Notes on Psalms

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(An original translation of the Psalms by Mr and Mrs Kelly is included on the CD as the file ‘ps.doc’.)

Book First.

The Psalms are divided into five books or volumes and this not by external marks only, but by internal distinctions full of interest. The first closes with Psalm 41 where a conclusion is manifest; the second, with Psalm 72, the last three verses marking closure; the third, with Psalm 89, of which verse 52 is the end; the fourth, with Psalm 106, verse 48 terminating; the fifth to the end of all (Psalms 107-150). The internal characters which distinguish these five books will appear as we proceed.

There is no part of scripture more evidently inspired of God, none more frequently cited by the Holy Spirit throughout the N.T., none more important for the believer to understand by divine teaching, so as on the one hand to enjoy truth needful, fertile, and strengthening for the affections, and on the other hand to keep clear of mistaken applications which might darken and even destroy all right sense of our proper relationship as Christians. The latter danger is not a mere apprehension; in fact it has caused ruinous mischief since the second century if not the first; it is no less rife in our own days, and nearly as prevalent among Protestants as among Romanists and others who profess to represent the ancient Catholic church. On scarce any question is Christendom more at one than the assumption that the Psalms compose the most fitting

help for christian comfort and devotion, and the best, because divinely purposed, expression of church worship. One plain evil result of what is miscalled spiritualising is the handle it gives to the judaising or superstitious. If Judah and Israel, if Zion and Jerusalem, point to the church, men logically infer that the righteous destruction of the enemies, the wicked, etc., warrants the office of the unchristian and unholy Inquisition, and the punishment of heretics even to death.

Yet one may fairly suppose that no believer has ever used them thus, privately and publicly, without finding himself face to face with unanswerable difficulties, to escape which he is continually exposed to the evil of "accommodating" and perverting God's word. Compare Ps. 5:10; Ps. 7:6; Ps. 10:2, 12, 15; Ps. 17:13, 14; Ps. 18:37-42; Ps. 28:4; Ps. 31:17, 18; Ps. 35:1-8; Ps. 40:14, 15. In the second book are portions no less energetic for the destruction of enemies, as Ps. 68:12, 23; Ps. 69:22-28; Ps. 70:2, 3; Ps. 71:13. Nor is it otherwise in the third book: see Ps. 74:11; Ps. 79:6, 10-12; Ps. 83:9-18. So, yet more sparingly, in the fourth book, as in Ps. 94:1, 2; Ps. 104:35. And so, to say nothing of Ps. 109, in the last book Ps. 129:5, 6; Ps. 137:8, 9; Ps. 140:9, 10; Ps. 141:10; Ps. 143:12; Ps. 144:6; Ps. 149:6-9. Thus uniformly earthly judicial righteousness is the atmosphere, not heavenly grace according to which the Christian is called now to feel, and pray, worship and walk.

Far be it to say that the Psalms are not right. It was what characterised the saints in Israel of old; it will be so once more in their midst when the former dominion shall come still more gloriously in the day of the Lord,

the kingdom for the daughter of Jerusalem. But we, called out meanwhile from Jews and Gentiles, and composing the one body of Christ, have the privilege and the duty of showing forth His grace Who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. We are not Jews, even if once many of us had been, but members of His body Who is rejected by the world, exalted at God's right hand, and Who sends the gospel to His foes, all the time of our calling. Communion with Him thus is Christianity; and hence the church and the Christian (objects and channels of grace, in His energy Who rests on us as the Spirit of glory and of God) make and sing their own suited psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (1 Cor. 15:15, Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16). For it is demonstrable that these mean christian compositions, and in no way the Psalms of David.

Is it meant that the Psalms are not most precious to the believer? If divinely inspired, as indeed they are, how could it be otherwise? No part of the Bible is more redolent of Messiah; and this too, not so much facts and doctrines, as His and Israel's experience in all circumstances, His innermost feelings not only about His people, but about and to God Himself. The Psalms not infrequently present His entering into earthly sorrows like His own, besides that in which none could be found but Himself suffering for our sins; and in both, His absolutely perfect affections and expressions, not merely those of Moses, David, Asaph, or any other. This is an inestimable boon for us who, besides what is peculiar, have our earthly path of trial and sorrow, and know His sympathy in this intimate way, as Israel will another day. But it is characterised and governed by the relations to the Jew supposed throughout, and by no

means rises up to the unfolding of what is distinctly heavenly as in the Gospels and N.T. in general.

Hence Bp. Horne labours in vain, and indeed to his own loss as well as that of all swayed by such thoughts, in seeking to mitigate the spirit of imprecating vengeance in many Psalms. He says that “the offence taken” at this ceases immediately if we change the imperative into the future, and read, not “let them be confounded,” etc., but “they shall be confounded” etc., of which the Hebrew is equally capable. In this unwarrantable boldness he follows Dr. Hammond, as the latter no doubt was led by others: even the Fathers are not worse than the Presbyterians or the Congregationalists. He is compelled to allow that the N.T. preserves the imperative form, instead of changing it into the future. For this he tries to account, as well as to explain away the impression, as no more than a solemn ratification of God’s just judgment. But the criticism is as bad as the doctrine; and the phraseology undoubtedly stands in Hebrew as in English, and in all other languages. It is the difference in divine dealing which clears all up without violence. When God is judging enemies as of old and by-and-by, His people share it in measure. Now He is displaying sovereign grace, and another spirit of action becomes them; as the N.T. conclusively proves as to the Christian and the church. For all that the Psalms are a divinely rich treasure to the believer. The Spirit of Christ ever speaks therein, though it be not Christ personally save in such as Ps. 2, Ps. 8, Ps. 16, Ps. 18, Ps. 22, Ps. 40, etc.

Psalm 1

The book begins with the beautiful picture of man blessed in dependence and obedience. His character is as marked as his happiness. He has not walked in the counsel of wicked men, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of scorners (ver. 1). With evil in any form he has had no fellowship. But, positively (ver. 2), the law of Jehovah is his delight, and in it does he meditate day and night. In no way is this inconsistent with Gal. 3:10. For he was not “of the works of the law” for the principle of his standing before God: all such are and were “cursed.” These never repented and never believed. They which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham, as they are truly his sons. No more in the O.T. than in the N.T. is a man justified with God in virtue of law; as the prophets prove only less clearly than the apostles. None but those who looked, by faith for the Messiah walked blamelessly in God’s ordinances. Still more evidently is it so with the Christian. “The law” here, as usually in the Psalms and elsewhere, means God’s word then revealed. This is ever the delight of the believer, as well as his directory: only the heterodox slight it.

Hence in ver. 3 we see the issue in the righteous government of God; and to this the book points as the rule. There is life, fruitfulness seasonably, abiding beauty, and unfailing prosperity. This will be manifest in the kingdom only; now it cannot be more than morally true.

The contrast appears in the second stanza of these verses. They are worthless and vanish under pressure. The N.T. adds the divine judgment as burning by

unquenchable fire. When judgment comes (and the Book of Psalms as a whole contemplates it), the present mixed state will give place to a manifest severance, and an execution of God's sentence on earth before the final one for eternity. This is no secret to faith which enters into His mind and will before that day. "For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish" (ver. 6).

Plainly then the Psalm describes in spirit rather than as a fact the just Israelite, is compared with the wicked mass. It is therefore the Spirit of Christ in the righteous remnant, not Christ personally, though He was the sole absolutely Righteous One. Thus is refuted at the starting-point — the fond and inveterate delusion of the people that every Jew had a good and true title in God's sight. On the contrary not all are Israel which are of Israel. For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.

Psalm 2

This again is prefatory like the first (to which its structure corresponds, only with double the length), and both not only to the first book (1-41) but to the entire collection. Here the Messiah is as evident and express, as His own are in the preceding psalm. The antagonistic nations and their kings are in full view, not the wicked as such, though wicked indeed those are.

Such is the first stanza of three verses in which the godless revolt against Jehovah and His Christ is set before us, with no less amazement than indignation. In

Acts 4 it is applied to the rebellious union of Romans and Jews, of Pilate and Herod, against the Lord.

But Jehovah's counsel stands, and He answers the fool according to his folly, with a strikingly parallel reference to the rebellious agitation of the Gentiles and their rulers (vers. 4-6). Those doings and savings in each case are an exact counterpart.

The constituted earthly royalty of Messiah in Zion opens the way to the next strophe (vers. 7-10). It is the Son of God born in time, the Messiah; neither eternal Sonship as in John's Gospel and elsewhere, nor resurrection as in Paul's Epistles. Sonship on earth and in time suits the kingdom here announced. But that kingdom, though with Zion its centre, embraces the uttermost parts of the earth, and so the nations or Gentiles. It is the Messiah of Whom Solomon was but a type like David. But here the Christ only is described throughout. It is exclusively future. He has not yet asked the earth, but is now occupied with relations above it, of heaven and for eternity. Soon He will come in His Kingdom, and receive the world at His request, when He will rule with the rod of iron (how different from the gospel!) and shiver men as a potter's vessel. What can be more contrasted with beseeching men, and with building up His body, the church?

Here too kings and judges are before us, for it is strictly a Messianic psalm. But it is the Son about to execute vengeance on a haughty and hostile world. Yet is He a blessing beyond every other, the only blessed object of trust for any or all: the secret spring, at the end of Ps. 2, of the blessings for the righteous proclaimed at the beginning of Ps. 1. These are unquestionably a pair, and

in the only place suitable, were we to search for a preface in all the hundred and fifty.

Having Christ clearly brought in as the hope of Israel, as well as distinct from the mass, the happy or blessed man, just and one of those justified by faith in Him, we have next a series (from Ps. 3) which concludes with the Lord Jesus, not merely Son of God born here below and King on Zion, but Son of Man, and so humbled but so too exalted on high over all things (Ps. 8).

Here the Spirit of Christ expresses the feelings He inspires in the righteous remnant as experiencing rejection like that which was His portion in an infinitely greater degree. Circumstances are sad in the extreme; for these bitter but blessed lessons are learnt among God's people when alas! alienated and hostile. Christ entered into it as none ever did; but His Spirit it is that works in the godly, directs their hearts, and expresses aright what ought to flow from them in the same path.

Psalm 3

Here, though it be only the general principle, it is a momentous starting-point. The historical fact that gave occasion is stated in our title, the first verse in the Hebrew: "a psalm of David, on his fleeing from the face of Absalom his son." No enemy is so trying as the traitor in the midst of God's people; and the nearer to the king, the more of pain, sorrow, and shame. The king also had known more than one profound humiliation, never one so heart-breaking, yet so public, as this. But in him it was far from being unalloyed; in Christ it was in every sense purer and deeper sorrow. His Spirit operates so that His own may unaffectedly and without presumption make His words theirs. The first word settles all

questions, and silences all fears; “Jehovah!” No doubt the dangers look great. But the righteous one is calm, far from the least self-reliance. His one feeling is confidence in Jehovah (ver. 3). Nor is true confidence silent (ver. 4). Then and there the saint can rest and rise unperturbed (vers. 5, 6). It is not doubt but faith that bade him say, “Arise, O Jehovah, save me, O my God; for thou hast smitten all mine enemies [on] the cheek; thou hast broken in pieces the teeth of the wicked” (ver. 7). His confidence anticipates, and, in the spirit of prophecy, sees the end from the beginning. “To Jehovah [belongeth] salvation; thy blessing [is] upon thy people. Selah.” The Christian can sing in still loftier strains. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Psalm 4

This is inscribed “To the chief musician on stringed instruments: a psalm of David.” It appears to spring from the same occasion, but goes out more in expostulation to others, with directions for the godly; and it was meant for public service, as its companion Ps. 3 seems rather private or personal. It breathes no less confidence in looking to Jehovah, but pleads righteousness also. There is a practically good conscience, no ground of standing before God but good for his appeal (vers. 1, 2). It was not merely evil done to a man, but to him whom God had set over His people to be His king. Yet their heart went out to a worthless thing, their zeal was spent on a false object. So we can say that he that does the will of God abides for ever. Here the word is, “But know ye that Jehovah hath set apart him that is godly for himself: Jehovah will hear when I call up to him” (ver. 3). If he prayed, he counted

on the answer. It is not the offended dignity of the king, nor yet the claims of the separated priest. The object of grace looks for grace, even if he were a king; and all the more, because Jehovah set him apart to Himself. How Christ entered into this, who can tell out? Nor does Jehovah fail to direct the gracious godly one (vers. 4, 5). Thus self-judgment, integrity of worship, and confidence are cherished. “Many are saying, who will show us good?” The saint’s answer is ready, and it is a prayer of faith and love (vers. 6, 7). What are men’s passing benefits to compare with the light of Jehovah’s countenance? He alone is peace and security too, and the godly man loves to have it thus. So the close is, “In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for thou alone, O Jehovah, causest me to dwell safely” (ver. 8).

Psalm 5

This goes farther, and is also “To the chief musician upon Nehiloth” (which some regard as wind instruments): “a psalm of David.” It expresses the cry of the godly to God for judgment; a characteristically Jewish sentiment, and righteous altogether when the day approaches for the vindication of His people. The nearest approach to it in Christ’s life as the Sent but rejected One is in John 17:25; for the “Righteous” Father was and is not indifferent to the world’s wickedness. But “Holy” Father expresses His actual ways, as the Christian should well know. In its due time He will surely hear and judge the wicked on the earth when His public kingdom comes. His righteousness is everlasting; but there is a fitting season for its display, and this in and by Jesus His rejected King, which will fill the remnant by-and-by with just confidence. As they look to enjoy the

earth under His reign, they rightly, when God livingly works in them, cry for judgment. We one with Christ in heaven look for Him to fetch us there where He is, and pray for grace as He did, even for His blinded murderers. For their joy and blessing they must await His deliverance, when condign judgment falls on His foes before all the world.

Psalm 6

As the three psalms just looked at are a cluster marked by growing confidence, the next two express the heart's experience in sorrowful trial. Divine anger is deprecated, and mercy appealed to, in the sixth; with the prayer in the seventh which spreads before Jehovah their persecutors' ways and the remnant's in view of desired judgment.

Ps. 6 is "To the chief musician on stringed instruments upon Sheminith" (or the octave). We must bear in mind that David was a great inventor of musical instruments (Amos 6:5), and that they will most appropriately celebrate Jehovah's praise in the kingdom when it comes for the world (Ps. 150, Rev. 11:15). Meanwhile we worship in spirit and in truth, as true worshippers of the Father, and are to sing with the spirit and also with the understanding (John 4, 1 Cor. 14). This is "a psalm of David."

How plainly it is Jewish sentiment, true, holy, and proper for a people "living in the world," as the apostle reproaches the Colossian saints that they were doing; whereas, as he insists, our relation to God is wholly and blessedly different, having died and being raised with Christ to seek and set our mind on the things above. Thus, though nationally the Jews had deserved Jehovah's

anger and wrath, the remnant know He has heard and will deliver.

Psalm 7

Here we have a wider range, not mourning like its predecessor, but pleading their justice with their adversaries. It is more manifestly as Jews that they pray for Jehovah's arising in His anger against the wicked, their enemy. For the desire is that not Israel only but the congregation of Gentiles compass Jehovah about. Then would be His judgment of the peoples. "Shiggayon of David which he sang unto Jehovah because of the words of Cush, the Benjamite" is the title. It is a song on occasion of wandering: whether Saul or Shimei is meant may be questioned under Cush.

This is not the Christian glorying in tribulation and suffering with Christ that he may be glorified together with Him. It is the zeal and prayer of a Jewish saint appealing to God's sure judgment at the appearing of Christ.

Psalm 8

This closes and crowns the series founded on the two prefatory psalms, the righteous man in the midst of the wicked (Jews though they were), and the Messiah the object of his trust and of the opposition of the nations and peoples, both the righteous and the Christ assured of God's favour and establishment in blessing and glory according to promise. But even the Messiah was rejected beyond all, and the righteous meanwhile share His experience, to which His Spirit gives a voice as He directs their hearts purified by faith while they pass through varied trials. This we have been tracing in Pss.

3 - 7. Ps. 8 is “To the chief musician upon Gittith a psalm of David.” Learned men suggest an instrument invented at Gath, or an air of the vintage festivity: a holy but happy season for a pious Jew. Fürst regards it as a hollow instrument from the verb “to deepen.” It is, however, sensibly distinct from the psalms before and after, as the anticipation of God’s counsels, and specially cited as such in the N.T. for the exaltation of the glorified Man over all things, after His humiliation unto death on the cross.

It is evident that we have here a glory far higher and wider than that of Ps. 2. Indeed it is the universe, if we heed the N.T., where the suffering of death is shown to be the hinge and ground of this conferred glory, heavenly and unlimited over all things. It is the great day of Jehovah in the rule of the second Man, the last Adam: His glory set above the heavens, but His name glorious in all the earth. He is the exalted Head over all things, consequent on His humiliation, wherein God was glorified as in nothing so much, though all His life glorified the Father.

Here also two psalms (Ps. 9, Ps. 10) open a new series which follows them, as Ps. 1, and Ps. 2 prepared the way for those which last occupied us. It is not here the great principles of man righteous and the Messiah, with the experience of sorrow and trial to which this leads, and the heart’s expression to God which it forms, and the greater glory that results at last (as in Pss. 3 - 8). The new prefatory pair treats of the actual circumstances which the remnant are called to face (Pss. 9, 10), which plunges us in the crisis of the latter day, leading to the experience suitable to them and formed by the Spirit of Christ in the righteous accordingly (Pss. 11-15). This

may serve to show what divine order reigns in that which might seem to a superficial reader the least consecutive, or mutually connected, book of all scripture; and]low much more light from God is given than those look for who are verbally familiar with them every day, but misapplied!

Psalm 9

The title is “To the chief musician on Muthlabben (or, death to the son): a psalm of David.” This singular term is supposed to be the name of an air.

It is a striking distinction from the New Testament and its links of truth, that the glorification of the rejected Messiah is there followed by the formation of the church, His body. Here it instantly brings in the troubles, at the end of the age, which lead to His setting up His throne in Zion. Jehovah is the covenant name for Israel, Most High that indicative of the Kingdom in power when heaven and earth are displayed as His. It is earthly righteousness in manifest contrast with that heavenly righteousness, which sets Christ with the Father, and makes Christians God’s righteousness in Him. Christ identifies Himself with the righteous remnant to make His cause and His right theirs (ver. 4). Whatever the mischief from the enemy Jehovah sits for ever. And meanwhile He is a refuge for an oppressed one in times of trouble. But Zion is His eventual dwelling, and judgment (not the gospel) settles all questions.

Any one acquainted with O.T. prophecy will recognise the allusions to its predictions, especially when the rod of Messiah’s strength shall be sent by Jehovah out of Zion, and He strikes through kings in the day of His

wrath, and judges too among the nations. What a change from His sitting at God's right hand waiting to crush His foes, and meanwhile gathering His friends and joint-heirs!

Psalm 10

This untitled psalm, dependent on the preceding one of which it is the supplement, is occupied with the wicked internal enemy that hates and afflicts the righteous Jew. As Ps. 9 looks at the Gentile oppressors generally as the object of Jehovah's judgment at the close, so this details the enemy within, though it binds up with the expected judgment the perishing of the nations out of His land (ver. 16) when Jehovah is King for ever. It is more special. Both run to and converge on the end of the age.

When the wicked one rises up from character to a person, it will be realised in the antichrist of the last days and in the midst of the Jews as here. As the Lord is from heaven, so he is emphatically from the earth, frail man but energised by Satan. The Psalm answers much to the cry of the elect, according to the parable of the importunate widow, whom God at length avenges.

Psalm 11

The psalms that follow to the fifteenth give the experience proper to such a crisis Gentile and Jewish, and have the form of results.

The first of them is inscribed "To the chief musician: of or by David," and expresses the resolve not to flee. To the righteous it was a question of absolute trust in Jehovah whatever the ungodly might do or say. If every resource failed, it was but the moment for Him to act for Himself and His own, as He surely will.

There is no wavering. Not only Jehovah abides immutably, but faith cleaves to His house; and whatever come of His representative on earth, His throne is in heaven; and He governs on earth in the face of appearances, though His public Kingdom be not yet come. Hence in due time is condign punishment for the wicked, while the saint knows all the while that He is righteous, loves righteousness, and regards the upright.

Psalm 12

This is “To the chief musician on the octave: a psalm of David,” as in Ps. 6. It is the plaintive prayer of the gracious man in presence of growing lawlessness; then comes in the value of Jehovah’s words before Himself arises to judge. Wickedness increases where righteousness was looked for. Such was the dreary state when Christ Himself was on earth, Who speaks of “this generation:” clearly a moral estimate which still abides, and will be found more and more till judgment overtake. It has nothing to do with a human life or chronology, as the context here unequivocally proves. Compare Ps. 14:5.

Psalm 13

Here things are no better, but the heart is more urgent, and “How long” is the key-note. It also is inscribed “To the chief musician: a psalm of David.” If deferred hope makes the righteous sick, confidence grows up to joy and gladness.

It is the patience of the saints, waiting for the Kingdom in power and praise.

Psalm 14

This raises the question what Jehovah has to say of the people on whom His name is called. The psalm is inscribed “To the chief musician: by David.” It is really a dirge.

For the substance it is the same as Ps. 53, with differences which strikingly illustrate the two books in which they respectively occur. Yet in the due place it will be shown that the apostle in Rom. 3 cites the later of the two, not the earlier before us. But they both speak of those “under the law,” that is, of the Jews. The heathen were self-evidently wicked. It might have been argued that the Jews were not, as latterly they eschewed idols. But no, exclaims the apostle, What the law saith, it saith to those that are under the law, and quotes from the psalm what He says to and of His ancient people. It is thus emphatic and overwhelming. Can one doubt that prophetically it looks on to the age when Antichrist and his followers are in question? But the truth is that the first coming of Christ brought out morally what will be manifest at His second. This is man at his best estate without Christ and denying God; and the Judge on earth pronounced on him. He is lost; not merely man carried away after every vain folly, but Jew under priesthood, law, sacrifice, temple, and every other religious privilege conceivable. Remnant there is; but those of it renounce man and rest on Christ from God, as all saints since man fell. It is salvation out of Zion they look for, and this to gladden Israel: not the indiscriminate mercy of God (His righteousness withal in the gospel) to any poor sinner, as we know now.

Psalm 15

Here we have the moral qualities of the remnant, the spared ones, when righteousness governs with Zion as the earthly centre. It is simply entitled “a psalm of David.”

These are “the wise” in contrast with “the fool” of the preceding psalm. It is not the sinner converted to God by grace, as we may see even in Ps. 25 and Ps. 32. It is the character that grace forms in the remnant for the Kingdom, described positively (2) and negatively (3), and this again (4, 5). The heavenly life which should be in the Christian (and this associated with earthly duties) is not here before us; but the relative responsibilities which a Jew (or any other) would surely neglect without the true fear of God; and the more easily in a religion of outward observances.

Next follows a deeply affecting group, in which Christ appears, more evidently perhaps than in Psalm 8, and as distinctly as in Psalm 2. This is marked in the first and last of the three,

Psalm 16

“Michtam of David:” a heading of doubtful import, which means “golden” or “jewel,” or both, according to many. It is without doubt David’s writing, but of Christ, Who is here seen taking His place personally with God among the godly Jews here below. Deigning to be man, He is the perfectly dependent and trusting One (compare Isa. 8 and Heb. 2). He identifies Himself here with the saints and the excellent on the earth, as we know He did when He took His place to be baptised in Jordan, to the astonishment of the Baptist; as to which Matt. 19, Mark

10 and Luke 18 afford inspired illustration, one might say comment. Jehovah is loyally owned as the Lord. This is what Christ said to Him. In the place He had freely taken, the bondman's place, He would not put Himself on a level with the Master; He said, "My goodness [is] not to thee." He was here to obey, not to assert co-equality. So He would not be called "Good Master" by one that knew not who He is, only what He became. None the less, but the more, was His heart with the feeblest of Israel who turned to the God of Israel in genuine repentance, though He needed none, but John rather to be baptised of Him. Therefore said He to such, "All my delight [is] in them."

It is Messiah's trust in Jehovah through life and death into resurrection and glory. Associated with the saints, He had His hope in God only and for ever, and was shown the path of life, resurrection-life, and joy. It is glory in His presence for Christ.

Psalm 17

Here consequently Christ takes His place with the godly in contrast with the wicked and oppressive. It is rather righteousness before God and from Him, than grace in dependence on Him, and being with Him. It is not so exclusively Christ as in Ps. 16 It will be observed, that though right is appealed to, there is no vengeance any more than self-seeking, but reliance on Jehovah. As regards the saints, it answers to Rom. 8:2-9, as the preceding psalm to Rom. 5:2. The one is more inward, the other rather display; but both are entire trust in God. Hence deliverance is looked for here, not in Ps. 16.

Psalm 18

“To the chief musician: by David, a servant of Jehovah, who spoke to Jehovah the words of this song in the day Jehovah delivered from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, and he said,”

Here again we have the Messiah, and this not so much as having His joy in God, or looking for righteous vindication in resurrection glory, but as identifying Himself from first to last with Israel’s history from Moses to David, and to His own reign yet future as David’s greater Son. Thus viewed (and less or other than this is not the truth) it is a grand close and complement of the two psalms before it. It is strictly Jewish, as any unprejudiced must see. Hence “mine iniquity” in ver. 23 (Heb. 24) looks at the godly remnant with whom He associates Himself; as it expressed the feeling of David in his day. It cannot apply to the Lord personally. Others indeed were naturally prone to it, He never and in no respect. We see how truly the suffering Christ is the final and full Deliverer of Israel, and the Head of the nations too — glories to come. But in all their affliction He was afflicted, and in association with Israel (not only in atonement for us), knew the sorrows of death. The psalm however contemplates Him as the delivered One at the beginning long before He delivers at the end. This the Jews have failed and refuse to see. The veil is still on their heart. But the day is at hand when their heart will turn to the Lord, and the veil be taken away. Meanwhile we, who now believe in the rejected but risen and glorified Christ, triumph in that grace which has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ; and so we await the day when Zion’s

light shall come and the glory of Jehovah rise on her. ‘Surely He will hasten it in its time.

The next group of Psalms has the common character of testimony, culminating in Psalm 22, which however, as expressing the expiatory sufferings of our Lord and their results may be viewed apart. Here again after the introduction of Psalm 19 the Messiah is prominent.

Psalm 19

It is inscribed “To the chief musician: a psalm of David.” It is the witness of creation, especially of what is heavenly, and therefore universal. The heavens, with the day, the night, and the sun, bear their testimony for God to all mankind. Here we may note the beautiful propriety of the apostle’s citation in Rom. 10 for sovereign indiscriminate mercy in the gospel; as of our Lord in Matt. 5:45, when enjoining grace to the worst, independently of desert and in contradistinction from legal injunctions. Here therefore “God” only is spoken of. Man is in view.

But there is another testimony to the greater value and more restricted character of the law of Jehovah, which is set out in the rest of this striking psalm. Here not the work of God is in question, but His word Who has covenant with His people on earth. It is the godly man’s estimate of what was divinely given to act on the conscience. Its excellent powers are confessed, not only in its intrinsic qualities but as expressive of God’s nature and authority, and hence above all pleasant and prized. There is needed admonition, God’s people being what and where they are, and serving Him withal. Hence one cannot discern his wanderings, but desires cleansing, and entreats to be kept from what, is presumptuous,

feeling that secret snares unjudged expose to great transgression, and that what is acceptable to God in word and heart is above all to be cultivated. But if He be rock and Redeemer, why distrust?

Psalm 20

This, again, is the personal Witness for the God-fearing Jew, Messiah in the day of trouble. “To the chief musician, a psalm of David.” It is not Messiah as Jewish unbelief and carnality conceived, but Messiah in the day of distress. How could it be otherwise if He were found in an ungodly people? But He is over, whatever come, the faithful Witness: and God takes care to have those who see Him thus and love Him the more for it; whose heart is drawn to Him because He is so unworthily hated and despised. Hence the outburst of confidence which closes the psalm. Thus the godly remnant in the latter-day trouble see Christ as their object and hope, where the ungodly are to fall under the deceit of the enemy and a wilful king after their heart, son of perdition for himself and them. In the Messiah that disdains not but enters into Jacob’s trouble they discern the Anointed of Jehovah, appreciate His piety God-ward as well as His desires and counsels which embrace them as His own. Hence their assurance of His triumph as identified with Jehovah’s name and glory, and of the King’s hearing them. They were learning the secret of His person.

Psalm 21

Here we have the answer to their desires, perhaps we may add to His also, as far as they could enter in. It too is “To the chief musician, a psalm of David.”

As it was into their trouble the remnant saw the Messiah enter, and therefore prayed that He might be heard of Jehovah, so now in the Spirit of prophecy they behold in His deliverance and exaltation the answer to their petitions as to His. Indeed they see more — that Jehovah had not only heard and given, but gone beyond, and of Himself anticipated with the blessings of goodness, and, if He with death before Him asked life, gave length of days for ever and ever. We may observe how completely Messianic all is, and bounded by Jewish hopes: not at all the far deeper truth of His eternal glory that dawned through the clouds of His rejection on those who so feebly followed to the cross and learnt all better in the light of His heavenly place and of His person. This is our portion, and therefore should we be the last to slight and the first to understand the very distinct relations of the godly remnant of Jews, who are to succeed us and take up His testimony for the earth when we shall have passed to heaven. It is the confusion of the earthly and the heavenly, of Jewish expectation in the Christian, that hinders our intelligence of either. Thus the enemy wrought from the beginning, first to hinder, then to darken and corrupt, the church; as all recovery, for such as by grace discern God’s mind to do His will, is by seeing in Christ the key to all; for He is the Head of the church in the heavenly places, as surely as He is Messiah of Israel and Son of man to rule all nations. Distinguishing things that differ (and the difference is immense) is the secret of learning by the word and Spirit of God.

So we see that the second part of the psalm anticipates Messiah’s proper action on His earthly foes.

Thus the opposition and enmity of those who would not have Him to reign over them are met by their overthrow and destruction before all; and Jehovah and His Anointed are identified, not more in public exaltation, than in the fire that devours their enemies. Messiah's sufferings at the hands of men bring sure and unsparing judgments on them, as surely as His glories follow His sufferings, though none of Israel understood but the godly, who merged in the church and rose to higher hopes and better blessings by the power of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. So there will be godly ones to understand in the latter day after those who now compose the church are translated to meet the Lord. For when the heavenly counsels are fulfilled, at least virtually, the question of a godly people for the earth has to be solved; and these are the souls who will take up and make good the Jewish aspirations in that day, that the Lord may have not only His blessed associates on high, but hearts to welcome Him on earth for long eclipsed Zion.

Psalm 22

In this psalm we hear Messiah bemoan His going down into the depth of suffering where none can follow, the shame and butt of man, the forsaken of God on behalf of guilty man, and very especially for the most guilty of all, that said they saw, but rejected Him Who shone in fulness of light and love even for the blind that felt their need and cried to Him. Here it is not the "day of trouble" merely, but of God's abandoning His elect and beloved Servant that He might abandon none who repent and believe, and that He might proclaim pardon to the vilest in His name. It is Christ made sin; and then

from the middle of 21 the resulting grace triumphant, as unmingled as the judgment which had befallen Him without mitigation, as described in the previous verses. It is therefore most fittingly His own voice exclusively that is heard, first in His lonely anguish, then in the joy that imparts the fruits of His deliverance in an ever-widening circle: “to my brethren,” and “in the midst of the congregation” (22); next “in the great congregation” (25); then “all the ends of the earth” and all tribes of the Gentiles share the blessing and praise; and this abidingly. How striking the contrast with the result of Ps. 21! Both are perfectly in season. The title is peculiar, “To the chief musician, upon the hind of the dawn, a psalm of David.”

Here is the transition (ver. 21). At this point when He is transfixed, the Lord is conscious of being heard. He bows His head in death, His blood is shed. So it must be in atonement. Without this there would be no adequate offering for sin; but He Who so died can commend His soul to His Father, and say, It is finished. The verses that succeed express the deep joy of a deliverance out of such a death, commensurate with a death so unfathomable, which He first sings in the midst of those who share His rejection, and pursues with enlarging circles of blessing into the kingdom, though the fellowship then will not be so profound as that which is immediately consequent on His death and resurrection. Compare John 20:17-23, 26-29; and John 21:1-14.

Such is this wondrous psalm; the suffering’s that pertain to Christ, and the glories after these. No voice is heard throughout but Christ’s; none could be with His atoning cries to God, though we may join in praising God and the Lamb, and are we assured that the truth that He was

alone in those sorrows is the guarantee of that efficacious work, whereby all our evil is annulled and we stand in His acceptance as believers in Him Who contrasts Himself with those before Him that cried and were heard. And how different all since, who if they fear have only to praise! Nothing but grace flows out of His atonement.

Psalm 23

Here it is not sufferings from man answered by judgments from God executed by Messiah; nor is it sufferings from God issuing in His blessing and His people's praise, yea from all that fear Him; but Jehovah's constant and tender care when death is still ravaging and the enemy not yet expelled, not His blessings only but Himself, proved and tested, faithful and good now and evermore. Though Christ was the Shepherd, yet He traversed the path Himself alone, absolutely dependent and perfectly confiding in His Father.

Whatever the present power of evil, and the consequent trials of the faithful, Jehovah does not, cannot, fail in His love and care, but rather makes the things directed against His own the occasion of proving what He is for and to them, as He will for ever.

Psalm 24

Lastly the One Who was really the Shepherd, but Who trod the wilderness in a trust and obedience and lowliness without parallel, is shown to be Himself Jehovah, the King of glory, when the earth and its fulness are manifested to be His on the overthrow of all hostile power.

Thus we have all the earth in His hands Who suffered here, not only for righteousness and in love, but once for all for sins. And here is proclaimed who is to be near Him in the day of His power here below: not Jews as such, for the mass were and are ungodly, nor of course Gentiles still more gross; but only the righteous whoever they may be, while of such Jacob according to immutable promise has the pre-eminence on earth.

Then follows the outburst of triumph. “Lift up, O gates, your heads, and be ye lifted up, O everlasting doors; and the King of the glory shall come in.” It is evidently the world-kingdom of our Lord and His Christ come in that day of dominion without limit or end, when the holy Sufferer is owned beyond dispute to be Himself Jehovah, the King of the glory which then dwells in the land of Israel, Jehovah that shall fight for them on their last siege as when He fought in the day of battle (Zech. 14).

Now that Christ’s place in reference to the godly Jewish remnant has been fully developed from the position He took on earth till He be owned by-and-by in His glory as Jehovah (16-24), we have the experience formed by that revelation, and pre-eminently by the prophecy of Him crucified and atoning as made sin (22). This opens the heart to God as nothing else can. Only then can out sins be confessed without disguise or doubt.

Psalm 25

In vers. 1-5 is the introduction: the God-fearing wait on Jehovah, in contrast with the deceitful who shall know shame and everlasting contempt. Then follows the plea of mercy to ver. 11. Can anything surpass this in the confidence of divine peace? It is the prospect by faith of Messiah suffering for sin that casts wholly on God’s

mercy; and the very greatness of the sin is openly urged as the reason for His pardon Whose thoughts are not ours, any more than our ways are His. He can well afford through that cross which emboldens the believer. Man's sin is too great for any one but the God that saves through Christ dead and risen.

The sinners whom Jehovah guides and teaches, as He forgives, are the meek who are to inherit the earth, as they only have uprightness and integrity. This last is the burden of the companion psalm that follows.

Ps. 25 is the first of the alphabetical psalms, though not strictly such; for two verses begin with the first letter (Aleph), and two with our R, two being omitted, and the last as well as the title being outside this order.

Psalm 26

"Of David." Integrity is the inseparable accompaniment of pardon. So will it be with the Jews in the end of the age: so it is with the Christian now. If there is faith, there is also repentance. The least of unleavened bread goes with the paschal lamb, roast with fire, and eaten with bitter herbs. Thus sense of the need of grace is thereby deepened, not lost or lowered, for all born of God.

Psalm 27

Here we begin exercises of heart corresponding with the remnant's view of Messiah thus known in measure; for it is only after they have seen Him and the Spirit is poured out afresh that they will enter into His work in power. It is the confidence inspired by the Spirit of Him Who was all alone in His sufferings, for them. Now that there is

integrity of heart as well as a purged conscience, they can boldly face the enemy.

“Jehovah [is] my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? Jehovah [is] the stronghold of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?” Such is the starting-point, simple-hearted confidence In Jehovah, be the enemies who or what they may in vers. 1-6.

But there is trial felt and prayer poured out to Jehovah, Such is the cry of distress, but of confidence withal founded on Jehovah’s heart saying, Seek ye My face: a touching plea somewhat obscured in both the Auth. and Rev. versions as elsewhere. There is some difficulty because of Jehovah’s call suddenly remembered and acted on; but when duly weighed, the resulting sense seems decidedly good and striking, whereas the ordinary way is confused and pointless.

The closing aposiopesis (as the figure is called) in vers. 13, 14, is beautiful.

Psalm 28

This is a still more distressful cry, and more judicial in experiencing what the ungodly are. “Of David.” Then comes the prophetic answer, on which they lay hold and rejoice.

These psalms (Pss. 29-31) fall fitly together; not only so, but the first of the three appears to be an answer to the call in Ps. 28.

Psalm 29

For the encouragement of the faithful, Jehovah is proclaimed mightier than the mightiest, who are challenged to give Him glory. We see in the beginning of

Job how the elements of nature as well as human passions may be left for a moment in the enemy's hand. But God is over all, and is faithful to His people; and all things work together for good to those that love Him.

Magnificent in its range, it is a triumphant assertion of Jehovah's power asserted to bless Israel. But He has a temple where every one says, Glory! - a centre for His people who know His name, the revelation of what He is to them.

Psalm 30

Death however is beyond the powers of nature. There all ends, now that sin is come in, and with consequences yet more awe-inspiring and agonising to the spirit. Hence the danger, for man who trusts human thoughts, of utter moral degradation in present enjoyment, with nothing but the darkness of despair before him. It was not so with the godly Jew who clung to God in hope of Messiah, though he too shrank back from death before the Cross; he had not passed that way heretofore. Yet it was his shame to doubt resurrection, whether of just or unjust, though his longing was for His reign Who annuls the power of death. Even the book of Job clearly reveals the two resurrections, separate in time as well as character, as may be seen in Job 14 and Job 19. Altogether different and far superior is the ground of the Christian who in the death and resurrection of Christ reads his justification, is dead and risen with Christ already, and awaits with joy His coming to present him with Himself in the Father's house. Here it is but the deprecation of death, while the Jew learns the deliverance of Jehovah to be better than any prosperity

He gave, or the strength He established in His favour for His mountain: a lesson of enduring praise.

Psalm 31

It is not triumph over the grave here, but the heart exercised in distress, and the Jew dying in the confidence which the proved knowledge of Jehovah gives. Hence the Lord did not hesitate to adopt its words for Himself at that moment (Luke 23:46), only substituting as became Him “Father” for Jehovah; as now He risen from the dead authorises us to do in the faith of His redemption, as later the ‘Spirit of adoption was given to be its power. But it is not as a whole His utterance, still less in resurrection power.

The closing rise of the soul from verse 20 is very fine after varied trials, with solemn sense of the judgment awaiting persecuting foes and the haughty wicked. He realises the pavilion of the divine presence, and the great goodness laid up for the God-fearing. It is the Spirit of Christ in the tried and delivered soul, rather than Christ personally.

Psalm 32

There is another want of the soul still deeper than the distress we have seen, deeper than death; the need that transgression be forgiven, that sin be covered by God, and that Jehovah should impute no iniquity. Thus only is guile effaced from the spirit. This is now prophetically announced; for it is not actually enjoyed till they look on their pierced Messiah: see Zech. 12, 13. Self-justification on the contrary hinders all blessing.

It is indeed an “instruction.” The Jew had long resisted genuine confession, without which as there is no truth of

heart, no integrity, so also there can be no sense of divine forgiveness, though of course all were vain without Messiah made sin on the cross. But at length he does confess, and Jehovah forgives plenteously, verses 3, 4 showing how painfully he was forced by grace to that point. If verse 7 gives the heart's consequent expression of confidence in Jehovah, verse 8 is the consoling and strengthening answer. Verses 9, 10 are an exhortation which the assured Jew addresses to all around, closing with a call to the righteous and upright in heart to rejoice and be glad in Jehovah. — We know how the apostle in Rom. 4 was led to use the introductory verses in the most unrestricted way to illustrate the gospel of God. Its blessedness through Christ dead and risen comes on all that believe. It is in reserve for Israel in the latter day, when they bowing to Jesus at length confess their sins.

Psalm 33

This is clearly a pendant on its predecessor, and begins where it left off, carrying on the joy and praise.

When deliverance, and especially of an inward sort, is known, joy flows. Jehovah in word and deed is manifest and celebrated. The nations, once dreaded, are nothing before Him. Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, Whose counsel alone stands when theirs is made void. He saw all, when it seemed not. His eye is toward those that feared Him and hoped in His mercy, as the remnant did. He would have His people happy in the knowledge of Himself; and Israel will know Him in displays of power on their behalf here below. We ought to know our God still better, viewing the cross of Christ in the light of His heavenly glory. Compare John 16:9-14.

Psalm 34

(This is the second alphabetical composition yet more regular than Ps. 25 the first verse or title not forming part of the series. For one letter omitted, another is appended.)

“Of David, in his changing his judgment (i.e., feigning madness) before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he went.”

This again is a distinct advance on the preceding psalm, beautiful and seasonable as it is. For here it is the heart rising from the most abject circumstances, if we heed the title, to bless Jehovah at every season; as the afflicted are expected to join when they hear. It is full of encouragement founded on proved deliverance.

It may be noticed that vers. 6-10 appear to be, not so much a continuation of what inspired David had been drawing from his experience, as an episode of the Spirit of Christ confirming and deepening all. From ver. 11 the psalmist pursues his task, with a heart now the more inviting others to join the chorus of praise. Ver. 20, we know, was literally true of the Lord, though Ex. 12 seems rather the scripture referred to in John 19.

These psalms (Pss. 35-37) are occupied with the evil, not only hostile to the righteous, but wicked in God’s sight and against His rights, as we see in the first of them.

Psalm 35

As usual, it is the Spirit of Christ guiding the remnant in feeling and estimating all relatively to their state and position. It is not at all Christ personally and simply suffering all to God’s glory, nor the members of His body as now in the power of the Spirit having the moral mind

which was in Him. Here He pleads for judgment on the wicked which will surely come to deliver godly Jews. We have His portion as caught up to heaven entirely apart from it, and previously suffering with Him and it may be for Him.

Psalm 36

This psalm follows up the last in the expression given to the enormous evil of the wicked, but with the comfort of the still richer, deeper, higher, blessedness of what Jehovah is for His own. Why then doubt or fear?

Psalm 37

This beautiful psalm is a moral and, one might say, aphoristic application from the wicked and his doom to the profit of the righteous who can abide in Jehovah. It has an alphabetic order not carried out perfectly. The preceding psalm rises as far as was possible under the law, though of course only for faith, to enjoy mercy and loving-kindness in God, yea the fatness of His house an the river of His pleasures, wonderfully suggestive of what is our portion as Christians — the communion of the Father and the Son in the power of the Spirit. Here we are shown the blessedness of faith in the moral government of God, which delivers from fretfulness no less than envy — a government which is yet to be displayed in “the land” as nowhere else. But it is ever true in its principles, though for the Christian now in a less visible way. Hence the allusions to the psalm in the N.T., as citations from Ps. 34 in 1 Peter 3. The Lord Himself refers to it in Matt. 5.

The next two psalms (Ps. 38, Ps. 39) constitute a pair, distinct from and rightly following those that precede,

and as duly followed by Ps. 40, Ps. 41. They do not express the path of the just sustained by trusting in Jehovah, and tried in the face of confident prosperous enemies, with the land in full view spite of all. Here it is the far deeper distress under Jehovah's anger because of sins. Nevertheless God is unhesitatingly looked to in the sense of His arrows and of utter corruption in themselves. This is carried out yet more in the companion psalm, where it is rather the sense of self, and man at large, being mere breath or vanity, and all under God's consuming hand; but the hope is in the Lord, as before in Jehovah.

Psalm 38

"A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance." Though there is no right ground for applying this psalm to Christ as ancients and moderns have done, yet His Spirit breathes unequivocally through it as through all. Indeed, without questioning the peculiar comfort it will prove to the godly Jew when awakened in the latter day to feel. its value, it is most suitable to the Christian suffering under the chastening hand of the Lord for folly and sin. Then is the time to cherish confidence in Him, as the Christian may do even more deeply and dropping all thought of enemies save of a spiritual kind. We can cry even then, Abba, Father.

Psalm 39

"To the chief musician, to Jeduthun: a psalm of David." As the saint felt nothing before God, and therefore checked himself in presence of the wicked, so much the more could he speak, when the fire burned, in turning to Jehovah Who was using His stroke for correction, and

this of iniquity. He owned himself a stranger and sojourner like saints of old, his fathers. To be strong and great here below was not his desire, but in his weakness he would be dependent on Jehovah. This closes the exercises of heart expressed to God by the tried godly. A vast change appears when Christ is introduced personally, as we shall see in the psalm that follows.

Here again we have a pair of psalms, where Christ appears unmistakably, even if the latter be not personal as the former.

Psalm 40

Christ chants His deliverance in connection with Israel and the earth. Hence 40 is more mixed with judgment at the close than we hear in Ps. 22. But His coming as incarnate to do God's will, in the setting aside of the sacrificial system by His own obedience unto death, is as plain as all-important.

"To the chief musician: a psalm of David." No one ever waited for Jehovah is Christ did, the eternal Son become His servant on the earth. In the roll of the book it was written of Him: He was the object of God's counsels before He became man. But it was His one aim too. Here the ears "dug" express His incarnation, as "opened" (Isa. 50) His daily dependence, and "bored" (Ex. 21) His devotedness in death and forever. He more than makes good all the offerings; His delight was to do God's will. He preached righteousness not to the little flock only, but to the great congregation if it seemed ever so vain; and their iniquities He took on Him (Isa. 53:11), the true and effectual sin-bearer. Who like Him poor and needy, yet to be "very high?"

Psalm 41

This too is “To the chief musician: a psalm of David.” Thus it also shows us an individual, yea a remnant “poor and needy” in their measure, and “Blessed is he that considereth the poor.” Jehovah will deliver, preserve, strengthen, and be merciful to him, whatever evil enemies may say. And the end will show the Jehovah God of Israel blessed from and to everlasting.

That this psalm embraces Christ as betrayed by Judas is beyond dispute. He indeed was the One Who being rich made Himself poor for His own. But if ver. 9 be truly applied to Him, ver. 4 proves that the godly Jew is really in view, and not the Lord throughout. Sin is confessed but the heart goes thoroughly out to Jehovah. Such will be the righteous in the consummation of the age.

Book Second.

The second collection of the Psalms begins here and closes with Ps. 72. It is characterised by the prevalence of “Elohim,” as the first by that of “Jehovah:” not of course that Jehovah is absent from Book I. or that Elohim is lacking in Book I., for both occur where they are required in these books; but that the predominance of each divine name appears as just stated. Of this a comparison of Ps. 14 with Ps. 53 is a striking illustration to the sober enquirer. Yet in Ps. 14 “God” is used thrice appropriately; in Ps. 53 it is uniformly and with no less propriety “God,” and in no case Jehovah. But they go far to evince the folly of distinct authors according to the baseless hypothesis or rather mere fancy of Astruc.

The reason underlying this difference is not the superficial assumption of two authors thus

distinguished, which Ps. 14 dissipates as but windy talk, but that the second book contemplates the Jews as driven from Jerusalem, and the house of God then in possession of His enemies both Gentile and Jewish. Those whose cry to Him is given in these psalms of Book 11. are no longer in the enjoyment of the ordinary privileges of the covenant through the apostasy of Jewish as well as the oppression of Gentile foes. Hence they are cast on the unfailing faithfulness, mercy, and goodness of God. Thereby a deepening work goes on in their souls, as they learn more of what God is intrinsically, when His outward blessings are cut off and the worst evil seems to prosper; and this most painfully to them, in the circumcised then in Jerusalem, under the man of sin seating himself as God in the temple of God, all there defiantly lawless.

Hence we may notice that the sons of Korah appear first in the inscriptions, though there are many of David, that most fertile of singers and with the most varied experience expressed in his songs. Yet Asaph is not wanting, though abundant in Book III. where a few psalms for the sons of Korah come in before the end. It suffices here to recall the awful crisis in Israel’s history when Korah’s sons were saved so as by fire. Compare Num. 16 with Num. 26:11. Mercy that day gloried against judgment, as it will in the future when the power of evil appears so overwhelming that judgment might appear the sole possible issue. If testimony fails to Jehovah for the present, God cannot cease to be God and infinitely good; and who more suited to sing than the delivered sons of the rebellious Levite? So it was in a measure in David’s time, when most clouded; so it will be in future days, when all things come out. definitively

and fatally for man on earth, and the Jewish apostates in particular, before the Man of Peace reigns over all publicly in power.

In harmony with this peculiarity even Messiah is acknowledged in this book as “God,” and His throne as for ever and ever, Ps. 45:7 (6); yet the same psalm both before and after fully shows His manhood, and consequently both blessing and anointing by God. This may be a difficulty to an unbeliever; it is the essential truth of His person to every Christian’s heart. But as a whole it is a clear anticipation of His Messianic victories and reign, yet suitably to the book of which it forms a part. So Most High occurs in Ps. 46; for His supremacy is before the heart at that fearful time when “God” is the sole refuge, no matter what the desolations, no matter how the nations rage. In the psalm following, Most High is coupled not with El but with Jehovah, and this a call to all the peoples, though “God” is still the prevailing term.

So it is even in the touching psalm of Messiah’s sufferings (69): He begins with “God” and ends with “God,” though Jehovah occurs with the usual fitness. It is even so in the closing psalm “of Solomon,” the beautiful melody for the millennial day, when the “prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” Christ had sorrows set forth in Ps. 69, no less than in Ps. 22 which is the characteristic psalm of His sufferings suitable for Book 1. As Christians we are entitled to enter into His mind in both; but it ought to need no argument to prove that the latter has a closer application to ourselves (especially in vers. 22-24, A. and R. Vv.); whereas Ps. 69 passes by our present blessing, and anticipates the judgment of His foes, and God’s saying Zion and building the cities of Judah, when

heaven and earth praise Jehovah, the seas and everything that moveth therein. The death and the resurrection of Christ do not appear in this book; but in Ps. 68 is His exaltation on high that He might dwell among the “rebellious:” what grace to them! what glory His!

Psalm 42

“To the chief musician: instruction; for the sons of Korah.”

Psalm 43

These are clearly companion psalms, and so under one title. The prophetic aspect is the remnant cast out or fled: compare with Matt. 24:15 et seqq., Mark 13:14, etc., Joel 2:17. The historic occasion is when David and his faithful following abandoned Jerusalem under Absalom’s conspiracy. The closing days of our Lord had in the highest degree this character, though modified by other considerations; for what sorrows had not He, the Holy One of God? Yet the former of the twain is more general and looks at Gentile enemies as much as or more than any; whereas the force of the later psalm is the complaint against the Jews as “an ungodly nation.” Professedly holy (in the sense here of piety from being the object of divine mercy), they had none; they were now goi lo-chasid. How true, yet how bitter, that the driven out godly ones should so speak to God of the chosen people! And so in fact it will be. The one psalm without the other could not adequately express the grief of the remnant at this juncture, when the Antichrist sets up the abomination of desolation in the sanctuary, instigated and protected by the Beast (or Emperor of the

Western powers). See Rev. 13. The thirst here is to drink once more of the waters, whence the abominable amalgam of Gentile self-will and Jewish apostasy had driven them out; so they confidently expect from God Who cannot deny Himself, and loves His people.

Psalm 44

From their now outcast condition, which the knew to be just, they cry to God, Who had done all the good their fathers had ever experienced; and God abides the same, He is their God.

The first group continues to Ps. 49 which is a sort of homily concluding them. As the saint in the extreme trial endured could only look to God as his King (Ps. 44:5), here we have the prophetic intervention immediately following.

Psalm 45

It is “To the chief musician upon Shoshannim1 [or lilies], for the sons of Korah: instruction, a song of loves.” It is of course in the Messiah that the kingdom of God is anticipated. His personal grace is celebrated; His divine nature and glory, at the very time that He is anointed by God as man above His companions; for such He has and will have. But it is His triumph and rule and association with the godly Jews, no longer cast out of all but honoured beyond all that had been in the palmiest days of Israel; and Jerusalem is no longer trodden down by Gentiles, no more desolate and sitting on the ground, but the city of righteousness, the faithful city, the queen at Messiah’s right hand in fine gold of Ophir. The virgins her companions are presumably the cities of Judah; and the peoples to give thanks for ever are the nations of

that future day in relationship with the Jews. It is in no way the Bride, the Lamb's wife in heavenly glory. (Rev. 19 -22).

Psalm 46

It is "To the chief musician, for the sons of Korah, upon Alamoth, a song." This is the calm but joyful answer to the taunts of all their foes without who asked, Where is thy God? Their refuge and strength, their refuge in distress very readily found, God is owned Most High and Jehovah of hosts, the God of Jacob, but God as He is in His own nature exalted among the nations and in the earth as He will be.

Psalm 47

This again is "To the chief musician, for the sons of Korah, a psalm." Here there is more: a call to all the peoples who seek association to join in their triumph and joy, but in the deep sense that it is God Who has rights and glory on the earth; and therefore all is of grace to those whom He loved, and for whom He chose their inheritance. It is the millennial day which faith sees and sings.

Psalm 48

It is "A song, a psalm for the sons of Korah." The remnant rise in the expression of their faith and can now begin with Jehovah, as they see the vision of Zion in its beauty and glory, and all confederacies confounded, yea, vanished away. It is an advance even on the last. The glory of the king penetrates as it were place and people. So predicted Isa. 2, Isa. 60, Micah 4, Micah 5, Zech. 14.

Psalm 49

This too is “To the chief musician, for the sons of Korah, a psalm.” It is a grave word of exhortation founded on the moral truth of the crisis just surveyed. The Jews understood not God’s ways more than the Gentiles, and hence the abominable compact at the end of the age which is fast approaching. Both idolise present wealth and power, ease and honour: God will be in the thoughts of neither. But as a vapour all passes away that is not of God and in God and with God, for no good is apart from Christ. Only God can and does raise from the dust of death; and as we know this now for heaven, so the godly Jews at the close will learn and preach as here for the earth, the honoured ones to welcome Him when He comes to take Zion and all the earth.

A new series appropriately follows in this cluster of psalms, which opens with God’s summons of His people to judgment (Ps. 50); and this calls forth the remnant’s confession of corruption and blood-guilt (Ps. 51): in both acknowledging the insufficiency of legal sacrifice and offering without brokenness of spirit and confidence in divine grace. In Ps. 52 we have an instruction which takes the shape of a plaint against their violent and deceitful oppressor with the assurance of his destruction on God’s part, Who will deliver and bless His godly ones in His loving-kindness for ever. Then In Ps. 53 comes the moral exposure of the lawless one, but in terms which the apostle in Rom. 3 applies to those under the law. For indeed the Jews as a mass will be first as their chief, the son of perdition; and the heart of a sinner, where not law only but Christ in grace is abandoned, is no better than in antichrist; and this is morally true since the cross and the rejection of the gospel. The sense of this in the

remnant turns by the Spirit into desire for Israel's salvation, when God has scattered the bones of the foes who beleaguered the object of His choice. In Ps. 54 the Spirit of Christ identifies the godly with Himself in resting every expectation on the name of "God" when covenant mercies are gone; but the end is thanksgiving to "Jehovah" when He has delivered the godly Jew out of all trouble in the displayed judgment of his enemies.

Psalm 50

It is "A psalm of Asaph." Here it is God's call to judgment, not yet of the dead but of the earth, and of those that know His law in particular.

Psalm 51

This again is "To the chief musician, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him after he went unto Bathsheba." Blood-guilt is also confessed.

Plainly these two psalms are closely bound together, though the first is a public and general summons, the second a private and personal confession; which at the end the godly remnant will take up as their own in view of corruption and the blood-shedding of the Messiah, the great transgression. Real godliness is requisite, not sacrifice, in the former; in the latter, not sacrifice but genuine repentance. Ceremonial observances are in vain, when. God judges us even on the earth, yet more for eternity. Boasting of the law serves only the more to condemn the sinner.

Psalm 52

Here we have a Psalm "To the chief musician upon Mahaleth: a psalm of instruction of David, when Doeg

the Edomite went in, and told Saul and said to him, David went to the house of Ahimelech." As we had the saints brought to renounce ceremonies as a substitute for righteousness and repentance, now we have the treacherous enemy portrayed, and the saints in their helpless exposure suffering, but delivered by the destruction that falls on the Edomite at the end, when good shall flourish like the olive and give thanks for ever.

Psalm 53

There follows another psalm "To the chief musician upon Mahaleth: a psalm of instruction of David." It is indeed the great folly of man, but most guiltily among the Jews, denying Him to Whom we owe all, Who had above all chosen and favoured them. Their fear is to come, whatever their contempt and hatred of God's people now. As for the righteous they have no reason to fear: God's judgment will fall on the wicked when least expected. And His word proclaims it across the ages.

Psalm 54

This psalm is "To the chief musician upon Neginoth (stringed instruments): a psalm of instruction of David, when the Ziphites went in and said to Saul, Is not David hiding himself with me? "The name of God (Elohim) will be everything in that dark hour to the godly Jews in the latter day, when they find themselves driven away by their apostate brethren, amalgamated with the lawless Gentiles, and Antichrist at their head. God's name is the revelation of what He is, and to this they cling in faith, when they have lost all else. As they besought by it, so they will give thanks and praise it when it emerges as

Jehovah (ver. 8), in the power and glory of His day when His hand makes good what His mouth had spoken.

These psalms (Pss. 55-58) continue in various forms the feelings produced by Christ's Spirit in circumstances which look on to the last crisis when the godly Jews suffer from Antichrist and his partisans, especially in Jerusalem and the land. David had these trials in the case of Absalom, and Ahithophel; our Lord far more deeply through the treachery, of Judas. But the Spirit of prophecy links all that is past with the coming hour, when the outward oppression and inward apostasy bring the sense of evil at its worst on the true-hearted Jews. Thus God is more and more looked to, not man or circumstances as the result, not only to sustain the sufferers in patience but to bring in deliverance and blessing in power.

Psalm 55

This like the last is "To the chief musician on Neginoth (stringed instruments): an instruction of David."

It was an awful time for a godly Jew to feel and to say that the wilderness was better than the city; but so it is here. The worst was within, even in the nearest circle: how Christ was moved at this, John 13 testifies. But it looks onward to a day of wider if not more literal accomplishment. In all their affliction He was afflicted. Divine judgment alone will solve and fulfil all.

Psalm 56

This is "To the chief musician, as the silent dove of the distant, Michtam2; when the Philistines took him in Gath."

This is a distinct advance on the overwhelming anguish of the preceding psalm, where the cry to God comes late, and confidence is attained only at the close. Here the soul begins with an appeal to His mercy; and enemies are in view, without the aggravated bitterness of traitors in those who were once near friends. The haughty fighting of foes threw him in the day of his fear on God, and, what is more, on His word as especial ground of praise. All this our Lord knew more calmly and profoundly; and this is our portion, the dearer to us as impressed with His name, as the Spirit is given us to make it good. But the godly Jews will also know what God's word is in their day of supreme trial when imposture and blasphemy succeed existing incredulity and superstition.

Psalm 57

This too is "To the chief musician; Al-tascheth (destroy not), of David, Michtam, on his fleeing from Saul in the cave."

In the evidently close companion of Ps. 56, the progress of soul in confidence is more complete. It is no longer the plea, "for man would swallow me up," but the quiet assurance, "for my soul is trusting in thee." And God's word was not praised in vain. Intervention from heaven is counted on, God's loving-kindness too and truth, with the grand result of His exaltation above the heavens, and His glory above all the earth. All things work together for good to those that love Him, as the godly remnant will; and as we do now by grace.

Psalm 58

This likewise is “To the chief musician, Al-taschеth, of David, Michtam.”

Here we have the solemn warning of the righteous, and the call of God to execute that judgment on the living wicked which will deliver the godly Jew of the future and clear the earth for the reign of Him Who is alike Son of David and Son of man, and with divine complacency as He is Son of God, yea the true God and eternal life. It is inconceivable that any unprejudiced mind could fall to see that the psalm, the due sequel of those before it, expresses not in the least the sentiments proper to those that now confess the Divine Saviour and are therefore the sharers of His long-suffering grace toward the evil and injurious, but the desire for long-slumbering and righteous vengeance of God on the iniquity that will then rise to a prouder lawlessness than ever. The time for patience will then be past; and most holy will it be for those who then fear God and are in the secret of His ways to pray for His judgment on His and their enemies (who are in truth the same). And the time is at hand; but the Spirit gives them to anticipate it, whilst preserving them from carnal measures. Even a tear of the eye God puts into His bottle, as the figure is, and His vows are on them — they are consciously devoted to Him. They look for His exaltation above the heavens, for His glory above all the earth; but this not as Christians do by being gathered together to Christ on high, but here below by His crushing destruction of the wicked, who would have swallowed them up. Lions they may be, and with the poison of serpents; yet they melt as snails when He appears in His glory, and the sword that proceeds from His mouth prepares the scene for the throne of His glory

over the earth. Israel will be the vessel of God's earthly righteousness in that day; as we ought to express the grace and glory of Christ in heaven now. Hence the godly Jew rightly utters his satisfaction at the terrible things in righteousness with which the God of their salvation will answer their prayer.

The next two psalms are part of the group which began with Ps. 55, itself closely following in spirit those that precede. In these we do well to trace the varying shades of iniquity in their enemies which by the Spirit of Christ had a blessed counterpoise in God's ways toward them, as we see historically in David with his adversaries within and without. All things work together for good to those that love God, though we by grace learn in light what the godly Jews spell out in the dark. God is the defence, "the God of my mercy." Evil never improves but grows worse till divine judgment. Thus God is right in our defeat, for evil is then in us even if unperceived: else He would uphold the banner He has given us. He cannot sustain pride in His people but dependence only. Even so faith looks to God and will surely receive His deliverance.

Psalm 59

This is again "To the chief musician, Al-tascheth (destroy not), of David, Michtam, when Saul sent, and they watched the house to put him to death."

As it is the nations or heathen who are here before the heart, Jehovah God of hosts, the God of Israel, is also the God of his mercy, his gracious God. To the ends of the earth is anticipated His rule in Jacob. To faith overwhelming danger is the signal for triumph.

Psalm 60

This is “To the chief musician, on Shushan (lily) of testimony, Michtam of David to teach; when he strove with Syria of Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah, and Joab returned and smote Edom in the valley of salt, twelve thousand.”

In this fine psalm, the fitting close of its series, God’s temporary rejection of His people is felt and acknowledged frankly. Yet they cleave to His calling them, and while justifying Him in His displeasure and sore chastening, they see, for those that fear, a banner to be raised for truth which He gave them. Hence their bold challenge even in their lowest state, as well as their identification with the whole elect nation and all the land. The God who restores is the more surely theirs against all their foes and oppressors; and man once leaned on is seen to be but vanity.

Psalm 61

This is “To the chief musician, on a stringed instrument, of David.” Here it is the soul more than the people and their enemies. And though the heart is overwhelmed, the cry is to God. From the end of the earth is strange and sad for a Jew, but makes no difference to God, Whose chastening is accepted, and His leading to a Rock higher than himself is counted on. go cannot fail, though His people do. Nor does the Spirit look for a refuge only but “the king,” not as erst to be rejected, but to abide for ever. So will the godly praise His name for ever, performing vows day by day.

Psalm 62

Here it is “To the chief musician, on Jeduthun, a psalm of David.” Thus, as is well known, this psalm divides into three strophes, each opening with “only” or truly, and the first and second ending with Selah. God alone throughout is declared worthy of trust. Unworthy objects are exposed in the last, where God is shown emphatically worthy.

There is manifest progress in Ps. 62 as compared with its forerunner. The soul learns to be silent or still, as well as to call on God importunately. It distrusts its own activity, and is assured that God’s will alone is good. Only He therefore is looked to; no deliverance from another quarter would satisfy. Mercy, power, and justice are His.

Psalm 63

This rises higher still; it is “A psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.” Higher than this, in its kind, no soul can go, though the covenant blessings cannot be enjoyed far from the city and the sanctuary. But the blessedness of God is enjoyed as never before, the Giver Himself, when the righteous are outside the prostitution of His gifts. Our Lord knew this, as no man ever did. Even deliverance is not sought; and the thirst is not of the desert but of the soul after God, and this too to see His power and His glory where He revealed Himself. A dry and weary land only brings out the more the longing for God fully manifested. It is meanwhile what the apostle. calls joying or glorying in God (Rom. 5), and in the close what the Lord desires for us in John 17:24. When the Bride the Lamb’s wife is glorified, she

rejoices that she has in fact the glory of God (Rev. 21:11), in the hope of which we now exult.

The first of psalms Ps. 64 - 67 appears to close the series wherein is set out the iniquity of the adversaries against those who look for Christ, the godly Jewish remnant. The three following portray their feelings as having in the Beloved a plea for deliverance which waxes stronger and clearer by His Spirit working in them according to the word provided for their souls.

Psalm 64

It is “To the chief musician, a psalm of David.” Thus the godly are consoled by the assurance of God’s sudden and retributive judgment of their enemies, who are here described not as reprobates only but as malicious against the righteous, plotting and conspiring. But suddenly God’s judgment falls, others fear as they behold God’s doing, and the righteous rejoice in Jehovah Who has thus appeared at length in vindication of His name.

Psalm 65

So is this “To the chief musician, a psalm of David, a song.” Here the positive side of blessing is before the heart; for to Jewish thought the people and the land (and indeed all the earth) are blended in their expectations of goodness at length triumphant. And terrible things in righteousness are not absent, even if the joyous change be more prominent. Not such is our proper but heavenly hope in the coming of our Lord Jesus; it is to be with Himself in the Father’s house, though we surely love His appearing and expect to be manifested with Him when He is manifested in glory. Our joy is to “be translated to

heaven, as Christ ascended, apart from all judgment of the world; in which the Jew shall be involved but delivered out of it, when the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

Psalm 66

This next psalm is “To the chief musician, a song, a psalm.” It is the godly Jew anticipating deliverance after the sorest but justly inflicted trials. But God is faithful, and proved so at the close, Who had of old redeemed them from Egypt.

Psalm 67

This is “To the chief musician, on Neginoth (stringed instruments), a psalm, a song.” Here the wonder is how any believer can fail to see that the Jew, praising God’s grace, at length delights in the blessing of the Gentiles, all of them whether in association with Israel or outside. Not only shall Ephraim not envy Judah, and Judah not envy Ephraim; but in that day far from either an atom of narrowness toward the nations. Their heart is enlarged by God’s mercy to themselves. If the casting away of Israel was the world’s reconciling as now, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? O blessed day for the long groaning earth!

Psalm 68

This also is “To the chief musician, of David, a psalm, a song.” Here, where things are out of course God is counted on; and this by the intervention in heavenly power of Him whose rejection was the fullest evidence of the state of the Jews as well as of man. But He Who

had obeyed to the cross, and thus glorified God to the uttermost, was exalted in the place of indisputable power and glory. He would thence make good the choice of Zion as His earthly dwelling and centre, the deliverance and blessing of Israel, once and alas! still "rebellious," the overthrow of every enemy, even of such as led all captive, to the joy and well-being of all the earth. It is "the regeneration" in prospect.

The psalm fittingly, as regards those we have seen, and splendidly sets forth the glory in which the rejected Christ makes good the purposes of God with His people and Zion as the earthly centre, but from above; and hence appropriately cited by the apostle in Eph. 4. There is also an allusion to Num. 10:35, full of interest, but with a notable difference. Moses before Israel in the wilderness said, Rise up, Jehovah, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee. Here it is Elohim. Each is precisely right, and Elohim as little in keeping for Moses as Jehovah for the psalm, which has Elohim throughout, as the expression of faith for a day of confusion when covenant was not enjoyed, anticipating God's intervention in Christ from on high after He had suffered to the uttermost. Indeed the psalm abounds in divine titles, as Jah, Adonai, El, Shaddai; but the staple unequivocally is Elohim; and Jehovah is only used for His dwelling on Zion when power and grace meet for His people blessed evermore under Messiah and the new covenant. Sheer spiritual ignorance invented the will-o'-the wisp of Elohistic and Jehovistic documents: evidently inapplicable here, really everywhere, in no case giving a key to the mind of God as the truth does.

Psalm 69

Here it is “To the chief musician, on Shoshannim (lilies), 3 of David.”

Whatever be the intrinsic glory of Christ, all scripture shows that His sufferings are the ground of His exaltation. So it is here. This psalm tells of His sufferings, though in a way evidently distinct from Ps. 22: where divine abandonment crowns all, as here human evil is prominent and calls for judgment, instead of the grace which is the answer in that psalm. But He was afflicted in all their affliction, as says the prophet. David was the occasion; yet the Spirit of Christ enters into all their wrong-doing, not only to vindicate God but to give expression to the confession of the godly remnant, who will thus pour out their heart in the latter day, when His wrath shall fall on their oppressors and betrayers.

The psalm which presents the exaltation of Christ is followed by that which expresses His humiliation and sufferings, leading to judgment on His adversaries and the deliverance of His people and land.

Psalm 70

Here is the final group (Ps. 70-72), which begins with His Spirit characterising those who looked to Him and were willing to follow in His steps with a heart devoted to their blessing in Jehovah’s time and way.

This is “To the chief musician, of David, to bring to remembrance.”

Psalm 71

The psalm before us goes on with this faithfulness throughout Israel's history (personified in David's), and the conviction with prayer that He will not forsake them when He is most needed.

Psalm 72

This is simply "Of Solomon." The close is strikingly suited. "Blessed [be] Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel alone doing wondrous things. And blessed [be] the name of his glory for ever; and let all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David son of Jesse are ended."

It is evident that the psalm closes with the millennial reign of David's greater Son, the Messiah, to Whom God gives His judgments, and Who will glorify Him in His reign as He had in His rejection (72).

Book Third.

The third division or book is externally marked by but one Davidic psalm all the rest, it would seem, being attributed to other inspired writers; internally of a larger character as compered with Books I. and II. There, as we have observed, the Jews proper were before us in sufferings or anticipated glory: the first as still having access to the sanctuary in Jerusalem; the second as fled from it on the setting up of the abomination of desolation. Thus the prophetic spirit is fully maintained. Psalms are no more of their own isolated solution than any other prophecy of scripture. But the collection on which we now enter manifests the larger sphere of Israel, and accordingly looks at the Gentiles in a more extensive way, as envious and hostile

to the people and the land because of the divine favour shown. A remnant of Ephraim are in the land, but the great national foe, the Assyrian, is yet in power and antagonism; and Messiah personally is not prominent as in both the books before. But the name of Jehovah rises increasingly for their hearts, at the close fully.

Psalm 73

The first is “A psalm of Asaph.” The opening utterance as usual gives the key-note. It is God good to “Israel,” but only “to such as are pure in heart,” - gracious to His people as a whole, and so known by those that honoured Him as a God of judgment. But the trial produced by the prosperity of the wicked, while judgment is not yet executed, is vividly expressed, and the secret only known in His presence which gave the clue and turned all for good. Why the Revised Version repeats the error of the Authorised in ver. 24 is hard to understand, if one knew not the force of habit. The mistranslation is probably due to christian prejudice overriding the correct Israelitish hope. Yet it overthrows our real privilege. For those put to sleep by Jesus will God bring with Him. Hence when Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory. Whereas it is after the glory that God will receive Israel. Compare Zech. 2:8.

Psalm 74

The next is “Instructed, of Asaph.” The psalm is thus occupied with the external enemies, though the inner oppressor is also noticed, in remarkable contrast with the more spiritual dealing of God with the soul set out in the psalm before it which introduces the book.

Outwardly things look at their worst, ravage unchecked, desolation of the sanctuary, roaring in the assemblies, man's sign the only sign apparent everywhere, and no voice even from God, not a prophet, nor one knowing "how long." Yet faith owns God "my King" from of old, and the mighty deliverances, and pleads at length, "Remember this: an enemy hath approached, O Jehovah," rising up to the covenant name, is the poor remnant were His turtle-dove.

Psalm 75

The third is "To the chief musician Al-tascheth [destroy not], a psalm of Asaph, a song." Very distinct, yet in appreciable sequence, is the faith in this psalm where Messiah's intervention is anticipated, and His upright judgment it the set time. He alone of men could speak of establishing the pillars of the earth or even land; He alone will cut off all the horns of the wicked or exalt those of the righteous.

Psalm 76

It is "To the chief musician on Neginoth, a psalm of Asaph, a song." Ps. 75 having disclosed Messiah the executor of divine judgments in the earth, by which the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness, the next sets forth that it is in Judah and Israel God is to be known, in Zion and in Salem. It is the age to come, and characteristically different from Christianity, which calls out souls that believe by grace from the world to Christ in heaven, soon to reign with Him in glory. To be a mere patriot is for the Christian beneath his heavenly calling; for the Israelites, at least such as are of a pure heart, by-and-by it will be consistent and have the sanction of

God. Now it is forgetfulness of Christ's sufferings and of the glories after these. Heaven is our true father-land.

Psalm 77

Here it is "To the chief musician, on Jeduthun, a psalm of Asaph."

The second of these psalms is all inward dealing suited to that day of distress when God will have heart-searching in His ancient people before their complete deliverance. The remembrance of the past may produce anguish in the present but gives hope for the future. God's way is in the sanctuary as well as in the sea; and faith lays hold of both. For the christian it is the settled favour and everlasting deliverance in Christ, dead, risen, and ascended, that we rest on. But the Israelite, if he looks on His way in the sanctuary, enjoys the wonders of His arm; if he turn as a man to His way in the sea, he has to acknowledge that His footsteps are not known.

Psalm 78

This is "An instruction, of Asaph."

The third of these three is alike full, beautiful, and important. It sets out the total failure of Israel under governmental dealings. Law, no matter what the long-suffering goodness that accompanies it, call only issue in the ruin of sinful man. Sovereign grace alone avails. The testimony Jehovah raised in Jacob was excellent, the law He set in Israel holy and good; but what could either avail, the people being what they were? "As many as an of works of law are under curse" (Gal. 3). It is but a ministry of death and condemnation. Real and stable blessing turns on God and His grace. Do what He would in nature or law, Israel brought Him but shame, with

misery on themselves. Then did He choose Judah, Zion, and David, the pledge and security of ultimate blessing and triumph, when the children shall indeed learn to profit by their fathers' failure, the final and everlasting passage from flesh and law to the true Beloved and the grace that brings salvation.

These psalms (Ps. 79-85) beautifully follow up the moral instruction of Ps. 78, for the whole people's interest Godward.

Psalm 79

It is "A psalm of Asaph." Here we have the desolating ruin of the city and the sanctuary, when the ovewhelming scourge falls on Jerusalem as in Isa. 10, 28, Zech. 14:1, 2, and other scriptures. It sets before us the feelings and prayers of the righteous Israelites, after the first Gentile siege which is partially successful, and before their leader, the king of the north, comes up a second time for his and their total destruction, Dan. 8, 11., etc.

Psalm 80

This is "To the chief musician, on Shoshannim-Eduth (Lilies, a testimony) of Asaph, a psalm." Here is a turning of their eyes upward to the Shepherd of Israel, and a binding together of their hopes as His people with the ark of the covenant as of old in the wilderness. They own His just anger, whilst entreating that His face may shine, and, most strikingly, that His hand may be upon His right hand man, upon Adam's son Whom He made strong for Himself (compare Ps. 8:4).

Psalm 81

It is “To the chief musician, upon the Gittith, of Asaph.” Here comes the psalm, of new year’s day, when the trumpet sounds not for alarm but joy, the joy of gathering the people at the new moon. The full moon will shine in due time. This is the new moon after a long eclipse. Now Israel will receive and reflect light afresh from the Lord. It is clear progress as compared. with the preceding psalm. It was Israel that would not hearken, Israel that would none of Jehovah. Oh! had they, how soon would He have subdued the foe, and blessed themselves in the grace that brought them out of Egypt, till at Sinai they preferred to stand on law, with fear as all must feel who so pretend.

Psalm 82

Again it is “A psalm of Asaph.” The psalm before us meets another difficulty of that day in particular. God is seen arising to judge the judges. How long His poor people had suffered oppression! Alas! Jewish rulers were no more righteous than Gentile. The rejection of Messiah proved His people inexcusably and excessively hostile to God. Judgment is at the door.

Psalm 83

This also is “A song, a psalm of Asaph, Here it is not only those who had authority from God warned of His judging, and the Spirit in Israel calling on Him to arise for it, and those who had His word threatened with a fall like to mere men, as alike without real understanding. But we have the last great confederacy, of which the Assyrian is the head, according to the prophets generally and here expressly named with others too

familiar to the ancient people of God. It is by the final execution of judgments on the earth, however overlooked by Christendom, and despised or censured by the vain mind of the flesh, that the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness and know the name of Jehovah. But thus shall they at the end of the age know that “Thou, Thy name Jehovah only Thine, art Most High above all the earth.” The Name regains its power for Israel’s heart.

Psalm 84

It is “To the chief musician, on the Gittith, for the sons of Korah, a psalm.” Hence in this psalm the joy of dwelling where Jehovah of host dwells, of the living God in His courts fills the heart with blessedness in contemplation; as also the blessedness of going there for those on the way: all summed up in the blessing of trusting Jehovah of hosts.

Psalm 85

This too is “To the chief musician, for the sons of Korah, a psalm.” The psalm looks rather at the blessing of the land and people than at the religious centre of Jehovah’s name or the way thither. Deliverance from external foes attests the people’s forgiveness, and leads them to seek all favour in that place of blessing, above all in hearing what the God Jehovah may speak. For He will speak peace to His people and to His saints, publicly and individually, though they need to watch against folly, as becomes those who by grace now understand. It is instructive to note how truly the psalm speaks of Israel as contrasted with church or christian blessedness. “Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that

glory may dwell in our land;" not that they may "ever be with the Lord" in risen heavenly glory, as we rightly hope. But for them, as for us, it is the righteousness of God that gives stability, not their own (though they will be righteous then) but His, or more strictly have Jehovah their righteousness. Thus only are mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace embrace, as we now know in Christ yet more gloriously.

Psalm 86

This is "A prayer of David."

It may be noticed that the name of God rises to its covenant character toward the close of Ps. 83, and for anticipated enjoyment in that relationship, whether in His house or on the way there, and for the land, in the two psalms that follow for the sons of Korah. Jehovah still appears in Ps. 86, but Adonai enters much into "the prayer of David," which entreats and counts on His grace, being as good as He is great, Whom all nations shall worship, coming before Him. But this glorifying of His name is not without a token for good shown his beloved to put His haters to shame. Israel cannot enter on their promised blessings save through judgments on the quick and the inhabited earth.

Psalm 87

This is "For the sons of Korah, a psalm, a song." As Christ the Lord is the sole key to the preceding psalms, which bring together Israel poor and needy looking to Him, and all nations coming to worship before Him, so it explains the divine spring of Israel's patriotism. For all others it is self, the first man. Mere justice might and must have cut all down: grace counts that This man was

born (not crucified!) there. But grace indeed can recall many an elder that obtained a good report through faith. Zion is Jehovah's foundation, he loves its very gates. In vain do the seats of the world's power, wisdom, and wealth, exalt themselves.

Psalm 88

This too is "A song, a psalm, for the sons of Korah, To the chief musician, upon Mahalath, and Leannoth, an instruction, of Heman the Ezrahite." Where can we find such a strain of profound sorrow and sense of wrath with no glimmer of light beyond the opening words? Israel to be blessed must pass through this, and have Christ's Spirit and sympathy with them in it. What could law do for those under it but press its terrors unto death? His Spirit felt it in grace.

Psalm 89

This is "An instruction of Ethan the Ezrahite."

In striking contrast, but morally connected closely with the preceding tone of depression and wrath under law, is the last psalm of this book. It is truly the expression of mercy and faithfulness in Christ, the object and securer of divine promises and especially of those to David. Then was the dark night; soon comes the dawn of the day when the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in His wings for the afflicted righteous, and He shall tread down the wicked as ashes. For it is in no way the gospel of grace, but the kingdom displayed in power and justice by Jehovah Messiah on the earth. This closes Book III.

Book Fourth.

The fourth book, consisting of Pss. 90-106., his its own distinct lineaments, which discover inspiration in their order as a whole, as well as in the contents of each: only spiritual ignorance can fail to see both.

Psalm 90

It is “A prayer of Moses the man of God.” This is the suited introduction and finds its place here rather than in any other among the 150, Historically it would precede all probably; for there is no substantial ground for doubting that Moses was the writer according to its title. Adonai is owned as Israel’s dwelling-place in all generations, from everlasting to everlasting El, turning weak man (enosh) to dust, and saying, Return, sons of men (Adam). He is the God of creation and of providence. But faith, that owns man’s transient littleness and the power of the divine displeasure, can also say, Return, Jehovah: how long? Their prayer rises that Jehovah’s work may appear to His servants; and His majesty on their sons.

Psalm 91

This Psalm introduces Messiah owning Jehovah, the God of Israel, as His God, Whose is supreme power and faithfulness; and hence delivered at length and set on high. “Jehovah reigneth.”

The N.T. clearly intimates that Messiah takes this place under the Most High and the Almighty, identifying both with the Jehovah God of Israel in the face of Satan’s evil and power. It is a sort of dialogue in which Messiah in ver. 2 answers the apothegm of ver. 1 and assures Israel

of deliverance in vers. 3-8. Then Israel rejoices in vers. 9-13, and Jehovah puts His seal to it in vers. 14-16.

Psalm 92

This is “A psalm, a song, for the sabbath day.” Here the true Sabbath, the rest of God, is anticipated when man’s restless toils are over. How suitable this song will then be needs no comment here. Blessing on earth follows judgment. Such is O.T. order. Those that follow to Ps. 100 hang on this title.

Psalm 93

How glorious an opening, and stupendous the change for the earth! “Jehovah reigneth.” It is not so now. Satan is still the prince of the world, the god of this age: God does not share his throne.

Psalm 94

It is the cry of a righteous remnant anticipating and longing for the establishment of Jehovah’s righteous rule on the earth, as the preceding psalm proclaimed the great principles succinctly: Jehovah reigning, not Satan as now (John 14:30, 2 Cor. 4:4, Eph. 2:2, 6:12); His testimony very sure before His power is displayed superior to all opposition; holiness becoming His house forever on earth, as well as in heaven. This draws out the appeal for His vengeance on the evil then undisguised towering to heaven, and blasphemers in pride; and its folly is exposed before their brethren that believe not. But their own hearts take the comforts of His discipline, as yet in vain for the Gentiles, but in faithful keeping for His own. The return of righteousness to judgment is assured if He reign, and the impossibility

of fellowship between Himself and the throne of iniquity. Such will be the blessedness when He brings in the First-begotten into the inhabited earth; and such in view of it the earnest prayer of the godly Israelite.

The next six Psalms may be viewed as completing the group which began with Ps. 93; yet of themselves they mike an evident and well ordered progress. The first of the six (Ps. 95) summons the people of God, in the Spirit of prophecy which animated the godly, to rejoice in Jehovah no longer to be hidden but revealed in Christ Who brings in salvation, glory, and rest; but no blessing is without hearing His voice. In the second the summons goes forth beyond Israel to the nations and peoples; as the third is the new song that is sought. The fourth demands a new song of Israel; and the fifth is the answer. This is completed by Ps. 100, which expresses Israel in the joy of grace, while owning their own portion, inviting all the earth to shout aloud to Jehovah, and with enlarged hearts welcoming into His gates with thanksgiving those whose approach they used jealously to fend off is dogs,

Psalm 95

It will be noticed how Jehovah is worshipped as the Creator but the God of Israel; then a warning is given from the unbelief of their fathers in the wilderness. Their failure from of old will not debar them from His rest tomorrow, only unbelief today.

Psalm 96

It is “ye” here to the nations, not “us” as in the preceding psalms. Yet Jehovah holds to His ordered place on earth, and the peoples are invited to the courts

of His sanctuary, then indeed a house of prayer for all the peoples.

Psalm 97

Such is the song in reply. It is the earth rejoicing through the execution of divine judgments because Jehovah reigns in that day. Zion rejoices on hearing, and Judah's daughters too; a blessed trait in it, for naturally how different had all been! So the heavens here declare Jehovah's righteousness; the earth certainly was far from it, though we, Christians, know it still more gloriously in Him Who is on the Father's throne.

Psalm 98

This is the call on Israel for a new song, though all the earth is to shout to Jehovah thereon, as Zion was glad when all the peoples saw His glory to the shame of idolatry. Here the sea too, the world, the rivers, and the hills all rejoice at His coming to judge the earth, Who is Jehovah the King.

Psalm 99

This is Israel's song in answer. Jehovah is great in Zion, and executes judgment and righteousness in Jacob. He sits between the cherubim. All the peoples therefore are to praise His name. As in the early days of the people, so yet more at the end of the age will He answer those that call on Him, while punishing their doings: not then one or two here and there, but "so all Israel shall be saved." "Thy people also shall be all righteous" in that day. Jehovah's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear.

Psalm 100

Its title is “A psalm of thanksgiving,” and how just! Here Israel calls to universal thanksgiving; no churlishness to the Gentile more. Jehovah’s mercy enjoyed makes His people bountiful.

The previous group of psalms anticipated in the Spirit of Christ, the revelation of Jehovah to the joy of His people and the nations, indeed of all the earth. The last of them demonstrates the great change by divine grace, when Israel will welcome the Gentiles to His courts, not only without jealousy, but with all their hearts. A fresh cluster now follows.

Psalm 101

This psalm introduces the Messiah again; but now as the true David, and Solomon too, singing of mercy and judgment on taking His house and kingdom to be ordered in righteousness unswervingly It is entitled “A psalm of David.”

Psalm 102

This psalm is “A prayer of the afflicted one when he is overwhelmed, and before Jehovah poureth out his complaint.” It is as full of interest, as of moment incalculable. The Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 1:10-12) quotes it to prove that the O.T. regards Christ the Son of God as Jehovah, Ps. 45 having just been alleged in proof of His Godhead, and in both psalms by the God of Israel Himself. Yet it is Messiah’s depth of humiliation which gives occasion to this expression of His divine glory. Out of that depth the Son contrasts His own wasting away in trouble with the permanence of Jehovah, with the certainty of Zion’s rise from ruin, and the fulfilment of

hope in the glorious morrow, when the peoples shall be no longer rebellious but gathered together to serve Jehovah. But when Messiah renews His cry of borrow, the Father declares that the holy Sufferer is no less than Himself, Jehovah the Creator, Who will change the creature as of old He made it, and is destined yet to have the sons of His servants abiding, and their seed established before Him. The comment of inspiration is as wondrous as the Psalm: none but the Holy Spirit could have given either; and both are worthy of Him to whom they testify.

Psalm 103

This psalm celebrates the fruit of blessing by the Israel of God in that day. For them, as for us now, Messiah's sufferings produced endless praise. It begins with the individual, as always, "every one that is written in the book." It follows up the forgiveness of all iniquities with the healing of all diseases; for the age of habitable earth to come will enjoy the full power of Messiah, of which miracles (when He was here or afterwards) were but samples. Then it rises to His ways as well as acts, not as of old partially made known, but attested in all the extent and display of His kingdom. For it is not only Jehovah's mercy from everlasting to everlasting on those that fear Him, but His throne is established in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. Hence His angels, His hosts, and all His work, are to bless Jehovah everywhere; as his own soul did, and so it concludes. Could this psalm be with such propriety anywhere but here, immediately after Ps. 102? Inspiration arranged as it wrote; the profit of both is lost by incredulity through vain confidence in man and his thoughts.

Psalm 104

This is the connected and dependent outburst of praise, with a similar beginning (“of David” excepted), and here therefore in due place. The theme is Jehovah supreme over creation, the chiefdom in Col. 1:15 asserted of Christ and this on evident and conclusive ground, because by (ἐν, in virtue of) Him were created all things (τὰ π. the universe), those in the heavens and those on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, etc. The whole of them has been created through Him and for Him; and He is before all things; and the universe by Him subsists together. As the preceding psalm celebrated what Jehovah-Messiah is to Israel, from the individual widening out and upward, so this definitely views creation blessed after long bondage and growing vanity through sin, but now delivered through the Second man. So the scriptures show, when sinners shall be consumed out of the earth and wicked persons be no more. This result rationalism deprecates irreverently and unintelligently as “a glow of passion.” For man, not God, fills the unbelieving mind to the exclusion of His glory. But in the end of the age the darnel shall be rooted out, instead of growing together with the wheat as now. And this is meet and due to God: even those punished will own it vainly for their lot in that day.

This book closes with the next two psalms which are an evidently antithetical pair, each by a different route tending, and contributing, to the end of Jehovah, His mercy in saving Israel to His own praise.

Psalm 105

“Give thanks unto Jehovah,” etc.

This recounts the good ways of Jehovah in grace with His people according to His promises, that they might keep His statutes and observe His laws.

Psalm 106

“Praise ye Jah.” “Blessed [be] Jehovah God of Israel from the everlasting and into the everlasting! And let all the people say, Amen Hallelujah (Praise ye Jah).” This confesses the evil works of Israel in ungrateful forgetfulness, rebellion, and idolatry. Yet Jehovah’s ear is open to their repentant cry, as His hand to deliver; hence their prayer to “Jehovah our God,” “Save us,” and “gather us from among the Gentiles” to give thanks to His holy name and to triumph in His praise, as will surely be at the end of this age.

In Ps. 105 only divine goodness appears to Israel, and His judgments on their enemies, ending in Hallelujah. In Ps. 106, which begins and ends with Hallelujah, we have only Israel’s evil ways confessed but divine mercy on their cry; as the ground for salvation and deliverance from among the Gentiles to triumph in Jehovah’s praise. Ps. 103 had the last title.

Book Fifth.

Next, the last book, into which the psalms are not merely divisible but actually divided, supposes the people of God once more in the land, for the display of God’s purpose and ways in Messiah’s kingdom, and spiritually fitted for it, for they will be characterised by His law written on their hearts. It ends with nothing but praises. How could it be otherwise when Rev. 11:15 is fulfilled? The first psalm has no title.

Psalm 107

Give ye thanks to Jehovah," etc. Israel affords the great object-lesson of man's folly and distress in the land and out of it, as on the sea; crying to Jehovah and heard in His unfailing mercy; at last delivered from the enemy and gathered out of the lands on every side (not a few Jews from Babylon merely) to enjoy the kingdom. It is in no way the church blessed with Christ in the heavenly places, though the church may well profit from all, and enjoy the truth and the mercy here described.

Psalm 108

"A song, a psalm of David." This Psalm consists of the latter halves of Ps. 57 and Ps. 60 with variations. The deliverance, though really of God, is not yet complete; but this is looked for with assurance.

Psalm 109

"To the chief musician, of David, a psalm." The Psalm is applied authoritatively to Judas; but it clearly includes the wicked like him, treacherous to the Messiah in the past, and especially in the future to those who have His spirit. — In the following we have the glorious answer of Jehovah on behalf of the despised Messiah, who will have the children in all freshness, if their fathers rejected Him.

Psalm 110

"A psalm of David." None but Messiah, Jesus, was ever called to sit at Jehovah's right hand; and He, because He was David's Lord as well as his son, the great Melchizedek withal as even now seen by faith. But His glory as Head to the church His body is in no way here

revealed. The mystery was great. But we are here clearly told what He will do, not for His friends, but against His foes. The smitten head over a great country appears to be either the king of the north, or Gog. Christ shines out from heaven to destroy Antichrist, etc. But here the rod of His might is sent out of Zion, to deal first with the king of the north; as finally with his great patron, the Lord of all the Russias, who will have made that king strong, and then falls himself for ever.

The next three psalms are plainly a trilogy in suited succession, following up that which set out the exaltation of Messiah on high and the coming day of His Power out Of Zion. The first two of the three are acrostics, but all are the praises of Jah (Hallelu-jah) for the deliverance of His people by Messiah.

Psalm 111

“Praise ye Jah.” Jehovah’s works, not here creation but on behalf of His people, are celebrated: great in themselves; powerful in their effects; permanent in result. flow different are man’s! Wise is the fear of Him; and His praise abiding.

Psalm 112

“Praise ye Jah.” Next to the intervention of Jehovah comes the character, as well as the blessing under His government, of the man that fears Him. It is not the Christian even now blessed in heavenly places, enjoying full favour, yet suffering on earth, and waiting for Him who will have us with Himself in the Father’s house; but the anticipative sketch of the righteous Israelite in the kingdom.

Psalm 113

“Praise ye Jah.” Here the scope is manifestly wider. Israel may be Jehovah’s earthly centre, but His name shall be praised from east to west, from that day and evermore. Who is like to Him, and to Him as thus displayed in His ways with His poor loved one, no longer in the dust but exalted, no longer barren but the glad mother of sons? Hallelujah!

Psalm 114

It is not only Jehovah’s glory above the heavens, yet stooping to look on the lowliest here below, as proved already in Israel. The sea, the river, the mountains, and the hills, the earth, all teach from before Him, Who will be to Jacob all He was of old and more. His power in goodness is unfailing.

Psalm 115

Then the wonders of Jehovah will no longer puff Israel up. They will need no humiliation more, being truly humble in that day. Jehovah’s name is all henceforth; and His “mercy” takes precedence, instead of boasting in “truth” because peculiarly theirs. This does but increase their loathing of idols, so long their snare. But if they forgot Jehovah, He remembered them; and that day is a day of blessing for Israel’s house and for Aaron’s, and for fearers of Jehovah, the small and the great. But it is for the living on earth, though heaven and earth shall be in]harmonious blessing and for evermore. Children of God are we now called, and such we are; His sons, with the Spirit of God, crying, Abba, Father; and we look up to heaven as our home because it is Christ’s, having the cross meanwhile on earth. Here

are we shown a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we all shall be changed. Even now are we, Christians, “heavenly,” and we shall put on the image of the Heavenly at His coming.

Psalm 116

Here we see the loving-kindness of Jehovah (Who is therefore loved) in delivering the simple ones, the righteous remnant from under the shadow of death that oppressed them. But the truth of this habitually applies to the suffering Christian (2 Cor. 4), and not merely at a special time or Jacob’s hour, when be is to be delivered out of it. The “haste” is not carnal precipitancy, but of such alarm as would make one hurry away at once. Comfort comes, but Jehovah is trusted in faith, which is better still. The end is praise of Jah.

Psalm 117

It is a little psalm out of a large heart. Grace enjoyed goes out toward others, yea to all. So shall Israel then sing. What a contrast with their narrowness of old! So Jehovah’s mercy and truth will work in that day to His praise on earth. We see how beautifully these three psalms ending in Hallelujah follow Ps. 114 (Jehovah’s intervention as when He brought Israel out of Egypt through the desert), which is preceded by the three psalms beginning with Hallelujah, as the last of these indeed both begins and ends.

Psalm 118

It is the end of the age which will vindicate the God of Israel. Till then appearances are adverse to His name and His people; and faith alone gains the victory unseen,

which then will be manifest to every eye. All men may oppose meanwhile, and never more than at the close; Satan too may deceive and destroy as far as he can; and God may chastise right sorely but for good: Christ knew all this exceptionally, and much more than is here in view. But the end is blessing and glory, not for us only on high as we know from elsewhere, but for those who will enjoy the kingdom on earth, when it is no longer man's but Jehovah's day. What a blank must be in the outlook of all Christians, who leave out such a scene for the glory of the once humbled but now exalted Man! Then He shall sit on His own throne, as distinct from the Father's, before the eternal state. It is the age to come, on which almost all prophecy converges.

Psalm 119

This psalm is not more remarkable in its structure than in its moral beauty — the expression of the law written on Israel's heart, after God's intervention to restore them to the land, yet before their complete deliverance. Each section consists of eight verses marked successively by each letter of the Hebrew alphabet in due order, all dwelling on the virtues of divine revelation as made known to the chosen people: law, testimonies, ways, precepts, statutes, commandments, and word generally.

Aleph. All here is introductory and general: the return after wandering and sorrowful experience; Jehovah's law or doctrine written within under the new covenant.

Beth. Here is the washing of water by the word, God purifying the heart by faith, in moral death to natural energy just where it might be strongest.

Gimel. Jehovah's goodness is asked according to and in His word, the delight and guide of the Israel of God, whosoever might despise.

Daleth. The heart prefers abasement from and with God to ease without Him, but looks for enlargement to do His will with alacrity.

He. The need of Jehovah's teaching, in order to obey and be kept, is here spread before Him.

Vau. The taste of the grace of Jehovah, of His salvation as here expressed, is next craved for courage and fidelity.

Zain. "The word" is owned as hope and comfort in the midst of pride and ungodliness;" the name gives motive to obey.

Cheth. Here the heart rises to Jehovah Himself; so that wicked men's hands were powerless to make the law forgotten, or His mercy unseen everywhere.

Teth. It is a soul profiting by affliction, and confiding all the more in Jehovah, to learn His statutes, better than thousands of gold and silver.

Yod. Jehovah is looked to as a faithful Creator, and those that fear Him counted on. As He afflicted for good, so would He show loving-kindness.

Caph. Here the prayer is instant, as the iniquity grows apace, and weakness is realised in the severest trial. It is not the hope of the Christian, who like Christ are to go on high; but deliverance, as Israel expect and shall have, by judgments executed manifestly on the enemy.

Lamed. The stability of Jehovah is seen on high., His purpose emanates thence infallibly, but establishes earth

too, the universe being His servant. Then its moral power is owned, and by it the conviction that the soul is His, attending in the midst of malice to His testimonies, and in the sense of total failure feeling the all-embracing value of what expresses His mind.

Mem. Here it is love of Jehovah's law, leading to meditation, and with blessed results in wisdom and moral ways.

Nun. In this stanza the light of the word for himself is acknowledged, and its judgments for wickedness.

Samech. Wavering and evil-doing are deprecated as heartily as Jehovah's law is loved. But the need of being sustained is expressed, as on the other hand Jehovah's summary dealings with the deceitful and wicked; for indeed He is to be feared.

Ain. Hence he looks for Jehovah to act, not only on His servant's behalf but in vindication of His law.

Pe. The intrinsic and real efficacy of Jehovah's revelation is here expressed, with the spiritual desire created by it.

Tzade. Here the righteousness of Jehovah's judgments and testimonies predominates, which he forgot not, if others did.

Koph. Dependence is the great resource in the evil day, and indeed always, with confidence in Jehovah, but according to His word.

Resh. If persecutors are more felt, so are Jehovah's judgments on behalf of faithfulness as well as life in power.

Schin. This stanza goes farther: awe at Jehovah's word, yet joy in what He says. Fruit of loving the expression of

divine authority, praise rises fully, and peace without stumbling. Obedience is deepened by having all our ways out before Him.

Tau. It is the worthy end of a psalm most instructive in experience for the individual and the nation: a brief summary.

The next group is clearly defined, the fifteen psalms of degrees or the goings up. That of (or by) Solomon occupies the central place, two on either side are expressly of David, as others perhaps such as Ps. 132 where it is not said. Some conjecture a late date for most, or all, because they are supposed suitable to be sting during the return from Babylon. The truth is that they look onward to the restoration of Israel in the latter day and are thus truly prophetic; the language, as the hope, is far beyond anything realised in the post-exilic return.

Psalm 120

“A song of the ascents.” It is the situation amid threatening foes north and south, from whom deliverance is sought. There was “the liar,” the Antichrist, on one side; on the other, the hordes of the great external enemy. The last days are unmistakable here.

Psalm 121

“A song of the ascents.” Jehovah now at length is Israel’s help, and keeper, Who slumbers not nor sleeps, in all circumstances and for ever.

Psalm 122

“A song of the ascents: of David.” Here is the joy of worship in the place where Jehovah’s eyes rest continually.

Psalm 123

“A song of the ascents.” It is the remnant of Israel staying no more, like the proud and ungodly mass, on him that smote them, but on Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, and this in truth.

Psalm 124

“A song of the ascents: of David.” This is the outburst of Israel’s praise when just delivered from that which seemed, to all but faith, the overwhelming power of man bent on their destruction.

Psalm 125

“A song of the ascents.” Here is expressed the peaceable fruit of righteousness for those exercised by the supreme trials of that day.

Psalm 126

A song of the ascents.” The return of Zion becomes the pledge and cry for the return of Israel, and the blessed Sower in sorrow shall yet reap in joy.

Psalm 127

“A song of the ascents: of Solomon.” All of blessing turns on Jehovah, on Jehovah-Jesus. When Israel welcomes and depends on Him what fruitful showers! “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children” as in Ps. 45: so here. Solomon had an earnest and might well sing in the

Spirit; yet his was not the rest of God, but vanity of vanities.

Psalm 128

“A song of the ascents.” It is millennial blessedness on earth, when Christ reigns and blesses out of Zion. To interpret it of heaven or the church is to deny the kingdom yet to be restored to Israel.

Psalm 129

“A song of the ascents.” It is a psalm of painful and touching interest as to Israel’s enemies, whose will was in their sufferings, however deserved. They hated Zion which Jehovah chose and loved; and their desolations were as cruel as fruitless, being in vain to destroy, as the end will show in that day.

Psalm 130

“A song of the ascents.” It is the new ground of divine mercy, and so of forgiveness for the generation to come.

Psalm 131

“A song of the ascents: of David.” This is the moral accompaniment of faith in mercy. Hope in Jehovah supplants self-confidence or looking elsewhere.

Psalm 132

“A song of the ascents.” The Anointed is here, typified by David and Solomon, to reign as surely as He suffered. His rest in Zion has yet to be accomplished. It is not the Father’s throne, any more than headship of Christ’s body, but the kingdom by and by, where and when the answers of grace exceed the desires of faith.

Psalm 133

“A song of the ascents.” There is unity of blessing in that Hermon’s dew will fall on Zion.

Psalm 134

“A song of the ascents.” It is no longer Sinai, the mountain of the people’s responsibility, but Zion, the seat of royal grace, after the fleshly king’s ruin also. Under the true King and the faithful Priest praise unceasing rises, even in the nights. How should it be otherwise when Christ establishes the blessing on the overthrow of the enemy?

Now follow a few psalms less closely connected, though the second may be regarded as an answer to the first. The third stands comparatively isolated, yet in its evidently right place. The fourth, instead of (like it) recalling the shame and sorrow of the Babylonish captivity, is an avowed thanksgiving to Jehovah, not only for His word, but for His everlasting loving-kindness. These are all judicial, and apply during the crisis which marks the incoming of the new age, The fifth or last expresses the deeper work of self-judgment before the inescapable presence of Jehovah; yet it looks the more for His slaying the wicked (the judgment of the quick and of the dead), while baring the heart now in order to be thoroughly proved and led in the way everlasting. The last two are Davidical, as are the seven that succeed.

Psalm 135

“Praise ye Jah.” It is instructive to compare ver. 13 with Ex. 3 and 14 with Deut. 32. The psalm anticipates the proximate accomplishment of both to Jah’s praise.

Psalm 136

“Give thanks to Jehovah.” Very impressive is this answering song of thanks, with a refrain so suited then to Israel. He Who is pleased to dwell at Jerusalem in that day is the “God of the heavens,” not merely of the earth (Gen. 14:19).

Psalm 137

Very different were Babylon and Edom, yet both the enemies of Zion, one to humble her for her sins, the other hating her for divine favour, alike to suffer before Zion’s joy, who must sorrow till then and not sing.

Psalm 138

“Of David.” It is Jehovah’s faithfulness to His sayings, His mercy in this respect which Israel proved experimentally, and all kings of the earth celebrate in that day. What a change from this day of delusion and infidelity, to which the Jew contributes so largely!

Psalm 139

“To the chief musician: a psalm of David.” The execution of external judgment, when Christ takes the world-kingdom (Rev. 11.), does not hinder the inner work for the faithful Jew, who here tells out his confidence in the heart-searching of Jehovah. This recalls not only His own omnipresence and omniscience, as the, faithful Creator, but His thoughts about us. For truly His complacency is in men, not angels: the Christ was to be man, though Son of the Highest. Therefore as a godly Jew he heartily goes with the vengeance to fall on the wicked, while he desires yet more God’s searching of himself lest any grievous way should be found in him.

From the deep searching, yea God's searching, of the heart in the last psalm, we turn to a group of five, rising from a cry for full deliverance by executed judgment to anticipated thanksgiving in Ps. 145, a millennial strain, followed by varied and ceaseless praises to the end of the book.

Psalm 140

"To the chief musician: a psalm of David." Probably the "evil man," if defined, seems to be Antichrist; the "man of violence" rather the external enemy, the Assyrian. Proud or high ones here are ungodly Israelites.

Psalm 141

"A psalm of David." This is pursued for the soul's profit that all said and done may be to and in the favour of Jehovah, apart from the dainties of evil doers, and accepting rebuke from the righteous; so that, when judgment falls, some may hear and live.

Psalm 142

"An instruction of David when he was in the cave: a prayer." Here is a didactic word, a prayer too. Wickedness in power casts the righteous on Jehovah alone. How often precious, and proved by how many! Yet, while originally David's faith, it will apply fully in the future crisis of Israel.

Psalm 143

"A psalm of David." The following is deeper still: not only none else save Jehovah, but self-abandoned. No righteousness can stand judgment, but here is the

righteousness of God by faith. Confidence is in grace. So the godly Jew will feel and say in that day.

Psalm 144

This psalm blesses Jehovah in confidence and bright expectation. Why should man (Adam) son of enosh, weak and faint, stay blessing through divine judgment? For so Israel always expects, whatever the mercy also. The Christian stands in grace and looks into heaven, to which he belongs as in Christ. This psalm looks for judgment, not the gospel.

Psalm 145

“Praise of David.” Here comes “Praise” or the new song purposed in Ps. 144, an alphabetic construction, omitting Nun (the Hebrew N).

The final praises of Jah in five strains close the book. It may be noticed that creation and Israel here and elsewhere in the O.T. answer to the new creation and the church in the N.T. The Septuagint attributes the first three to Haggai and Zechariah, 147 being divided.

Psalm 146

“Praise ye Jah.” The praise of Jah, Jehovah, Jacob’s God, is urged, in contrast with men, not only as maker of heaven, earth, the sea, and all in them, but as the sure moral Governor, only to be proved and displayed perfectly in that day when Zion is the earthly centre.

Psalm 147

“Praise ye Jah.” Incomparably greater things are before Israel than the work of Nehemiah for the returned remnant, though to speak of this may have given

occasion to their glorious hope, inseparable from the Messiah and the kingdom and all Israel then to be saved. Then indeed it will be Jehovah building Jerusalem and gathering Israel's outcasts far beyond the little provisional mercy to the Jews from Babylon. And He is competent Who makes the world, yea the universe, delights most of all in the lowly that fear Him, and shows Jacob His word, Israel His judgments; for He thus owned no other nation.

Psalm 148

"Praise ye Jah." Here praise is called for from the heaven, and every one and thing connected, the praise of Jehovah's name; so from the earth and all below, rising up to the kings and all peoples, of every age, sex, and degree, to praise His name set in His people, His holy or godly ones, beyond question Israel's sons. The church reigns with Him Who reigns over all the rest, the universe.

Psalm 149

is "Praise ye Jah." It is expressly a new song for Israel, no longer enemies as touching the gospel, no longer only beloved for the fathers' sake, but a congregation of pious ones, Zion's sons rejoicing in their King. Their position is judicial on earth; but we who believe, without seeing Christ, have our joy in His heavenly grace and glory.

Psalm 150

"Praise ye Jah." Thus fitly ends this inspired collection of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, in a grand chorus of praise on this long travailing but soon to be delivered

and rejoicing earth, when the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is come.

1 The music to which the psalm was set, it appears.

2 See the title of Psalm 16. Dr. J. A. Alexander prefers “a secret.”

3 The music it would seem: see Ps. 45, Ps. 50, Ps. 60.