at last the yearning prayers of His Saints, and by taking upon Him the nature of man in the Incarnation, became our salvation. Simeon departed in peace, having seen Him; and He said to His own disciples, ”Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” And this unspeakable goodness of His is enforced for us by the phrase, becamest my salvation, which is more than art my salvation, or gavest me salvation, for it denotes that the Eternal, that He might save us, suffered change, and became what He was not, mortal and passible, that He might bestow on us grace and glory, and enable us to give thanks to Him in the heavenly Jerusalem, for having been our salvation Bellarmine. from sin and death.

22 The same stone which the builders refused : is become the head-stone in the corner. 23 This is the Lord’s doing : and it is marvellous in our eyes.

We have no means of knowing if these verses refer to any historical event; but more than one scholar has supposed that they may very possibly enshrine for us some such incident of the building of the second Temple on the foundations of the first, as that the workmen accidentally uncovered one of the stones, perhaps the very foundation stone, of Solomon’s stately shrine, and were disposed to reject it, till overruled by the priests, who compelled them to set it up in the most honourable place, at the point of juncture of the two walls. R. Shelomo. But the old mystical interpretation of the passage by the R. Rashi. Rabbins was that it refers to Messiah, although some of them, assuming the Psalm to speak of David, take him, as the prince who re-united Israel and Judah under one sceptre after having been for a time rejected by the former, to be the corner-stone intended, albeit the later date of Isaiah’s prophecy disproves this view: ”Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation. For us no room for question remains, because the LORD JESUS has directly applied the verse to Himself, and to His rejection by the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, saying to them: ”Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the LORD’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of GOD shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the Chief Priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that

He spake of them," as indeed His chief Apostle expressly says that He did, when He, the Living stone, chosen of GOD, and precious, was disallowed of men, and "became a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient. He is the cornerstone for four reasons: He has joined GOD and Man together, two natures in His one Person; He has united the Old and New Testaments; He has blended Jews and Gentiles in one Catholic Church; He links the Church Militant and Triumphant together in one Communion of Saints. It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes, because that Stone was cut out without hands, was Very GOD and Very Man, conceived by the HOLY GHOST, and born of the Virgin Mary. Hence we sing of Him as "the sure foundation, and the preThe Hymn, Angulare fundamentum. Adam Victor. The Sequence, Ecce dies celebris.

cious corner-stone" in the hymn of Dedication; and as Adam of S. Victor similarly sings: Once refused, and once rejected, Now that stone hath been elected, As a trophy is erected, At the Temple's corner stands. Slaying sin, but not our nature, He creates a newborn creature, Binds Himself the duplicature, Of the people with His bands. 24 This is the day which the LORD hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it. A. D. C. S. Chrysost.

Whether these words refer to the actual festival upon which the Psalm was originally sung, or to the "Day of salvation," the whole period of the wonderful restoration of Israel from exile, acknowledged in the previous verse to be the work of the LORD, Who had brought back His despised and suffering people to a place of honour and safety, after bringing utter destruction on its oppressor, Babylon, and saying of that proud city by the mouth of His Prophet, "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD;" at any rate there is no doubt as to the Christian application of the verse. From very early times, it has been held to apply not merely to the new time of grace, after the abolition of the Law, but in an especial manner to Easter Day, styled by S. Ignatius of Antioch, "Queen and chief of all the days." The verse in question is used as an anthem instead of the hymn at Lauds and Vespers from Easter Eve till Low Sunday in the Gregorian rite, and also as a response in the first Nocturn of the Circumcision, regarded as the Octave of the Nativity; while it was formerly employed in some Churches on the Feast of the Annunciation. Cardinal Bellarmine observes, that although the Angel's "good tidings of great joy" to the shepherds, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR," would seem to justify the application of the verse to Christmas, yet as CHRIST's rejection was to follow His Nativity, and His place as the corner-stone was not openly appointed until after the Resurrection, we are bound to prefer the latter feast, which is thus celebrated as the Day in many a hymn of East and West alike: Thus the Golden Canon bursts into song:

Thou hallowed chosen morn of praise, That best and greatest shinest! Lady and Queen, and day of days, Of things divine, divinest, On Thee our praises CHRIST adore, For ever and for evermore. Nor is the Western Church, as already observed, behind-hand in her exultation: Hail thou day of days most glorious, Happy day, in CHRIST victorious, Day with gladness meritorious, First of days! Adam Victorin. The Sequence, Salve dies dierum gloria. 25 Help me now, O LORD : O LORD, send us now prosperity. 26 Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the LORD :

As the LORD JESUS applied an earlier part of the Psalm to Himself, so here we find the welcoming plaudits addressed to Him by the multitudes during the Palm Sunday procession to Jerusalem. Help me now is the Hosanna cry, left untranslated amid the Greek of the New Testament, and the fact that both this festival and that of Easter fall on the first day of the week makes the song of gladness and the prayer for divine assistance equally suited to the Christian Sunday. In the Hebrew ritual, the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles was called the ”Great Hosanna,” and the name hosannas was even extended to the branches of trees, palm and myrtle, which were borne in the procession; whence it would seem that over and above the notion of a triumphal march (perhaps borrowed by the Maccabees from Greek usage) which may have been entertained by the multitudes who escorted the LORD into Jerusalem, the other idea, that of rest in the Land of Promise, was even more directly present to their minds, as betokening their hopes from a King of the house of David Who should expel the Gentile oppressor, and cause Israel to sit once more in peace under the vines and fig-trees of Canaan. So we, in like manner, pray to Him first to save us, by delivering us from the tyranny of sin, and then to send us prosperity, by causing all our present evils to work together for good, and bring us into the perfect rest of heaven.

Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. And that in contrast to such as come in their own name, without any divine authorization, as CHRIST Himself said to the Jews, ”I am come in My FATHER’S Name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” The liturgical use of these words in the Mass is of remote antiquity. In the Liturgy of S. James, the congregation utters them in response to the Deacon’s invitation to draw near the altar for communion. In that of S. Clement, they form part of the anthem sung by the people immediately after the ”Holy things for holy persons” has been uttered by the Priest at the elevation. In that of S. Chrysostom, the Priest uses the words much Ay. S. Luke i. 78.

It is very well said Who cometh, not who came, for He is always coming to those who need Him, always passing by unseen, always near, and ready to show Himself when we call. We have a further proof that this is the true collocation of the words from another saying of the Redeemer, ”Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD.” Were it not for this, and

for the express form of one cry of the multitude, ”Blessed be He that cometh as King in the Name of the LORD;” we might follow the present Hebrew accents, and understand the words as a priestly benediction on the zealous worshippers who thronged to the Temple, reading the sentence, Blessed in the Name of the Lord be he (i.e. every one) that cometh, [to worship Him here.] And in fact there is Jewish authority for saying that this was the greeting given at Jerusalem to the caravans of pilgrims as they arrived to keep the great festivals: a sense which accords very well with the latter strophe of the verse:

we have wished you good luck, ye that are of the house of the LORD. The Prayer Book version here (though agreeing with a gloss of S. Chrysostom) misses the plain meaning of the passage, which is correctly given by all the old versions, as well as by the A.V., We have blessed you from the house of the Lord, words spoken by the Priests and Levites standing on the threshold of the Temple to receive the procession of worshippers. And it is mystically explained of the ministry of the Word and Sacraments to the people, at the hands of the Priests of the Church, whence come the healing waters of Baptism, whereof Joel saith, ”A fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley;” while we may also take it of the love and help exhibited to us on earth by the Angels and Saints of the heavenly Jerusalem.

27 GOD is the LORD, who hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, yea, even unto the horns of the altar. He hath showed us light, Who is Himself ”the Day-spring from on high that hath visited us,” Who is the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And as the first reference here is undoubtedly to the deliverance of Israel out of the darkness of bondage, so we may see in it earlier in the office, just after the Prayer of the Trisagion, and the choir recites it again, as part of the Tersanctus, before the words of Institution, while the Roman Missal, not dissimilarly, uses it as part of the Sanctus at the end of the Preface, immediately before the Canon begins. an allusion to the glory of Easter, the ”splendour-bearing day.” So Adam sings, with many another hymnodist: The Light of CHRIST the LORD hath shone, The Light renowned, the Light but one, The Light of light, the light of glee, The Light of endless radiancy.

The Sequence, Lux illustr dominica.

He hath given us the HOLY GHOST, to shine with sevenfold rays in our hearts, He hath given us His Word, to be a lantern unto our feet, He hath given us wisdom to see clearly the way of salvation, He hath given us His sacraments of illumination, ”and of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. Bind the sacrifice with cords. The Hebrew is more exactly , the festival itself, taken to mean the festal victim, as it is also in Exodus xxiii. 18, and is so translated by LXX. and Vulgate. Some difficulty arises from the following words, unto the horns of the altar, for there is no evidence that the victims were fastened there in any such wise. Consequently,

the Chaldee explains the phrase as meaning, Bind the victim, and bring it bound to the altar, on whose horns its blood is then to be sprinkled. It is not impossible, however, that the phrase may be figurative, and mean, ”Bind up your festival with religious associations, especially with acts of sacrifice, and do not make it a piece of mere worldly rejoicing. The LXX. and Vulgate, agreeing with Symmachus and S. Jerome, interpret the words somewhat differently, Set up the festival with densities (πυκάζουσιν, condensis) that is, with ”shady boughs,” as the Douay version has it, thickly-twined leafy branches (S. Hieron. frondosis) adorning the Temple throughout its courts and wreathing the victims also; obviously understanding the passage to refer to the Feast of Tabernacles.

The difficulty in the way of accepting this view is that while , meaning simply ”twists,” might stand for twined branches as well as cords, (cf. Ezek. xix. 11; xxxi. 3, 10, 14,) it does not appear that the verb is ever used in the sense of wreathing, but only in that of binding or tying. The commentators (some of whom read confrequentationes instead of condensis) explain the verse as denoting first the duty of Christians to assemble in crowds at the House of GOD, as well the outward and visible churches of earth, as the unseen shrine of inward spiritual worship: and then of shunning all sin and servile work, but persevering in the thick abundance of good works. We should come as far as the horns of the altar, by remaining to receive the Blessed Sacrament of CHRIST’s Body and Blood, instead of contenting ourselves, like too many, with going away in the middle of the service just after the Gospel, as an expositor writing at the beginning of the sixth century warns his readers. We ought

S. John i. 16. A. not to be content, observes another of a somewhat later day, with the mere altar, but with the horn of the altar, for as the horn in Holy Writ is the emblem of strength and power, so here it means for us the virtue of the Blessed Sacrament, for the bare act of Communion is of no profit, nay, is harmful to unworthy recipients, and we should therefore so prepare ourselves as to obtain not the Sacrament only, but its benefits. Yet again, as the Cross is CHRIST’s altar, so we keep our feast-day at its horn when we conform ourselves to His Passion, in order that we may keep a better festival in the time of the open vision; when we behold that other horn of the altar, the exaltation in heaven of His Godhead, whose Manhood is our altar and sacrifice on earth.

28 Thou art my God, and I will thank thee : thou art my God, and I will praise thee. This is the confession of the faithful soul which believes in the verity of CHRIST’s Resurrection, saying to Him, like Thomas, ”My LORD and my God.” As God, He is entitled to awe and worship, but in that we have a right, each of us, to call Him my God, He has a dearer title to our gratitude and adoration, since He has become ours by giving Himself entirely for us and to us. Thou art my God, says the faithful soul, contemplating Him as He hangs dying on the Cross, and I will thank Thee for

Thy wondrous love; Thou art my God, reigning in heaven, and I will praise Thee for Thy glorious majesty. 29 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious : and his mercy endureth for ever.

The Psalm ends as it begins, with the notes of praise, betokening that our life here ought to praise God, that we may rejoice with the Saints in chanting the endless Alleluia in the world to come. It begins and ends with CHRIST, the Alpha and Omega, Whom we should praise at every time, doing all to the honour of His Name, confessing ourselves to be miserable sinners both at the very beginning of our strivings to lead a holy life, and when we have reached the close of our mortal pilgrimage, and ascribing to Him alone the thanks and praise Who giveth us the victory. Glory be to the FATHER, Whose mercy endureth for ever; glory be to the SON, the Corner-stone, the King that cometh in the Name of the LORD; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the LORD Who hath showed us Light. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

O most merciful GOD, consolation of our troubles, Who had bedewest the tabernacles of the righteous with joy and gladness, exalt Thy Church with the power of Thy mighty right hand, that it may become the gate of righteousness, and so bind itself together with the steadfast corner-stone as to shine with glory in Thy Resurrection. (5.) The enemies, encompassing Thy soul, O CHRIST the LORD, rushed angrily upon Thee, like bees upon a honeycomb, when in the time of Thy Passion they blazed out against Thee like fire among thorns. And we therefore beseech Thee, have regard to the prayer of Thy Church, and take the bloody sword out of the hand of the cruel enemy, that he may feel himself to be struck down by Thy weapon, when he knoweth the doctrine of Thy faith to be preached by those whom he had held captive. (11.) O GOD, strength and praise of the faithful, grant us increase of holiness in Thy salvation, exalt us with Thy right hand in good things, that Thou mayest open to us the gates of righteousness, and we entering therein, may with the righteous evermore give thanks unto Thee. (1.)

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