A Commentary on the Psalms from Primitive and Mediaeval Writers, volume 4 (Psalms 119–150) (part 2 of 2)

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Psalm 135

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, by the sweetness of His Name, may turn us from the foulness of heathenism. The Voice of the Church exhorting the people to praise GOD, and vehemently reproaching the idols of the nations, and declaring they are nothing. Whosoever therefore hath ascended the fifteen steps in faith and works, praising the Name of the LORD, will see Him face to face without end in Heaven. The Voice of the Church to the workers, because she rebuketh idols, to praise GOD for His wondrous works. VEN. BEDE. After the beautiful structure of the Graduals, which has led up to the summit of everlasting happiness, Alleluia is most fitly placed, that the Holy Church may enjoy the praises of the LORD; and it is made known that such is the office prepared for her. Throughout the Psalm the Prophet speaks. At the outset, he saith that praises are to be paid to the LORD, because of the mightiness of His name. Since He hath done whatsoever He pleased in heaven and in earth; describing His various great doings, Praise the Name of the Lord. In the second part, since the perfect praise of truth is to destroy falsehood, he refutes with ridicule the worshippers of idols. As for the gods of the heathen, &c. Thirdly, he counsels the various orders not to cease praising the LORD. Praise the Lord, ye house of Israel.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. In a spiritual sense it is spoken of a soul consciously dreaming hymns, waking in union with the Trinity. And he implies in it the conversion of the Christian people to the faith. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. Teaching to lead on. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm declaratory of praise.

Various Uses. — Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. All things * whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did He. Parisian. O praise the LORD * sing praises unto His Name, for He hath chosen Israel for His own possession. Lyons. O praise * the LORD. Ambrosian. I know that the LORD is great * and that our LORD is above all gods. 1 O praise the LORD, laud ye the Name of the LORD : praise it, O ye servants of the LORD ; 2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD : in the courts of the house of our GOD.

We have here a repetition of the opening of the previous psalm, whereby this one, though not itself one of the Graduals or Pilgrim-songs, but belonging to the Alleluiatic group, is linked on to them, and teaches, as the early commentators delight to observe, that praise of GOD is what awaits the persevering climber who has ascended one by one the lofty flight of stairs leading up from the valley of weeping to the House of GOD. The whole Psalm is one tessellation from other parts of Holy Scripture, with the recurrent melody of thankful praise resounding throughout it. There is an apparent distinction here between those who stand in the house of the Lord, and those who stand only in the courts of it : probably denoting severally the Priests, who were empowered to enter the Temple proper, and the Levites, whose duties were confined to the other parts of the building, typifying the two chief grades of faithful believers, the beginners, and the perfect ; the saints who are here in the outer courts of earth, still militant, and those who are triumphant in the house eternal in the Heavens, both being members of one and the same Church. Either way, they are standing, as we ought to do, as under one Sovereign's eye, and waiting on His service. A soldier under arms does not lounge, but is alert and upright, therefore it is said to CHRIST's soldiers, "Behold now, praise the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, ye that stand in the house of the LORD.

But on the other hand, wickedness sitteth in an ephah under a talent of lead, because it is fixed in sin, and cannot separate from it ; and as they who are hardened in wrong-doing, and cling steadfastly to their sins, are said to sit down, because they do not choose to rise up. And note that we have here the ascription of praise to the Most Holy Trinity, in the threefold repetition of the Name JEHOVAH, while the stress in the second clause of the triple hymn on the Name of the LORD tells us of that Name which is above every name, the human Name of GOD the SON. Wherefore the Church's answer to this exhortation is made in that glad cry of the Gloria in Excelsis ; "For Thou only art Holy, Thou only art the LORD, Thou only, O JESU CHRIST, with the HOLY GHOST, art most High in the glory of GOD the FATHER."

3 O praise the LORD, for the LORD is gracious: O sing praises unto his Name, for it is lovely. A. Gracious. So the Roman Psalter and S. Hilary, benignus. It ought rather to be, with A.V., LXX., Vulg., good. GOD is not made better by man's praise, nor worse by man's blasphemy, but man himself is amended by fearing GOD, who is good, not accidentally, derivatively, or partially, but essentially, naturally, and perfectly. All creation, which he made is "very good," what then must be His goodness Who made the universe, Himself unmade? O sing praises unto His Name. Here they dwell on the word psallite in the Vulgate rendering, which denotes playing on an instrument, and repeat the lesson so often given before, that the works of our hands must accompany the words of our lips in every true and hearty praise of GOD. For it is lovely. Rather sweet or pleasant. And there is a division as to what the it means, whether the act of praise is the pleasant thing, or, as most of

them prefer, the Name of the LORD. In the latter case, they remind us of the Incarnation, and the title of SAVIOUR thence derived, sweet to us, so that "the Name of JESUS is music in the ear, honey in the mouth, gladness in the heart;" and sweet especially in that Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist wherein He gives Himself to be the food of our souls. And note that as the Divine Name occurs thrice in the first verse, so it is repeated thrice in the second and third, as taken up by other voices.

Crashaw, Name of Jesus. Come, lovely Name! appear from forth the bright Regions of peaceful light; Look from Thine own illustrious home, Fair King of names, and come: Leave all Thy native glories in their gorgeous nest, And give Thyself awhile the gracious guest Of humble souls, that seek to find The hidden sweets Which man's heart meets When Thou art master of the mind. Come, lovely Name! life of our hope, Lo, we hold our hearts wide ope, Unlock Thy cabinet of day, Dearest sweet, and come away. 4 For why? the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself: and Israel for his own possession. S. Chrysost. Here is the first reason for acknowledging the goodness and sweetness of GOD, His covenant relation to His chosen people. It is what is peculiar to themselves, not what they have in common with other nations, that comes home soonest to their joy and affection. He put other nations under Angel rulers and princes, but reserved Jacob for His own royal domain, His special possession. Jacob is chosen of Him, because all who wrestle against sin are His very own,—as it is written, "There was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul [the 'asked for,' the Desire of the nation] saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him." Israel is more than chosen, has become His very own, because they who have wrestled here and prevailed, shall in the Resurrection be "princes with God" for ever. And even here, the saints of active and contemplative life, severally denoted by the same two names, are equally His, only that He dwells more perfectly in those who, like Mary, sit at His feet and listen to His words.

5 For I know that the LORD is great: and that our LORD is above all gods. Again in these two verses we have the threefold repetition of the Divine Name, thus occurring nine times so far in the Psalm. Here is the second reason for praising GOD. He is not only the special GOD of Israel, their own national object of worship, but supreme above all other supernatural beings, without fellow, without rival. It would be no great thing to say that He is above the dead idols of metal and wood and stone of which the Psalm speaks later, but He is LORD of all the mighty angel hosts; Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers, are but His servants. I know, not how great He is, for that passes human knowledge, but yet some glimpses of His righteousness may be caught by the faithful believer, as it is written, "No man knoweth the SON, but the FATHER, neither knoweth any man the FATHER, save the SON, and he to whomsoever the SON will reveal Him." Perfect knowledge of the FATHER is impossible save to the SON, but nevertheless, in the light of the Gospel revelation of the FATHER's love, mercy, righteousness

and power, man may arise and say, I know, while confessing the truth of Zophar's objection, "Canst thou by searching find out GOD? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? As high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?"

6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth: and in the sea, and in all deep places.

The strain of praise, the claim of power, rises higher still. GOD might be the mightiest of all beings, and yet have limits to His power. He might (a disbeliever would allege) be stronger than any one rival, and yet not equal to a coalition of all other Powers against Him; or He might, like the Zeus of Greek belief, be overshadowed by the dark, mysterious force of Destiny in the background of His throne. But here all such bounds are swept away, and He is proclaimed as Almighty, having no limits except His own will, the laws He is pleased to make for Himself; whereas the mightiest of all other beings, on however great a scale they may work, are merely dealing with what He has been pleased to intrust to them, and obeying His commands. And passing lightly over the argument from natural theology which follows, the commentators come at once to the underlying meaning. Heaven and earth stand for spiritual and temporal things, the sea and the deeps for evil in its most violent and its darkest form. The LORD hath done what He pleased in heaven, by sending down the HOLY GHOST, by employing His angels as ministering spirits, by making men into saints, each of them a heaven, because He dwells in them. He hath done what He pleased in earth, by setting up His Church there, by overthrowing idolatry, by judging and punishing His foes, by His dealings with men of carnal mind, who are of the earth, earthy.

He hath done what He pleased with the wicked, who "are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. He hath done what He pleased in the deep, when He overcame death in the grave, and Satan in hell; and when He brought to nothing the craftiest plots of cruelty and unbelief against His Church. He will yet do what He pleases in the deeps when He calls the dead out of their tombs, when He binds Satan in the pit, when He casts Death and Hell into the lake of brimstone. Hence this verse begins the song of the redeemed, and therefore for the tenth time the Name of JEHOVAH is heard, because the band of ransomed Saints, who have ascended the fifteen degrees to the House of GOD, and have just heard the nine choirs of Angels celebrating the goodness, sweetness, and elective grace of GOD, now chime in with their harmony in praise of His wonders in redemption, which they proceed to describe as follows:

7 He bringeth forth the clouds from the ends of the world : and sendeth forth lightnings with the rain, bringing the winds out of his treasures.

H. The clouds (which seem to ascend from the horizon), as pouring down the rains of heaven on the thirsty earth, are the constant types of the instruments of Divine teaching. Here then, we have the Apostles, lifted by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness from the lowliest place on earth, from the salt waters of restless sinners, and exalted on high, to pour the Gospel message on the parched and thirsty lands. With this rain He brought forth lightnings, in the marvellous works which He empowered them to do in proof of their mission, in the awful threatenings He bade them utter against obstinate sinners, in the clear brightness of the wisdom with which He endowed them. And as lightnings are followed by rain, so the eloquent preaching of God's word ought to be followed by the tears of the hearers, disturbed and repentant, truly a rain from heaven. Bringing the winds out of His treasures. The commentators, agreeing that the word treasures denotes the hidden counsels of God, give different interpretations of the winds. S. Hilary takes them to be the Angels, and quotes in illustration the saying, "He maketh His angels spirits. The most usual view is S.

Augustine's, that it is another epithet of the preachers of the Gospel, who in the body are as clouds, because lifted up from lowliness to a great height, but are winds in the Spirit, because filled with the mighty rushing wind of the HOLY GHOST, and passing with incredible swiftness from one part of the earth to the other according to the Divine will. Another exposition, which seems happier, is that as the winds are the powers which drive the clouds along the sky till they reach the spot whence they descend in showers, so the fierce persecutors of the Apostles, those mobs and tyrants who scattered them hither and thither, did but work out unconsciously and unwillingly the designs of God in bringing the Gospel tidings continually into fresh places. So it was from the very first: for "they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word. Lastly, they take the winds to be those sudden operations of God on the soul, which are either warm or cold, the North and South winds of the Bride's garden, sometimes cooling and refreshing in time of heat, sometimes freezing with terror, sometimes warm and genial to ripen the fruit, sometimes hot and parching with inflicting sorrow and trouble, but in each and every case, gifts to man out of the treasures of God.

H. Ps. civ. 4. Heb. i. 7. A. 8 He smote the first-born of Egypt: both of man and beast. 9 He hath sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O thou land of Egypt: upon Pharaoh and all his servants.

Here is the proof of all that praise of God which we had in the preceding verses. God chose Jacob, and brought Israel out of Egypt to be His possession, instead of the bond-slaves of Pharaoh. He showed Himself greater than all the gods of Egypt, who were powerless against Him. He did what He pleased in heaven, sending the hail, and the locusts, and the darkness. He did what He pleased on earth, with

Exod. ix. 6; the murrain, and the blight; He did what He pleased in the viii. 6; vii. sea, bringing frogs out of the ponds, turning the Nile into 20; xiv. 21; blood, making a passage for His people through the Red xii. 29. Sea; and in the deeps, by casting all the firstborn down into the grave. God's triumphs over the enemies of men's salvation are set forth for us in these two following verses; and here we have first His victory over the world and its prince, Hugo Card. of which Egypt and Pharaoh are the recognized Scripture A. types. The first-born of Egypt are the original sins which C. are born within us into the world, whose guilt God destroys in Holy Baptism, and that both of man and beast, sins of thought and sense, sins of the wise and instructed, as well as R. of the ignorant and dull. The wonders of grace which God has wrought in the midst of the world have awed and enfeebled the prince of the world and his ministers of evil. Hugo Card.

He has turned water into blood, by making fleshly pleasures intolerable; brought up frogs, when He has taught men to be weary of idle and frivolous chatter; sent a plague of lice, by causing weariness of the petty cares and anxieties of the world; of flies, when He allows the hatefulness of evil thoughts to become fully understood; a murrain of cattle, when He strikes at worldly prosperity, and brings the thought of death into the soul; a plague of boils, when the very pomps and dignities of the world become burdensome to those who possess them; a plague of hail, when remorse and terror seize on the mind; a visitation of locusts, when He strips away the grace and dignity of life, the honours and rank on which men pride themselves; a plague of darkness, when the consciousness of ignorance, of incapacity to solve the awful problem of life and death, and of that which lies beyond the grave, forces itself on men; the slaughter of the first-born, when He visits us in our affliction, and takes from us by death, or any other sorrow, whatever is dearest to our H. heart. In another sense, they take the signs and wonders in the midst of Egypt to be the portents which attended the S. Matt. Crucifixion of the LORD, when He conquered on the Tree, xxvii. 45, 51. and the sun was darkened, the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, and the bodies of the saints arose.

10 He smote divers nations : and slew mighty kings; 11 Sehon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Basan : and all the kingdoms of Canaan ; 12 And gave their land to be an heritage : even an heritage unto Israel his people. C. The divers nations are the varieties of sin, the mighty kings the deadly sins, the powerful temptations under which those sins are marshalled, or the evil spirits who direct them against us. Sihon the "striker-down" King of the Amorites, "lofty ones," that is, giants or mountaineers, typifies Satan and his angels, since he is the enemy that rejoices against us when we fall, and is, like his emblem Leviathan, "a King over all the children of pride." Og, the "great" King of Bashan, the "fertile," or more strictly, "the rich, soft place," is the flesh, delighting in wealth and luxury, and in self-indulgence. These two, as well as Pharaoh, go down before the terrible judgments of the Most High, so that Canaan,—here not the Land of Promise, but

the unreclaimed abode of the seven wicked nations, the seven deadly sins, the land lying ”low”—is lifted up to become God’s sanctuary, because man is raised from the daybreak, and the ”Kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST,” and the Gentile Israel has entered into possession of that Canaan which the Synagogue has forfeited, the dignity of the Church of God.

13 Thy Name, O LORD, endureth for ever : so doth thy memorial, O LORD, from one generation to another. Here are the two great tokens of victory, the silver trumpets of the conquering army. Thy Name, O LORD JESU, with which we are baptized, endureth for ever, as that title Christians, given so many centuries ago in Antioch, shall abide to the end of time; Thy memorial, O LORD, of the triumph Thou didst win on the Cross in the destruction of sin, abides in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, which began with the Jewish generation of the Apostles, and passed from them to the younger generation of the Gentile Church, which too, continuing throughout the generation of the baptized, shall abide, though in a different fashion, when the generation of the just who have risen again shall worship Him Who was dead and is alive again, in Whose radiant form the wound-prints, memorials of His love and victory, remain for His Saints to reverence with thankful and adoring awe.

Where living streams arise, His flock the Shepherd leads, With richest fruits of Paradise, The hungry souls He feeds. Based on Thomas Olivers. Before the SAVIOUR’S Face His ransomed people fall, They ever laud Him for His grace, Who freely giveth all. From the root , he struck down. From , to be lofty. , to be soft. Canaan, from , he bowed down, lowland. He shows the nail-pierced Feet, The wounded Hands and Side, They sing, with praises just and meet, The Lamb Who lives, yet died. To Him Who reigns on high, The great Archangels sing, Thrice Holy LORD, they ceaseless cry, Almighty GOD and King. 14 For the LORD will avenge his people : and be gracious unto his servants. H. Avenge. It should rather be judge (LXX., Vulg., A.V.), in the sense either of pleading the cause of His people, or as here, giving a decision in their favour. Although in the primary meaning of the verse, the two clauses are parallel, some of the early commentators take them with much beauty as contrasted. The LORD will judge, with fire and sword, with exile and destruction of their polity and worship, His people the Jews, who refused to hear His prophets, who rejected and slew His SON ; but He will be gracious unto His servants of the Gentile Church, who have accepted the message He sent, and unlike their elder brethren, answer, ”We will have this Man to reign over us.” Others take both clauses as referring to the same Christian Church, which GOD judges here by afflictions and chastisements, all sent, nevertheless, in love and graciousness ; which He will judge at the Last Day by separating it from the people of the world, and be gracious to His servants, setting them at His right hand for ever. C. S. Luke xix. 14. Ay. S. Bruno Carth.

15 As for the images of the heathen, they are but silver and gold : the work of men's hands. 16 They have mouths and speak not : eyes have they, but they see not. 17 They have ears, and yet they hear not : neither is there any breath in their mouths. 18 They that make them are like unto them : and so are all they that put their trust in them. These verses are repeated from the fuller language of Psalm cxv. 4-8, and there is little to add to the exposition given there. They who will not confess to the LORD, by acknowledgment of their own sin, and His holiness, they who will not open their eyes and behold the wondrous things of His law, they who are like the deaf adder, and hear not the voice of the charmer, they in whom the Spirit of Life is not found ; these are the men who worship the silver and gold of the world, who are given to covetousness, which is idolatry. So too, they who worship literal idols, are like them in lacking sense and reason; they are like them because they imitate the sins which they attribute to their gods, as the foul rites of several Pagan deities proved, putting a powerful weapon into the hands of Christian apologists; and, as Arnobius adds, the ultimate fate of gold and silver statues is to be melted in the fire, and that is what awaits those who wilfully persist in turning from the one True God to idols of any kind; whether their god be their belly, or who professing to know God, deny Him by their deeds.

19 Praise the Lord, ye house of Israel: praise the Lord, ye house of Aaron. 20 Praise the Lord, ye house of Levi: ye that fear the Lord, praise the Lord. 21 Praised be the Lord out of Sion: who dwelleth at Jerusalem. [Alleluia.] These verses also are a recasting of previous Psalms, of cxv. 9—11, cxviii. 2—4, and, as before, are explained the whole body of the Christian Church, consisting of the true Israel, those children which God has raised up to Abraham out of the stones; and subdivided into its chief rulers, Bishops and Priests, typified by the house of Aaron; its Religious and lower ministers of the sanctuary, as singers, doorkeepers and the like, represented by the house of Levi, and the whole body of the faithful laity, who fear the Lord. These are all called in to show the heathen what true worship is, and by the force of a higher example, to recall them from their vain idols to serve the living God. And He whom they praise is that Man who by His Incarnation appeared out of Sion, born in Bethlehem of Judæa, of the house and lineage of David, who is worshipped here in the Church Militant, and who dwelleth at Jerusalem above, the Vision of Peace, as God in everlasting Glory, and blessedness, where Alleluia is sung to Him unceasingly.

A. Glory be to the FATHER, Who hath given this Name of LORD to Him that took on Him the nature of man; glory be to the SON, ruling supremely in both His natures, Divine and Human; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the consubstantial sweetness and goodness of FATHER and SON, whereby the good LORD and His sweet Name is proclaimed in this Psalm. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen. O GOD of surpassing sweetness, Whom the whole earth praiseth because of Thy merciful pleasantness, we beseech Thee to take away

from us the error of vain superstition, that we may be joined unto Thy will. (1.) O LORD, Who bringing the clouds from the ends of the earth, hast filled the whole world with holy teachers; mercifully turn Thy lightning into rain, that Thou mayest refresh with Thy blessing Thy servants, whom for their correction Thou refreshest with Thy precepts, and filling them with Thy grace, mayest bless them yet more abundantly. (11.)

We praise Thee, O LORD, because Thou art good and gracious, grant therefore that while we persevere in Thy praise, Thou mayest call us away from the allurements of the world, and win us to the fellowship of the perfect. (11.) We praise Thee, O LORD, because Thou art merciful and great, and Thy wondrous works bear witness to Thy might and goodness. Great art Thou, O LORD, in making out of nothing such marvellous and manifold things; merciful too, in restoring a perishing world with the Blood of Thy CHRIST; great in quickening the corpses of the dead, merciful, and giving everlasting life to them whom Thou hast revived. Grant us, Thy humble servants, Almighty GOD, to understand the power of such great might, and to receive the peace of Thy graciousness. (11.) Choose us, O LORD, to be Israel, for Thy possession, and after our strife with our enemies, establish us in peace, granting us to serve Thee in freedom, that enjoying this liberty, we may gladly sing unto Thy Name, which is sweet, and ever bless and praise Thee, O LORD. (1.)

Psalm 136

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, mindful of our lowly state, redeemed us by His bodily Passion. The Voice of the Apostles to the Synagogue. Truly the Voice of the HOLY GHOST by the Prophet, calling the people to thanksgiving, that it may ever be mindful of the LORD, and magnify His wondrous works. VEN. BEDE. We have again to say Alleluia: always new in its grace, but familiarly known by constant explanation. Upon it follows a Psalm which continually teaches the mercy of the Lord in verses ending in one fashion, and that rightly; for it is of His clemency that we lose not all, of His mercy, that we are strong. Throughout the Psalm the Prophet speaks. In the first part he declares the mightiness of the LORD, and the state of the whole world. O give thanks unto the Lord. Secondly, he narrates the wonders which He did in Egypt and in the Jewish nation. Who smote Egypt. Thirdly, he passes on to the Christians, mentioning in order the LORD's bounties. And He gave their land to be an heritage.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. It is uttered concerning Moses and Israel praising the LORD for them that were delivered; and concerning the delivering of souls out of hell and the power of Pharaoh the devil by CHRIST our SAVIOUR their Redeemer. EUSERIUS OF CÆSAREA. The perfect thanksgiving of the redeemed. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm with confession.

Various Uses. — Antiphons.
Gregorian. { For His mercy endureth for ever. Ambrosian. Monastic. [Easter Eve: The veil of the Temple was rent * Ambrosian. and all the earth quaked, the bodies of the Saints which slept arose.] Parisian. First portion: The LORD is gracious, and His mercy endureth for ever. Second portion: The LORD remembered us in our low estate, and redeemed us from our enemies. Lyons. First portion. O give thanks * unto the LORD, for He is gracious. Second portion: The LORD hath redeemed us from our enemies. Mozarabic. In our trouble the LORD remembered us, and delivered us out of the hand of our enemies.

This Psalm, closely connected with its predecessor (and always recited together with it by the Eastern Church) dwells like it with its chief stress on the conquest of Canaan by Israel, and therefore, as the fifteen Gradual Psalms have more or less direct reference to the rebuilding of the City and Temple, so these two appear to point to the hope of the returning exiles to re-occupy the whole of the Land of Promise, and to drive out the mixed race of Assyrian colonists as their forefathers had done to the Seven Nations. The parity of expression which it exhibits towards Ps. cxxxv. leads to the conjecture that it is itself the very song of praise which the Priests and Levites are called on, in the closing verses of that Psalm, to utter. It seems almost certainly to have been composed for and sung at the laying the first stone of the Second Temple, for we read: ”And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

It is clearly antiphonal in structure, and is known to the Jews as the ”Great Hallel,” distinguishing it thereby from the ”Hallel” of Pss. cxiii.—cxviii. But this name of ”Great Hallel” is sometimes extended to include Ps. cxxxv. from the fourth verse onward, and sometimes even to take in all the Graduals also. The Rabbins say that the Psalm consists of twenty-six verses (the twenty-seventh is not in Hebrew nor LXX. because that is exactly the number of generations recorded in the Pentateuch between the creation of the world and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. The Psalm has a Christian memory connected with it, as having been sung by the orders of S. Athanasius when Syrianus and his troops burst into the church of S. Theonas at Alexandria, at the head of the Arian faction, to disperse the Catholics and seize the Patriarch himself. The Psalm (always said in the East, as noted above, with Psalm cxxxv. is called by the Greek Church the Polyeleos, from its continual mention of the mercy of GOD.

1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious: and his mercy endureth for ever. 2 O give thanks unto the GOD of all gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. 3 O thank the LORD of all lords: for his mercy endureth for ever. A. 2 Cor. iii.

In these three opening verses the Most Holy Trinity is praised because of the essential attributes of GOD, and in the remainder of the Psalm because of the manifestation of those attributes to man in the visible works of GOD. In the first verse the FATHER is praised under His incommunicable Name , JEHOVAH, as the Fount and Source of Godhead and being; in the second verse the SON is named as , ELOHI, GOD of GOD, as Sole-begotten of the FATHER, as GOD of gods, as supreme over both angels and men; and in the third verse the HOLY GHOST, as the Spirit of lib-

erty, whereby alone any one can bear rule, (since he who is not free is no lord, but a slave,) is praised as , ADONI, LORD of lords, the Uncreate and Almighty Love, Whom all things obey. And note how this language of the Psalm rises above that of the preceding one, wherein no more was claimed for the GOD of Israel than that He is "above all gods," but here they are declared to be no more than His creatures and servants. "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one GOD, the FATHER, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one LORD JESUS CHRIST, by Whom are all things, and we by Him. GOD's goodness, which created us, is the first cause of our thankfulness;

but His mercy, in that He redeemed us, after by our own free-will we had fallen from the state in which He placed us, is that which earns our gratitude for ever, and forms the theme of the song of the redeemed; and belongs far more truly to Christians than to Jews, for it cost GOD nothing to ransom Israel out of Egypt, but it cost His own precious Blood to save us on the Cross.

4 Who only doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever. The words, "O give thanks unto the LORD," are to be prefixed here and in the succeeding verses to complete the sense. There are three things here declared of GOD; that He doeth wonders, that the wonders He doeth are great; that He only doeth them. And though in the first verse of the Psalm His goodness is the theme of praise, there is no change of subject in passing to celebrate His power, because the works which are described are those of His goodness and mercy. He only doeth great wonders, because whatever Angels or men accomplish is done merely by power which He delegates to them, but His own works are done without any co-operation whatsoever. They draw, too, another distinction here, as to the different meaning of wonders. Anything of which the cause is unknown is wonderful, albeit it may be simple enough when explained, as the eclipse of the sun, wonderful to uncivilised people, is no marvel to astronomers. And in this sense men may be said to do wonderful things, as the magicians of Pharaoh did, and as it is prophesied that Antichrist will do in the last days. But these are partly mere illusions and jugglery, having no real existence, and partly would be explicable by complete knowledge on our part; whereas the works of creation, the laws of nature, the miracles of Holy Writ, are abiding facts, and not capable of being explained by man's understanding. We can tell the How, not the Why, and therefore GOD's works are wonderful.

5 Who by his excellent wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever. That excellent wisdom is His Only-Begotten SON, as it is written in another Psalm, "By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made." He made them in His wisdom, unlike men, whose greatest achievements are at best but the ultimate product of previous labour and discovery, and therefore accomplish what they do by instruction, by emulation, by addition,—consequently by the wisdom of others as well as

O A. A. A. their own, but God had no guide or teacher, and yet the marvellous order of creation, due to His will alone, forces from us the confession not only that His works are done in wisdom, but that His wisdom is excellent. And besides the visible heaven of the firmament, He has made other heavens too, spiritual ones, the Angelic Powers, Prophets, Apostles, and all holy souls wherein He dwells. They count up, besides, the seven heavens of mediæval cosmogony as here designated by the plural word, the heavens of Air, Fire, Ether, Stars, Crystal, Empyrean, and the abode of God.

6 Who laid out the earth above the waters : for his mercy endureth for ever. A. C. B. Haymo. S. Bruno Carth. Ps. xxiv. 2. Passing from the physical meaning of these words, which tell how the waters are not suffered to break their bounds and submerge the land; they remind us how man's bodily nature, and the whole Church Militant on earth, made up of many nations, is established (LXX. and Vulg.) above the waters, because Holy Baptism is the foundation of our spiritual life, whence it is written in another Psalm, "He hath founded it upon the seas;" and because, further, the waves of persecution are never suffered to overwhelm it, which is laid out over and higher than this. 7 Who hath made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever. 8 The sun to rule the day: for his mercy endureth for ever. 9 The moon and the stars to govern the night: for his mercy endureth for ever.

They give various interpretations to these: according to some, the sun is the LORD JESUS CHRIST according to His created Manhood, the "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" the moon, paler and colder, and deriving all her light from Him, is either His Virgin Mother, or the Church, and the stars are the Angels, Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, and other Saints and members of the hierarchy of the Church, differing from one another in glory. Another view is that the New Testament is the sun, given to Christians as the children of light, who walk in the day, and the Old Testament the moon, assigned to the Jews who walk still in the shadow and coldness of imperfect belief. Again, the sun is understood of the gift of wisdom, and the moon of knowledge, acquired by means of that wisdom, and useless without it, while the great lights and the stars then severally denote those endowed in various degrees with those gifts.

GOD'S Saints are shining lights: who stays Here long, must pass O'er dark hills, swift streams, and steep ways As smooth as glass; But these, all night Like candles, shed Their beams, and light Us into bed. They are indeed our pillar fires Seen as we go, They are that City's shining spires We travel to. These govern the night, because it is through the instrumentality and teaching of His Saints and wise men that GOD instructs the ignorant world, as it is written, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever," and He gives them, moreover, spiritual power over sinners, who walk in darkness. And finally, this passage of the Psalter was made

a great battle-field during the strife on the subject of Investitures which raged in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as it was argued that the Church and the State—especially the Empire—were the two great lights of the heavens, but that the Church, as the Sun, had rule over all that belonged to spiritual questions, the day, while the State, deriving its authority from GOD through the Church, was but as the moon, restricted in its rule to temporal questions, matters of the night, only, and was therefore incompetent to encroach on the privileges of the hierarchy in matters of patronage.

On this work of GOD in creation a great preacher of early times bases an argument addressed to the Jews. ”They said, ’Is not this the carpenter’s son?’ that under the name of a common handicraft the skill of the maker might be hid, and the name of carpenter conceals that of Godhead. CHRIST was the carpenter’s Son, but of that carpenter Who made the world not with a hammer, but with a command; Who fitted together the parts of the elements not with a machine, but with a behest; Who forged the mass of the world not with charcoal, but with will; Who kindled the sun not with earthly fire, but heavenly; Who framed the moon, the darkness, the night, and the seasons; Who arranged the stars into their diverse radiance; Who made all things out of nothing; and did it, O man, for thy sake, that thou mightest esteem the artist by appraising His work. But

Rather, wright, the ”worker,” as the Scotch still name a carpenter, which exactly represents the Greek τέκτων, and the Latin faber; whereas carpenter, strictly a maker of carpenta, cars or wagons, is a worker in timber only. thou, O Jew, settest a brand upon the Son of this carpenter, whereas thou oughtest to repay the Son for these great benefits thou hast received. This is the reason thou hast no share in things to come—the cause that thou art thankless for what now exists.” 10 Who smote Egypt with their first-born : for his mercy endureth for ever ; From this point onwards it is shown that what GOD does by delegated agency, He does Himself. And the spiritual teaching is that in condemning and chastising the world, with its eldest and favourite sins, of luxury, pride, and avarice, and with all original sins besides, and in excluding them and their doers from the rules of His divine law, He smote them, since whatever is withdrawn from the Author of Life is thereby dead. He did all this, slaying pride by humbling Himself to be a servant, and becoming obedient unto the death of the Cross; avarice, by becoming poor for our sakes, though He was rich, that He might enrich us with His poverty; luxury, when He intrusted His Virgin Mother to His virgin disciple; anger, when He prayed on the Cross for His murderers; envy, when He brought the thief with Him into Paradise; gluttony, when He willed to taste the vinegar and gall; and sloth, in that He fulfilled all His FATHER’s commandments; wherefore He said, ”I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.”

11 And brought out Israel from among them : for his mercy endureth for ever ; 12 With a mighty hand, and stretched out arm : for his mercy endureth for ever. He delivered, and still does deliver, His Saints from the companionship of sinners, from the bondage of Satan, and that as GOD, with His invincible action, which is His mighty hand, and His omnipotent power, which is the source of that hand's strength, the stretched out arm which nerves it. And as Man, He wrought that salvation when His mighty hand was nailed fast, what time His arm was stretched out upon the Cross. 13 Who divided the Red Sea in two parts : for his mercy endureth for ever ; 14 And made Israel to go through the midst of it : for his mercy endureth for ever. 15 But as for Pharaoh and his host, he overthrew them in the Red Sea : for his mercy endureth for ever.

The word two, inserted by the Prayer Book in ver. 13, is not in the Hebrew, nor in the other versions. There is a Rabbinical tradition that the number of channels into which the Red Sea was parted was twelve, so as to give a separate line of march to each tribe. Christian expositors who take the Red Sea as the type of the world, red with the blood of Saints, explain the parts into which it is divided as the various ways of escape which God makes for His people, according as the practice of one or other virtue brings them out of bondage to sin, while on the other hand, those who understand it of Holy Baptism (red with the Blood of CHRIST, and with the penitential blush of catechumens for their former sins) allege that God divides it into two parts, for those who persevere in their Baptismal vows, and attain life, and those who fall away from those vows, and are overthrown along with the spiritual Pharaoh and his host. Again, the Red Sea is interpreted of the restless heresies which assail the Church, which God makes to go through the midst of them, by causing her to keep the mean betwixt opposing errors, between Sabellianism and Arianism, between Nestorianism and Eutychianism, and so forth, vindicating the truth which each heresy maintains, but rejecting its negation of other truths.

16 Who led his people through the wilderness : for his mercy endureth for ever. Where note that in what precedes this, in this verse itself, and in what follows, God's three ways of leading are set forth. He leads out, He leads through, and He leads into, out of sin, through the world, into heaven, out by faith, through by hope, into by love. 17 Who smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever; 18 Yea, and slew mighty kings: for his mercy endureth for ever; 19 Sehon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever; 20 And Og the king of Basan: for his mercy endureth for ever; 21 And gave away their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever; 22 Even for an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever. The mystical meaning of the Seven Nations, as betokening the seven deadly sins, and the types of the devil and the flesh as found in Sihon and Og have been already dwelt on; and for the rest they tell us that these benefits, conferred in the letter historically on the Hebrew people, are but shadows of the greater spiritual inheritance which has been taken from them in turn, and given to

that Church which is the servant of GOD the SON. And they find, too, a reason for the repetition of the word heritage, that the celestial inheritance is promised not to the glorified soul only, but to the body also, through the Resurrection.

23 Who remembered us when we were in trouble: for his mercy endureth for ever;
24 And hath delivered us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever. A. In trouble. Better, with A.V. low estate, which agrees with LXX. and Vulgate. Historically, the reference is to the Egyptian bondage of Israel's youth, and to the Babylonian captivity of a later day, from both of which GOD delivered His people. For us, the meaning is the low estate into which the Fall had brought all men; and especially the low estate in which we Gentiles were in darkness, sorrow, ignorance, and idolatry, and sin, till CHRIST redeemed us with His own most precious Blood, and delivered us from our spiritual foes; as He did His Church also in the letter from her Jewish and Pagan adversaries. 25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.

He not only feeds all living things with the physical food which they require, and sustains man, and beast, and bird, and fish, and reptile, and insect, with all that they need; but also gives spiritual food to all mankind without distinction, to Jew and Gentile, noble and serf, bond and free alike, for "there is no respect of persons with GOD." And the chief of all such food is the Most Holy Sacrament of His own Body and Blood. This He gives to all flesh; that is, to those who have soft and believing hearts, not to those of stony and incredulous hearts, who when He saith, "Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life," reply, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Such as these are not flesh, but stone, and are in no wise partakers of Him. 26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever. 27 O give thanks unto the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.1

1 Verse 27 is not in Hebrew nor LXX. As the Psalm began with the praise of God, it closes in like manner, because He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last; and it is our bounden duty to praise and thank Him for the outset and the close of every good thing, since both are from Him only, whence it is that the first-fruits and the tithes are both dedicated to His service. And because He is the God of heaven, Holy in the holy place to which we look forward as our home, we say with the Prophet: "I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses. For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their SAVIOUR. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old." We give thanks, then, to the God of heaven, lifting

up our hearts thither, where He will feed us with the bread of angels in such wise as the angels themselves feed on it, not in a sacrament, nor under a veil, but seeing face to face, and tasting with savour unspeakable, for He is the Lord of lords, and makes His good and faithful servants, whom He brings into His heritage, to be lords there under and with Himself, alway and evermore, for His mercy endureth for ever.

Glory be to the FATHER of mercies; glory be to the SON, Who obtaineth everlasting mercy for us; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is that very eternal mercy, whereby we are delivered from our misery. Amen. Amen. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Almighty GOD, remember our low estate, and have mercy upon us, and as Thou didst in time of old give our fathers their enemies' land for an heritage, so set us free from sin, and bestow Thine heritage upon us. (1.) O LORD, Who alone madest great lights, in wisdom making the moon and stars to govern the night, bring us out from under the yoke of spiritual wickedness with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm; and cut asunder whatever barriers are set in our way, and as Thou art the LORD of lords, be Thou also the abiding keeper of our souls. (11.) We give thanks unto Thee, O LORD, Who by Thy understanding madest the heavens, and Who liftest up the learned unto wisdom, Who hast founded the earth upon the water, and erected Thy Church upon the unstable world; grant that the floods of worldly delights may not overwhelm us, but that the graces we receive may lift us up to things above. (11.)

Vouchsafe, as with all the powers of our minds we give thanks unto Thee, O LORD of lords, and sing of Thy wondrous works, to bestow the light of Thy countenance upon us, graciously protect us from all the plagues of the Egyptians, and grant us Thy mercy for ever. (1.)

Psalm 137

TITLE. LXX.: For David, of Jeremiah. Vulgate: A Psalm of David; of Jeremiah.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST may bring us out of the corruption of this flesh by angelic freedom. The Voice of the Church. This Psalm shows how mankind, led captive into confusion by the ancient enemy out of the Jerusalem of Paradise, hung up its everlasting harps on the willows of this world, ceasing to sing the LORD'S song; and how the true Ezra, the Virgin's offspring, brought man back to Jerusalem, to wit, the heavenly one. A prophecy of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. Concerning barbaric Babylon. The Babylonian captivity is prophesied. The Voice of the Church. VEN. BEDE. This Psalm may be understood in three ways: Concerning the captivity which befell the Jewish nation, when they were carried away to Babylon, and there mocked in various fashions; and concerning sinners, who, cast out of the Church, were given over to the power of Satan; and concerning the former captivity, whereby we were cast down, in the persons of our first parents, from the joys of Paradise to the valley of weeping.

The Hebrew people in the first section describes the calamities which it was to suffer in Babylon, adding that it would never forget Jerusalem under any circumstances amidst the troubles of this world, although it was certain that the city would be destroyed. By the waters, &c. In the second part, it addresses its words to the LORD, that He may remember them who insult the Church, declaring that they are blessed who cast the beginnings of evil thoughts out of their heart. Remember the children of Edom, O Lord, &c. SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David. The words of the Saints who were led captive to Babylon. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The voices of the Saints in captivity. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of narration.

Various Uses. — Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. Sing us a hymn * of the songs of Sion. Ambrosian. Upon the willows * in the midst thereof, we hang up our harps. K. K. K. Parisian. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem in the beginning of my joy. 1 By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept: when we remembered thee, O Sion.

This Psalm is the expression of the mingled feelings of a newly-returned exile, recalling the bitter memories of the Captivity amidst his joy at restoration to his native land, and breaking out at the close, as he notes the ruin and desolation of the Holy City, into a cry for vengeance upon the enemies who had wrought it. By the waters of Babylon. Literally, the rivers Euphrates, Tigris, Chebar, and Ulai, and also, probably, the numerous irrigating canals of that flat plain, contrasting so forcibly with the natural water-courses of mountainous Palestine. It is probable that this sitting by the waters was for the convenience of the ceremonial washings which make so large a part of the Mosaic Law, and it may be that we have here the first mention of those oratories (προσευχὴ) by the river-side, into one of which S. Paul entered at Philippi. Sat down implies that the burst of grief was a long one, and also that it was looked on by the captives as some relaxation and repose. It is also the posture of humility, neither erect in pride, nor prostrate in despair, but midway between the two, in godly sorrow, and that not for personal loss and suffering, but when they remembered Sion. For Sion only they wept, unlike many who weep with the weeping and rejoice with the joy of Babylon, because their whole interests and affections are bound up in things of this world.

For the waters of Babylon are all things which are loved here and pass away, which belong to that city of ”confusion” we call the world. By them sit all who have been led away captive out of Paradise, or out of that visible Church of Sion, where the hymn waits on God. Sion may be captured and wasted for the sins of her children. Jerusalem which is above is free, and can never come into bondage, and this is the consolation for the citizens of Sion in the midst of their trouble. Nevertheless, several of the commentators understand the Church Triumphant here as the subject of the exiles’ lament, as they

A. sit by the four streams of earthly riches, sensual pleasures, worldly dignity, and unprofitable learning, watching them glide past, with no desire to bathe in or taste of their waters, above (super, Vulg.) which they seat themselves, opposing the torrents of their tears to the torrents of the world; for though obliged to sit among the ungodly, they are not of them, since the two cities are eternally distinct, and their citizens, however mingled with each other, can never be truly allied. So runs the hymn: The Hymn, O quanta qualia. Now in the meanwhile, with hearts raised on high, We for that Country must yearn and must sigh, Seeking Jerusalem, dear native land, Through our long exile on Babylon’s strand. A. O holy Sion, where all things stand firm, and nothing flows away, let us ever remember thee! 2 As for our harps, we hanged them up: upon the trees that are therein.

The latter clause of this verse should run, as in A.V. and the other versions, on the willows in the midst of it, that is, of Babylon, through which the Euphrates flowed. The interpretation of this verse is that the harps, as instruments of cheerful music, denote worldly mirth and pleasure, which the exiled citizens of Jerusalem have no

mind for, but leave entirely to the citizens of Babylon, resembling willows in being unfruitful, continually watered by those carnal streams which the others refuse to touch, bitter in themselves, and dwelling by choice in the very midst of Babylon. S. Augustine, however, taking the harps to mean the Holy Scriptures, explains this hanging up to be the refusal of the exiles to communicate spiritual teaching to unworthy hearers, lest they should cast their pearls before swine, and is followed by the majority of mediæval expositors. Nevertheless, one ray of hope steals in even here. The harps are not destroyed, nor put out of sight altogether, but hung up, so as to be within reach, when God's good time for taking them down and tuning them anew arrives. What then shall be done, the Beloved Disciple will tell us: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, LORD GOD Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints."

3 For they that led us away captive required of us then a song, and melody, in our heaviness : Sing us one of the songs of Sion. There is some variance of opinion as to the motive of this demand on the part of the captors. It is variously set down as simple curiosity to hear something of the famous melodies of the Hebrew people; as well-meaning counsel to the exiles to reconcile themselves to their inevitable situation, and to resume their former habits in social harmony with the inhabitants of the land; or, most generally, as a fresh aggravation of their misery, in requiring them to make sport for their new masters. S. Augustine and several others, following the last-named view, takes the verse as describing the controversial arguments which evil spirits and human unbelievers, their allies, force upon weak Christians, asking them for tangible proofs of their creed, for evidence that the Gospel has not done more harm than good, that there is another life, that CHRIST really came on earth, and so forth.

A. 4 How shall we sing the LORD's song : in a strange land? If the Law of our GOD forbids us to celebrate His worship fully in the Holy Land itself outside of Jerusalem, how can we profane the sacred melodies of the Temple by singing them in an alien and idolatrous region? Note how much the exiles had already learnt by their captivity. They who had fallen away from their religion, who had trodden under foot the precepts of the Law, who had mocked and ridiculed their Prophets who appealed to them with tears, now refuse to expose the hymns of their once neglected creed to the possible ridicule of unbelievers. For us, it is not merely a lesson not to expose holy things to insult by dwelling on them at unsuitable times and in uncongenial society, (as many and many a martyr died rather than reveal the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament to heathen questioners,) but as some of the commentators deeply teach, a warning that it is not possible for us to unite the

praise of GOD with earthly and carnal habits of life. When we habitually dwell in an irreligious atmosphere of thought and conduct, we cannot sing the Lord's song; the very words will be imperfectly uttered, the melody will be false, the whole effort a failure. And this is the sense of that hymn sung at the "Farewell to Alleluia," (emphatically the Lord's song,) just before Septuagesima :

Alleluia thou resoundest, Salem, Mother ever blest; Alleluias without ending Fit yon place of gladsome rest; Exiles we, by Babel's waters Sit in bondage and distressed. The Hymn, Alleluia, dulce carmen. Alleluia we deserve not Here to chant for evermore; Alleluia our transgressions Make us for a while give o'er, For the holy time is coming Bidding us our sins deplore. It is one of the pathetic touches about the English captivity of King John II. of France, that once sitting as a guest to see a great tournament held in his honour, he looked on sorrowfully, and being urged by some of those about him to be cheerful and enjoy the splendid pageant, he answered with a mournful smile, "How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?" 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem : let my right hand forget her cunning. 6 If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth : yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem in my mirth.

These verses seem to fix the meaning of the request for a song as an attempt to reconcile the captives to their new habitation, to induce conformity with the habits of those around them; and the Psalmist's answer is an imprecation on hand and voice, on his whole exercise of instrumental and vocal skill in music, should he so far forget his city as to fall in with Gentile ways; and the literal rendering of the last clause of verse 6 is, If I exalt not Jerusalem above the head of my joy, that is, If I do not set the prosperity of the Holy City above all personal advantage or pleasure, so as to be unable to feel gladness while she is desolate. It is Nehemiah's answer to Artaxerxes: "The king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, and said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?"

A. The literal structure of the clause about the hand is, Let my right hand forget, that is, forget all its powers, be palsied. S. Augustine, taking the right hand, as so often, to mean eternal life, supplies the omission in a different way. If I forget the Church of God, if I become conformed to the world, let everlasting life forget me; let me become mute altogether towards God, if I speak only the barbarous jargon of the world, and forget my own dear native speech, the song of Jerusalem. Another interpretation is that the right hand stands for good works, and the verse will thus be a renunciation of all hope of future reward, and even of the power of doing good, while the clause about the tongue similarly denotes all devout speech, become impossible to the captive of this world. 7 Remember the children of Edom,

O LORD, in the day of Jerusalem : how they said, Down with it, down with it, even to the ground.

What the share of Edom was in the overthrow of Jerusalem, we may learn from the woes denounced against that nation by the Prophet Obadiah : ”For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”

Hence this false kinsman of Israel is made the subject of threatened woes by three of the four great Prophets. The Jews put the verse into the mouth of their tutelar spirit, the Archangel S. Michael. And Christian interpreters take Edom or Esau to be here the Synagogue, the elder Church which sought the life of the younger, and joined throughout, so far as opportunity allowed, in the persecutions which Pagan rulers stirred up against the Christians; of which the attempt to slay the LORD in His cradle, made by the Idumæan Herod, then the civil chief of the Jewish nation, was a foreshadowing. And then, looking to the meaning of Edom as red, and as ultimately the same word as Adam, they add that all cruel and earthly enemies of religion, especially the Emperors and Præfects who urged on the persecutions, are intended. Down with it, the A.V. more precisely, Rase it, for the Hebrew means to shave, or make bare. And that, the Carthusian tells us, is because the enemies of the Church are never contented with spoiling her goods, which is plundering the city, but desire to subvert her belief, which is levelling her walls to the very foundation within her, that is, to the abolition of faith in CHRIST Himself, that no possibility of rebuilding may exist. This guilt the LORD is im-

Isa. lxiii. 1. Jer. xlix. 7, 22. Lam. iv. 21. Ezek. xxv. 8, 12. Targum. A. 2 Thess. i. 8. plored to remember; and then we may take the day of Jerusalem in two senses, the more obvious one of the day when the crime which so calls for vengeance was committed, and Jerusalem was laid low; or that which the commentators prefer, in the day of Jerusalem’s manifestation in power and glory, ”when the LORD JESUS shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.” 8 O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery: yea, happy shall he

be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. 9 Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children: and throweth them against the stones. A. 1 Cor. x. 4. S. Matt. xxi. 44.

As the Jews ascribe the former verse to the Archangel S. Michael, Prince of Jerusalem, so this one is put by them into the mouth of S. Gabriel his fellow, Prince of Sion. The coming doom of Babylon had been declared by the Prophet long before the event, and there can be little doubt that this Psalm, albeit composed after the ruin of the imperial city, records a real expression of the exile's confidence in the speedy fulfilment of her doom, while she yet appeared in her pomp and strength, and that the words wasted with misery (which the Targum, however, and Symmachus take actively, as the waster or spoiler) were prophetic. The daughter of Babylon here stands for the entire empire, depending on the capital, and the early expositors take its spiritual meaning to be the flesh, as covering us with the confusion of sin. The happy one, in the letter referring to Cyrus, is he who subdues the flesh with fasts and austerities, depriving it of its delights, as it had dealt with the soul, and who takes the children of the flesh, the first motions of evil thoughts, while they are still new and weak, and dashes them against that Rock which is CHRIST, Who hath said of Himself, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

And that the mystical sense is here of more direct significance than the literal may be seen from the manner in which the woes here denounced are repeated and amplified in the Apocalypse against the spiritual Babylon: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and GOD hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for GOD hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

Then, at the overthrow of evil, then, when the wanderers are returning to their country, the LORD's song will be heard again: Exile, take down the lyre! Shake off the dust from every tuneless string, Pass thy hand softly o'er each fragile wire, Look Zionward—and sing! Heavenward—till one by one, The notes of joy thy silent shell o'erflow, The song they sing before the SAVIOUR's throne, Must first be learned below. Thou canst not join their throng, Till thou hast caught the keynote of their strain; The foreign land must echo the home-song, "Worthy the Lamb once slain." The music of one Name O'erflows the courts of heaven with melody; And pilgrim lips reply—"Worthy the Lamb, For He was slain for me!" And so: Glory be to the FATHER, unto Whom is said, Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom; glory be

to the SON, the Rock against which the children of Babylon are dashed; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is the blessedness wherewith he is blessed who dasheth the children of Babylon against the Rock.

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

Collects.
O GOD, Almighty Looser of our captivity, grant that we may sing Thy praise with spiritual harmony, so that the lifting-up of Thy right hand may restore to heavenly citizenship those whom the load of sin exiles from Thee. (1.) Remember, O LORD, Thy pilgrim Church, and while we sit weeping by the waters of Babylon, let us not be carried away by the flood of this passing world, but, delivered from the contagion of this present life, let our longing be directed towards Jerusalem above. (11.) O LORD our Redeemer, do away our captivity into which our adversary has led us, who sinfully consented unto him, and that we who humbly sit weeping by the waters of confusion may arise through Thy delivering us from temptations, let not the flow of pleasure carry us headlong, but let the lowliness of our weeping lead us to heaven. (11.) D. C. O LORD, of Thy pity as a merciful FATHER, receive us returning from Babylon, that is, from confusion of sins, and of Thine inspiration make us by full confession dash our misdoings against CHRIST the Rock, that we may sing a song of rejoicing with Thee in melody befitting the heavenly Sion. (1.)

Psalm 138

TITLE. Of David. LXX.: A Psalm of David, of Haggai and Zechariah. Vulg.: To David himself.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER or of the Church to CHRIST, whose sons, who were silent a little before, hanging up their harps on the willows, promise that they will sing to the LORD in the sight of the Angels. VEN. BEDE. To David himself, signifies to the LORD CHRIST Himself unto Whom the whole confession of this Psalm is referred. Throughout the Psalm the Church Universal speaks. In the first paragraph she praises the LORD for the benefit vouchsafed her, intreating for patience in future, that by the gift thereof she may be able to bear the troubles of the world. I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord. In the second part, she prays that the kings of the earth may give thanks to the LORD most High, because He vouchsafes to show the wonders of His Majesty in all things, beseeching that He will not despise those converted sinners whom He has vouchsafed to create.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Composed by David. A thanksgiving with prophecy. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARRA. Thanksgiving with prophecy. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm with confession.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Friday: Vespers. [Sacred Heart: Vespers. Michaelmas and other Feasts of Angels: II. Vespers. Office of Dead: Vespers.] Eastern Church. Mesorion of Nones. Gregorian. Monastic. Lyons. Mozarabic. In the sight* of the Angels will I sing unto Thee, my God. Gregorian. [Sacred Heart: Because of Thy mercy, O LORD, I will give thanks unto Thee with my whole heart. Michaelmas Day: Angels, Archangels, Thrones and Dominions, Princedoms and Powers, Virtues of the Heavens, praise the LORD of heaven. All. SS. Guardian Angels: Praise GOD all ye Angels of His, praise Him, all His hosts. Office of the Dead: The works * of Thine hands despise not, O LORD.] Ambrosian. The works of Thine hands * despise not, O LORD. Parisian. I will give thanks unto Thy Name, O LORD, because of Thy

lovingkindness and truth. 1 I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, with my whole heart: even before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

There is much diversity in the meaning assigned to gods in this verse. It may mean literally in an idolatrous country, in the very temples of false gods, as so many Christian martyrs bore testimony to the Faith. The LXX., Vulgate, Æthiopic, and Arabic translate angels. The Chaldee has judges, the Syriac kings, and the earlier Greek Fathers explain the reference of the choirs of Priests and Levites in the Temple. All these notions may well be united in the sense which the words bear for us: a promise to do homage to the LORD, undismayed by the presence of earthly potentates who disregard Him: ”I will speak of Thy testimonies also, even before kings, and will not be ashamed,” to do this homage publicly in His temple, when His ministers are celebrating Divine Service, and to do it remembering that the Angelic hosts are joining in that worship, so that we men should be careful to let our attention, devotion, love, and reverence be like theirs, that there be no dissonance, instead of harmony, in the united song of praise. And in this way S. Chrysostom explains the LXX. ivarriov, opposite the Angels; as though they formed one half of the choir, and men the other half, facing each other, and provoking one another to emulation in the good work of praise and devotion. This notion of the presence of the Angels as a check upon careless or irreverent behaviour during worship is that adduced by S. Paul, saying, that a woman ought ”to have a covering on her head because of the Angels;” while Tertullian and S. Bernard alike cite the same truth as a reason against any un-

Genebrardus. 1 Cor. xi. 10. Tertullian. de Orat. 12. S. Bernard. Serm. 7 in Cant. The LXX. and Vulgate vary from the Hebrew here in two particulars, by inserting the word Lord in the first clause of the verse, and by adding in the second member, because Thou hast heard [all, LXX.] the words of my mouth. A. seemly demeanour in church. Before the Angels too, for another reason, because the joy which makes the Psalmist sing is divine. Earthly happiness would cause him to sing before men, spiritual gladness makes him sing before the Angels; for the ungodly know nothing of the joys of the righteous. The wicked rejoice in the tavern, the martyr in his chain. And the whole thought may well be a looking forward to that happy time when Angels and men shall be joined together into one choir of praise after the resurrection of the just. Before the Angels, with the same purity of heart and steadfastness of intention which they exhibit in adoration. They draw the usual distinction between give thanks, as vocal devotion, and song, (ψαλῶ, psallam) as practical service of GOD, alike thankofferings for answered prayers.

2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy Name, because of thy lovingkindness and truth : for thou hast magnified thy Name, and thy word above all things. H. If it were an earthly temple which is here spoken of, we should have in, not towards; but as Daniel in Babylon opened his windows towards Jerusalem,

and knelt down in prayer; we here in Babylonian exile, bow ourselves in prayer and longing towards GOD's dwelling in the heavens. And as all the sacredness which encompassed the Temple was due to the indwelling Presence which made it, with its created exterior and uncreated inhabitant, a type of the Incarnation, so the deepest meaning of these words for us is adoration of the Sacred Humanity of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of Godhead bodily, which Presence we daily adore in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar :

G. Moultrie. In the sight of the Angels I sing to Thee, In Thy holy temple I bend the knee, Thy Name shall my lips, O LORD, confess, And praise Thy mercies numberless : From the eastern gates of the rising sun To the goal where he rests when his course is run, The Offering pleads to the throne of grace With holy incense in every place. A. Because of Thy lovingkindness and truth. Lovingkindness, or mercy (Vulg.) in predestination, truth in judgment, mercy in forgiveness of sinners, truth in reward of the righteous; and still more, because of the coming in the flesh of Him Who is Himself the mercy and truth of GOD. For Thou hast magnified Thy Name, and Thy Word, above all things. There has been some difficulty raised about the construction of this clause. The Hebrew runs (as in A.V.) Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name. The LXX.:

Thou hast magnified Thy Holy Name above everything. Syriac: Thou hast magnified Thy Word above every name; and the Vulgate may be either taken as the LXX., or Thou hast magnified Thy Holy One above every name, (which is also a possible but less probable rendering of the Greek.) There need have been no perplexity, for each and all of these versions are but so many ways of expressing the blessed truth proclaimed by the Apostle of the Gentiles: "Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER." There is a special force in magnified, because this magnifying accrued to the LORD JESUS chiefly in the work of our redemption. Magnificence is more than liberality; coming short of waste and consumption, it yet denotes lavish and splendid outlay, and they who are magnificent in their expenditure are so in four ways, towards GOD, towards the general community, towards special persons, and towards themselves. CHRIST was magnificent towards GOD, being obedient unto His FATHER, even to the death of the Cross; He was magnificent towards the general community, because He gave the price of His Blood not to redeem one nation only, but all; He was magnificent to single persons, as when He gave the Church to Peter, and His own dear Mother to John; and He was magnificent towards Himself, by doing such wondrous works as to draw upon Himself the love and worship of mankind.

JESUS, in glory high renowned, JESUS, by all men fruitful found, JESUS, with every virtue crowned, Gives comfort infinite. Above all might, the mightiest, Above all honour, lordliest, Above all love, the loveliest, All praise to Him pertains. In wisdom everything He knows, In compass all things doth enclose, By love He captureth His foes, And holds their hearts in chains. Missale Sarisbur. The Sequence, Jesus dulcis Nazarenus. 3 When I called upon thee, thou heardest me: and enduedst my soul with much strength. When, &c. It ought to run, as in A.V., In the day when I called, Thou answeredst me. Some call on GOD in the day, and others in the night. They who walk as children of light, in a pure, bright conscience, unclouded by secret sin; who ask GOD not for earthly and carnal blessings, but for C. grace, glory, immortality, such as these cry in the day. It is a prayer, Hear me [quickly LXX.] in whatsoever day I call, in the LXX. and Vulgate, and it is well said that as night is the time when we seem specially in need of prayer, so that no exclusion of it can be intended, the spiritual sense of day becomes more prominent. And enduedst my soul with much strength, to confer power of resistance to the many troubles and temptations Thou knowest to await me; giving me whatsoever day, whatever ray of Thy glory, whatever special grace I may need to overcome any given obstacle; eloquence, in the presence of rulers and enemies, against aspersions cast on the Faith; courage to endure tortures; zeal and perseverance in spreading the Gospel; that the prophecy of the next two verses may be fulfilled:

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD: for they have heard the words of thy mouth. 5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: that great is the glory of the LORD. Whether these words referred originally to the subjugation of the tribes around Palestine by David, or to the awe of their descendants at the unlooked for restoration of exiled Israel to their own land; at any rate, the first meaning for us here is the conversion of the Gentiles, and their entrance into the fold of CHRIST. But the Latins almost unanimously understand the words of those spiritual Kings, Apostles, Saints, and rulers of the Church, not Jews alone, but of every nation, who have heard the words of God’s mouth in the sayings of Holy Writ, and other such, who celebrate the mercy and truth of GOD, which are all His ways, and they sing as men near the end of their journey.

6 For though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: as for the proud, he beholdeth them afar off. A. Therefore if the kings of the earth wish GOD to have respect unto them, they must needs be lowly. And lest any one of the proud should say, If GOD looks only on the lowly, I may do as I please, because He will not see me, forgetting that though it certainly is said that the eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, yet it is added that ”His ears are open unto their prayers,” so that if they be wronged, the injurer will not escape; and forgetting also that though man cannot see plainly things which are afar off, GOD can, He sees thee perfectly, but He is not with thee, He beholdeth thee, but it is afar off, far from His grace and mercy. Afar off, too, at the last, if they repent not, as far as the depth of hell is

from His throne in heaven. And, on the contrary, that one human creature to whom GOD came nearer than to any other, gave the reason for it, saying, "My soul doth magnify the LORD, for He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden." The interpretation of the verse by Arnobius is very striking, taking it, as he does, of the LORD JESUS, high upon the Cross, looking down thence in the same moment of time on the lowly mourners near His feet, on whom He looked in tender compassion, and at the proud rebellious spirits in the far depths below, whom He was about to triumph over and spoil, whom He keeps ever at a distance from Him, as He does those who are too proud to come to the feet of the carpenter's Son, but try to find GOD out by their reason only.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, yet shalt thou refresh me : thou shalt stretch forth thy hand upon the furiousness of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

Though I walk. The Vulgate turns it If I walk, and the expositors take walking as the condition of the subsequent reviving. If I walk, if I persevere, if I continue in penitence, if I brave temptations and persecutions, if I turn not back out of the battle because there are armed enemies around me, if I continue faithful unto death, Thou wilt revive me (LXX., Vulg., and A.V.) and give me a crown of life. And note how there is here a prophecy of trouble awaiting the Church even after the conversion of the kings of the earth. Those very monarchs and people who embraced the Cross, afterwards by heresy, by apostasy, by hurtful encroachments, and yet more hurtful gifts, brought straits and troubles on the Bride of CHRIST. Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand, &c. The wonderful change, still fresh in the memory of the Christian writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, exhibited when the very men who had shared in the execution of the martyrs, now vied in building churches in their honour, is the staple of exposition on this part of the verse, and they complete the picture by noting that CHRIST, the Right hand of GOD, saved His Saints in the persecutions, not with the left hand of temporal deliverance from torture and death, but with the right hand of perseverance to the end, by a glorious death and a more glorious reward, all foreshown by that Right Hand Himself, Whom the FATHER revived by the Resurrection, after He had walked through the deep waters of His Passion and Death; when the evil spirits in Hades, the Guards at the sepulchre, the Chief Priests in their council, were alike overcome, and the Almighty Power of GOD exalted the SON to the throne of the kingdom.

8 The LORD shall make good his loving-kindness toward me : yea, thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever; despise not then the works of thine own hands. S. Luke i. 46, 48. Arnobius. A. A. S. Matt. xvii. 27. Ps. lxix. 5. The first clause is, literally, The Lord shall perfect concerning me; that is, fulfil all His promises on my behalf. The LXX. and Vulgate read, The Lord shall repay for me, and S. Augustine hereupon allegorizes the miracle of the tribute-money which CHRIST paid for Himself and

for S. Peter, saying that He paid what He never took and did not owe, that He, the first-born from the dead, was the fish that came up first out of the sea, and that as in the mouth of the fish S. Peter caught, there was a stater, which makes four drachmas, so in CHRIST's mouth, and given by Him, were the four Gospels, which contain the price of our redemption from the troubles of this world. And this He did, because His mercy endureth for ever, and because, so far from despising the work of His hands, He condescended to take on Him the form of a servant, and to be found in fashion as a man, wherefore He is not ashamed to call us brethren, and we may pray Him to show that everlasting mercy not only upon us, by bringing to perfection within us these beginnings of faith, hope, and charity, which are the work of His hands, not of ours, but upon all our enemies, repaying for us in this wise, by bringing them to repentance and to salvation, remembering that they too are His creatures, and have thus a claim on His compassion and mercy.

And so: Glory be to the FATHER, Who hath magnified His Word above all things; glory be to the SON, the WORD so magnified above every name, Whom the FATHER hallowed and sent into the world; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is the mercy that endureth for ever. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Collects.
Multiply Thy strength, O LORD, in the souls of Thy humble servants, that while we ever worship Thee in Thy holy temple, we may together with Thy holy angels rejoice in beholding Thee. (1.) If I walk in the midst of our trouble, O LORD, quicken us, and stretch forth Thine hand upon the furiousness of mine enemies, and save us by Thy right hand, Who didst conquer the world by the immovable standard of the Cross, so that, mightily delivered by Thee from the powers of the air in this world, we may with triumph and rejoicing seek the inmost courts of heaven. (11.) O LORD JESU CHRIST, Way of them that walk aright, correct us when we stray from Thee in the way of iniquity, that we may abandon the way of error and be led by Thee under Thine own guidance, in the way of life everlasting. (5.)

Psalm 139

TITLE. To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David. LXX. and Vulgate: To the end, a Psalm of David. Some copies of LXX.: To the end, a Psalm of David, of Zechariah for the dispersion.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, conquering the darkness of hell, hath made the night to shine as the day. The Voice of the Church to the people, praising GOD, or the Voice of CHRIST. Of one acknowledging the power of GOD, and that He is present in the secret thoughts, and in all the elements. The Voice of CHRIST to the LORD. The Voice of the penitent Apostle Peter. VEN. BEDE. To the end, means for CHRIST, in Whose Person this whole Psalm is sung. In the first part the LORD speaks to the FATHER concerning His own repose and resurrection, saying that all His thoughts are perfectly known unto Him, O Lord, Thou hast searched Me out, &c. In the second part, He declares the power of the FATHER'S Godhead, because in so far as He is Himself a Man, He cannot hide Himself from His ken by any distance, adding that He, Who overcame the sins of the world by His glorious holiness, hath been preserved from His mother's womb by His protection, Whither shall I go? &c. Thirdly, He professes that He, in so far as He is subject to the FATHER, will praise the LORD, Whose works are in Him, and are known to be wonderful. I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, &c. Fourthly, He alleges that the principality of all the blessed ones is established, commanding the ungodly and obstinate to depart from Him, as they would not be saved by any lowliness of penitence. How dear, &c.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when a certain man called Shimei, son of Gera, cried out and reproached him for having rebelled, saying, O thou bloody man. In the spiritual sense it is the doctrine of GOD, and prayer with supplication. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. An address of the righteous man with the doctrine of GOD, together with confession. S. ATHANASIUS. A psalm or address, and prayer, and thanksgiving.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Friday: Vespers. Monastic. Thursday: Vespers. Ambrosian. Parisian. Lyons. Quignon. } Friday: Vespers. [Ambrosian. Good Friday: I. Nocturn.]

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Monastic. Ambrosian. } Ferial: O LORD, Thou hast searched me out * and known me. [Gregorian and Monastic. Comm. Apost.: Their principality is strengthened, Thy friends are made honourable. Ambrosian. Good Friday: I tell thee, Peter, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. K. K. K.] Parisian. First portion: Thou hast laid Thine hand on me, O LORD * whither shall I flee then from Thy presence? Second portion: I will give thanks unto Thee, for Thou art fearfully magnified: my soul knoweth right well. Lyons. First portion: As Gregorian. Second portion: Lead me in the way everlasting. Mozarabic. Thou hast fashioned me, hast laid Thine hand upon me, O LORD. 1 O LORD, thou hast searched me out and known me: thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts long before.

S. Chrysost. Searched me out does not mean that GOD needs to do this before He can know, but tells of the perfect exactness of His knowledge, of the impossibility of anything, however hidden, escaping His observation. The order of the words is borrowed from human experience, in which inquiry must precede knowledge, but with GOD they are simultaneous and identical. The Greek and Latin words for searched out are more exactly rendered proved, and upon this sense much of the exposition turns, showing that GOD does not prove us that He may know us, but that we may know ourselves and Him. And whereas the entire Psalm declares the relation in which man stands to GOD, they take it as spoken principally of the LORD JESUS, as the Head of the human race, so that we have here a foreshadowing of the manner in which the Captain of our salvation was tested and made perfect by suffering and humiliation, and proved most holy, not to GOD, but to the Tempter and to doubting men. And in this sense they interpret the second clause, taking CHRIST's down-sitting to be His Passion and lying in the grave, and His up-rising to be the Resurrection, which is the precise word used by the Vulgate here, whence the liturgical use of the verse as the Introit for Easter Day. Applied to the members instead of the Head, down-sitting signifies the humble and penitential abasement of the sinner, up-rising his justification through grace, and arousing to the hope of everlasting life.

And with this accords well the Chaldee paraphrase: "Thou knowest my sitting down to study Thy Law, and my rising up to go into battle. Long before. GOD knew the mind of CHRIST from all eternity, long before the Incarnation, long before the first promise of it to Eve. And whereas the literal rendering is afar off, it is not only true that GOD has foreseen everything which passes through the mind of man, but He beholds the sinner afar off from heaven in his pilgrimage, when he is feeding

the world's swine, like the prodigal son, and long before the words of penitent confession burst from the repentant lips, He is ready to meet the returning sinner with His grace, and to anticipate him with his pardon, as it is written, "But while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and kissed him."

2 Thou art about my path, and about my bed : and spiest out all my ways.

This further amplifies the confession of God's omniscience : S. Hieron. Thou winnowest (A.V. marg., S. Jerome) man's paths, that is, all his actions during the busy hours of day, and his bed, his time of repose and cessation from toil, not only tracing them out, (which is the sense of the LXX. ἐξιχνίασας and the Vulgate investigasti,) but subjecting them to severe scrutiny to prove how much of them is fruitful, and how much mere vanity. And observe that in the four occupations of time in these two verses, there is a direct reference to the injunction twice given by God as to sedulous study of the Law, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. But for bed the LXX. and Vulgate have σχοῖνον, funiculum, that is, rope or cord, and of this there are various explanations. One view is that it means a path as straight and narrow as a cord, or else roped in, as the line of a racecourse, and thus signifies the one special path which men ought to take out of the many open to them.

A second theory is that the cord marks the end of the road, the goal of the journey, and the force in this case will not be very different from that of the true meaning, bed. Again, they take the cord as a measuring line, and thus a type of careful judgment, either that which God passes on man's sin, or man's own estimate of himself ; and finally, as a lot or inheritance, marked out, in ancient fashion, with a cord. And spiest out all my ways, those by-ways of thought and resolve, tending to a certain goal, which lead into the path or high road of practical action.

3 For lo, there is not a word in my tongue : but thou, O LORD, knowest it altogether. Another rendering of this passage, adopted by some Rabbins and modern critics, is even more forcible, Before a word is yet on my tongue, Thou knowest it. And the force of this is twofold, as it denotes not only God's foreknowledge, but man's incapacity to utter, without God's help, the very thoughts he has formed and has ready on his tongue. But the LXX. and Vulgate both depart from these senses, and coupling the words with the closing ones of the previous verse, read severally, Thou hast foreseen all my ways, that there is no unrighteous word in my tongue (LXX.), or, that there is no speech in my tongue (Vulg.) The Greek Fathers P A. Origen. S. Chrysost. A. C. G. take their rendering to signify either solid purpose of speech or child-like innocence, (and there is a variant δόλος, craft, which makes for this,) while the Latins for the most part explain theirs of the powerlessness of human

speech to express the marvels of God's wisdom. The Psalmist endeavours to tell of it, and is obliged to confess that words fail him. Those of the Latins who follow the Greek text, explain the words of CHRIST as the Truth, as having in Him no fault; and such of them as seek an interpretation of the Vulgate rendering which shall fit them, take speech upon the tongue as meaning "lip-service," impenitent confession, indevout prayer, all words, in short, which are not the genuine utterance of the heart.

4 Thou hast fashioned me behind and before: and laid thine hand upon me.

Key. Acts xvii. 28. The translation of the first clause here differs at once from the A.V. and from the ancient versions, except S. Jerome. The true sense is that of the A.V., Thou hast beset me, or pressed on me, behind and before, that is, as a recent commentator happily illustrates it, the immanent Presence of God, in which "we live and move and have our being," presses us and compasses us equally on all sides, with an unseen, unfelt, and yet most real and powerful impact, like the atmosphere with which we are surrounded, whose enormous weight is unperceived because it is exerted equally in every direction at the same moment of time, upwards and downwards, vertically and horizontally, behind and before. But the LXX. and Vulgate translate the words differently, and connect this with the previous verse, thus: Thou knowest all things, the newest and the ancient, Thou hast formed me, and laid Thine hand upon me. Thou knowest man's old fall, and his later penalty of death, Thou knowest how I of old asked for my share of the inheritance, and later how I had to feed swine. Thou hast formed me for labour, and laid Thine hand upon me to cast me down when proud, to lift me up when humbled. And taking the words as spoken by CHRIST, GOD knows His latest acts, His Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and also those ancient things, when "in the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with GOD, and the WORD was GOD.

Thou hast formed me, by generation, whereby the LORD JESUS was "in the form of GOD," and laid Thine hand upon me, showing the might of His power in the words and works of CHRIST, as it is written in another Psalm, "I have found David My servant, with My holy oil have I anointed Him; My hand shall hold Him fast, and My arm shall strengthen Him; or, as others take it, hypostatically united the WORD, the Hand of GOD, with the humanity of CHRIST. And taking the words of any servant of GOD, the Carmelite bids us observe that there is S. Luke xv. 12, 15. C. S. John i. 1. Phil. ii. 6. Ps. lxxxix. 21. Haymo. Ay.

much force in the position of the words, laid Thine hand upon me, after the words fashioned me, for a mortal workman, when he has formed anything, a house, a sword, and so on, takes his hand away from it, for he can be of no more use to it; but GOD's hand is conservative as well as creative, and is needed to sustain the existence of all things that be. And finally, taken either of the Head or of the members, these last words denote the consecration to that royal priesthood after the

order of Melchizedek, whereof CHRIST Himself is the High Priest, and all others His ministers, since those whom GOD fashioned out of clay He hallows by spiritual grace and by the gift of the HOLY GHOST. S. Ambros. in Ps. cxix. 5 Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me: I cannot attain unto it.

The Vulgate rendering of the verse has a special fitness when applied to CHRIST. Thy knowledge is made wonderful from (or, by) me, it is strengthened, and I cannot attain unto it. Thy knowledge was once despised, because the world, blinded by its sins, knew Thee not, O FATHER, but it was made wonderful by Me, giving the Spirit of wisdom and understanding when I sent down the HOLY GHOST, and was strengthened against all the tyrants, philosophers, sorcerers, and wizards, who endeavoured to resist and overthrow it. And the latter clause is not less applicable, for even the words, I cannot attain unto it, may be without irreverence applied to our Blessed LORD, in that His human soul, albeit perfectly holy, and wiser than all mankind, is yet, as finite and create, immeasurably below the height of the Divine Wisdom of the WORD. And they hold good of mankind collectively, specially of the Jews, on whom GOD's hand was laid, as on the eyes of Moses, lest they should see His glory, and who in their blindness could not attain to the knowledge of the Son of GOD; answering to His question about Himself, like Abner to Saul's question concerning His great forefather: "Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell;" and of the Gentiles too, who with all their searching were unable to find out GOD, and were forced to wait for the revelation of the Gospel. And as for us singly, we can but exclaim with the Apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD, how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the LORD? or who hath been His counsellor?"

A. Exod. xxxiii. 22. S. Matt. xxii. 46. 6 Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit: or whither shall I go then from thy presence? 7 If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: if I go down to hell, thou art there also. 8 If I take the wings of the morning : and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea ; 9 Even there also shall thy hand lead me : and thy right hand shall hold me. Wisd. i. 7. A.

"The Spirit of the LORD filleth the world ; who then can flee any whither in the world away from that Spirit wherewith the world is filled ? What place can receive GOD's fugitive ? Men who take in fugitives ask of them from whom they have fled, and if they find it is from a master of slender power, they admit them without fear ; but if they learn that the master is potent, they either do not admit them at all, or do so with considerable alarm ; yet think that even a potent man may be outwitted. But where is GOD not ? who outwits GOD ? when does GOD not see ? from whom does He fail to claim His runaway ? Even here the LORD JESUS speaks, not as though He, consubstantial with FATHER and Spirit, could seek to hide from either, but as our Head He teaches His members the impossibility of escaping from GOD.

If in self-righteous pride I deem myself holy, and say in my heart, as Lucifer, ”I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of GOD,” I shall find Him there to check me, and to say to me, ”Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.

If by despair, or by making light of sin, I make my bed in hell (A.V.), I cannot there hide myself, for Thy power is present to punish me, as it is written in another place, ”Though they be hid from My face in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them. ”Never wilt thou be neglected by the Justice of the gods,” says the great Athenian sage, ”not even though thou wert small enough to sink into the depths of the earth, nor if exalted in thy flight to the height of heaven ; but thou wilt suffer due penalty from them, either abiding here, or journeying to Hades, or borne to some yet more terrible place than those. And terrible as the words are in one sense, they are full of the deepest comfort in another. If I go up to heaven, I shall not be lonely and strange there, amidst angels diverse from me in nature and properties, for CHRIST my Brother, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, is there also, ascended to the right hand of GOD, to prepare a place for me. If I go down to hell, in sorrow, in sin even, into the grave, He has been there before me, and saith now, ”Though they dig into hell, thence shall My hand take them.

If I flee to the very end of this world’s ways, on the bright wings of love, the twin pinions of charity to GOD and my neighbour, there I shall find Him waiting to lead me, Who has passed on His swift healing wings, Who is Sun of Righteousness, across the waves of this troublesome world, and is now

A. Isa. xv. 13. S. Alb. Mag. A. shining for ever in that glorious land where there is ”no more sea,” waiting to give His hand, as He stands on the shore, to us, when weary with rowing, we reach it on the Resurrection morning, to be upheld by His right hand in the blessed necessity of sinlessness for ever. So we flee with these wings from His face to His face, from the face of His wrath to the face of His mercy. A singular tradition of Christian mythology is cited here by Denys à Rykel, saying that CHRIST is the speaker, the wings of the morning denote His early rising before dawn on Easter Day, and that the uttermost parts of the sea signifies the earthly Paradise wherein He abode with the ransomed Fathers during the Great Forty Days, appearing thence at intervals to His Disciples, but always returning thither until His Ascension.

A. 10 If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me : then shall my night be turned to day. 11 Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day : the darkness and light to thee are both alike. ”God,” says the Apostle, ”is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” It is recorded of the great Egyptian Saint, Paphnutius, that he determined to attempt the conversion of Thais, a famous

courtesan of Alexandria. Disguising himself, he visited her, and requested her to bring him into a private room, where they might converse uninterruptedly. She led him into one chamber after another, but to each he objected as not secure enough. At last, leading him into the most retired apartment of the house, she said, ”It is certain that no human eye can penetrate hither, but if you wish to escape the presence of God, you cannot do it, no matter what corner of the house you withdraw to.” ”What?” answered Paphnutius, ”do you know that there is a God?” ”Certainly,” replied Thais, ”and I know too that there is a Paradise for the righteous, and a hell for the wicked.” ”Then,” rejoined the Saint, ”how dare you lead an evil life in the sight of a God who beholds you?” The rebuke pierced the sinner’s heart, she abandoned her depraved life, and died, after long penitence and austerity, a humble and trustful Christian.

And, as before, this thought, terrible to the sinner, is consoling to the Saint. He who is striving to wing his way on the pinions of devout contemplation, and fears that the darkness will tread him under foot, (the forcible rendering of LXX. and Vulgate,) that is, that the sins, troubles, errors, and temptations of the world will be too much for him to contend against, finds that the night is turned to day, and 1 S. John i. 5. S. John i. 6. Lohner, Bib. Conc. i. 560. A. that this night is my illumination in my delights, (Vulg.,) because a candle is lighted, as in the Gospel parable, to search for that lost silverling which bears impressed upon it the Image of our King. That candle, or rather, lamp, is the Godhead of CHRIST in the earthen vessel of His human Body, the delights and rejoicing of His people; and that being so, the darkness and light of this world are both alike to the Saint, equally unmoved by prosperity and adversity, unexcited by the one, undepressed by the other. Nay, the very night of affliction itself becomes brightness to him in delights, because he knows it comes from GOD for his profit, and therefore he receives it with a glad and thankful mind. So Apollinarius understands the passage:

I said, The gloom which hurteth man perchance may trample me, But gladness overcame the night, light made the darkness flee. Putting the words into CHRIST’s mouth, they explain them of His words of comfort to His doubting and timorous people. ”You think,” He would say, ”perchance the darkness will cover Me, that the sin and ignorance of evil men will prevail to bring the Gospel into oblivion. I tell you, Nay, the night itself, these very sinners, and even the dead in the grave, shall be brightness in My delights, shall be converted and enter into Paradise, after they have been chastened till they are no darkness with Me. The night, even of Jewish unbelief, shall be as clear as the day of Apostolic faith and teaching, shall be brightness in My delights, shining amongst My dearest Saints, and as great as its darkness has been, so great shall its light be, both alike.” And finally they see here a prophecy of the Passion and the Resurrection of CHRIST, a contrast between the mysterious darkness of the three hours, and the radiant brightness of Easter

morning. The very night of His death was the cause of His glorification, and both alike were part of the same fore-ordained plan of GOD for man's salvation.

12 For my reins are thine : thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. The primary notion here is that as GOD has not become acquainted with man in any later stage of existence, but is Himself his Maker, having knowledge of him from the very beginning, it is idle to think of hiding anything, however Reading, instead of , or else , from delights. The words, to Thee, in Prayer-Book version, are not in the Hebrew, nor in LXX. nor Vulgate. obscure and forgotten, from Him. And the reins are taken, they tell us, to denote the emotions and passions of man, all his fleshly appetites, which GOD possesses (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) in the case of His Saints, whom He has taught to subdue the flesh to the spirit. Spoken of the LORD JESUS, they take it as a confession by Him to His FATHER of the Divine power whereby His Body was not only so possessed by GOD as to be incapable of sin, but also of His miraculous conception by the HOLY GHOST in the womb of the Blessed Mary, making Him, as S. Bruno the Carthusian here observes, the only one free from original sin. Of the Christian Church they explain the words as meaning GOD's election of His people from out of the Synagogue, their mother's womb, as it is spoken by S. Paul of himself, "When it pleased GOD, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to reveal His SON in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." And of the soul it is taken as deliverance out of native Babylon, out of vain and worldly conversation, to be brought into Sion and made a citizen in that free land.

13 I will give thanks unto thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. The Psalmist goes on to praise GOD for the wonders of His creation of man; and as the Rabbins explain the verse, the latter clause denotes man's distinction from all other earthly creatures as a reasoning being. All things that Thou hast fashioned are made with wonderful power and skill, but there is this, more wonderful and fearful in myself than in any of the forms I see around me, that Thou hast created in me a soul which knoweth it right well, which is able to take cognizance of its own existence and of Thine, and to give thanks to Thee. So interpreted, the verse is intimately connected with that which precedes and those which follow; and besides its literal meaning, applicable to all men, may be taken of the perfect Virgin-born Manhood of CHRIST, and also of the birth, amidst terrible wonders, of the Jewish nation, and its antitype, the Christian Church. But the Syriac, LXX., Vulgate, and Arabic agree in rendering, Thou hast been fearfully made wondrous (LXX.) or magnified (Vulg.), so that the current of thought is interrupted by a fresh idea. S. Augustine takes the words as denoting the mingled awe and love with which the faithful believer regards GOD, after his soul, which had been unable to attain to wisdom, had learnt to know it right well by GOD enlightening the darkness. Cassiodorus makes the verse CHRIST's

address to the FATHER in thanksgiving for the miracles which attended the Passion and Resurrection, and others extend it to the whole mani-

A. Gal. i. 15. A. A. festation of the FATHER to mankind by the preaching and miracles of the SON, fearfully to the Jews in judgment, wonderfully to the Gentiles in grace. 14 My bones are not hid from thee : though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth. The word fashioned here would be more exactly rendered woven or embroidered, (well paraphrased by the A.V. curiously wrought,) as the human body is here described as a marvel of artistic skill, wrought out of rough materials by a consummate workman, who builds up the elaborate and variegated pattern out of unfigured threads, as man's complex frame of nerves, veins, arteries, bones, muscles, membranes, and tissues is built up out of certain few and simple elements, having no visible likeness to that into which they are thus shaped. And whereas the earthly artist needs light to accomplish his delicate and intricate task, it is here put forward as the especial attribute of GOD, that His far more wonderful work is done in the darkness of the womb, ἐν σκότοισι νηδόσι τεθραμμένη, as the Greek tragedian expresses it.

The Latins, understanding the first clause of the verse, from an ambiguity of the Vulgate, My bones are not hidden by Thee, take these words of CHRIST's thanksgiving for GOD's manifestation of the Church, whose doctrines and sacraments were hidden in type and mystery till the Advent of CHRIST, and continues, My substance, the revelation of My Godhead and Manhood, is now known in the lower parts of the earth, amongst those very Gentile nations who were once in their ignorance and idolatry, so far below the Jews; and they also understand the bones and substance, that is, flesh, of the stronger and weaker members of CHRIST's mystical Body. The Carthusian, though ascribing the verse to CHRIST, departs from the view that the Church is the subject-matter of His words, and applies them to His Person, Whose inward strength of Godhead was hidden from all save the FATHER, Whose mortal substance, after sojourning with mankind here below, went deeper yet into the lower parts of the earth, and rested in the grave, a sense apparently put upon this passage by S. Paul, saying, "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" Thou seest too, His true soldiers may say to Him, that which the world can no more see than it sees the bone covered with flesh and skin, the inward strength which I have from Thee, hidden from all others, and my substance, how it remains incorrupt through grace, albeit in the lower parts of the earth, amidst all the temptations of the world and the flesh, and of troubles here below.

A. 15 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect : and in thy book were all my members written ; 16 Which day by day were fashioned : when as yet there was none of them. My substance, yet being imperfect. This is but a single word in Hebrew, , which means literally something rolled together as a ball. The most usual

explanation of it is that it denotes the embryo or foetus of the unborn infant, but Hupfeld takes it as the ball or skein of life's thread, unwound day by day. It is more probable that the metaphor of weaving or embroidering the body is here carried on, so that the ball does mean the embryo, as the indistinct and shapeless mass out of which the beautiful structure is soon to be developed, compared here to the ball of silk or thread which the artist at the loom weaves into the pattern he desires to form; that it is, in modern language, the "raw material" of the manufacture (exactly the LXX. ἀκατεργαστόν.) This shapeless material God fashions with unerring skill, having all its structure and proportions as it were in writing before Him, and builds it up day by day until the germ becomes a child ready for the birth.

There is great obscurity and difficulty about the whole passage after the first clause of verse 15, and it is desirable to set down some of the chief renderings. The LXX. has In Thy book all [men] shall be written, they shall be fashioned [in the course of] days, and there is no one amongst them. The Vulgate reads, And in Thy book shall all be written, days shall be formed, and there is no one in them. The Syriac is, In Thy books shall all these things be written; Behold, the day is shortened, and there is no man in them. The Chaldee paraphrases, All my days are written in the book of Thy memory, in the day when the world was created, from the beginning were all creatures created, and as yet there was not one of them. It will be seen from these versions (and from others which might be cited, as Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, S. Jerome, Arabic and Æthiopic), that the English stands alone in its interpretation, though it is that of R. Kimchi and other Rabbins. The others all take that which is written in God's book to be either the days of life or the men born in the course of those days, each coming from non-existence into being at His will.

S. Chrysostom and Theodoret, abandoning the LXX. reading as inexplicable, and following that of Symmachus, understand the verse to mean, Thine eyes saw me, even before I was formed, as clearly as they saw all men that were So Ainsworth, translating here "bottom," the old technical word for a skein, and the French Huguenot version, which has peloton. Vieyra, Sermon for Palm Sunday. Haymo. The Gloss. 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 23.

fully formed and lacked not one day of their full development; but they obtain this rendering at some cost to the grammar of the sentence. Another view, closer to the LXX. is: It is no marvel that Thou seest my imperfect form, seeing that all men who shall be made as long as time lasts, are written in Thy book, and there is not one omitted. SS. Hilary and Augustine follow other readings again, differing from one another and from the Vulgate, and Cassiodorus has yet a third variant. The resultant sense is however, that the Church, or CHRIST as Head of the Body, addresses the FATHER, "Thine eyes have seen My imperfections, on the one hand in the weakness of some of My members, on the other that the number of the elect is not yet made up. All who are to attain to everlasting blessedness shall be

written in Thy book. Days, that is Saints shining with the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness, shall be formed, and there shall not be one in them left defective or unformed in the heavenly country.

Vieyra, preaching one of his great sermons of call to repentance, and taking the verse as spoken by CHRIST to His FATHER touching all imperfect Christians, adds that one meaning which may be fairly put on the latter words is, that Lent after Lent, the special time of formation and reformation of souls, goes by, is written down in GOD's book, but no names of repentant sinners are found inserted in it, for none do repent. Arnobius takes the whole passage of the Resurrection, understanding, as he does, the previous verse of man's death and burial, not of his generation and birth. Thine eyes, he interprets, see my imperfections, my body, now lacking bone, and skin, and nerves, and vital breath, and all, in short, which is my body to man's eyes; and yet all the Saints who are to rise again are written in Thy book, the day will come when Thou wilt refashion the disintegrated bodies, and not one shall be lacking. Others take the days to be the Twelve Apostles, one for each hour of sunlight, formed themselves in CHRIST, and teaching in such fashion that no one of their hearers is fashioned in them, in Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, but in CHRIST alone.

17 How dear are thy counsels unto me, O GOD: O how great is the sum of them!

There can be little doubt that this is the true sense of the verse, though precious may also be translated difficult or weighty; and denotes awe and wonder rather than delight and love; as the Psalmist contemplates the unceasing marvels of creation in their innumerable sum and variety. But the Chaldee and all the other ancient versions with one voice translate Thy friends instead of Thy thoughts, and sums is taken for the most part as heads or chiefs. The Vulgate is But Thy friends are exceedingly honoured by me, O God, their principality is exceedingly strengthened. And the commentators, with one voice, explain the verse of the Saints of God, under the leadership of the Apostles. In the LXX. the word ἀρχαί, governments, is used more than once to denote a troop or division of an army; and the thought in this wise will be, How hast Thou honoured Thy intimate companions (Aquila, ἑταῖροι) the Apostles, and how vast a number of forces marches under their banners in the ranks of the white-robed army! In this sense this verse has suggested the use of the Psalm in the Common of Apostles, and has furnished its antiphon. But the Vulgate reads principality in the singular, and the first gloss on this which meets us is that of Cassiodorus, who explains the strengthened principality of God's friends to be the Episcopal Sees founded by the Apostles, to continue their own headship in succession throughout the Churches. S.

Gregory, however, explains it quite differently, that the elect subdue the flesh, strengthen the spirit, bear rule over devils, share with virtues, despise things of this life, preach in words and conduct the everlasting land, love it even through

death, reach it through tortures, and may be slain, but cannot be bent. And, as another adds, their principality is exceedingly strengthened, since they are not only rulers here, but shall even judge angels. The LORD JESUS honoureth those whom He was pleased to call no longer servants, but friends, in several ways. By calling them Himself in person, by choosing them out of the world, by giving them power to work miracles, by living familiarly with them, by teaching them personally, and not by the ministry of angels and prophets, like the Old Testament Saints; by revealing hidden things to them; by giving them judicial authority; by calling them His brethren; by intercourse with them after His Resurrection; by making them rulers of the Church; and by constituting them His witnesses. And He strengthened them with the HOLY GHOST, so that they preached the Word of God without fear throughout the world.

Hom. in Acts i. 21. Acts i. 3. Acts i. 8. 18 If I tell them, they are more in number than the sand: when I wake up I am present with thee. The Vulgate has I will number them, and it is explained of CHRIST's foreknowledge of His elect. More in number. We look at the whole world, it is full of martyrs. We who behold are hardly so many now as the witnesses we have. God can count them, but to us they are more in number than the sand, since, whatever the number be, it cannot be known by us. They are more in number than the sand, for God's promise to Abraham was, "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is on the sea shore." Abraham's spiritual progeny, the Gentile Christians, made like the stars of heaven by their enlightenment A. Alcuin. C.

and exaltation in CHRIST, countlessly surpass His natural offspring the Jews, barren and trodden, like the sand, under the feet of men. I wake up and am present with Thee. And first they are the words of our glorious Head, declaring not only His Resurrection, but the further truth that while He seemed to the Jews to be dead and lying in the grave, He was even then, in right of His Godhead, throned with the FATHER in Heaven, where He is now in His Manhood also present with Him until such time as He is revealed to us once more in His second Advent. Wherefore this verse forms the beginning of the Introit on Easter Day. Applied to the Saints, the primary sense undoubtedly is (taking the translation counsels or thoughts instead of friends in the previous verse) I pray myself all day in pondering in love and wonder on all Thy works, and the moment I wake up from sleep, I occupy myself with them again, as the first employment of my time; nay, I have been dreaming of them in my sleep, so that they are still before my mind without effort as soon as I open my eyes; and the spiritual sense is the same under both versions, for it is a thanksgiving to GOD for rousing His Saint out of the sleep of sloth, out of the death of sin, and bringing him close to Himself in love; not only in this life, but more perfectly after death, in the Resurrection.

”For this we say unto you by the word of the LORD, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the LORD shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the LORD Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in CHRIST shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD.”

19 Wilt thou not slay the wicked, O GOD: depart from me, ye blood-thirsty men.

Here, as before, whether we take the crucial word to be friends or counsels, the connection of the sense is clear. In the one case, the Psalmist sees that countless as are the friends of GOD, His visible enemies are even more numerous, that their leaders and hosts are drawn up in battle array against the armies of heaven; nay, that some of them attempt to range themselves as pretended allies along with the forces of the Church, in order to betray them in the hour of conflict, and he therefore beseeches GOD to rout the one, while he takes himself the precaution of driving the others from him. In the other sense, GOD’s perfect knowledge of the thoughts and words of men, and His absolute mastery over their future are put before Him by the Psalmist as a reason why He should arise to destroy the power of evil. If even I, O LORD, myself a sinful man, compel the bloodthirsty to depart from me; wilt not Thou, as perfectly Holy, and as supreme Judge, with Whom are the issues of life and death, slay the wicked one? And as this last is in the singular in Hebrew, it points to the great enemy of souls, whom the LORD will indeed slay at the last, by casting him into the lake of fire. But the LXX. and Vulgate have the word in the plural, and it is explained of heretics, sinners, and false brethren in the Church.

Yet how, asks Cassiodorus, can such a prayer befit His lips Who desireth not the death of a sinner, but Who came to save all such? Only by understanding it of His making them die to sin, and live unto the LORD. Yet, as amongst those whom He calls, there will be some who refuse to hear Him, them He will cause to depart by excommunication out of that Church of which they are no faithful members, will bid at the last day depart from Him, as cursed, into everlasting fire. All kinds of wilful and persistent sin are included under the term bloodthirsty, for as there was no sanctuary under the Law for the intentional murderer, so under the Gospel he who continues willingly in sin, and especially sin against his neighbour, has no place in CHRIST; wherefore the Apostle saith, ”Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

A.

20 For they speak unrighteously against thee:
and thine enemies take thy Name in vain.

Here is the reason for slaying or banishing them, because they attempt to lead men away from GOD to the worship of false divinities, idols or objects of worldly reverence; either on the ground that He is not GOD, or that He pays no regard to the affairs of mankind. The words Thy Name in the second clause of the verse are not in the Hebrew (although the Chaldee supplies them, and explains the phrase of perjury), and the translation of LXX. and Vulgate is They shall take Thy cities in vanity. The Arabic version explains this, They will unrighteously pillage Thy cities, unless Thou destroy them beforehand. Others understand, They teach people that Thy cities, wherein are no idols, have nothing to trust in, and urge them to adopt the tutelar gods of foreign towns as their protectors. Yet again, They perjure themselves by the names of Thy cities, as the Jews in our LORD's time did with Jerusalem. These interpretations are all of the text as it stands in Hebrew. But the manner in which the LXX. and Vulgate severally translate the first clause, gives birth to a fresh crop of expositions. The LXX. is For Thou shalt say in discussion, They shall take Thy cities unto vanity. That is, GOD's judgment against men of this stamp is that their dwelling in their cities will be perfectly useless to them, they will reap no benefit from their stores, nor protection from their fortifications.

And in this sense it may very well be explained not only of the vanity of their earthly life, but of the spiritual inutility of mere outward fellowship with the Church of God. The Vulgate, on the other hand, takes the final words as spoken by sinners, and therefore as referring to the righteous. Depart from me, ye bloodthirsty men, because ye say in your thoughts, They shall receive Thy cities in vanity, that is, the whole of Christianity is but an idle dream of a visionary world to come, and therefore it is to no purpose that congregations are collected and churches built, as no advantage whatever can possibly come from so intangible and undemonstrable a creed. Several commentators, however, divide the verse differently, making a full stop after ye say in your thoughts, which they explain as a charge of mummery or of hypocrisy, and then interpret the remaining part of the words in the Greek fashion.

21 Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee : and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? 22 Yea, I hate them right sore : even as though they were mine enemies.

"There are occasions when the wise man will see fit to indulge pity and suppress indignation, there are other occasions when he will gratify the indignation, and resist the impulses of pity. But he is not merciful unless he feels both. Thus the man who cannot be angry cannot be merciful. Of the two feelings which go to compose mercy the indignation requires to be satisfied first. The first impulse roused by the sight of vice should be the impulse of opposition and hostility. To correct it, to detect it, to contend with it, to put it down, is the first and indispensable thing. It is indeed a fair object of pity even when it remains undetected and prosperous, but

such pity must be passive, and must not dare to express itself in deeds. It is not mercy, but treason against justice to relent towards vice so long as it is triumphant and insolent. . . . . The Enthusiasm of Humanity does indeed destroy a great deal of hatred, but it creates as much more. Dull serpentine malice dies, but a new unselfish anger begins to live. The bitter feelings which so easily spring up against those who thwart us, those who compete with us, those who surpass us, are destroyed by the Enthusiasm of Humanity; but it creates a new bitterness, which displays itself on occasions where before the mind had reposed in a benevolent calm.

It creates an intolerant anger against all who do wrong to human beings, an impatience of selfish enjoyment, a vindictive enmity to tyrants and oppressors, a bitterness against sophistry, superstition, self-complacent heartless speculation, an irreclaimable hostility to every form of imposture such as the uninspired, inhumane soul could never entertain. Our own personal enemies are often roused against us with righteous indignation, and are angry because we have failed in our duty towards them, because we slander them, because we are jealous of their efforts for good. And we are rightly taught therefore to love our enemies, whom we have offended by our own fault, but there is no such excuse to be made for such as rebel against Him in Whom is no fault. Am not I grieved? The LXX. and Vulgate are stronger, I pine away; with sorrow for the very sinners whom my duty to God forces me to hate, with deep grief for their wickedness and for the terrible doom awaiting them if they repent not; for, as a Saint says, "In the wicked we rightly hate the wickedness and love the man. Yea, I hate them with a perfect hatred (A.V., Vulg. "A perfect hatred of God's enemies is to love them as men and to rebuke their acts, to bear hard on the conduct of the ungodly, and to do good to their lives.

For we must consider, if we abstain from rebuke, what a sin it is to be at peace with the wicked, if such a Prophet as the Psalmist offered as a special oblation to God his having roused the enmity of the wicked against himself for God's sake."

23 Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me, and examine my thoughts. 24 Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me: and lead me in the way everlasting. There is only One who can dare to court inquiry in this way, with the certainty that no fault can be found, even He Who said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." But it may be spoken in another sense by His Bride, the Church, imploring God to sift and try her, to send the breath of His SPIRIT into her threshing-floor, to part the chaff from the wheat, to distinguish heretics and sinners from the faithful and the Saints. And lastly, it may be taken also of the members of CHRIST's Church, not claiming to be righteous, but asking of God to search and try them, that He may take away what is evil, and leave only what is good, and if He see any trace of the way of sorrow, as some take it, that is, of a path which leads to punishment, or of the way of idols, as others explain it, in

us, our own way of error and self-will, He will shut it up that we go not by it, and lead us in the way which alone leadeth to our country and to life everlasting, even JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who knoweth the SON; glory be to the SON, Who went down into hell, and ascended up into heaven; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the SPIRIT of the LORD which filleth the world. A. A. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collect.
O GOD, Protector of heaven and earth, in Whose death Hell was lighted up, by Whose rising again the multitude of Saints was gladdened; at Whose Ascension the host of Angels exulted; we make our prayer to the exceeding might of so much glory, that led in the way everlasting, we may be protected by that arm wherein Thine honoured friends rejoice with Thee in heaven. Who.

Psalm 140

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

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST may deliver us from the poison of new (novellarum) tongues. The Voice of CHRIST in the Passion, or the Voice of the Church against unclean spirits, evil thoughts, and persecuting men. The Voice of CHRIST on behalf of the negligent people. VEN. BEDE. CHRIST is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth; and in this Psalm as with a herald's voice He is proclaimed as the coming Judge, terrible, Almighty, gentle and altogether lovely. Throughout the whole Psalm Holy Church speaks. In the first part she prays that He may vouchsafe to deliver her from the impious devil, who strives by many wiles to overthrow the devotion of the faithful people. Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man. In the second part she asks that she may not be given up to the wicked tempter, seeing that she has already been delivered, by CHRIST'S help, from bitter perils. I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God. Thirdly, she declares that vengeance will come in the future judgment upon them who persecute His poor with wild fury. As for the head of them that compass me about.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Spoken by David, when Saul cast a javelin at him to slay him, but smote the wall. Spiritually, the words of one who clingeth to GOD, and contends with them that hate Him. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The Voice of him who contendeth as GOD wills. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, and prayer, and supplication.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Friday: Vespers. [Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Comm. of Passion, Five Wounds, Seven Dolours: Vespers.] Monastic. Thursday: Vespers. [Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: Vespers.] Lyons. Friday: Vespers. [Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: Vespers. Decoll. S. John Baptist: Vespers.] Eastern Church. Mesorion of Nones.

Antiphons.
Ferial. Preserve me from the wicked man. [Gregorian and Monastic. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Passion: Preserve me from the wicked man, O LORD. Five Wounds: The LORD hath bound up the wound of His people, and healed their bruise. Ambrosian. Tuesday before Easter: First verse.] Parisian. First portion: Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the ungodly. Second portion: O LORD GOD, the strength of my health, forsake me not. [Good Friday: About the ninth hour, JESUS said with a loud voice, My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?] Mozarabic. O LORD GOD, the strength of my salvation, overshadow my head in the day of battle.
1 Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man : and preserve me from the wicked man;
2 Who imagine mischief in their hearts : and stir up strife all the day long.

There is no unfitness in understanding this Psalm and others like it of spiritual perils, and of prayer for deliverance from them, because of a man being named as the foe to be dreaded, for most of the snares laid for us by spiritual wickednesses, are set by the agency of men, and though it is a nature foreign to our own that devises the scheme, the opportunities are found in our defects. And therefore the evil and wicked man stands here not for the mere instruments of wrong-doing, but for its prince and head, that is, Satan himself; who is so described by the LORD, saying of the sower of tares among the wheat, ”An enemy, a man, hath done this.” The evil spirits are sometimes described in Scripture as beasts, sometimes again as men. When they swoop down suddenly on the soul, and cause unpremeditated sin, they are like birds; when they proceed by open violence, then they rage like a lion or wolf; when they proceed by craft and reason rather than by force, they are compared to man, who, inferior to many animals in bodily strength surpasses them all in cunning and skill. Thence the Psalmist passes to the plural, who imagine mischief in their hearts, because he prays against the servants as well as against

their master; and he uses this special petition against such as speak good words with their mouth, in order to deceive, since it is far easier to avoid an open and violent enemy. And the strife which these foes stir up all the day long is everything which makes part of the Christian’s conflict, all which comes out of these secret thoughts, often hidden under peaceful and flattering words, but yet persevering all the day long with no intermission during the whole of life. There is a distinction between the two phrases evil man and wicked man, literally man of violences, as in the one term the root, and in the other the fruit is described, inasmuch as every man will, sooner or later, hurt either himself or his neighbour; and though there are many evil men in the world who seem not to be violent, because they are not cruel or rough, but only luxurious, drunken, addicted to pleasure, yet they certainly hurt themselves, and rarely fail to hurt others too, by example, or even by fraud or violence, to obtain means to carry on their indulgences after their own

resources have been squandered. And as those who strive to injure the spiritual interests of the faithful are more dangerous enemies than such as aim merely at their worldly possessions, many of the commentators see here sectaries, heretics, and false brethren, as those who imagine mischief in their hearts against the Faith, stir up strife all the day long by warring against the Church of God.

And in that the secret mischief in the hearts, and the strife all day are grouped together, we learn that these two methods of attack are used simultaneously by our foes, who mine the citadel while they assail its walls, who sometimes shoot a silent and secret arrow, sometimes brandish a formidable spear; and the former method is used chiefly against strong and valiant soldiers whom they dare not face openly, while the other is employed against the weak, and only in the last resource against the strong, as was shown in many a martyrdom, where torture was not tried till every mode of blandishment had been first exhausted. And therefore, interpreting the Psalm of CHRIST, they see in the evil and wicked man the Tempter who vainly strove to overcome Him in the wilderness with crafty speeches, and failing, stirred up open enmity against Him, making Judas, the chief priests, and the multitude, instruments to compass His death. There is yet another deep sense in which the prayer of these verses may be made, Deliver me, O LORD, from myself, that I may cease to be evil and wicked, that I may deny and forsake myself, not as I am by nature and grace, but as I am by free-will and sin; thinking evil thoughts, and engaged in ceaseless war of the flesh against the spirit.

3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent: adder’s poison is under their lips. The tongue of the serpent is long and slender, capable of much protrusion, and forked, whence they observe that the words of slanderers or of false teachers inflict a double wound at once, on the character of that which they attack, and the conscience of him to whom they speak. The serpent moves swiftly along by means of muscular force and its vertebral column, and having no feet, is silent in its approach, and the track it makes is a very slight and indistinct one, but never in a straight line. It is soft to the touch, but under that softness are hid the deadly fangs with their poison-bags under the lips, while the lips themselves betray no tokens of mischief. Such were the weapons employed against CHRIST by His enemies, slandering His life, and turning His very miracles of healing into matter for calumny and persecution. ”Though I have redeemed them,” saith the LORD by His Prophets, ”yet they have spoken lies against Me;” and they did it too with the deadly venom of the adder, saying, ”We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” Thence the figure passes on to those enemies of CHRIST who endeavour by stealthy measures and acute, subtil arguments, to poison the minds of the faithful, and slay their belief with specious, friendly, and seemingly pious language.

A. 4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the ungodly: preserve me from the wicked men, who are purposed to overthrow my goings. S. Hilary, applying the words to CHRIST, takes the one ungodly person to be the traitor Judas, the wicked men the priests and soldiers who came under his guidance to seize the LORD. Others, more generally, understand the verse as before, to denote Satan and all his instruments. To overthrow my goings, to take my feet from under me, to destroy the basis of belief, the power of advance in good works, that we may turn back from the way of salvation, or fall upon it, or at any rate, may go very slowly along it. 5 The proud have laid a snare for me, and spread a net abroad with cords: yea, and set traps in my way.

They understand by the proud in the first place all evil spirits, and then all men who follow their own will in preference to GOD's, especially heretics and sectaries, who set up their own reason and verifying faculty as superior to Holy Scripture and the continuous teaching of the Church. S. Hilary applies the title to the haughty Pharisees and rulers of the Synagogue, who scorned to associate with the publicans and sinners amongst whom CHRIST mixed familiarly, but who could nevertheless stoop to the baseness of laying plots against His character and life. A distinction is drawn by some between the snare, as that laid by hunters to catch four-footed prey, and the net of fowlers for birds, denoting that the enemies of souls endeavour to capture alike the earthly and carnal, and the heavenly and spiritual; nay, that they adapt their gins to the different parts of the same man's nature, at one time assailing him on the side of the flesh, at another on that of the spirit. Abroad. The true sense is given by A.V., as by LXX. and Vulgate, by the wayside. That is, as they are careful to tell us, not in the way, but beside it. On the King's highway, which is CHRIST Himself, the evil spirits can lay no snare. "It shall be called The Way of Holiness; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.

They are safe there, but the moment they get out of the path, ever so little to one side of it, the snares and nets await them. And therefore it is to be observed that the words in my way, which end the verse, and seem to contradict this gloss, are not in the Hebrew. Nevertheless, it is further to be noticed that the nets are not laid at a distance from the true way, but close beside it. Those who are manifestly out of the road altogether are in Satan's territory, and his bondslaves, ruled by open force, not captured by secret craft; but to kidnap the King's subjects, it is necessary to draw very near His highway, and to use words and doctrines counterfeited as those of the Saints to deceive unwary souls; and trying to make an evil thing seem good, or at any rate, a very trifling fault. The metaphor of cords, as consisting of slender threads twisted one after another till the requisite thickness is attained, and of nets as fashioned of a number of such cords interlaced, is one which they dwell on as forcibly illustrating the distortion of sin and the force of accumulated

habits, from both of which they are safe who keep in the straight road and obey the law of the LORD.

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou art my GOD: hear the voice of my prayers, O LORD.
A. Here is the true refuge from hidden malice, from open strife, from cords, and nets, and traps, to take refuge with GOD, Invincible and All-wise. And it teaches us, too, that the one safety for simple and unlearned people when assailed by the crafty arguments of heretics and infidels is not controversy, but prayer, a weapon their enemies seldom use and cannot understand. The Psalmist calls Him my GOD, not as though He were less truly GOD of his enemies, but claiming His protection as His willing liegeman, not resisting His power as a revolted rebel, not denying CHRIST'S Godhead like the various sects which impugn it, and refuse to adore Him. The voice of my prayer. Voice denotes life. Dead things may sound, but they have no life, and therefore voice of my prayer signifies a prayer which comes from a living faith, and the loudest cry of such a voice, unheard by man, but well known to GOD, is a holy life in His service.

7 O LORD GOD, thou strength of my health : thou hast covered my head in the day of battle. As usual, the weak Prayer Book word health should be salvation, making the appeal to GOD at once more worthy of Him and more significant of imminent peril. S. Hilary bids us observe that the order of the words denotes perfect confidence in GOD, and sure hope of final victory and reward, because the Psalmist speaks of my salvation, as something already his, of which the LORD is the strength, as its source and Preserver; whereas had he been speaking merely as a man, he would have called GOD salvation of my strength, which is a far less thing. Thou hast covered my head, as with a helmet, in the day of armour (Heb.) giving me that "helmet of salvation" which is the "strength of my head." The LXX. and Vulgate read for covered, ἐπεσκίασας, obumbrasti, Thou hast overshadowed my head. According to this rendering there is a double metaphor, and the helmet is not only a protection against the sword, but against the heat, and it is accordingly explained of that battle of the hot passions of the flesh which goes on within man himself, over and above that war which he has to wage against external foes. And therefore the Church prays in her daily noon-tide hymn when the sun is in midheaven:

Extinguish strife with all its fire, Quench Thou the heat of ill desire, Health to the body's frame impart, True peace bestow upon the heart. And whereas the sun was darkened during the Passion of CHRIST, we learn that whenever we are oppressed by the heat of battle and the fire of fleshly desires, we can find shade under the Cross in meditation on the redemption wrought thereon. The FATHER was with the SON in that Passion, covering His head with the helmet of a constant and resolute will, enabling Him to bear all to the very last, as it is written, "Behold, the LORD is with Me as a mighty terrible one; therefore My persecutors shall stumble, and

they shall not prevail." 8 Let not the ungodly have his desire, O LORD : let not his mischievous imagination prosper, lest they be too proud. Brev. Rom. The Hymn, Rector potens, for Sext.

A.

This prayer tells us that the ungodly, even in the height of his pride and power, is but an unconscious instrument in the hand of God, Who can frustrate his best-laid plans, and in a moment overthrow his strength. And this notion is well brought out by a rendering offered for the second clause of the verse by some Rabbins: Cause not his might to come forth, that is, rein him in with Thy bridle and bit. The reading of the first clause by the LXX. and Vulgate is somewhat different from the English: Give me not up, O Lord, from my desire, to the sinner. S. Chrysostom explains this to be, Grant not to my enemy even the smallest part of his desire against me. S. Hilary, who had not the word me in the text before him, conversely understands the words thus: Suffer not even the very smallest part of what I desire to be baulked by my enemy. But the interpretation of S. Augustine is that usually followed: Give me not over to the enemy by reason of my own desire; that is, Let there be no inward assent to sin by reason of my appetites and wishes. And S. Paul appears to cite this passage indirectly when he says, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts. Some, however, take a desiderio to mean "contrary to my desire; and understand the ground of the prayer to be exactly that the Psalmist's will has not consented to the tempter.

The verse continues in LXX. and Vulgate, They have planned against me, leave me not, lest they be exalted, and thus the first clause, Give me not, &c., will be a prayer for the healthy condition of man's free-will, and the second, one for the co-operating aid of God's Grace. Lest they be exalted, for as the angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, so the devils exult over one Saint that falleth; and they become too proud, as thinking they have won the victory not against him only, but against his God.

9 Let the mischief of their own lips fall upon the head of them: that compass me about. This is rather a paraphrase than a translation. The Hebrew runs, The head of them that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. The previous verse has a Selah or pause at the end, and it seems very probable that it has been pushed too far forward in the MSS., so that the last words of that verse really belong to this one, thus: "When they lift up the head that compass me about, then let the mischief of their own lips cover them." But it is not ne- τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν. Neither Mr. Gough nor Mr. Turpie cites this parallel in their works on the Quotations in the New Testament.

cessary so to recast the construction, as the abrupt transition to a new subject is frequent in the Psalter. They raise a question as to the word head, whether it is

to be taken generally of all the besiegers, or if their chief and leader alone be intended, which is the Chaldee view. Several of the Latins, following S. Augustine, understand the verse in a different way. The first words run in LXX. and Vulgate, ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ κυκλώματος αὐτῶν, caput circuitus eorum, and they take them thus: Let their pride, which is the head and sum of all their circling round and round, instead of going in the straight road, cause that the toil of their own lips, their own laboured falsehood, may cover them. Another view is that Satan is spoken of. "Their Head is a going-round," that is, the devil never can do anything straightforward, but must attain his ends by roundabout means; and further, he is "as a raging lion, going about seeking whom he may devour." Yet again, some have seen here a figure borrowed from the coils of a serpent, and detect a reference to the contorted and winding arguments by which sectaries and unbelievers endeavour to protect themselves and injure the Faith, while the true Christian takes the upright rood of the Cross as his pattern. There is less divergence in the interpretation of the last clause, which is, in brief, that prayer of David which the Chaldee takes to be historically intended here, "O LORD, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness."

A. 10 Let hot burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire, and into the pit, that they never rise up again. If the metaphor of a siege be carried on from the previous verse into this one, the meaning may probably be that the assailants are depicted as kindling a great pyre to burn down the gate of the city; but as discomfited in such fashion from the battlements, that the blazing brands are hurled down on themselves, and their dead bodies fall into the town-fosse on each side of the gate. Others take it of such a rout as that of the Amorite kings at Azekah, when a storm of thunder and hail proved more fatal than the sword of Joshua. Spiritually, the two opposing schools of interpretation, as usual, take the words in a contrasted sense; the one looking to the terrors of the Judgment, the other seeing in the coals the pains of repentance (or, as others prefer, the glowing words of devout preachers, themselves once black and cold, but now candescent with holy zeal) in the fire the glow of love which those coals kindle, the pit (which the Vulgate omits) will then signify the depth of humility and self-abasement, and then the closing words in miseriis non subsistent, instead of being taken to mean, They shall perish in their misery, are explained, They shall not abide in their misery, because God will pardon and restore them at the last.

11 A man full of words shall not prosper upon the earth : evil shall hunt the wicked person to overthrow him. H. S. Hilary takes the man full of words (literally a man of tongue, LXX., ἀνὴρ γλωσσώδης, Vulg. vir linguosus) to be D. C. Judas Iscariot, and Denys à Rykel extends the epithet to Hugo Card. the Jews, contradicting and gainsaying, while others take it further of heretics and disputatious persons in general. But it seems better to extend it to all evil speakers, flatterers, slanderers, talebearers, and so forth, to all of whom the lines apply : Sit tibi linguosus vir

quinque modis odiosus, Præproperus, præceps, ignarus, fictilis, anceps. A man that is given to prate is in five ways deserving of hate, Hasty, and headlong in trouble, ignorant, lying, and double. C. Such as these shall not be established upon the earth (A.V.) because their own levity does not suffer them to rest, nor to persevere in the right way, the force of the Vulgate dirigetur in this place.

Evil shall hunt the wicked person to overthrow him. This forcible metaphor recalls the Latin poet's words : Seldom has vengeance, although lame of foot, Given up the caitiff who goes on before. S. Chrysost. And the Greek Fathers accordingly warn us that the present sense of freedom and impunity which the wicked may feel is no warrant that the pursuing avenger is not on their track, slow, but sure, as one of their poets, in his turn, has said : What mortal thinks that he can day by day Do evil, and yet hide it from the Gods, Deems falsely, and so deeming, he is seized, When vengeance is at leisure, and must pay The penalty for evils he began. A. But the Vulgate misses the full meaning, as it translates Evils shall take the unjust man in destruction, that is, as they variously interpret it, evils, which take hold of every one, saint and sinner alike, will lay hold of the latter, not for his correction but for his utter ruin; or, as others will have it, evils shall seize on him in his death, so that he goes down to the grave unpardoned, and with the Doom awaiting him.

12 Sure I am, that the LORD will avenge the poor : and maintain the cause of the helpless. Our LORD Himself, as Man, was poor. He became poor for our sakes, that we might become rich. And His FATHER did avenge Him, punishing the Jews, converting the Romans, and upheld the cause of the helpless; the poor and defenceless group of Galilean fishermen who preached the Gospel to the world. And that defence of the poor and helpless will have a yet more signal manifestation in the Judgment, when they shall be chastised who have persecuted CHRIST's poor in this world. 13 The righteous also shall give thanks unto thy Name : and the just shall continue in thy sight. As in the siege and fall of Jerusalem, the little band of Christians escaped safely from the horrors within and without the guilty city, and were enabled to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving in security to the LORD Who had delivered them, so in that same Judgment when the enemies of the poor shall be cast down, the righteous shall lift up the voice of thanksgiving to the LORD for their redemption, and shall dwell with Thy face (Heb., LXX., and Vulg.) pure in heart, and seeing GOD, filled with the joy of Thy countenance in the Beatific Vision.

A. Glory be to the FATHER, Who hath delivered me from the evil man; glory be to the SON, His Countenance, with Whom the just shall dwell; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, by Whose kindling those coals burn which shall fall upon the ungodly. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD, Strength of our salvation, defend Thy Church from the deadly poison of sectaries, that overshadowed by Thee, we may never be entangled by the cords of

the effemy. (1.) O GOD, Keeper of all the faithful, defend us from the snares of the ungodly, that we may be justified and give thanks to Thy holy Name, and abide righteous in Thy sight. (1.) Deliver me, O LORD, from the wicked man, Who wast Thy- Q self given up for the sins of others, that Thy Passion, which was made a mocking by the ungodly, may deliver us from future torments. (11.) O LORD GOD, Strength of our salvation, overshadow our head in the day of battle, lest we should be shaken by the snares of the enemy, or drink the poison hidden under the lips of the envious. And as Thou avengest the poor and maintainest the cause of the helpless, make up for the contempt of our low estate with the riches of Thy bounty. (11.)

Deliver, O LORD, the flock of Thy people from the snares of the evil man, that supported on all sides by the bulwark of Thy Passion, unlearned Christians may not fall in with the man our enemy, nor fear the shafts of a deceitful tongue in the matters of faith. (11.) Keep us, O LORD, from the hand of the ungodly, and preserve us from the wicked men, that as Thou art our protection, we may obtain Thee as our reward in everlasting glory. (11.) O LORD, Strength of our salvation, hear the voice of the prayer of Thy people, and help us in the troubles wherewith we are afflicted, that delivered by Thy protection from all evils, we may serve Thee in safety. (1.)

Psalm 141

TITLE. A Psalm of David. ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST may accept the prayers of the simple, as incense of a sweet savour. The Voice of the Church to the LORD against heretics, hypocrites, and schismatics, that she may be kept from the snares they set for her, and from the stumbling-blocks of them that work iniquity. VEN. BEDE. The Prophet intreats that amidst the doings of this world he may be delivered from divers errors. In the first part he beseeches the LORD to hear his prayer, adding what errors they are from which he chiefly desires to be delivered. Lord, I call upon Thee. Secondly; he prefers to be reproved by the righteous rather than be praised by the sinner, intreating that he may be kept from the traps of the wicked doers, because he witnesseth that he hath no communion with them. Let the righteous rather smite me.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when he was meditating on the Evening Office, and the prayer of one perfect in GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. The prayer of him that is perfect according to GOD. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, and prayer and supplication. Gregorian. Friday: Vespers. { [Maundy Thursday, Good Monastic. Thursday: Vespers. { Friday, Office of Passion, Five Wounds: Vespers.] Lyons. Friday: Vespers. [Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: Vespers.]

Antiphons.

Gregorian. { Ferial. LORD, I call upon Thee, * hearken unto Monastic. me. [Maundy Thursday, &c.: Keep me from the Ambrosian. snare that they have laid for me, and from the traps Lyons. of the wicked doers. Ambrosian. Tuesday before Mozarabic. Easter: Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the ungodly * and preserve me from the evil one.] Parisian. The righteous shall rebuke me in mercy * but the oil of sinners shall not anoint my head. [Good Friday: JESUS, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, said, I thirst.] This, structurally one of the most obscure and difficult of the Psalms, is of uncertain date and occasion. If it be David’s, as the title alleges, it will agree best with the time of Absalom’s rebellion, though any period before the Captivity at which evil men had the upper hand may be plausibly assigned to it.

1 LORD, I call upon thee, haste thee unto me: and consider my voice, when I cry unto thee. The faithful prayer of every Saint is a cry to GOD, for He is cried to by faith, and not by the sound of the voice. The blood of the martyrs has no bodily voice, but their unmerited death is as a cry to GOD; as the LORD Himself saith to Cain concerning Abel, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me;" and in this wise it is that the souls of the martyrs under the altar of GOD are said to cry aloud, saying, "How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And note that the difference of tense, I have cried, (Heb., LXX., and Vulg.) followed by when I cry, signifies the earnest perseverance of the Saint in prayer, never ceasing so long as trouble lasts. And trouble does last so long as we are in the world, wherefore the Apostle teaches us, "Pray without ceasing." They are the words of every Saint, but chiefly of the King of all Saints, crying as our Head for His Church with His own Blood, which speaketh better things than that of Abel, for Abel's cry brought vengeance on one fratricide, but CHRIST'S Blood in His Agony in the Garden and upon the

A. Cross, joined with His prayer, obtained free pardon without vengeance for many of His enemies, and for many more with corrective chastisement, as the thief upon the Cross. Note, moreover, that GOD hears us before we pray, because the very will and intention of prayer, without which it cannot be made, comes from His inspiration, and therefore He must needs be thus beforehand with us in all our petitions. 2 Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense : and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice. These are the words of one cut off from external communion in the Temple services, and desiring to share in them spiritually, albeit debarred from bodily presence and action, and this may well refer to David when driven from Jerusalem by Absalom.

Set forth. Rather, with LXX., Vulg., and A.V. margin, directed, Let my prayer go straight to Thee, not being purposely turned aside by hypocrisy or desire of applause, nor yet blown about with the contrary winds of distracting thoughts. And this prayer is to be like the incense, because incense rises from below upwards on high, and is fragrant to the senses. Moreover, the sacred incense of the Law was compounded of four ingredients, stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense, all blended together, denoting the four kinds of petitions specified by S. Paul, "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks; answering to the four Christian graces which make us pray acceptably, humility putting us in the attitude of supplication, faith in that of prayer, hope in that of intercession, love in giving of thanks. And the four elements are thought to be typified also by these same four spices, transparent frankincense standing for air, the coarser and opaque galbanum for earth, the dropping stacte for water, the smoking onycha for fire; as teaching that everything which is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, is bound to pay its service of worship to Almighty GOD. The incense was offered morning and evening on its own special golden altar in

the Holy Place, in front of the veil, at first by the High Priest only, but under the Second Temple, by the inferior priests also, chosen daily by lot for the office.

Besides this separate cremation of incense as an independent offering, it was joined to all the other oblations "of a sweet savour," as something which gave them acceptance; and similarly in the Apocalypse the Angel who stands at the altar with a golden censer, offers the incense "with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne," while in a previous chapter an ambiguity of the English version disappears in the Greek original, which shows that the "golden vials" of the four and twenty elders "are the

Exod. xxx. 6, 7, 8. S. Luke i. 9. prayers of saints," while the "odours" are something super-added. That something, by the consent of all Christian teaching, is the perpetual intercession of CHRIST; and it is therefore for union with Him that the Psalmist prays, that his golden vial may be full of odours, that the Great Angel of the Covenant may present his petition amidst the smoke which rises from off the altar of gold. This is the spirit of the "Prayer of Incense" in many ancient Liturgies, of which the Armenian may serve as an example: "We offer unto Thee, O LORD CHRIST, incense with sweet smelling savour. Grant that it may ascend into Thy holy dwelling-place, and there be received by Thee, and send down upon us, we beseech Thee, the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, for to Thee, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, we ascribe glory, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen." And the lifting up of my hands. Not only in prayer, (and with a probable reference to the attitude of the Jewish priests in benediction after the evening oblation,) but in action, in zealous carrying out of GOD's will;

Offerri nequit hostia major, Quam cum homo castorum profert libamina morum, Et de virtutum munere sacra litat. No better offering can be made, Than when man gives the wine of holy life, And sacrifices pious deeds unto the LORD.

As the evening sacrifice. That is, the Minchah, or "meat-offering," of fine flour, mixed with oil and frankincense, and salted, which was added to the daily burnt-offering of a lamb, both morning and evening; but for a typical reason, a greater stress was laid on the evening rite, as appears more than once in Holy Scripture. The Minchah was, first of all, made of corn, the chief food of man, but not until it had been made, by bruising and grinding, into flour; thus typifying the sufferings of CHRIST, the Bread of Life, which fitted Him to be the offering for the sins of the world. Wheaten flour so ground is pure white, marking CHRIST's perfect holiness. It had to be fine flour for the Minchah, boulted more than once, to make it quite free from husks and other foreign matter; as in CHRIST there was no unevenness nor inequality, no changefulness nor uncertainty. Oil was poured upon it, to denote His anointing by the HOLY GHOST; frankincense because of His acceptance, sweetness, and Ascension; salt, because of His incorruptibility and preserving power, and the greater part of the offering became the food of the priests,

only a memorial of it being burnt. And as all these types looked to Him, and Him only, His Saints have delighted to see in this verse a prophecy of His intercession and sacrifice. His prayer for man's salvation ascended with Himself into heaven in perpetual mediation as the incense at the golden A. altar.

His lifting up His hands upon the Cross where they Hugo Card. were nailed, as He died at the ninth hour, (the time of the C. second Minchah) was the evening sacrifice, at the close of the Bellarmine. Mosaic day of legal ceremonies, for the sins of the whole Mal. i. 11. world; wherefore too it was that on the night before His Passion, He constituted that new Minchah of the Gospel which Malachi foretold, offered now in all places amongst Mal. i. 11. the Gentiles, and made the food of His royal priesthood. So in the Liturgy of the Abyssinian Church these two notions Canon. are united in one of the introductory prayers of incense: Ordinar. "Peace be unto thee, holy Christian Church, abode of peace. Eccl. Peace be with thee, O Virgin Mary, Mother of GOD, thou Habess. art the golden censer which didst bear the coal of living fire. Blessed be he who receiveth out of the sanctuary Him Who forgiveth sins and blotteth out transgressions, even GOD the Word, Who took flesh of thee, Who offered Himself to His FATHER as incense and a precious sacrifice: we adore Thee, O CHRIST, with Thy good FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, the Giver of Life, for Thou camest to save us. And therefore, O LORD, as my trust is in that all-sufficing oblation upon the Cross, let the lifting up of my hands in final penitence, in the evening of my days, when the shadows of the G.

night are coming fast around me, be like that evening sacrifice, and in union with it, be acceptable unto Thee, that as I have abided by Thy Cross in the sorrows of the Passion, so I may offer Thee the morning sacrifice too, in the bright dawn of the Resurrection!

Lyte. Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes, Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies, Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee, In life, in death, O LORD, abide with me. 3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth : and keep the door of my lips. S. Chrysost. in Cath. "The tongue," observes S. John Chrysostom, "is as though shut up in a prison, for the LORD has compassed and fortified it with two barriers, He has fenced it with teeth, a kind of ivory rampart, and has enclosed it between lips capable of being tightly shut, whereas all the other organs of sense are open. Has He not willed hereby to signify to us how dangerous the tongue is, and with what pains we ought to watch over it?" Nevertheless, a door is meant to be opened A. sometimes, and accordingly, "there is a time to speak." Let Eccl. iii. 7. our mouth be open when we have to confess sin, and shut when we would fain excuse it, or make any other ill use of our faculty of speech. If the Psalmist had thought absolute

Minchah is the word translated "oblation," in Mal. i. 11. in Holy Scripture, but always It is never used metaphorically denotes a tangible offering or gift, whether

made to GOD or man. silence at all times a duty, he would have asked for a wall, not a door. ”A wise man will hold his tongue till he see opportunity, but a babbler and a fool will regard no time.” It is told of Rabbi Jehudah the Holy that he proclaimed one day in the market place that he had by him an elixir of life, which had the power of renewing youth and prolonging existence. A great crowd assembled at his house to obtain the precious fluid, and leading them in, he opened the Psalter and read the verses: ”What man is he that lusteth to live, and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.” And we may well, after asking the Wise Man’s question, ”Who shall set a watch before my mouth, and a seal of wisdom upon my lips, that I fall not suddenly by them, and that my tongue destroy me not?” return to the petition in this Psalm, ”for every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame.” And therefore that was a wise saying of Xenocrates, who was asked why he had made no answer to one that reviled him, ”I have often had to repent of having spoken, but never of having been silent.”

Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control That o’er thee swell and throng; They will condense within thy soul, And change to purpose strong. 4 O let not mine heart be inclined to any evil thing: let me not be occupied in ungodly works with the men that work wickedness, lest I eat of such things as please them. The first clause of this verse, as given above, is a paraphrase, and the Hebrew runs Incline not my heart, &c., as rightly given by A.V., LXX., and Vulgate. But the sense is the same. GOD was besought to put a sentinel at the gate to prevent evil thoughts from breaking out in the form of words, and now He is asked to do more, to overcome the evil thoughts themselves in their innermost citadel, that there may be nothing harmful to break out at all. And in his saying Incline not, we learn two things, the free-will of man, and that the heart is not naturally wicked, but that evil comes of sloth and selfishness, and is something added on for the injury of the heart, instead of being an integral part of it. All the latter part of the verse deals first with idolatry and the dissolute orgies of heathen festivals, from which the Psalmist prays to be delivered, knowing full well even under the Law that which the Apostle taught his converts in later time: ”The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, not to GOD, and I would A. C.

A. S. Bruno Carth. S. Luke xi. 39.

not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the LORD, and the cup of devils, ye cannot be partakers of the LORD’s table, and of the table of devils. Lest I eat of such things as please them, rather, of their dainties, and this not only spoken of meat offered to idols, but of any indulgences unfitted for GOD’s servants, as we read of Eleazar the scribe, who suffered death in the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes rather than eat swine’s flesh. So too, in a more modern day

it is recorded of the martyrs of Gorcum, that during the brief imprisonment which preceded their slaughter, they were given no food except flesh-meat upon a fast-day which occurred, but declined to touch it, on the ground that though necessity is usually held to dispense a fast, yet as this was no accident, but a thing done in deliberate mockery of a religious custom, it was better to endure severe hunger rather than suffer the scoffers to have their way. But the rendering of the LXX. and Vulgate varies a good deal from the English versions. It runs, Incline not my heart unto words of wickedness, to excuse excuses in sins, with the men that work iniquity, and I will not communicate with their chosen.

And they take the whole verse of the sin of self-excuse, interpreting the Hebrew idiom excuse excuses as denoting the self-deception which follows on a false plea in defence, when the offender endeavours to persuade himself that the excuses he has made are true and reasonable. Cardinal Hugo sums up the commonest excuses made for sin: accident; pressure of poverty; requirements of rank and wealth; fate; human frailty; ignorance; violence of temptation; and the example of others. The Carthusian supplies more; palliation of evil, laying the blame on another, denial of the facts. And to these we may add the pithy saying of a heathen philosopher, ”The worst of all excuses is, ’I didn’t think.’” The closing words of the Vulgate, I will not communicate with their chosen or elect are variously taken to mean their dainties, or their leaders, and in the latter case, these are severally described as all people of the stamp of the Pharisees, cleaning the outside of the cup and platter, or as heresiarchs or other encouragers of falsehood in any form.

5 Let the righteous rather smite me friendly : and reprove me. 6 But let not their precious balms break my head : yea, I will pray yet against their wickedness.

These two verses, as they stand together, present considerable difficulty. It is not clear whether the first clause of verse 6 is in contrast with verse 5, as above, or whether it should be translated so as to be a further development of the idea there; that is, whether the precious balms, or rather oil, be that of the righteous or of the wicked. The former is the view of the Chaldee, which paraphrases Let him not take the oil of the anointing of the sanctuary away from my head; of the A.V. It shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head; of most modern critics, who take it that the reproof is oil for the head, let not my head refuse it. On the other hand, the LXX., Syriac, Æthiopic, Arabic, and Vulgate agree in translating Let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head; which is not very far from the Prayer Book version. In either case, the ultimate sense is the same, and is akin to that other saying, ”Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful,” taking, as they all do, the oil of sinners to be flattery. Two other interpretations of the verse are so remarkable that they ought not to be omitted.

One is a variant of the Chaldee, which takes the words of the King of Israel saying, Let the priest who anointed me with the holy anointing rebuke me, and let not the

royal unction of my head, my kingly rank, withdraw me from receiving wholesome correction. The other is Ewald's, Let not oil anoint my head, where there is no assignment of the oil to either good or bad, but it is taken as a mark of festivity, from which the Psalmist abstains altogether while the wickedness against which he protests is in the ascendant. The last clause of verse 6 is almost as much debated, and in much the same way, as the preceding one. It may stand as above, agreeing with the Chaldee and Syriac; or it may be My prayer shall be in their calamities, as A.V., or My prayer is yet in their good pleasure, as LXX. and Vulgate; both of which may be taken either as intercession for the righteous, or depreciation against the wicked, or better, for their amendment on their punishment.

7 Let their judges be overthrown in stony places: that they may hear my words, for they are sweet. That is, let punishment overtake the leaders, that those who have followed them may repent in time, and listen to wholesome counsel, and to the glad tidings of amnesty for all save the chief offenders. Overthrown in stony places may mean either dashed down precipices on the rocks below, or driven out into barren or desolate regions, where their feastings must needs be at an end. The Vulgate translates the first clause Their judges, joined to the rock, are swallowed up. The Latins, agreeing that the rock must mean CHRIST, differ in their glosses. S. Hilary takes it of the Doom. These evil judges, with their prince, shall be swallowed up when once they come in contact with CHRIST in judgment. And he further explains the remainder of the sentence, They shall hear My words, for they have been able, as meaning either, They have no excuse, for they had ample opportunity of hearing in time; or They shall hear My words, and A.

perish, for their words are able to swallow them up. S. Augustine takes it in a somewhat different sense, Their judges, the chief teachers of Pagan philosophy, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and so forth, when brought close to the Rock, which is CHRIST, for comparison, prove to be nothing, and are swallowed up, because His words are stronger than all theirs, and prevail against them. Another interpretation, for the most part following a variant juxta petram, that is, beside the Rock, but not on it, takes it of the overthrow of heretics, coming very near to the Gospel in their words and doctrines, but not really founded upon CHRIST. But a more general exposition is the gentler one which connects the verse with the preceding. My prayer shall be in their good will, that it may one day be pleasant to them, and even to their chief leaders, to be joined to the Rock, and so converted to CHRIST, as to be swallowed up in Him. One other interpretation, given by S. Bernard, is singular, and allied to this last one, that upright judges ought to be transformed into rock, in their love of justice and firmness of purpose, so that nothing plastic may be found in them to warp them from the right way.

S. Bernard, Serm. x. in Ps. xci., Qui habitat. 8 Our bones lie scattered before the pit : like as when one breaketh and heweth wood upon the earth. This verse,

sufficiently obscure in itself, is further complicated by the interpolation of the word wood in the English versions. The metaphor is from ploughing, not woodcutting, and seems to mean, Our bones lie neglected and unburied at the mouth of the grave, like the clods of earth along the track of the furrows made by a plough. The meaning is the same if wood be inserted, for then the comparison will be to the neglected fragments and chips lying about where wood-cutters have been at work. The LXX. and Vulgate read As the thickness of the earth is burst upon the earth, so are our bones beside hell, that is, , Hades. Some understand this exactly as above, of the broken clods of the furrows, and S. Augustine, taking the bones as those of the unburied Christian martyrs, explains that this breaking up of the earth's (that is, the Church, lowly and despoiled) thickness by the furrows of persecution, fitted it to bring forth abundant fruit for the LORD. Some modern writers, too, though not following the Messianic interpretation, take the verse as a promise of seed-time and national revival. Two other interpretations, however, accord better with the mournful tone of the verse, that of S. Gregory Nazianzen, who takes it of divisions and schisms in the Church, parting her very best and strongest sons, the bones of her frame, asunder, and bringing her near destruction; and that of Denys à Rykel, who understands the verse of the deadly peril into which the arts of flatterers bring the strongest and healthiest powers and resolutions of the mind, scattering them away from unity and fixity of resolve, and bringing them near to hell.

9 But mine eyes look unto thee, O LORD GOD : in thee is my trust, O cast not out my soul. I look not to the threats of the persecutors, to the racks of the executioners, mine eyes look unto Thee, O LORD GOD, hanging for me upon the Cross, and promising me there salvation. I come to Thee for shelter from the men that work wickedness, O cast not out my soul, to wander houseless, and fall into their hands as they seek after it to destroy it. It is the cry of the Anima Christi : A. O good JESU, hear me, Within Thy wounds hide me, Suffer me not to be parted from Thee, From the malicious enemy defend me. The literal Hebrew is Pour not out my soul, as water spilt Agellius. on the ground, but keep it in Thy cup of salvation. 10 Keep me from the snare that they have laid for me : and from the traps of the wicked doers.

The LXX. and Vulgate read scandals and stumbling-blocks in the second clause, and thence the commentators distinguish here two dangers of the soul; the hidden deceit of Satan, luring by evil thoughts and desires, and the open peril of wicked men prompting to wrongdoing by their example. And taking it, with many commentators, as a prayer against false teachers, it is well illustrated by that prayer of the Coptic Liturgy: "Pluck up idolatry utterly out of the world. Break down and humble Satan and all his evil power speedily under our feet. Abolish scandals and those who cause them. Let there be an end of the mischievous divisions of heresies. As at all times, so now too, O LORD, bring low the enemies of Thy Church. Break down their pride of heart, teach them their weakness quickly, stay their envyings,

their plottings, their mischiefs, their evil speakings, which they practise against us. O LORD, bring them all to nought. Scatter their counsels, O GOD, Who didst scatter the counsel of Ahithophel. Arise, O GOD, and let all Thine enemies be scattered, and let all that hate Thy holy Name flee before Thy face, but let Thy people for ever and for evermore abide in blessing, and do Thy will."

11 Let the ungodly fall into their own nets together : and let me ever escape them. The word here rendered together, , also means at one time, or in one place, and accordingly, it is more usual to interpret the verse thus: Let the ungodly fall into their own nets, whilst I at the same time pass over. But the LXX. and Vulgate have translated it as though it meant alone (whereas in fact it always implies union of at least two), and read, But I am alone until I pass over. In this wise, the stress is rather on the rescue of but one righteous amidst the many wicked, than on the rescue itself, and out of this S. Augustine has developed a most beautiful meaning, albeit not to be drawn from the Hebrew. "I"—he puts the words in the mouth of CHRIST—"am alone, with no one to help, no one to understand, no one to sympathize, no one to die for Me, till I pass over, till that Passover comes, when I shall depart out of the world to My FATHER. Thenceforward I shall not be alone, for the one grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying there, will give birth to a vast harvest of waving corn, golden in the sunshine." Others take it of the Church, solitary and alone, or else, united together, a mourning widow in the world, waiting for the Bridegroom, until she pass over to Him, or of any faithful soul, alone, because having no fellowship with sinners, alone, because having only one hope, one desire, all through its pilgrimage here, that of passing over to the Land where it shall no more be alone, but ever with the LORD.

Glory be to the FATHER, unto Whom the Son crieth; glory be to the Son, Who crieth to Him; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the fire eternal, wherewith our prayer is kindled to be directed as incense in the sight of the LORD. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Set a watch, O LORD, before our mouth, that we utter not idle things, that reproved by Thy mercy, we may be defended from all scandals and wickedness. (1.) O LORD GOD, offering unto Thee the evening festival of praise on the day of our holy solemnity, we beseech Thee to bow down Thy merciful ear to the prayers of Thy humble people. Let the prayer of my supplication be sweet incense in Thy sight; let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice. Let this be profitable to Thy servants, O LORD, for their sure protection, that in every hour and every season we may be guarded in our daily acts and watched in our nightly sleep by the gift of Thy mercy. (11.) O GOD, Whose Name is praised from the rising to the setting of the sun, let our prayer be set forth in Thy sight as the incense, and the lifting up of our hands, as an evening sacrifice, fulfil the solemnity. (11.)

Hearken to our voice, O LORD, as we cry unto Thee, reprove us, not in anger, but in mercy when we sin, set a watch before our mouth, and suffer not our heart to incline to words of sin and wickedness, but cause our tongue to rejoice evermore in Thy glorious praise. (1.)

Psalm 142

TITLE. Maschil of David: a Prayer when he was in the cave. LXX. and Vulgate: Of understanding for David, when he was in the cave, a Prayer.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, returning from the prison of the flesh, hath satisfied the expectation of the righteous. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, considering and seeing that there was no helper to acknowledge Him in the Passion. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER touching the Jews. VEN. BEDE. David, a refugee because of Saul's plots, when he lay hid in the cave, prayed, whereby he signified that the LORD CHRIST in the body would do so before His Passion. For as for understanding is prefixed to this prayer, it is meant that David understood amidst the straits and hidings of his flight what the LORD would suffer from the Jews, and how He would beseech the FATHER. In the first part, the LORD cries to the FATHER, declaring the wicked craft of the Jewish persecution. I cried unto the Lord with My voice. In the second, He prays that He may be delivered out of the prison of the grave, because the faith of all the Saints hung upon His Resurrection. I cried unto Thee, O Lord, and said, Thou art My hope.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, concerning the famine which lasted three years because of Saul's guilt. Spiritually, the words of them that contend, and the supplication and prayer that bringeth us near to GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The voice of him who contendeth according to GOD. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm in prayer.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. { Friday: Vespers. [Maundy Thursday, Good Monastic. { Friday, Passion, Five Wounds, Shroud, Seven Dolours.] Ambrosian. Friday: Vespers. [Good Friday: Matins.] Parisian. Tuesday: Vespers. [Good Friday: Vespers.] Lyons. Saturday: Compline. [Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: Vespers.] Quignon. Friday: Vespers. Eastern Church. Daily: Vespers. Gregorian and Monastic. Let my portion, O LORD, be in the land of the living. [Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: I looked upon my right hand and saw that there was no man that would know Me.] Ambrosian. I will pour out my complaint before Thee, * O LORD, deliver me. K. K. K. [Good Friday: as Gregorian, and K. K. K.] Parisian. The righteous wait for me,

until Thou repay me, O LORD. [Good Friday: There was a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it to His mouth.] Lyons. [Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: as Gregorian.] 1 I cried unto the Lord with my voice: yea, even unto the Lord did I make my supplication. 2 I poured out my complaint before him : and showed him of my trouble.

The words here, more true of David's Son than of David himself, are set in beautiful order. First the voice utters its cry of pain; then this cry is shaped by faith and longing into a supplication; thirdly, it does not come merely from the lips, but is poured out from the deep fountain of the heart; next, it is before Him, not carelessly, but with the reverence due to God's presence; lastly, it is trouble which he shows to God, as his one defence and refuge in time of need. Nor is it necessary to understand an audible cry; rather the secret call of the heart, because, whether we take the cave to be Engedi or Adullam, David was in sore peril, and a cry heard by his pursuers might have led to his seizure and execution. And therefore my voice, the voice of my inward heart and affection, is different from the voice of my body, and clearer, for devout thought is a cry to God. That prayer which the Son of God poured out, did not sink into the ground, trying to bury itself, but rose as a pure and sparkling fountain upwards to the height of Divine love. Our prayer should be a fountain too, fed by those four springs of mercy, grace, wisdom, and love, which rise from the wounds of CHRIST's hands and feet; while He gives us Himself the fount of life from the wound of His Heart, whence flowed the twin great Sacraments of the Church.

And those words poured out teach us that in prayer we should not try to keep anything back from God, but should show Him all that is in our hearts, and that in His presence in our closet, with the door shut, but not before men. And the Carmelite adds that there is much force in the words with my voice, twice repeated (as in Heb., A.V., Vulgate, &c. to show us that we ought to pray to God directly for ourselves, and in person, and not be contented with an Ora pro me addressed to some one else. And my voice for another

A. reason, that when men cry to GOD for revenge, or for injury to any of their fellowmen, they cry with the voice of a wild beast, or of a serpent. 3 When my spirit was in heaviness, thou knewest my path : in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

It is the Agony followed by the Betrayal. His spirit was in heaviness, when He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; but His FATHER knew His path, "and there appeared unto Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him: In the way wherein He walked there "was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples. And Judas also which betrayed Him, knew the place : for JESUS ofttimes resorted thither with His disciples. It was there they privily laid a snare for Him; since "he that betrayed Him gave a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss,

that same is He; hold Him fast. Because of the Vulgate rendering, In the failing of my spirit from me, some of the Latins who interpret the verse of the LORD JESUS, take it either of His yielding up His human will, or of His giving up the ghost on the Cross, rather than of the Agony, and apply the latter clause to the whole series of plots against Him, especially such as aimed at proving Him an offender against the Law of Moses, that way in which He ever walked. But they more commonly follow the view that spiritual weakness and proneness to fall away in time of temptation is meant, and therefore that CHRIST speaks as the Head of His feeble members. S. Augustine takes the words to be a martyr's prayer, that he may not trust in his own strength, but rely on that counsel and promise :

"When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your FATHER, which speaketh in you. GOD knows the paths of such an athlete, and sees him to be standing valiantly in fight when his enemies suppose him to be cast down; to be walking in paths which they cannot see, deeming him a bound and motionless captive; paths, not roads, narrow and straight, such as they have never trod on. There, in the way, in the confession of CHRIST, it is that they lay the snare for the martyr; yet not in the very way itself, but close beside it, as we had it in a previous Psalm, by upbraiding him with adoring a crucified GOD. Spoken by one of the members of CHRIST's Body, it may be taken either as the acknowledgment of true humility, not trusting in human strength or merit, yet sure that GOD knows and approves all the ways of righteousness and charity in which His Saint has striven to walk; or as the confession of frailty and proneness to fall; in either case looking to

A. A.V. God for protection against the snares privily laid in this way, in the pilgrimage of this world, such as heresies, schisms, vices, and the like, by our ghostly foes. Cardinal Hugo sums up the most frequent snares in the ways of our Christian calling; hypocrisy in the way of continence; vain-glory, in that of bodily austerity; rigorism in the way of righteousness; false pity in that of mercy; lavishness in bounty; carnal affection in love, presumption in hope; despair in fear; rage in zeal; rashness in courage; cunning in prudence; slowness in counsel; obstinacy in firmness. The whole prayer well befits a servant of God in the time of sore sickness and approaching death, when the thought that He knows every hidden path, every secret deed and thought, every forgotten action of the past, flashes on the soul, and when the evil spirits strive to the very last to shake all confidence in Divine love and mercy.

4 I looked also upon my right hand : and saw there was no man that would know me. It is rather an appeal to God to behold his desolate condition : Look upon my right hand and see. Then all the disciples "forsook Him and fled," and Peter "began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this Man of Whom ye speak." They upon His

right hand, His own disciples, and the very chief even amongst them, who will be at His right hand once again in glory, they all fulfilled that prophecy, ”I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” That would know me. They knew only the Man of sorrows, the Carpenter’s Son; for had they known the Eternal Word, doubtless they would have remained beside Him. Spoken of the Saint on earth, when he looks upon his right hand, when he turns his gaze on Jesus, the Right Hand of God, when he neglects and turns from earthly and temporal things, which belong to the left hand, then no man will know him; if they do not hate and persecute him to the death, as they did to the martyrs of old time, they will at the least neglect, despise, and vilify him. And taking the verse, like the previous one, of the dying Christian, it may be fitly understood of the uselessness of all help save from God Himself. So goes up that cry of the Holy Eastern Church for the departed :

Woe, for the bitter struggle That racks the parting soul; Woe, for the tears she poureth When none can make her whole! She looketh to the Angels, But supplicates in vain; Her hands to man she stretcheth, But thence no help may gain. Then mindful, dearest brethren, How soon this life must cease, Pray we to CHRIST for mercy, And for our brother’s peace. 5 I had no place to flee unto : and no man cared for my soul.

The literal Hebrew is Refuge, or flight, perished from me, A.V. marg. which is the rendering of the Vulgate. Flight perishes G. from a man in two ways; when he is safely lodged in prison, and cannot escape; when he is firm in valour and constancy, and will not. The LORD JESUS had a place to flee unto, when Herod pursued Him in His childhood, and He was carried S. Matt. ii. into Egypt, because His hour was not yet come; but when 14. that hour did come, and the traitor came with the soldiers to lay hold of Him, ”JESUS knowing all things that should S. John come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom xviii. 4. seek ye? They answered Him, JESUS of Nazareth. JESUS D. C. saith unto them, I am He. No man cared for His soul, R. on the one hand, Pilate had not courage to abide by his first acquittal, and there was not a single voice raised to defend His innocence, to ask that He might be spared when the sentence of death was recorded against Him: ”They all say S. Matt. unto him, Let Him be crucified; ”then answered all the xxvii. 22, 25. people and said, His Blood be upon us, and on our children. No man cared for His soul, for there was none to speak A. word of comfort to Him in His Passion, when He was left alone to die for all. As regards His Saints, He has Himself given them two counsels;

”When they persecute you S. Matt. x. in this city, flee ye unto another; and then, lest they should 23. flee when it is their duty to stand firm, He saith in another S. John x. place, ”He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose 12. own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth. Wherefore

His Apostle teaches us, ”Hereby perceive we the love, because He laid down His 1 S. John iii. life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the 16. thren. When it is needful to do this, flight perishes from the Saint, for he will not move, and even if he must move in body, will remain unshaken in mind. No man careth for his soul, either in the way of endeavouring to save him from an unjust death; or taking the more literal rendering, No man seeketh after his soul, because if any one did so seek, he would find the soul clinging close to CHRIST, and that he could not discover till he had himself come near to CHRIST by imitating the life of one of His Saints.

6 I cried unto thee, O LORD, and said : Thou art my hope, and my portion in the land of the living. He did so cry, and that ”with a loud voice,” when He said, A.V. marg. G. C. A. S. Luke xxiii. ”FATHER, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit;” He claimed His portion in the land of the living, His rights over that good land as the King’s Son, when He said to the penitent thief, ”Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” In this land of the dying, God is our hope, as He was of our Head, for we do not as yet see Him, but in that land very far off, where our eyes shall see the King in His beauty, there He will be our portion. God, observes S. Augustine, gives a portion in the land of the living, but makes no gift from Himself save Himself. For what could He give to any one that loves Him, except Himself? In that land of the living, His Church, built up of living stones, and unlike the dead and vanished Synagogue, CHRIST is our portion even upon earth, giving Himself, as He does, to each and all of His people in the Sacrament of His love; and blessing them in a manner that those who are not within His Church know not; just as in the first sense of the words land of the living, it was only in Canaan that the worship of the True God could be found, and an exile from it had to dwell in the midst of idolaters, and yearn for the time when he could again join in the solemn rites of the sanctuary.

7 Consider my complaint : for I am brought very low. H. He was indeed brought very low, for ”He humbled Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was obedient unto the death of the Cross.” And it is true of His Saints also, humbled outwardly by their persecutors with afflictions, humbled inwardly by themselves in holy confession; and therefore to be lifted up by God both visibly and invisibly, here in this life, invisibly by the firmness He gave their souls, visibly, in the Resurrection, when even that part of them on which their enemies were able to wreak their will, shall be restored to more than its first vigour and beauty. 8 O deliver me from my persecutors : for they are too strong for me.

H. It is not as though the Son could not deliver Himself, for He saith, ”I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” But out of filial reverence to the FATHER, He does homage to His Majesty in this wise,

not pleading any weakness of His own, but declaring the almightiness of Him that begat Him. By His own abdication of the powers He had in Himself, or could have obtained by prayer, He suffered His enemies to become too strong for Him, to lead Him away and crucify Him; and therefore He asks for that deliverance at His FATHER's hands which He would not achieve with His own; and yet, because of the perfect conformity of His will with the FATHER's, He was delivered out of their hands when He pleased and as He pleased. The Saints, when they use this prayer, do so for the deliverance of the soul rather than of the body, albeit both are assailed by their enemies; who are usually too strong for them in this world in two different ways; temporal prosperity, so as to be able to bring rank, power, wealth, and popular favour to bear against the servants of GOD; and criminal malignity, so as to be unscrupulous about the means of persecution. And as we wrestle not only "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places," we have indeed sore need of crying to GOD to deliver us from such powerful foes.

A. 9 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy Name: which thing if thou wilt grant me, then shall the righteous resort unto my company.

If the words are David's, then they are a prayer that he may come safely out of the cave which served as his prison, may pay his worship publicly in GOD's holy place, and be surrounded at once, in making his appearance, with a band of tried and valiant friends, ready to maintain his cause against all the forces of Saul. But spoken by the Son of David, they have a deeper meaning, of resurrection from that new tomb hewn out in the rock, to the mouth of which a great stone was rolled. That I may give thanks unto Thy Name, because the Resurrection of the SON is the proclamation of the FATHER's power displayed in Him. The righteous wait for Me, until Thou repay Me (LXX., Vulg.) for My Apostles and other disciples are waiting, in fear and trembling, indeed, but not without hope, till Thou raise Me up again. But the words of the last clause ought rather to run either as in A.V., shall compass me about, or, with Chaldee, Symmachus, and S. Jerome, shall make a crown, either of praise to GOD, or a crown for themselves in the Name of their victorious King. And thus we come to the prayer of the Church, Bring my soul out of the miseries and straits of this world's prison, that I may give thanks unto Thy Name in the glorious liberty of the children of GOD. Many interpreters understand the prison to be the body, but S. Augustine, although he mentions this gloss, and admits that there is something to be said for it, on the ground of the liability of our body to pain and corruption, yet does not altogether approve it, on the other ground that the human body is GOD's

A. A. A. Phil. i. 23.

creation, destined to future glory, and that moreover unrepentant criminals, going out of the body, are not thereby delivered from prison, but rather cast into worse

confinement. But Arnobius protests more strongly, saying, "We cannot be so bold as to call the human body a prison, though some think so, for the Apostle Paul bears witness that it is the 'Temple of God.' But we suffer imprisonment, when we have no delight in prayer, when we have a distaste for spiritual dainties, and fail, shut in sometimes by the bars of earthly needs, and sometimes by the gates of pleasure. The true prison of the soul is within thee, and there is need to cry with all thy might to CHRIST, to bring thee out of it. Too great haste to be out of the world is not charity, and we ought to desire what the Apostle says of himself, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with CHRIST, which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. But the prayer may be taken without any doubt as a petition for deliverance from the sin which is in the world, and also for the promise of the Resurrection;

that on the one hand the soul may duly advance by holy contemplation of divine things in spiritual life even here, and constantly join in GOD's worship, and on the other may pass from the gates of the grave into a joyful eternity of praise, for which the righteous are waiting, until GOD repays them for all the toil and pain they have borne for Him here below; or taking the truer sense of the passage, that when that Bride of CHRIST, whom He loves as His own soul, is brought finally out of the prison of earth, then, whether we take the last words as denoting the wreaths which the rejoicing victors put upon their brows, or the circle they form around their Monarch's throne, we shall find both meanings fulfilled in the exulting hymn which the Church puts in the mouth of her LORD Himself:

The Hymn, In domo Patris. The Virgins walk in beauty Amidst their lily bowers, The coronals assuming Of amaranthine flowers; The Penitents, attaining Full pardon in My sight, Leave off the vest of sackcloth, And don the robe of white. The bondsman and the noble, The peasant and the king, All gird one glorious Monarch In one eternal ring. And so: Glory be to the FATHER, our Hope, to Whom we make our supplication; glory be to the SON, our portion in the land of the living; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who comforteth our spirit when in heaviness. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O LORD, we make our prayer unto Thee with a lowly voice, beseeching Thy lovingkindness, that by Thy help Who art our Hope, we may obtain with Thine elect a portion in the land of the living. (1.) Mercifully be at hand to help us, O LORD, as we pour forth our prayer in Thy sight, be Thou our protector, Who art our Redemption. Guide our understandings with Thy goodness, and oversee our paths with Thy calm wisdom, that we may in such wise pass quickly in our longing for Thee through the snares hidden in this way of Thine wherein we walk, that we may hurry with the step of faith into a region pleasant unto Thee. (11.) Bring our soul out of trouble, O LORD, Who didst for us bear spitting and stripes, that brought

out of the prison of this world, we may sing with due praise after our departure the triumphs of Thy Cross. (11.)

We humbly pray and beseech Thee, O LORD, that Thou wouldst receive the voice of our cry, and bringing us out of the prison of the grave, cause us to be carried from death thither where Thou didst prepare a shining dwelling and repose for the thief on the Cross. (5.) Cause us, O LORD, to avoid the hidden snares of our enemies in the way of this present life wherein we walk, that they who persecute us may not prevail, but depart free from us, at Thy command. (1.)

Psalm 143

TITLE. A Psalm of David. LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of David when his son [Absalom, Vulg.] persecuted him.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, set upon the height of the Cross, stretched out His hands either to an unbelieving people, or to the FATHER. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, or the Voice of the Church to the LORD that He would deliver her out of every trouble and teach her to do His will because He is her GOD. A Voice to the LORD. The Voice of Paul and the Apostles. Also a prophecy of CHRIST. VEN. BEDE. This history, how David was persecuted by his son, is well known from the lesson in Kings. And this similitude, as some will have it, is extended to every Christian, who is harassed in the bitterness of this world by raging sins, as it were his own children, but against this is opposed remedial penitence, which this Psalm contains. Although the prophet wrote many penitential Psalms, yet as he is wholesomely tested in exact proportion to the pricking of heart which he feels, he seems all the purer to divine inspection. Therefore in the first supplication, he beseeches the LORD CHRIST not to enter into judgment with His servant, but asks His mercy to help his trouble. Hear my prayer, O Lord, &c. In the second, he prays that he may attain pardon quickly, that led into the way of truth, he may be delivered from the snares of the enemies. Hear me, O Lord, and that soon.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David. Concerning the Edomites who came against him. And the prayer of him that giveth thanks at all times for troubles. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A prayer of one confessing. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, and prayer, and supplication.

Various Uses.
Ambrosian. Friday of Second Week: Lauds. [Tuesday before Easter: Matins. Office of Dead: Lauds.] Eastern Church. Last Psalm of Hexapsalmos at Lauds. Great Compline.

Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. In Thy truth * hear me, O LORD. [Good Friday: My spirit

is vexed within me, and my heart within me is desolate.] Ambrosian. [Tuesday before Easter: Deliver me * O LORD, from mine enemies, for I flee unto Thee. K. K. K.] Parisian. [Easter Eve: I will penetrate into the lower parts of the earth, and I will behold all that sleep, and I will give light to them that hope in the LORD, (Ecclus. xxiv. 45, Vulg.)] Lyons. [Good Friday: as Gregorian.] Mozarabic. O let me hear Thy loving-kindness betimes in the morning. 1 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and consider my desire: hearken unto me for thy truth and righteousness' sake. In this, the last of the seven Penitential Psalms, the Fathers have unanimously seen a prophecy of CHRIST'S Passion, and have dwelt on the LXX. title, as foreshadowing, in the ungrateful rebellion of Absalom against David, the rejection of CHRIST by the Jewish nation, His own peculiar children. The Psalm opens with a suppliant request for an

H. A. S. Greg. Magnus. audience of GOD, not venturing to present the petition till this has been accorded. Then the petitioner asks that GOD may hear him in His truth, because He is Very GOD, eternal, Almighty, and the Creator of all things, and no mere false dream of man's imagination; of wood, or stone, or metal. Next he asks to be heard in GOD's righteousness, knowing that with Him there is neither the arbitrary caprice nor the wanton injustice of earthly kings and magistrates, but a thorough knowledge of man's frivolity, and a just and ready willingness to make all due allowance for it. And if it be asked, how the sinner, conscious of his own falsehood and iniquity, (and deprecating the divine judgment in the next verse,) can ask GOD to hear him in such a manner; the answer is, that the force of the appeal is not in man's character, but in GOD's, and it lays claim to the promises which He has made of amnesty to the repentant sinner. Wherefore the Apostle in almost the same words teaches us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

GOD hears us in His truth and righteousness by accepting our prayers in and through His Only-Begotten SON, in Whom all His promises were made true and fulfilled, by Whose life and death He justifies sinners and makes them righteous. 2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. When GOD is said to enter into judgment with man, it does not mean that He takes His seat as Judge to examine him, but that He becomes man's opponent in a suit, to try their several rights: and against any such contest as this the Saints ever make their prayer, knowing how unfit they are to be brought for an instant into comparison with Him, how unavailing the effort would be to establish their own righteousness and take no account of His. And it is therefore well said with Thy servant, for it is below GOD's dignity to plead against one who is no more than His slave, albeit He has deigned to call him friend. That runaway slave returns to his Master, and throws himself on His compassion, knowing full well that if the rule he has broken be produced against him, he has no counter plea to adduce, and that such is not only his own case, but that of the holiest and wisest Saint when

brought into contrast with the absolute perfection of GOD; and that because of the remaining taint of original sin, the acquired defect of actual sin, the number of separate acts of wrong-doing, the continuance in faultiness, and finally, because if there be any good thing to set

1 S. John i. A. against all this evil, it is none of our own, but the gift of God Himself. Nor is this unfitness to come into contention with God confined to man, for the Hebrew and all the older versions have simply every living [creature], and thus even the Angels are included, for their righteousness, pure, strong, and exalted though it be, is not only unspeakably beneath God's, but is conferred on them by Him, so that their nature is not of itself inherently incapable of unrighteousness, but is sustained by the grace of Him Who is primal and essential holiness of Himself alone. And therefore the words are not to be understood as though declaring that there is no way in which any man ever will be justified, seeing that the Saints will at the day of Judgment be not only justified in God's sight, but by God Himself; but to teach us of ourselves that "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" and of God, "Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not clean in His sight. How much less then man, a worm, and the son of man, a worm?" It is in this sense, therefore, and this only, that the words can be ascribed, as they are, by so many Saints, to the LORD JESUS, for He speaks here of the derived and conferred holiness of His Humanity, not of His natural holiness as the Eternal WORD.

3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground: he hath laid me in the darkness, as the men that have been long dead. A.

For. The position of this word, coming as it does immediately after the confession of faultiness in the preceding verse, is an acknowledgment of the justice of the chastisement as sent from God, a lesson which is lost if the for be taken merely as the reason of the prayer of the first verse. If we take the words as CHRIST's, then we may remember how the enemy, even Satan, persecuted His soul, and Judas pursued after his Master's life; while, understanding them of CHRIST's Body, the Church, the same ghostly enemy persecutes men still, and one Judas succeeds another in the ranks of her foes. Their aim is the same throughout all ages, to smite the life down to the ground, to turn away our thoughts and hopes from heavenly things, and bow them down to the decaying joys of earth, to lay us in the darknesses of ignorance and sin, like the men that have been long dead in their trespasses, and have hardened themselves against repentance, or, as the Vulgate reads, like the dead of the world (sæculi), those who have no thought or desires beyond this present life. It is some plea for God's help and mercy that man can say that "an enemy hath done this," that the Fall was not spontaneous and wilful, like that of the rebel Angels, but the result of strong temptation from a crafty and powerful foe.

Spoken by CHRIST, the words, As the men that have been long dead, point to Satan's error touching Him, as believing that slaying Him and casting Him into the grave would blot out His teaching and efface His memory; just as those who have been long dead fade away from the recollection of those who knew them best, and the very epitaphs on their graves grow illegible by little and little: nay, adds a Greek Father, buried under one layer of earth after another, with many another grave overlying them, and so utterly forgotten.

4 Therefore is my spirit vexed within me: and my heart within me is desolate. His spirit was vexed within Him, when He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and He adds, My heart within Me is desolate, because He was left alone and deserted by those who had been His disciples, and who found their faith exceeded by that of a robber. Vexed spirit signifies the near approach of danger; desolate heart points to the confusion and baffling of human wisdom, and that there remains no confidence in any aid, save GOD'S. And spoken of the returning sinner, in awe of Divine judgment, the words denote the trouble of man's intellect and affections when finding himself far from GOD, for the spirit is vexed and wearied at being dragged downward by earthly corruption from reaching those heavenly things to which it aspires, while the heart is desolate and troubled at the remembrance of its sin and at the distance it has wandered from GOD. And within me adds to the stress, because it tells us that so long as a sinner neglects and despises all which makes for his eternal health, he is as it were beside himself, is unconscious of his malady, and thinks that he sees when he is blind; but the first movements of penitence cause him to return within himself.

5 Yet do I remember the time past; I muse upon all thy works: yea, I exercise myself in the works of thy hands. The time past. Rather, the days of old (A.V., LXX., Vulg., &c.) It is no little consolation in time of trouble to cast one's eyes backward and consider that the same GOD Who guides the course of events now is He Who wrought all the deliverances in times past, to bid oneself "Look at the generations of old, and see; did ever any trust in the LORD, and was confounded? or did any abide in His fear, and was forsaken? or whom did He ever despise that called upon Him?" And we have not only the past of history to fall back upon for comfort, but the present around us, the A. S. Matt. xxvi. 38. R whole visible creation with its constant lessons of GOD's Acts xiv. 17. power, wisdom, and love; for "He left Himself not without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." When the words are put in the mouth of the LORD Wisd. ix. 9. JESUS, He speaks as the Eternal Wisdom, "which knoweth Thy works, and was present when Thou madest the world, and knew what was acceptable in Thy sight, and right in Thy commandments;" and thus the Divine memory and knowledge of the WORD, understanding the whole plan of man's salvation, the entire order of GOD's Providence, constrained the Man CHRIST JESUS. Spoken by one of CHRIST's members, man recalls the state

of innocence from which he fell, and the penalty inflicted, ponders GOD's dealings in the past, and is awed and penitent as he considers them. S. Greg. Mag. D. C.

6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul gaspeth unto thee as a thirsty land.

C. Albeit the Psalmist has in countless places foretold the Coming of the LORD the SAVIOUR, here he has further shown us, in the stretching forth of the hands, the effigy of the Holy Cross. For he who prays with outstretched hands, imitates that Cross of the Redeemer, which though inflicted as a punishment by the unbelieving Jews, was granted to believers for their salvation. So did Moses, when he fought with Amalek, prevailing when he stretched out his hands, yielding when he lowered them. We too may, like our LORD, stretch out our hands to GOD, and that in three ways, by bringing Him sacrifice, by making our prayers, by busying ourselves in good works. And thus it is said of the virtuous woman, "She stretcheth out her hands unto the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. And what is the reward of those who do so, who see the Poor and Needy in His suffering members? "Then saith He to the man [which had his hand withered], Stretch forth thine hand; and he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole. As a thirsty land. Three things befall land which lacks moisture. It becomes either hard or barren, unclothed with herbage, undecked with leaves and flowers; it turns to light dust, so as to be swept away by the winds; and it is full of great fissures.

So the heart which is dry and unnurtured by the grace of GOD becomes unmerciful, unfruitful in good works, frivolous and easily carried away by every change, and lacking in unity. Well for us if our soul does gasp to GOD, and to none other, if we can say in the spirit of our Master when He stretched out His hands, "I thirst. We have water in abundance, but it is the salt and unfertilizing sea of bitterness and sin. Nothing but the fresh rain of heaven, the sweet irrigating streams sent forth by the LORD among the hills can be of any avail. Pray ye therefore: "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation. God's desire to grant the prayer is not less than man's to make it, as we are told that,

The parched earth loves the rain, And holy heaven, which is full of rain, Loves upon earth to fall. And therefore the Psalmist confidently urges his petition: 7 Hear me, O LORD, and that soon, for my spirit waxeth faint: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

It is the dying prayer of CHRIST on the Cross, before commending His spirit into His FATHER's hands, asking not only to be heard, but that soon, lest if His Resurrection should be delayed, the faith of His disciples might utterly fail, and the unbelief of the Jews be confirmed, accounting Him as having fallen under the general lot of mankind, and as having descended into a grave whence He should not return. In the mouth of the penitent, thirsting for GOD's grace and pardon, these same

words express his confession that his pride and self-will are gone, that he is down in the dust, in fear of spiritual death, lest if even a little delay intervene before the LORD's face is again turned to him, he may fall into that pit of sin which is the loss of all wish to confess sin, whereof is written, "The pit hath shut her mouth upon me;" and may so pass into that other pit of the grave, and thence into the worst of all, the pit of doom for impenitent sinners. And that a prayer may be heard soon, it needs these qualities: It should be faithful, not timid; lowly, not proud; fervid, not lukewarm. Fear ties the prayer down to earth, and scarcely allows it to come forth at all, not to say ascend. Rash and proud prayers do not ascend, but deserve chastisement, not grace, for GOD resisteth the proud. And a tepid prayer goes up a little way, becomes chill and feeble, and falls back again from lack of strength, while the faithful, lowly, and fervent prayer passes into heaven.

8 O let me hear thy loving-kindness betimes in the morning, for in thee is my trust: show thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto thee. Betimes in the morning, in the early dawn of My Resurrection, before the rising of the sun. The way that I should A. A.

walk in, in the triumphal march of My Ascension, which I need to be shown to Me, for as Man, I know not the path, but I lift up My soul unto Thee, and My Body will follow it. For us, it is a prayer that after the dark night-time of sin, the LORD will let us hear His loving-kindness, saying to us, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," in the bright early morning of pardon and grace, and will teach us what man cannot know of himself, the way of GOD's commandments, in which we are bound to walk, from the morning time of early youth to the evening of old age, and with prayer daily offered to GOD in the early hours, thus seeking first the kingdom of GOD and His righteousness. GOD does make His way known to man in three manners; by the illumination of the HOLY GHOST, by the secret monitions of guardian angels, by the public teaching of the Church. And in making this prayer, we do but call on GOD to fulfil His promise, "I will inform thee, and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go; and I will guide thee with Mine eye. But we can ask for this guidance only when we can say, I lift up my soul unto Thee, when by penitence, meditation, and zeal for good works, we have turned our eyes from the downward paths of earth upwards to the LORD, seeking instruction from Him. And then:

when the night of this world is over, when the bright morning of the Resurrection dawns, make me to hear Thy loving-kindness betimes, saying, "Come, ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the Kingdom," and lead me on gently then from strength to strength to the noontide where Thou feedest, and makest Thy flock to rest in perfect light, those ninety-and-nine sheep to which Thou addest that hundredth one, brought back from destruction when it had gone astray, because even in the wilderness I yearned for Thee and lifted up my soul on the wings of contemplation and

the upward flight of ardent love, with the buoyancy of hope and the perseverance of patience.

9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies : for I flee unto thee to hide me. A. For the LORD JESUS it is a prayer for deliverance from the Jews, and from Judas, and still more for victory over those mightier spiritual foes who had prompted them, and against whom He went out to battle. For the man who has just begun to walk in the way by which he should go, it is a petition to be delivered from all foes, ghostly or mortal, that may beset that road, and especially from evil thoughts and suggestions. For I flee unto Thee to hide me. Unlike Adam, who fled from Thee to hide himself, ”I have counted Thy WORD as my Redeemer,” as the Chaldee paraphrase reads in this place. The last clause runs in Hebrew, Unto Thee have I hidden, and there is no word supplied. Hence three meanings besides that of the English rendering (which is practically the same as that of the older versions) have been suggested, of which the most probable is that to hide to a person is the exact reverse of hiding from a person, so that the Psalmist here declares that he made no attempt to resist or publicly answer his adversaries, but revealed his cause to God only. And then it will fit with that place where we read: ”And when He was accused of the Chief Priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee? And He answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.”

10 Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God: let thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness.

The thing, &c. More tersely and accurately, Thy will. Where note that the Psalmist does not ask merely that God will teach him His will, but how to do it, to carry theory into practice, and not to idle on the road of which he speaks in the last clause of the verse. For Thou art my God. I would hasten elsewhere for restoration, had any other made me. I seek my Creator, because I need to be created anew, I seek my Redeemer, Who delivered me by taking flesh for me. If Thou teach me not, I shall do my own will, and my God will leave me. Teach me, for it cannot be that I should be my own master when Thou art my God. Let Thy loving Spirit, not my own perverse spirit, nor yet the spirit of another man, weak and sinful like myself, nor even the spirit of an angel, able to advise, but not to persuade, but Thy princely and free Spirit, lead me out of my own evil and barren land of self, bringing forth no good fruits, but only the thorns of evil works, into the Church of God, into a life of holiness, into a ”level land,” (Heb.) where there is no stumbling, a fertile plain abounding in the harvests of grace; and so onward into that true ”Land of uprightness,” the land of the living, where the righteous dwell with God. And this prayer befits also the human soul of our LORD as the CHRIST, for as at the beginning of His ministry ”JESUS was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness,” an evil land, ”to be tempted of the devil,” so it was fitting that He should be led at

the close of it by the same Spirit into Paradise, the land of righteousness, out of the darkness of the grave.

A. 11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy Name's sake: and for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. It is a renewed prayer for the Resurrection, for the glorification of the FATHER by the arising of the SON; and that for His righteousness' sake, that as death had entered into the world by the first Adam, in whom all die, so life might enter in by the new Adam, in Whom all live. The Body cries even as the Head, Quicken me, O Lord, and that not for my merits, or because of my righteousness, but for the sake of that Name of JESUS which makes Thee a SAVIOUR, for that righteousness' sake which is pledged for the rescue of sinners. And the Apostle will tell us the answer, "Even when we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us together with CHRIST, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS." These last words tell us what is the truest bringing of the soul out of trouble, out of the consciousness of sin, out of the weakness and pain of this world, whence we fain would flee away and be at rest, and hence it is not only the prayer of all the faithful now, but was also that of the Patriarchs in Hades who waited eagerly for the coming of the Deliverer.

12 And of thy goodness slay mine enemies : and destroy all them that vex my soul; for I am thy servant. I Cor. xv. It is of no human enemies that he speaks in the chief place, albeit the fearful punishment which fell upon the guilty Jewish nation teaches that we may not forget how GOD chastises rebellious man, but of death and hell, of the devil and his angels, of all evil thoughts and wicked examples. These destroy Thou utterly, and human enemies destroy in another sense by slaying sin and self within them, and making Apostles out of persecutors, as with Saul of Tarsus. For I am Thy servant. And to be Thy servant is to reign over the passions by grace here, and in glory hereafter. For, as the Virgin Martyr S. Agatha replied, when upbraided with stooping to tasks unworthy her high birth, "Our nobility consists in this, that we are the servants of CHRIST."

It is just and reasonable, then, that a good servant should be aided by a good LORD against all enemies, and be guarded from all peril. And that will be in the happy life of the blessed, where we shall have no adversary and fear no enemy, because death will be swallowed up in victory, and the last enemy of all, death itself, shall be destroyed, and the Saints shall praise GOD evermore in that City, glorious, free, everlasting, irradiated with the true, inaccessible, and boundless light of the Sun of righteousness; the City into which no one that is ungodly can enter, no one that is unjust can dwell, no one that is filthy can pass. There is light without waning, joy without sighing, desire without suffering, love without sadness, fulness without loathing, safety without sin, life without death, health without disease, and there

all the citizens of that heavenly land see the King in His beauty, and rejoice in the glory of His might.

And so: Glory be to the FATHER, Who hearkeneth in this Psalm unto His Son, the true David; glory be to the Son, Who prayeth here for His members; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who leadeth every David, every true penitent, into the land of righteousness. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O GOD, Who madest joy to be heard in the morning of Thy holy resurrection, when returning from the grave, Thou filledst the earth with gladness, after leaving it in darkness, we beseech the unspeakable majesty of Thy power, that as Thou madest the Apostolic band rejoice then in Thy holy arising, so Thou wouldst vouchsafe to enlighten with the brightness of heavenly radiance Thy Church, which with outstretched hands implores Thy mercy. (5.) Let Thy good HOLY SPIRIT, O LORD, lead us in the right way, overcome evil within us, and abound with His Godhead in us all. (11.) When our spirit faileth, hear us, O LORD, and that right soon, comfort us, and make known unto us the way in which we may walk to please Thee, that with Thy good Spirit for our guide, Thou mayest bring our soul out of all trouble, and quicken us in Thy righteousness. (1.)

O good JESU, WORD of the FATHER, Splendour of the FATHER's glory, on Whom the angels desire to gaze, teach me to do Thy will, that led by Thy good Spirit, I may reach that blessed City where is eternal day, and one spirit amongst all, where is certain safety, and safe eternity, and eternal peace, and peaceful happiness, and happy sweetness, and sweet enjoyment, where Thou livest. (5.) Grant me, O LORD, so fitly and devoutly to say, not with voice alone, but with penitent heart, these Psalms which Thy Church calls penitential, and appoints to be sung unto Thee by penitents, that through the saddening of wholesome penitence I may attain the joy of spiritual gladness, so that after wholesome penitence I may rejoicingly say in spiritual gladness, Let Thy good Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness. Grant me, O LORD, that this sevenfold group of penitential Psalms may be a remedy against the sevenfold group of deadly sins, and help me to the sevenfold group of the principal virtues, and the sevenfold group of spiritual gifts, to the sevenfold beatitudes, and to the seven petitions contained in the LORD's Prayer. Grant me, O LORD, in meditating on these Psalms, fear of punishment, sorrow for sin, hope of pardon, love of purity in heart, longing for the heavenly country, distrust of my own strength, and joy of spiritual gladness. Vouchsafe in Thy mercy that I may go up by the seven steps of the ladder of penitence to the life of the heavenly country, that I may be led thither at the last, and happily ascend, and dwell there, and reign with Thee for evermore. (1.)

Psalm 144

TITLE. Of David. LXX. and Vulg.: A Psalm [Vulg.] of David against Goliath.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST may both arm and instruct us to defeat spiritual wickednesses. The Voice of CHRIST against the devil. The Voice of the Church exhorting [sic] that she may be delivered by the LORD out of the hand of the devil and all her enemies, especially heretics and hypocrites. The Voice of the Church against the devil and his ministers. VEN. BEDE. This war of David's was a type to signify the LORD's conflict, that as the one overthrew with the blow of a stone weapon the glory of Goliath (which is by interpretation Revealed or else Migrating over), so the devil's power was conquered by the Rock, which is CHRIST the LORD. After the slaughter of Goliath, the Prophet in the first part gives thanks unto the LORD, for deliverance in the conflict of the fight just ended, intreating that the LORD's advent, whereby the devil is conquered, and the spiritual Israel delivered, may be quickly declared. Blessed be the Lord my strength. In the second part, the Prophet promises that he will sing unto the LORD both in the Old and New Testaments when he is delivered from his wicked foes, who have put all their happiness in the enjoyment of this world, laying down that they only are happy whose GOD is the LORD. I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God.

It is to be observed that after the mention of Goliath's slaughter, there is a kind of end put to worldly matters, for after this Psalm there is no more said about the toils of the Church, or the bitterness of the world, or the sorrows of penitents, or the wickedness of Antichrist, but the remaining seven Psalms, fitted in a great mystery to the praises of GOD, seem most full of heavenly gladness. SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when Asaph slew the brother of Goliath. And a thanksgiving of him who hath achieved victory. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A thanksgiving of him who hath achieved victory. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of thanksgiving. The true meaning yields a liath is an exile, from , he much more significant type. Godrove out. Cf. Rev. xii. 9.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Blessed * be the LORD my GOD. Parisian. First portion: My GOD, my

mercy and deliverer. Second portion: Blessed are the people who have the LORD for their GOD. Mozarabic. My mercy and refuge, my lifter-up and my deliverer. There is no clue whatever to the date or occasion of this Psalm. The LXX. title is a late interpolation, and not found in Origen's Hexapla. R. Kimchi, who ascribes the Psalm to David (a view made highly improbable by the form of the first eleven verses, which are a cento from earlier Psalms) supposes it to belong to the time when David's sovereignty over all Israel was acknowledged. Theodoret holds it to be a thanksgiving of the returned exiles at the failure of the attack on them by the neighbouring tribes; but this theory is discredited by two things; the mention of a powerful native sovereign in the earlier part of the Psalm, and of a condition of great national prosperity in the later. On the whole, the most probable conjecture seems to be that of an anonymous Greek commentator, who ascribes the composition to the Maccabee period.

1 Blessed be the LORD my strength: who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight. My strength. More exactly My Rock, but LXX. and Vulgate both have My God. It is, comments S. Hilary, the thanksgiving of the Man CHRIST JESUS to His FATHER for teaching Him how to overcome the world, when His arms were made like unto a bow of steel, as He triumphed with them extended and his hands nailed upon the Cross. After the victorious war of the hands in overthrowing principalities and powers, followed the fight of the fingers, when He blotted out with them the handwriting that was against us, and affixed it to His Cross. Spoken by the Church, as the Body of CHRIST, the hands denote strength and unity of action, the fingers diversity of operations, yet springing from the same root of unity. It is not merely a general, but a particular war we have to wage, and every separate grace or virtue we use as a weapon against Satan is a separate finger of the hand of righteousness. These five fingers are the finger of the Divine grace, "With the finger of GOD I cast out devils;" the finger of devout union with the Passion of

A. Ricard. Victorin. in Cant. v. 5. Plato, Legg. i. 3. CHRIST, "And Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger;" the prayer of holy action, "My fingers dropped with sweet-smelling myrrh;" the finger of compassionate help, "That he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue;" and the finger of discretion, that finger of GOD which wrote the two tables of stone, and wrote on the ground when the woman was taken in adultery. And this answers to the nature of the campaign itself, for we have in common to fight against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places; and each of us for himself has that inward strife of the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Of this Plato speaks, "For a man to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories, but to be worsted by himself is the most shameful and basest of all things. Such language denotes that there is in each of us a war against ourselves." When these enemies of ours come to close quarters, and make dangerous attacks

upon us, we need the whole strength of our hands to grasp the sword with which we resist them. When they are only hovering in the distance, and are less formidable, then the fingers suffice, to shoot an arrow or cast a dart of ejaculatory prayer against them. And in the case of Christian teachers, the hands mean preaching to those close beside them, the fingers prayer for those at a distance, neither of which may be neglected.

Origen, explaining the hands to be good works, quaintly takes the fingers to mean the ceremony of signing the Cross upon the forehead as a help against sinful thoughts. There were three qualities of a valiant soldier found in CHRIST, the Captain of our salvation, in His war against Satan, which His followers are bound to emulate, boldness in attack, skill in defence, steadiness in conflict, all which He teaches by His example. He was bold in attack, for He began the combat by going up into the wilderness to defy the enemy. So we too should be always beforehand with Satan, ought to fast, even if not tempted to gluttony, and be humble, though not assailed by pride, and so forth. He was skilful in defence, parrying every attack with Holy Writ; where we too, in the examples of the Saints, may find lessons for the combat. He was steadfast in conflict, for He persevered to the end, till the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him; and we too should not be content with repelling the first attacks, but persevere in our resistance until the evil thoughts are put to flight, and heavenly resolutions take their place.

2 My hope and my fortress, my castle and deliverer, my defender in whom I trust: who subdueth my people that is under me.

My hope. Rather, with A.V. my goodness, or with LXX., Vulg. and A.V. margin, my mercy. God is the mercy of His Saints in two ways, in being merciful to them Himself, and in making them merciful to others; in blending indissolubly the prayer and its condition, ”Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; in uniting cause and effect in ”Give, and it shall be given unto you. He is the fortress of His Saints, as at once their strong place, and their storehouse, whence they can neither be forced out nor starved out; He is their castle, or rather their high tower, the ”watch tower,” ”the tower of David, builded for an armoury,” as the place of observation whence they can detect the approach of every foe, and rout them by hurling down missiles which they cannot return; their deliverer by bringing rescue in actual conflict; their defender or shield by warding off attack. In whom I trust, for ”the Name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. Who subdueth my people that is under me. Taking the words as those of CHRIST, the earlier ones, S. Hilary tells us, need no explanation, so clearly are they set forth in the Gospels by CHRIST’s revelation of His FATHER and ascription of all things to Him;

but this last clause points especially to the conversion of the Gentiles, and is the LORD’s thanksgiving for the fulfilment of that promise, ”Desire of Me, and I shall

give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance: and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron: and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. It may be extended further to the Apostles, and all other great heralds of the Gospel; and, as one commentator reminds us, to the orderly ranks of the Religious Life guided under superiors by a fixed rule. And, applying the words to individual Christians, we are told that the people referred to are the crowds of evil thoughts that arise in our minds, the emotions and passions of our souls, which are subdued under me, when I fight the good fight with GOD as my teacher, and subdue the flesh to the spirit, so that all these rebels are forced to lie quiet in the heart.

A. 3 Lord, what is man, that thou hast such respect unto him: or the son of man, that thou so regardest him? 4 Man is like a thing of nought: his time passeth away like a shadow.

By the Apostolic comment on the former of these two verses, as it stands in its original form earlier in the Psalter, we are taught that there is here a foreshadowing of the Incarnation of the LORD, the only means by which frail humanity could attain to the knowledge of GOD; which, rather than God's taking knowledge of man, is the sense of the LXX. and Vulgate in this place, reading as they do in the first clause of verse 3, ἐγνώσθης αὐτῷ, innotuisti ei. There is a force in the Hebrew wording of the third verse which is lost in the versions, by its use of a different name for man in the two clauses. The first is , Adam, the generic title, but the second is , Enos, which means frail man, a weak mortal being, from the root , to be weak, denoting thus derived and hereditary enfeeblement. And in the answer which the fourth verse makes to the question in the third, Man is like a thing of nought, there is a further reference to the first great blow which fell on the parents of mankind. A thing of nought, turned as foolishness or vanity by LXX. and Vulgate, is literally a breath, and letter for letter the same as the name of the second man born into the world, so that the reply may be worded Adam is as Abel, once strong, and like the truth, but becoming like to vanity, and cut off in the flower of his years, dying as truly in spirit by that sin in Paradise as his son did by his brother's hand. His time passeth away as a shadow, because he not only is as unstable and transitory as a shadow, but because he walks in darkness as well as in weakness.

A. Tennyson, In Memoriam, 53. But what am I? An infant crying in the night; An infant crying for the light, And with no language but a cry. Heb. i. 8. But note, that whereas, were the parallel structure of the fourth verse in exact keeping with that of the third, we should have at the close of the verse, "The Son of man's time passeth away like a shadow," yet in fact this is not said, and man alone is spoken of in each member. Why? Because "unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." Man truly is nothing, that Thou shouldst take knowledge of him; but the Son of man,

that Thou shouldst regard Him, is the Man that is Thy fellow, very God of very God, Begotten, not made; not vanity, but the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. Wherefore I cry unto Him:

5 Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. 6 Cast forth thy lightning, and tear them: shoot out thine arrows, and consume them.

Bow Thy heavens, O God the Son, humble the awful majesty of Thy Godhead, where Thou dwellest in light inaccessible, and come down, down to earth, down to the form of a servant, down to the manger at Bethlehem, down to the cross of Calvary. ”Come down ere my child die. Come down, O Good Samaritan, to me, who have myself come down by sin from Jerusalem, the peaceful vision of GOD in Paradise, and am lying naked, wounded, dying, on the downward way, the ”road of blood,” waiting for One to pour oil and wine into my wounds and bind them up. Bow Thy heavens, make Thine angel hosts bring the glad tidings down to mankind, bid Gabriel hasten to the Maid at Nazareth, let the heavenly hosts sing carols to the wondering shepherds, summon the ministering spirits to wait upon Thyself when Thou smitest Satan in the wilderness of the Temptation. Bow Thy heavens by bidding Thy great Saints and Apostles come down from the lofty heights of divine contemplation, to adapt themselves in their preaching to the needs of the lowly and unlearned. Come down Thyself with them, and pour the knowledge of Thee into our hearts. Come down, for if Thou come not down to us, we can never rise to Thee. Touch the mountains, all those exalted above the rest of mankind by rank, or pride, or power, or wisdom; let them feel that a mightier than they is ruling them;

let them send up the thick smoke of penitential sighing, betokening the divinely kindled fire within their hearts. Cast forth Thy lightning, shine in the flashing glory of Thy marvellous works, and scatter them (Syr., LXX., Vulg., A.V.), dispersing them into all lands to preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven. Scatter those also to whom they make known Thine awful might, driving them from all their firm places of shelter into the folds of the Church Catholic, parting them for ever from those who refuse to hear the Word. Send forth Thine arrows, those polished shafts which Thou hidest in Thy quiver, Thy swift and piercing Apostles, Thy sharp and salutary counsels, and consume them, destroying in them all the power of sin, transfixing them with the shafts of Divine love, or (with LXX. and Vulgate) trouble them, let them no longer be content with their condition, raise in them a horror of their sins, a longing for holiness, and restlessness until they can find repose in Thee. The verses may be taken, obviously, in the sterner sense, as the declaration of the righteous judgment of GOD upon impenitent sinners, but the other more loving exposition is that which the great majority of early commentators prefer to follow.

7 Send down thine hand from above : deliver me, and take me out of the great waters, from the hand of strange children; 8 Whose mouth talketh of vanity : and their right hand is a right hand of wickedness. Send down, O GOD the FATHER, the SON, Thine own Right A. Hand, from above, to deliver all mankind from the floods of sin, even as later He delivered Peter when sinking in the waters. It is the prayer of all men, and chiefly of them who were waiting in Hades for the Deliverer Who should come to harrow hell: Neque enim, credo, sine numine divùm Flumina tanta paras Stygiamque innare paludem; Da dextram miseri, et tecum me tolle per undas; Sedibus ut saltem placidis in morte quiescam. Not, as I think, without the might of GOD Thou comest to cross mighty streams and hell's own waves; Give wretched me Thy right hand, bear me forth With Thee across the billows, that at least I may in death rest in a peaceful home.

A. Send down Thine hand, O GOD the SON, from above, reveal Thyself amidst thunder and lightnings and the trumpet of the Archangel, and take Thy Church forth from the many waters, the unbelieving nations of the world, the floods of false doctrine and its teachers, strange children, evil spirits, or wicked men, because children of the world and the devil, not born again of water and the HOLY GHOST, or if so born, become aliens through rebellion, as did the Jews, talking of vanity, of all things which are frivolous, erroneous, unstable and alien from the laws of GOD, whose right hand is not as Thy Right Hand, but is that which Thou accountest the left hand, looking to temporal prosperity rather than everlasting blessedness, choosing to stand at Thy left hand rather than at Thy right in the Doom, because full of wickedness which it will not let go, even as the Jews denied any King but Cæsar, and blasphemed their own Messiah, and used their hands to buffet, and scourge, and crucify Him; types as they are of all who blaspheme Him now, and crucify Him afresh, putting Him to an open shame.

9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O GOD: and sing praises unto thee upon a ten-stringed lute. A. A new song, the song of the newly-born, the song of grace of the New Testament, blended with the decachord of the Old, its ten precepts of the moral law. The Old Testament is the instrument which accompanies the new song of the Gospel, because all its histories and types, all its rites and ceremonies, all its canticles and prophecies, are interpreted in a new light and with a fuller meaning than they had for the Jews, in whose hands that ten-stringed lute remains, but only that they may sing the harsh old song of the Law. And each of GOD's redeemed servants can sing Him a new song too, and that upon the decachord, if in his new life he serve the LORD with the five senses of the body, and the five powers of the mind, if sight and hearing, smell and taste, and touch, join with understanding, memory, and will, with judgment and imagination, to exalt the LORD.

10 Thou hast given victory unto kings : and hast delivered David thy servant from the peril of the sword. 11 Save me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children : whose mouth talketh of vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity.

The Kings to whom GOD gives victory, are those to whom CHRIST will say, "Come, ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you," Kings who shall bind the kings of the earth in chains, and their nobles with links of iron, and sit in judgment upon them. He hath delivered David His servant, that truer Shepherd King, from the hurtful sword (A.V.) in that He raised Him up again unharmed by death, as the Firstborn from the dead. GOD's Saints are kings, who know how to rule their own bodies well, and who, by governing the motions of their passions, reign over subject thoughts by the law of holiness, and thus achieve through divine grace victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Earthly kings give camps, and send their soldiers forth to die, GOD our King gives a Kingdom, and makes us Kings to reign for ever. It is good to serve such a Monarch, Whose service is a throne. The repeated cry for rescue at the beginning of the eleventh verse has led several of the Latin expositors to point the words differently, and to read Save me from the hurtful sword, and from the hand, &c. And they say that there is a merciful sword, that two-edged blade of the Bible in Old and New Testament, with its mingled threats and promises, cutting the elect away from fellowship with sinners by its wholesome severity in the mouth of wise preachers; and that consequently the false teaching of heretics, is by converse type, the hurtful sword which slays the soul, from which and its wielders the Psalmist implores deliverance in the same words he used before.

Hugo Card. in Gen. xxi. A. 12 That our sons may grow up as the young plants : and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple.

The manner in which this verse begins in Hebrew, with a relative , whose antecedent cannot readily be pointed out, has made the grammatical structure exceedingly difficult. The Targum, Aquila, Symmachus, and S. Jerome agree with the English rendering, and the manner in which R. Kimchi explains the construction is as satisfactory as any which have been suggested since his time. He takes in the sense of Because, and makes the whole passage an appeal to God's regard for His own work: Because our sons are growing up as the young plants, and so forth, do not suffer all this peace and prosperity to be laid waste with fire and sword, but protect Thine heritage from the hurtful sword of the strange children. According to this view, which is the more probable, the whole latter portion of the Psalm refers to the blessings conferred by God on His people. And the scholar will remember Plutarch's simile, "For man is a plant, not rooted in the earth, and immovable, but heavenly, whose head stands erect upon the body, as though springing from a root, and is turned towards heaven. But the great bulk of the ancient versions take it quite otherwise. LXX., Syriac, Æthiopic, and Vulgate agree in reading Whose sons

grow up, &c., and understand all that follows until the last verse of all as a description of the worldly prosperity of the ungodly, which is the sense in which the whole body of ancient commentators expound the passage.

Their sons grow up as the young plants, not like the stately old trees rooted in the traditional teaching of the Prophets, Apostles, and the Fathers, in the deep soil of historical Christianity, but springing up in a weedy crop of new errors from a thin and artificial soil. They are not, like the young olive trees of a former Psalm, round about the table of the LORD, but are stablished by their youth only, having that as their sole apparent strength which is in truth their weakness, as it is written: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

And this sense is intensified by the Vulgate rendering plantations, because in mere nursery-grounds no plant remains long enough to get old, and the notion of never coming to maturity is thus very forcibly put forward. They commonly explain these sons to be the thoughts of the ungodly, and the daughters of the next clause to be their words. These are made up (compositæ), that is, artificial, and outwardly adorned (circumornatæ), so as to be in the likeness of the Temple. The commentators dwell here on four things; that only sons, and not daughters, are mentioned in that Psalm which described the Church, to signify that frail and unstable thoughts and teaching have no place there; that such thoughts as false teachers have are not simple and natural, but artificial and factitious; that though skilfully coloured with rhetorical ornaments and show of wisdom and piety, it is only round about the outside, and not inwardly at all:

Hor. Epist. i. 15, 45. But his whole house and all the country side, Sees his foul heart within his comely hide. And they are in the likeness of the temple, because they have a certain specious resemblance to the teaching of the Church, whereas they are the synagogue of Satan. Titelman applies the words to the elaborate costume, the painted faces, rich attire, and jewelled ornaments of the women, resembling those of gaudy statues in an idol-temple, and deserving such censure and punishment as that proclaimed by the Prophet to the daughters of Zion.

One of the later commentators observes that there is no doubt that the Hebrew points with delight to all these tokens of prosperity, as befitting the Old Testament system of temporal reward, but that the rendering adopted by the Seventy, which has affected the exposition of the Church, is better fitted to the Gospel dispensation, which teaches man to make light of earthly blessings, and to look forward to those of heaven. And he is so far right that it would be no light thing to discard the lessons which Christians drew during thirteen hundred years uninterruptedly from this sadder view of the passage. Nevertheless, it is not unfit to point out the more recent interpretation which reverts to the original Hebrew exposition. Our

sons, then, designed for active, out-of-doors life, are compared to young plants, carefully tended in the ground of a skilful gardener, watered, trained, pruned, as they may need; our daughters, designed for the stiller life of home, polished with all graceful refinement, all Christian courtesy, till they are like to the corner-stone, JESUS CHRIST Himself, and fitted to adorn, as beautiful columns, some kingly palace (A.V.), for "him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the house of My God, and he shall go no more out." And both these processes of growth and polish, can be carried on in one place only, the Church of CHRIST.

13 That our garners may be full and plenteous with all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets. The Saints, says Origen, are like "the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your Heavenly FATHER feedeth them." All manner of This sense agrees very well with the suggestion of Gesenius here that the reference is to Caryatides, which, however, as a purely heathen kind of ornament, forbidden to the Jews by their interpretation of the second Commandment, cannot be meant in this place, if we take the verses, as he does, to be descriptive of Jewish, not Gentile, prosperity.

S. Chrysost. store. Literally from kind to kind, containing a great variety of things. The LXX. and Vulgate read bursting forth from this to that, which the Targum explains to mean from one year to another, and is taken by some to mean so full that the contents have to be put into more barns than one. C. And the interpretation found here is that the garners denote the learning and system of false teachers, who pass with a show of wisdom and argument from one subject to another, R. or from the Old Testament to the New, while their unfortunate disciples, numerous and simple as sheep, follow them in their goings-out (ἐξόδου, egressibus), in their quitting the sheep-fold, in their departure from the Church, in their abandonment of the Faith, in their non-entrance into life. Yet again, passing to the most ancient exposition, we may see here the storehouses of Holy Writ and of the Church, having in them all manner of store, wholesome doctrine, wise counsel, necessary correction, proof of truth, refutation of error, explanation of Scripture, abundant communication of divine wisdom, while the thousands and ten thousands of sheep denote the myriads of catechumens as yet in the meadows outside the walls of the City, but soon to be admitted inside, and find pasture in its gardens.

14 That our oxen may be strong to labour, that there be no decay : no leading into captivity, and no complaining in our streets. This is a very difficult verse, and the versions, ancient and modern, vary much in their renderings. The LXX. and Vulgate read Their oxen are fat, there is no ruin of the wall nor breaking through, nor a cry in their broad places. The A.V. explains the first clause as meaning that the oxen are "able to bear burdens," or "loaden with flesh," the first of which glosses is untenable, because oxen, though beasts of draught, are not beasts of burden, and

the second agrees with LXX. The Syriac is more probable : Our cattle are great [with young] and there is not a barren one among them, and this agrees with the desire for the fecundity of the sheep expressed just before. No decay. The LXX. is better here, no breach of the wall. And thus it may be taken either of the wall round the sheepfolds and paddocks, guarding the cattle from wild beasts and robbers, or of the city wall, unassaulted by foes, and strong enough to repel them should they come. No leading into captivity. It is simply no going-out, as in A.V., and this may denote no going forth as cap-

The LXX. and Vulgate are so far right in their rendering goings-out instead of the A.V. and Prayer Book version streets, that the word does mean something outside. It is glossed here as stalls by the Chaldee, and is translated fields by A.V. in Job v. 10 and Prov. viii. 26.

tives, but more probably means no need to sally forth to drive back an enemy, because there is perfect peace. And no complaining. This may be the meaning, as it is in Jer. xiv. 2, but the notion of the shouting at the sudden attack of a wild beast on the fold, or else of a battle-cry in the city, seems to suit the context better. After thus dealing with the literal meaning of the text, it is time to turn now to the mystical sense. And first, as the sheep denote the ignorant followers of false doctrine, so the oxen stand for their chiefs and teachers, abounding in temporal prosperity. There is no breach in their wall, because their systems are so skilfully put together with learning and logic, that it is not possible to pick a hole in the arguments. There is no passing through, for they hold their disciples captive in their ingenious prison of dialectic; nor can the preachers of righteousness make their way in, so that there is no cry, no proclamation of the Gospel, in the wide spaces which their false teaching shuts in. It is not in the broad places, but in the narrow way, that the voice of God can be heard.

And then, in the good sense, taking the whole passage of the Church, let her oxen, her rulers and teachers, be strong, and fit for labour, treading out the corn of the elect for food, and let there be no breach, no pulling down of her tried bulwarks against false doctrine or evil life, no consequent irruption of heretics and worldlings into her pale, no going forth by the formation of sects or the rejection of belief by any of her members, no cry of alarm at the appearance of some fatal pestilence, some inveterate enemy, within her walls. Not here in this life,—and so far all these Fathers are right in telling us to look away from worldly prosperity,—but in that other yet to come, is the safety of the flock, the learning war no more, the end of complaining, the return for ever from exile. There, there indeed:

No more the foe can harm, No more of leaguered camp, And cry of night alarm, And need of ready lamp: And yet, how nearly he had failed,— How nearly had that foe prevailed! The lamb is in the fold In perfect safety penned: The lion once had hold, And thought to make an end; But One came by with wounded side, And for

the sheep the Shepherd died. The exile is at home! O nights and days of tears, O longings not to roam, O sins, and doubts, and fears, What matter now, when (so men say) The King has wiped those tears away? of the The Return 15 Happy are the people that are in such a case : yea, blessed are the people who have the LORD for their GOD. Ay. A.

The LXX. and Vulgate, keeping to their view of the whole passage, take the first word here—which is the same as the first in the whole Psalter, , O the blessednesses—as the expression of the opinion of the ungodly : They called the people blessed which have these things. But we, answer the Saints, say rather, Blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God. The Syriac version produces the same effect by making the first clause a question : Are not the people blessed that are in such a case ? and then comes the answer as before. We blame not all these things as though they were evil in themselves, but we blame those who place their happiness in possessing them. Many Saints of GOD have had them, but they used them as only means to an end, not as being themselves the end. ”I ask you, O ye faithful, ye members of CHRIST,” cries S. Augustine here, ”do you not think to have stalwart sons, fair and graceful daughters, full stores, abundant cattle, no ruin, I will not say of a wall, but of so much as a hedge, no disturbance nor anger in your wide places, but quiet, peace, plenty, abundant stores in your houses, in your cities, that all this is happiness, or that the righteous ought to shun them ? Was not Abraham’s house well stored with gold and silver, with servants, and children, and cattle ?

Did not holy Jacob come back from service, after he had fled from Esau’s face into Mesopotamia, enriched with great store of cattle and children ? What shall we say then ? is not this happiness ? Happiness it is, but of the left hand, because temporal, corporal, mortal. I would not have you flee it, nor yet think it to be the right hand. Men are not necessarily vain or wicked because they abound in such things, but because they set on the right hand that which ought to be on the left. Wherefore it is said, ’Their right hand is a right hand of iniquity, therefore their mouth speaketh vanity.’ What ought they to have put in the right hand ? GOD, eternity, the unfailing years of GOD. There is one right hand, there ought to be one desire. ’If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.’ I blame them not, because their sons are like the young plants, nor because their daughters are adorned in the likeness of the temple, nor because they had other things in plenty and peace to boot. But I do blame them because they said that a people is happy which hath such things. But what sayest thou, David ? what, O Body of CHRIST, sayest thou ? Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord.

And therefore it was well said by a faithful Saint of old time, ”If I have any possessions, health, reputation, learning, this is all the satisfaction I have of them, that I

may have somewhat to despise for CHRIST, Who is Himself altogether lovely, and everything which is lovely."

Glory be to the FATHER, Who sent down His hand from above; glory be to the SON, His Right Hand, Who bowed the heavens and came down; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who giveth victory unto Kings. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Teach us, O LORD, to resist our hurtful sins with spiritual weapons, lest made subject to earthly vanity, we be drawn from the governance of Thy law. (1.) O GOD, Captain and Teacher of our victory, grant us to become able to resist and overcome all our adversaries, and send down Thine hand from above to protect us amidst the storms of this world, that we may magnify Thy holy Name; saying, Blessed is the people whose GOD is the LORD. (1.) O GOD, Who deliveredst Thy most blessed Martyr Clement from the counsel of the ungodly, taking him out of many waters, and making him victorious in all his sufferings, deliver us from the hand of strange children, that our life may not lie exposed to hurt from the enemies that lie in wait, and that their cruel pride may not be merry over the fall of our ruin, but we, girt with Thy sword, may here boldly overcome opposition, and at last attain unto Thee unwounded and happy. (11.)

Send down Thine hand, we beseech Thee, O LORD, from the heavens above, and deliver us from the hands of our enemies, visible and invisible, and from all peril of evil, that when all our adversities have been quieted we may joyfully sing the hymn of victory unto Thee our LORD GOD. (1.) Mozarabic, for S. Clement.

Psalm 145

TITLE. David’s, of praise. LXX. and Vulgate: Praise for David [himself, Vulg.]

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST may give us spiritual food in due season. The Voice of the Church to CHRIST, asking that He may vouchsafe to be her King without end, and that she may evermore give thanks for His bounties. VEN. BEDE. It may be asked why this title alone contains Praise for David himself, whereas in all the Psalms the glory of David himself, that is, of the LORD CHRIST, is proclaimed. But it is set down here more precisely and clearly for this reason, that having come to the end of all things intended for the instruction of man’s ignorance, now he is enjoined to give his time to the LORD’S praises only, which Lauds are included in a septenary of psalms, because (as I think) of the Sabbath of the world to come; for, saith he, Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, they will be alway praising Thee. And this Psalm, moreover, observes the order of the Hebrew alphabet in the beginning of the verses. Wherein, however, it is to be noted that the letter Nun is not extant in the Hebrew manuscripts, but, added by the Seventy Interpreters, contains this verse, The Lord is faithful in all His ways, and holy in all His works.

The Praise of CHRIST, which the Prophet utters, is detailed in three statements. First; is the boundless promise of His praise. I will magnify Thee, O God my King. Secondly; he saith that the LORD’S praise ought to be celebrated in nine ways. One generation, &c. In the third part he explains somewhat more fully and clearly what he had briefly set forth in the second concerning CHRIST’S praise, teaching at the end that the LORD ought to be praised by all flesh. The Lord is gracious and merciful, &c. So then the first division contains three letters of the aforesaid alphabet; the second, four; the third, fourteen. SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David. Praise with the doctrine of GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A hymn with doctrine of GOD.

Various Uses.
Monastic. First portion, vv. 1—9: Friday: Vespers. Second portion, 9—21. Saturday: Vespers.

Antiphons.
Gregorian. Every day will I give thanks unto Thee, O LORD. [Sacred Heart: The LORD is loving unto every man and His mercy is over all His works.] Monastic. First portion: as Gregorian. Second portion: Thy kingdom, * O LORD, is an everlasting kingdom. Ambrosian. Every day * let us bless the LORD. Parisian. First portion: One generation shall praise Thy works unto another * and declare Thy power. Second portion: The LORD is faithful in all His words, and holy in all His works. Third portion: The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him faithfully. Lyons. First portion: as Gregorian. Second portion: The LORD is holy * in all His works. Mozarabic. The LORD is loving unto every man * and His mercies are over all His works. Albeit the whole Psalter is intitled , Sepher Tehillim, or Book of Praises, yet this Psalm is the only one which has the word Tehillah as a heading, and the circumstance has given it a degree of prominence amongst the Rabbins beyond even what its intrinsic dignity would have secured for it. Accordingly, it is said in the Talmud: ”Every one who repeats the Tehillah of David thrice a day may be sure that he is a child of the world to come. And why? Not merely because the Psalm is alphabetical (for that the 119th is, and in an eightfold degree), nor only because it praises God’s providence over all creation (for that the Great Hallel does, cxxxvi. 25), but because it unites both these properties in itself.”

The acrostic is not perfect, as the letter Nun is missing, albeit the LXX. have supplied it with a verse which the Vulgate has adopted, beginning with the word Faithful, in Hebrew , but it is almost certainly an interpolation. The Talmud gives a singular reason for the omission of Nun, that it is the letter which begins (with the word) the fatal verse, ”The Virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise; she is forsaken upon the land, there is none to raise her up.” Others have supposed that the object of the omission was to group the Psalm into three strophes of seven verses, the covenant number, for a mystical purpose. Cassiodorus quaintly remarks that the Psalms in which the alphabetical order is complete are especially fitted for the righteous in the Church Triumphant, but those in which one letter is missing are for the Church Militant here on earth, as still imperfect, and needing to be purified from defect.

1 I will magnify thee, O God, my King: and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever.
2 Every day will I give thanks unto thee: and praise thy Name for ever and ever.
There are many persons who, looking round on the wonders of creation, are ready to magnify God; but they who recognize Him as directly ruling what He has made, as having a personal relation to themselves, as having the right to govern their conscience and acts, as being the future Judge of their conduct, as being, in short, their King, are much fewer. Still fewer are they who look forward with delight to the thought of constantly praising Him, as well in the world to come as in this world; and who do not fail to give thanks to Him every day, even if weighed down by sorrow, disquieted by fever, oppressed with sickness, or troubled with coldness

and dryness. Yet we must begin the song of praise here, if we are to carry it on hereafter, we must practise the melody in the single days (Vulg.) if we are to chant it perfectly in the one perfect and unending day to come. And Job's example shows us how even in the midst of the deepest sorrow we can keep this rule, for on the one day when all the terrible blows fell together upon him, we read that he answered, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken

A. away; blessed be the Name of the LORD." As the previous Psalm was a prayer for the Incarnation of CHRIST, so this one is a prophecy of the fulfilment of that prayer, and itself a song of praise and supplication to the Incarnate Word, acknowledged in His Godhead to be the Psalmist's God and Creator, and in His glorified, ascended Manhood to be his King and LORD. For magnify, the LXX. and Vulgate have exalt, the extol of A.V., a fitting word to use of Him Who was exalted on the Cross in His Passion, out of the grave in His Resurrection, above all angels in His Ascension, over the hearts of mankind in the spread of the Gospel, and Who will be throned at last as Judge of quick and dead. And in styling Him King, His constant title in Holy Writ, far more than the bare notion of power is implied. It connotes a kingdom, a state under one law, a people gathered together in unity under a single ruler, and thereby the perfect freedom of all its citizens, because they have no master save CHRIST Himself, they acknowledge no bondage to men or to the elements of this world. And His servant in the opening of the Psalm pledges himself to three distinct acts of homage: to magnify Him, by believing and confessing His absolute supremacy over all created things, and thus His power to abolish the old law given by His servant Moses; to give thanks to, or to bless His Name, by yielding Him not merely submission, but gratitude and love, ascribing all good things to His bounty; and to praise His Name by declaring His glory and power to all who are ignorant of them.

3 Great is the LORD, and marvellous, worthy to be praised: there is no end of his greatness. A. Haymo. G. There are as it were four parts of greatness: breadth, length, height, and depth, which can be made subject-matter for thought in contemplating GOD, according to that saying of the Apostle, "That ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height." Wherefore the Prophet begins the praise of GOD with His greatness in His divine essence, which in breadth has no bounds, in length is eternal, in height is Most High, in depth is incomprehensible. As King, the breadth of His dominion is such that all things serve Him, from the highest Angel to the least of worms; in length, His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; in height, He rules with supreme and most absolute power; in depth, He is not only LORD of bodies, but of hearts, and rules the inmost thoughts and affections of all men, and there is nothing so hidden and secret that the sceptre of His kingdom cannot search out. Worthy to be praised, rather, greatly to be praised, because as there is no end of His power, there is also no end of fresh cause for praise of the unbounded breadth of His love,

unending length of His existence, immeasurable height of His immoveable power, unfathomable depth of His unsearchable wisdom, and the phrase further implies God's goodness, for He might be great without being bounteous, but here it is declared that He is both. For no end the Hebrew is no searching-out, teaching us hereby the doctrine of God's uncreated essence, since otherwise, if He were in any respect finite, He might be apprehended at last, and shown to be subject to laws and conditions like all created things.

4 One generation shall praise thy works unto another : and declare thy power. It is not one day only which has seen the wide expanse of sky, and earth, and sea, has looked upon lakes, and rivers, and fountains, on seeds, and plants, and herbs, on the unvarying course of nature, night and day, sun, and moon, and stars, rain, and changes of the seasons; but they were the wonder, and joy, and blessing of past ages as they shall be of ages yet to come; while for more direct and personal interference with mankind, there is the long roll of God's dealings with the Jewish nation, in signs and providence, and the like; of all He wrought for us in the time of the Apostles; while every era feels His hand still, whether stretched out in bounty or in chastisement. The generation of Abraham's faithful children, to whom were intrusted the oracles of God, praises and declares His works and power unto the new generation of the Gentiles, heirs of Abraham's promises. The generation of sons of God in this present life shall continue their celebration of His praises when they become the new generation of the Resurrection in the life to come, lauding Him for His works of nature, of grace, and of glory, and for that power which has no limits; since it is little to praise the works and forget Him Who made them, as some do, and that eloquently.

A. 5 As for me, I will be talking of thy worship: 7 thy glory, thy praise, and wondrous works; 6 So that men shall speak of the might of thy marvellous acts: and I will also tell of thy greatness. 7 The memorial of thine abundant kindness shall be showed: and men shall sing of thy righteousness. The opening of the fifth verse is better rendered by A.V., which is also much nearer to the LXX. and Vulgate (save that they read the whole passage in the third person plural), I will speak of the glorious honour of Thy majesty. The first praise of the King is His outward splendour, the dazzling pomp of His court, the external tokens of His riches and power; and therefore what is here signified is all that part of God's works which chiefly arouses our admiration and A. A. A.

wonder, such as the sun and stars and the ocean. But the LXX. and Vulgate for majesty read holiness, and the commentators take it for the most part not as direct praise of God's own perfections, but of the magnificent glory He bestows upon His Saints. The next part of God's wondrous works which is celebrated is that which consists of His mighty and terrible (LXX., Vulg., and A.V.) acts, which exhibit Him not merely in His splendour, but in His judiciary and retributive power, in

chastising the wicked. Such are the Flood, the destruction of the cities of the plain, the plagues of Egypt, the overthrow of the nations of Canaan, and all similar and subsequent judgments. If they proclaim His everlasting kingdom, they do not pass over in silence His everlasting fire. And in the third place God is revealed as being not merely glorious and mighty, but also as being good. Men shall copiously pour out (Heb.) the records of all His abundant sweetness (Vulg.) and loving-kindness evidenced in the creation of nature, in His fostering care for all His creatures, but still more in the creation of grace, in the life and death of His most dear Son, in all the spiritual blessings stored up in and dispensed by His Church. They will not be content with treasuring up such memories as these in their own hearts, but will pour them forth freely as a fountain, that all may quench their thirst by drinking them.

And shall sing of Thy righteousness. Here is the sum, that all these dealings of the LORD, whether terrible or of abundant kindness, are in no case the result of arbitrary caprice, but are ordered by perfect justice, the inflexible uprightness of the perfectly wise and holy Judge. It is of God's righteousness, not of their own, that the Saints will sing, rejoicing in that free grace of His which has saved them, and of which they have been made to drink that they might know it. And it is to be observed that God Himself, in revealing His attributes to Israel by the words of Moses, declares them in the order of this Psalm; putting first His majesty, then His might, and thirdly His abundant kindness, while righteousness binds all together: "For the LORD your God is God of gods, and LORD of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. And that this perfect righteousness of His proves the especial rejoicing of His Saints, we learn from the words of that great Song of Moses and the Lamb, which is the Canticle of the Church Triumphant, until such time as the New Song shall begin: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire:

and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, LORD GOD Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest. These nine reasons for praising GOD, His works, power, glorious honour, majesty, wondrous works, might of terrible acts, greatness, abundant kindness, and righteousness, are the cataracts of heavenly eloquence, the fountains of celestial words, the bounteous breasts of praise, which give the refreshment of loving thanks to mankind and unending blessedness to the angels; and in their triply threefold number shadow the unceasing worship paid to the adorable Trinity.

8 The LORD is gracious, and merciful: long-suffering, and of great goodness.

That the LORD is gracious, is an attribute of His nature, that He is merciful, which is the energizing of His graciousness, is the cause of salvation to our frailty. He is gracious in creation, because He is not urged thereto by any benefit conferred on Him by others, but does it of His own love. He is merciful, when by His loving-kindness He builds up again that which was falling, lifting by grace what was ruined by sin. And as there are many of those to whom He has offered pardon who have not availed themselves of the terms of amnesty, and accepted His mercy, He is long-suffering, waiting for them to come back to Him, Who desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. And of great goodness, or rather, mercy. He is calling thee now, He waits for thee now, He urges thee to be doing, and thou lingerest. Great is His mercy, wherefore He hath made the end of thy life uncertain, that thou mayest not know when thou shalt pass hence, and daily hoping, mayest be at last converted. This is great mercy, for had He appointed a foreknown day of death for all, security would have bred abundant sin. And He therefore gave a hope of pardon to avert the sin of despair. Those who are too confident, go on in sin, because they look to GOD's mercy, and forget His justice;

those who are too fearful, go on in sin, because they remember GOD's justice, forgetting His mercy, and knowing that rigid justice must doom them. To such as act thus He gives Scriptures which tell of His love and mercy; while to those who are over-confident He saith: "Concerning propitiation, be not without fear to add sin unto sin; and say not, His mercy is great; He will be pacified for the multitude of my sins: for mercy and wrath come from Him, and His indignation resteth upon His enemies. Make no tarrying to turn to the LORD, and put not off from day to day; for suddenly shall the wrath of the LORD come forth, and in thy security shalt thou be destroyed, and perish in the day of

A. A. vengeance." And if you will not hear this His warning by the mouth of a wise man under the old law, hearken to the Apostle: "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds." Say not, therefore, I will be converted to-morrow; to-morrow I will begin to please God, and all my sins of yesterday and to-day will be forgiven. You say truly; but bear in mind that God has not promised you a to-morrow for your conversion, and that is the reason why He has left you ignorant of the end of your life. 9 The LORD is loving unto every man: and his mercy is over all his works.

A. S. Matt. v. 45. S. Bruno Carth. A.

He is loving unto every man, ”for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,” and offers pardon and salvation to all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike. And His mercy is over all His works. They explain these words in different ways. The Rabbinical interpretation, which S. Hilary follows, is that mercy is the chief and highest of all God’s attributes. ”The attribute of God’s mercy,” comments a Rabbi, ”is greater than that of His vengeance, in the proportion of one to five hundred. For in the attribute of mercy He keepeth ’mercy for thousands,’ but in the quality of justice, He visits iniquity unto the fourth generation. Secondly, there is the more obvious explanation that God’s mercy extends to everything that He has made. And hereupon arises the question, Why then does He threaten damnation, why do we hear the decree of everlasting punishment? And they answer that His mercy is over all His own works, which are good without exception, but that He has not promised mercy to the evil works of the devil or man. His sternness is not for His works, but for thine. If thou take away thine evil works, and there remain in thee only His work, His mercy will not let thee go; but if thou wilt not leave hold of thy works, His sternness will be against thy works, not against His own.

”For Thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which Thou hast made; for never wouldst Thou have made anything, if Thou hadst hated it. And how could anything have endured, if it had not been Thy will? or been preserved, if not called by Thee? But Thou sparest all; for they are Thine, O LORD, Thou lover of souls. Lastly, it is taken of that merciful grace of perseverance, which He adds over and above the works of grace, the virtues with which He endows any of His Saints. The Rabbins, besides the gloss already cited, urge from this verse the duty of kindness towards the lower animals, and avoidance of all wanton and unnecessary destruction of their lives, all that goes beyond the claims of self-preservation, either in the matter of food or of removing what is hurtful to men. And there is a legend of R. Jehudah the Holy that he quoted this verse to his servant as a reason for leaving some weasels unmolested in the cellars of his house.

10 All thy works praise thee, O LORD : and thy saints give thanks unto thee. All GOD’s works, even those which are irrational, and even lifeless, praise Him, by fulfilling their part in the order of nature, and through their beauty and harmony causing rational beings to glorify their Maker. All praise Him without exception, because, whereas every artist is tried by his works, and reaps praise or blame, no fault can be found in the skill and perfection with which GOD achieves all that He does, from greatest to least. This praise comes to Him from all His works so far as He is GOD; but the higher service of blessing and thanksgiving comes from them who know and obey Him personally as their King, and who have a deeper reason than His other works for celebrating His praise, because they know not only His creative power, but His loving-kindness in grace and salvation; and therefore the

title befits more particularly the holy men of the New Testament, and especially such as are hallowed and dedicated solemnly to the service of GOD.

A. C. 11 They show the glory of thy kingdom: and talk of thy power, 12 That thy power, thy glory, and mightiness of thy kingdom: might be known unto men. The glory of a kingdom is the power of a kingdom. Power consists first in duration: GOD's "dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away," whereas of earthly realms it is written, "Because of unrighteous dealings, injuries, and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is translated from one people to another." Next, in extent and number of subjects, "All peoples, nations, and languages, should serve Him;" but earthly sovereigns rule over narrow provinces and few subjects, for "the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam;" in peaceful tranquillity, "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places;" whereas in this world's states, "there reigned in all men without exception blood, manslaughter, theft and dissimulation, corruption, unfaithfulness, tumults, perjury, disquieting of good men." Moreover, earthly kings rule 2 S. Pet. i. 17.

S. John i. 14. 1 S. John i. 2.

over their subjects in such wise that they are in fact servants to them, since they cannot do without them, and they are not rich enough to dispense with taxes and tribute, and nevertheless are usually laden with debt, whereas GOD is LORD of all, needing no help, and abounds in resources without lack, in that He can produce all things out of nothing in a moment of time. And mortal kings, despite their rank, are weighed down with cares, which have sometimes led them to abdicate, whereas GOD cannot be touched with disquiet, but rules in perfect calm and security. And when CHRIST came to set up the kingdom of GOD on earth, all existence showed His glory. GOD the FATHER did so by the Transfiguration, "for our LORD JESUS CHRIST received from GOD the FATHER honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My Beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased. Secondly, Angels, who had been the superiors of man before the Incarnation, proclaimed CHRIST's glory, announcing His coming, heralding His Nativity, ministering to Him in the wilderness. Inanimate nature gave Him glory too, a star foretold His advent, the sun was darkened at His crucifixion, and the earth quaked, the winds and waves were lulled at His bidding, the waters formed a path for Him to walk on.

And thus His Apostles and other great Saints, who "beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the FATHER," showed that glory, "for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal Life which was with the FATHER, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the FATHER and with His SON JESUS CHRIST. And talk of His

power, exhibiting it by their miracles, preaching Thee, not themselves, thereby, that Thou and Thy kingdom might be known unto men. And accordingly, when Peter and John healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, they said to the wondering multitude, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The GOD of Abraham and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the GOD of our fathers, hath glorified His SON JESUS."

13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom : and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages. Ay. S. Luke i. 33. It is the same proclamation as that made by the Archangel to the Virgin at Nazareth, "The LORD GOD shall give Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Throughout all ages. Rather, all generations. Over angels and men, over Jew and Gentile, from the first to the last righteous man upon earth with reward, from the first to the last sinner upon earth for punishment; from the generation of this world, from the Jacob of the Church Militant, to the generation of the world to come, the Israel of the Church Triumphant. [The LORD is faithful in all his words : and holy in all his works.] Here is the verse supplied by LXX. and adopted by Syriac, Æthiopic, and Vulgate. They take it, following S. Augustine, of the certainty of future reward and punishment, as declared by the same Voice and in the same way as many things which came to pass after being foretold; the Passion and Resurrection of CHRIST, the gift of the HOLY GHOST, the victories of the martyrs, the conversion of the Gentiles, the chastisement and exile of the Jews, for "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." The latter clause of this verse is borrowed from verse 17.

A. 14 The LORD upholdeth all such as fall : and lifteth up all those that are down. It is noteworthy how the Psalmist proceeds to exhibit the mightiness of GOD's kingdom not by its power "to break in pieces and bruise" like the iron legs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, but by the King's readiness to aid the weak. Even a heathen could see that this was the noblest use of power: Believe me, It is a kingly thing to help the fallen. He upholdeth those that are falling—note the present tense—aiding them by the gift of timely repentance and wisdom before they fall away altogether; and those that are down, (more exactly, bowed down) who are self-humbled, or have been spiritually prostrated less by their own will than by inexperience, or sudden and overwhelming temptation, or who have been bowed down by worldly misfortunes, suffering either for their own purification and advancement, like holy Job, or as confessors for the Faith, He lifts up again by restoration as He did Peter. And thus He taught by one of His miracles of healing: "And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when JESUS saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And

A. He laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified GOD." The Good Shepherd lifts, by remission of sin, the weary, fallen, exhausted sheep on His shoulders, and upholds it there as He carries it home; and not one only, but all, who do not reject His help, however grievously they may have sinned. And all those that are down in the grave He will raise up, that He may bear His sheep far away then into His safe fold for ever. 15 The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord : and thou givest them their meat in due season. 16 Thou openest thine hand : and fillest all things living with plenteousness. These verses, in use for many centuries in the Western Church as part of the Blessing of the Table before meals, serve here as a further mark of contrast between the kingdom of heaven and earthly realms. This world's monarchs are fed at their subjects' cost, the King of Heaven is the feeder of the whole creation, the source of universal life and sustenance, from the seraphim to the amœba. And it may be remarked that the heathen philosopher in whose life and death some have noted points of contact with those of CHRIST, named sustenance at the public expense for himself as the fitting sentence to be passed on him; whereas CHRIST spreads the table at His own cost, and bids His disciples thereto, saying, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

The eyes of all wait on Thee. The metaphor seems taken from the wistful look of a hungry dog towards its master, silently beseeching him for food; as though even irrational creatures, albeit not knowing by what hand they are fed, were unconsciously gazing up to GOD, Who gives them their meat in due season, that is, giving each kind of food at its regular time of maturity; or giving each kind of animal the sort of food which suits it best; or sending them forth to procure their food at different times, some by day and some by night; or lastly, at the time when they need it. Thou openest Thine hand, not giving tardily or stintedly, but with lavish bounty, whence it is added fillest, not drawing back that hand till abundance has been given, and that of the best, for the Hebrew is, as in A.V. Thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing. They take the verses also in the higher sense of spiritual sustenance, when the eyes of the soul, unsatisfied with earth, turn to GOD, and He gives then spiritual meat in due season, milk for babes, meat for strong men, teaching to all in this life, which is the due season of instruction, seeing that the Saints in heaven will need no more teaching, for they drink in continual draughts of wisdom

The verb here is ἀνωρθώθη; the LXX. verb in the Psalm is ἀνορθοί. from the Beatific Vision of GOD. Thou openest Thine hand, Thou, O FATHER, by disclosing Thy SON, Thy Right Hand, in His Incarnation, openest that Hand to bless mankind, and Thou, O loving JESU, that it may not close till all Thy bountiful gifts are poured forth, Thou hast caused Thy hand to be nailed firmly to the Cross, and fillest all living things, every animal (Vulg.) with blessing, all those who cheerfully bear Thy yoke, all the sheep of Thy pasture, all those still carnal and not yet spiritual, Thou omittest none; but, as a wise Physician, givest only what and when is good for the patient's

welfare, in due season. 17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways : and holy in all his works. He is righteous when He wounds and when He cures; and His Saints, in the time of their suffering, have always acknowledged this, and made it the ground of their petitions. His ways are His will, His methods, His principles of action, always unswervingly right, never biassed nor capricious. And then He is holy in His love, His patience, His bounty; and His works are the manifestation of His righteous will. From human frailty we are obliged to speak of them as if ways and works were different properties in Him, but will and deed, plan and execution, are the same with GOD. And in this perfect justice and tenderness of His rule lies another distinction between Him and earthly kings.

A. 18 The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him : yea, all such as call upon him faithfully. It is a special virtue in kings to be accessible, to set as few barriers between themselves and their subjects as may be, and to be ready to receive their petitions. And thus Cicero, writing a letter of counsel to his brother, when he had assumed, as Proprætor, the government of Asia Minor, ”Let access to thee be extremely easy, let thine ears be open to every one’s complaints, let no one’s poverty or friendlessness be shut out, not merely from public audiences and from the court of justice, but even from thy house and bedchamber.” And this is the peculiar glory of GOD as a hearer of prayer, that there is no need of a pilgrimage to reach Him, for ”in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” But they must call upon Him faithfully, not with mere formal and mechanical recitation, still less with hasty and inattentive gabble of unconsidered prayers; but with reverence and earnestness; asking Him not merely for earthly blessings, for health and food, for clothing and shelter, for wife and children, friends and wealth; but for something more and higher, for immortality, for holiness, for Himself. To all who ask in this wise He is

Cicero ad Quintum fratrem, i. 8. A. near, standing like a physician to help, yet in His help often-times delaying that which the patient desires, and inflicting that from which he shrinks in fear and pain. And above all, if we desire GOD to be near us, we must call on Him in Truth, in Him by Whom GOD came not merely near to us, but to be one with us, even JESUS CHRIST our LORD. And then we may most truly exclaim, ”What nation is there so great, that hath GOD so nigh unto them, as the LORD our GOD is in all things that we call upon Him for?” 19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will help them. Here is the next quality of our King, that He does not merely admit His subjects freely to audience of Him, but is bountiful in granting all their just and reasonable petitions, neither repelling them with sternness nor putting them off with fair words, but being at pains to fulfil their desire. That is, of them that fear Him, not with servile dread, but with filial awe, and who are content to do His will, and whose will He will therefore do. It is said He will fulfil, not He does fulfil, because it is in due season only that He hears the prayers of the righteous, and that fulfilment of their desire

He often keeps for the life to come, but that unfailingly. And for that reason the verse ends with the words, And shall save them (A.V., Vulg.) because everlasting salvation is the goal and end of the cry of the Saints to GOD.

20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but scattereth abroad all the ungodly. Aristotle teaches, observes the great Carmelite expositor, that the steward of a household ought to be competent to acquire wealth, increase it, and keep it when acquired, since acquisition without keeping is profitless. Now CHRIST is the steward of the Householder of the heavenly City, for He hath made Him LORD of His house, and ruler over all His goods. He earned us for His Heavenly FATHER with great toils, because He purchased us with His own Blood. And now He keeps, or preserveth all them that love Him, here by grace, wherefore He saith, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My FATHER, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My FATHER's hand." And in the world to come, by the "blessed necessity of sinlessness." And this is the final part of a King's public duty, that he keep his loyal subjects from all harm, securing their lives and property from danger, in due return for their devotion to him. But as this cannot be done without the operation of punitive justice, since the bad must needs be coerced, if the innocent are to be at peace; it is added, but scattereth abroad all the ungodly, exiling them from his dominions. And this CHRIST will do when He utters His sentence on the finally impenitent, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh give thanks unto his holy Name for ever and ever.

The Psalm which began in praise ends with it also; but it closes with a promise too; and in pledging our mouth to the praise of GOD, we are also pledging it against reviling our neighbour. Let our mouth speak the praises of the LORD, and let all harsh language depart from it. We may speak of praiseworthy things which we know of in our brethren. But let the sins of others find other witnesses than ourselves, for we shall have enough to do in blaming our own faults. And similarly, let all scurrilous, hurtful, unprofitable and vain talk be banished from mouths hallowed to such a service as GOD'S. "Therewith bless we GOD, even the FATHER; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of GOD. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." And let all flesh, all mankind, of every sex and nation, give thanks unto His Holy Name, JESUS, because He hath been revealed by His Incarnation, according to the prayer of the previous Psalm, and the

saying of the Prophet has been fulfilled, ”All flesh shall see the salvation of GOD;” a prophecy capable of yet further and more blessed fulfilment, when all who have fleshly, not stony hearts shall be saved, when ”a great company which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palms in their hands,” beholding Him and giving thanks unto His Holy Name for ever and ever.

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is holy in all His works; glory be to the SON, the Hand of the FATHER, which He openeth, to fill all things living with blessing; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the blessing wherewith they are filled. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O LORD, Ruler of all ages, Who ministerest spiritual food to every soul in due season; grant that we may evermore bless Thee, and faithfully exalt Thy Majesty unto Thine elect. (1.) Be nigh at hand, O LORD, to all that call upon Thee in trouble, fulfil the devotion of them that fear Thee, and hear their supplication, that saved by Thee, we may love Thee, and bless Thy holy Name. (1.) Be nigh at hand, O LORD, to all that call upon Thee, and fulfil the desire of them that fear Thee, lift up them that fall, and support them that are cast down, that we who are falling headlong into death, may arise safely by Thine uplifting. (11.) O LORD JESU CHRIST, Very GOD and Very Man, Who changest not, but art holy in all Thy works, put away from us the unbelief of a doubting mind, and fill our hearts with the gifts of Thy grace, that Thou mayest be confessed and believed to be Very GOD, Who art proved by Thy miracles and holiness to be the SAVIOUR of all men. (11.)

O GOD, long-suffering and of great goodness, be gracious unto us who cease to do evil, and beseech Thy pardon, that when our conduct hath been amended, we may be glad in the bestowal of eternal joys. (1.)

Psalm 146

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia, of Haggai and Zechariah.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST may love the righteous, enlighten the blind, and loose the prisoners. The Voice of CHRIST. The Voice of CHRIST to the people, that they cease not to offer praise to the FATHER and to Himself; or the Voice of the Apostles to the people, that they trust not in princes, but in Him Who lifts up souls cast down by the attack of the ancient enemy, and enlightens the blind, and loves the righteous. VEN. BEDE. That memorial of the LORD'S praise, which he had set down in Latin in the preceding titles, now at the close of the same praise he desires to augment with the Hebrew word, Alleluia. The Prophet, desiring to sing the LORD'S praises with his whole heart, at the first outset saith that no trust whatever is to be put in men, lest anything should be coldly asked of Him, if it were believed that another could give it. Praise the Lord, O my soul. In the second place, he avers that all hope ought to be placed in the Almighty LORD, and seeing that He is the LORD, it is laid down most clearly from His doings that the Gentiles, convinced by such abundant proofs, should with faithful devotion abandon their errors.

Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob, &c. SYRIAC PSALTER. Spoken by the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who went up with the captivity from Babylon. Concerning the morning office of the Priests. And a prayer and praise with doctrine of GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A hymn with doctrine of GOD. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm uttering praise.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. } Saturday : Vespers. [Office of the Dead : Preces Monastic. } at Vespers.] Sarum. Saturday : Vespers. [Christmas Day : I. Vespers. Trinity Sunday : Vespers.] Eastern Church. Second Psalm of the Typica.

Antiphons.
Gregorian and Monastic. I will praise * my GOD in my life. Ambrosian. I will sing unto my GOD * as long as I have any being. Parisian. I will in my life praise the LORD * Who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong. Mozarabic. The LORD

lifteth up those that are down, looseth the prisoners, giveth sight to the blind. 1 [Alleluia!] Praise the LORD, O my soul; while I live will I praise the LORD : yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my GOD. It is man's reason calling upon his affections, the intellectual part urging the emotional to pay homage and reverence to Him only Whose due it is, instead of giving earthly potentates that honour which He alone can justly claim. And the answer promises compliance, that henceforth holy thoughts and resolutions shall be the plan of the soul's life; and that not at intervals, nor yet in meditation only, but in active operation, and continuously throughout the whole span of existence. And that because our life here and hereafter is truly one, albeit divided by the veil of death. While I live here, short as the time is, I will begin to praise the LORD, and learn the lesson of rejoicing worship which is to go on as long as I have any being, that is, since CHRIST has brought life and immortality to light, throughout all eternity. Here, our praise is not only interrupted by many other things, but is itself often no more than mechanical, the utterance of the lips only when the heart is far away, engrossed in its own concerns, and thereby offends GOD instead of glorifying Him; but there, heart, and voice, and will shall be at one, and nothing distract us from the thought of GOD, because the three obstacles which impede praise on earth

2 Tim. i. 10. A. will have vanished, imperfect knowledge, bodily corruption, and halting love, and with them that admixture of tears and prayers which prevents the act of praise from being absolutely pure, spontaneous, disinterested, and exulting, as it will be in the kingdom of heaven. 2 O put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man : for there is no help in them. A. A.

If this Psalm belong, as is most probable, to the post-Captivity era, there is in all likelihood a reference here to the disappointment of the returned exiles in their hopes of a speedy restoration of the Temple by reason of the favour and decrees of Cyrus, when the hired counsellors of the people of the land succeeded in frustrating the plans of the builders all through the reigns of Cyrus and Ahasuerus, down to the second year of Darius. Put not your trust in princes, for they cannot save themselves from peril, sorrow, disease, and death; how much less then can they help others? What they do, even if they do anything, is but as a conduit yields water, as a town-crier gives liberty to a prisoner. The conduit does but convey the waters of a living fountain, the crier merely echoes the voice of the Judge, nor may any child of man, save One, give help, and He because He is not only Son of man, but Son of God, since if even He were only Man He could not be our SAVIOUR. Not even those great princes of God, the Apostles and the Angels, may be made objects of trust, observes here the English hermit Saint, for to God only in CHRIST does that belong; much less, therefore, any ministers of His Church on earth, who are no more than the instruments whereby He communicates grace to His people.

And if it be so even with those who are princes in spiritual things, how much less confidence is to be placed in those whose rank, wealth, and power are of the earth, earthy, doomed to a brief span and total disappearance? Albeit, experience teaches us that if a man in trouble is told that some powerful fellow-creature will come to his aid, he is at once cheered and roused, but if God's help is promised, the words are received with coldness and indifference, although God Himself has said by His Prophet, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and departeth from the LORD. And the reason follows. It is not, as so often understood, from any special capriciousness in the favour of earthly princes, (the

As Shakespeare takes it, putting the sentiment into Wolsey's mouth : O how wretched Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favour! There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to, That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin, More pangs and fears than wars or women have : Hebrew word here, , may be correctly enough translated benefactors or free-will givers,) but from their frail tenure of existence. 3 For when the breath of man goeth forth he shall turn again to his earth : and then all his thoughts perish. However assured the good will of an earthly monarch towards a subject may be, yet he can never insure its operation beyond his own life, and often not during it. Death must come, and cannot be averted, and with death vanish all his thoughts, all the plans and dispositions made beforehand, since the dead sovereign has no means of enforcing their execution, nor of protecting his friends against his successor. And it is recorded of the great Saladin, that every evening in his camp an officer on horseback lifted up a black shroud as a standard upon a lance, while one of two mollahs made proclamation, "Saladin, king of kings, Saladin, conqueror of conquerors, Saladin must die." And the other made response, "Extolled be the perfection of the Living Who dieth not!" The slave in the chariot of a Roman general during a triumph, with his repeated phrase, "Remember that thou art a man," was not so impressively solemn a warning as this.

4 Blessed is he that hath the GOD of Jacob for his help : and whose hope is in the LORD his GOD. For there is no change in the politics of heaven. No cry there Le Roi est mort, Vive le Roi! ushers in a displacement, perhaps a revolution. No need was there for the LORD JESUS, when crowned King of Heaven, while wielding in His right hand the sceptre of the Cross, to bear in His left, like the Eastern Emperors at their coronation, a purple bag containing a little earth, to remind Him that royalty is mortal, for "death hath no more dominion over Him," and "of His kingdom there shall be no end." Blessed is he that hath Him, the GOD of Jacob, of every pilgrim and wrestling soul, Rom. vi. 9. S. Luke i. 33. And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer, Never to hope again.

And it will not be forgotten how Strafford quoted the verse when the news reached him that Charles I. had given the royal assent to the bill of attainder against him.

Rushworth, viii. 743. History is full of illustrations, and amongst the latest, as the most singular of them, is that record of a loud sound as of thunder rolling, heard in the Œil de Bœuf on May 10th, 1774, which proved to be the simultaneous rush of the whole French court, the moment Louis XV.'s death was known, to pay homage to Louis XVI. G. for His help, for even in the night of struggle and tears, He will manifest Himself as the Angel of the Great Counsel, and make of Jacob an Israel, who shall see Him in the morning Ay. face to face. And it is noteworthy that this title God of Jacob is more frequent in Holy Writ than that which mentions Abraham or Isaac, albeit they worshipped Him too; and the reason may be that Jacob was the first to make a voluntary covenant with the LORD to serve Him, and have Him only as his GOD. And whereas Isaac alone of Abraham's sons, and Jacob alone of Isaac's, inherited the promise; all the twelve sons of Jacob were co-heirs, and formed but one people of GOD, so that the title God of Jacob denotes no longer relationship to one person, but to a whole race, the entire of that "chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, peculiar people," whom CHRIST hath purchased to Himself for a possession. So then, "cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? But trust ye in the LORD for ever; for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."

5 Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is : who keepeth his promise for ever ; A. All worshippers, even in false religions, have hope in their God, whoever he may be, but only those who trust in the Creator of all things can be sure of the power of Him they serve, Who keepeth truth for ever (A.V., Vulg.) stored in His inexhaustible treasury as the most costly jewel even there. And that because the Truth which He so keeps, and which is the sustaining power which preserves the fabric of creation, is the Eternal WORD, His Only-begotten SON, JESUS CHRIST. He too, if we follow the Prayer Book rendering, is the Promise made to Adam and Eve, and again and again pledged to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David by the mouth of GOD Himself or by the voice of His Prophets. 6 Who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong : who feedeth the hungry.

C. By all the tokens given in this and the succeeding verses wherewith to identify the LORD, it is made clear that He is the Incarnate SON. CHRIST is the true Judge and Ruler eternal, Who avenges the oppressed for His Name's sake. And as there is no wrong so grievous as the attempt to deprive us of our just rights as fellow-citizens of the Saints and of the Kingdom of GOD, so this is the first thing which He corrects, destroying the power of the devil. And He helped His own servants when they suffered wrong at the hands of the Jews who cast them out, and will help them more wondrously at His second coming, according to that saying, "Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at His word, Your brethren that cast you out for My Name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." Who feedeth the hungry. He did it literally in the repeated miracle of the loaves and fishes, and spiritually too, when that famine foretold by

Amos was in the land, ”not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD,” He fulfilled the promise of His own Beatitude, ”Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled;” by feeding the multitude with the words of life.

7 The LORD looseth men out of prison: the LORD giveth sight to the blind. These words of glad thankfulness, probably first uttered when the decree went forth that Israel might return to his own land, set forth the glory of the LORD Who delivered men from the bondage of sin, and enlightened their understandings to receive His law; Who descending into Hades, broke the gates of brass and smote the bars of iron asunder, releasing the prisoned Fathers, and irradiating the land of the shadow of death with His glorious light; and Who, in the act of making His new revelation to the world, did away with the restraints and bondage of the ceremonial law; an interpretation given to this passage by some Rabbinical authorities, who cite it as a proof that the Mosaic code is not of perpetual obligation. Daily still He looseth men out of the prison of their sins, and having thus brought them to the purgative way, gives them light enough to advance in the illuminative way also; which He prefigured in miracle by His frequent restoration of sight to the blind; a special token of Messiah’s power which the Prophet had foretold; while His deliverance of Peter from one dungeon, and Paul and Silas from another, showed that the Hand which had brought Joseph from a prison to a throne, and had led Israel out of Egypt, was not shortened so as to be unable to save. And what He has thus done by grace, He will do yet more perfectly by glory, delivering us out of the prison of this world, and touching our eyes, who have been born blind, that we may see the King in His beauty face to face, He Who even here, is ”the Light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.”

Agellius. Ezra i. 1. A. C. S. John i. 9. He comes the prisoners to release, In Satan’s bondage held; The gates of brass before Him burst, The iron fetters yield. He comes from thickest films of vice To clear the mental ray, And on the eye-balls of the blind To pour celestial ray. He comes the broken heart to bind, The bleeding soul to cure, And with the treasures of His grace To enrich the humble poor. 8 The LORD helpeth them that are fallen : the LORD careth for the righteous.

There are two faults in this version; fallen ought to be bowed down, and careth for should be loveth. Yet again we are called to gaze upon Him Who healed the woman bent for eighteen years, the Friend Who loved John, and Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus; Who makes ”the crooked straight and the rough places plain” in the souls of His people by correcting their perverted and depraved wills, when their powers for good are broken and their will enfeebled, or when pride has put them out of the right way, or caused them to be dashed down, as the Vulgate reads. The Lord careth for the righteous. ”If the gods,” says the greatest of heathen philosophers, ”have any interest in human affairs, as seems to be the case, it is

reasonable to suppose that they take pleasure in that which is best, and nearest akin to themselves . . . . and those who loved and honoured this most, they would requite, as interested in things dear to themselves, and acting rightly and honourably. And that this is so with a wise man is not hard to see, wherefore he is dearest of all to GOD, and consequently, the happiest also." What the Pagan thought out in abstract speculation, the Evangelist will give us in concrete fact. It is written of the young man, to whom CHRIST enjoined the commandments of the moral law, that he answered, "Master, all these things have I observed from my youth. Then JESUS beholding him, loved him."

9 The LORD careth for the strangers; he defendeth the fatherless and widow : as for the way of the ungodly, he turneth it upside down. A. The first clause of this verse is quaintly styled by an old German commentator, "GOD's trefoil," a flower growing nowhere else in the Psalter. The LXX. word here for strangers is proselytes, whence S. Augustine interprets the reference as being to the whole Gentile Church, while a Greek expositor, agreeing with him herein, considers the righteous of the previous verse to be limited to the Saints of the Old Covenant. But the more usual interpretation takes the meaning to be that they are the special charge of GOD who regard themselves as "strangers and pilgrims" here, having no continuing city, but seeking one to come, as they journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. And what He does for these strangers we learn in another place: "He loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment," the righteousness, and the Body and Blood of CHRIST. The fatherless are all those who are alone in the world, "calling no man their father on earth," or else far away from GOD their Father, and not knowing Him as such, albeit He knows well that they are His children, and neither forsakes nor forgets them. He says, as He said on the night before His Passion, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come unto you." The widow, in like manner, is the Church which waits desolate here till her Bridegroom come.

A. A.V. marg. The Church has waited long Her absent LORD to see; And still in loneliness she waits, A friendless stranger she. Age after age has gone, Sun after sun has set, And still in weeds of widowhood She weeps a mourner yet. Come, then, LORD JESU, come. We long to hear Thy Voice, To see Thee face to face, To share Thy crown and glory then, As now we share Thy grace. Should not the loving Bride The absent Bridegroom mourn? Should she not wear the weeds of grief Come, then, LORD JESU, come. As for the way of sinners, &c. This way is said by an early commentator to be Satan, who is the way, and the lie, and the death, as the opposite to CHRIST, while others take it more simply of any course of evil conduct, or even of a depraved conscience. He turneth it upside down. The A.V. more tersely has overthroweth. It may well be that the metaphor is taken from the destruction of a raised causeway by a flood or a landslip, when the road is literally overthrown, but the Hebrew root implies "twisting," and therefore it is better to understand here causing sinners to miss the goal at which they are aiming, by turning, as

it were, their very road out of the true direction, or else entangling them in the intricate maze of their own plots, so that they cannot escape from them. But, as usual, the gentler exposition finds supporters, and we are reminded that it is the way of sinners, not the sinners themselves, which is destroyed; and that when this is done, the aforetime sinners will walk in the way of the Saints.

10 The LORD thy GOD, O Sion, shall be King for evermore : and throughout all generations. [Alleluia!] A. Rejoice then, O Sion, Church Militant on earth, for He will reign over thee, thou shalt be His Kingdom. He will reign for ever, and He will not reign without thee. And in that it is said shall be, not is King, we are forced to remember that His empire over our thoughts and hearts here is at best a divided one, but when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then CHRIST will reign perfectly in His Saints, "that GOD may be all in all," ruling over the two generations of Jew and Gentile in one Church Universal, and that not for a brief span, like earthly kings, but for evermore, so that His Saints will never need to raise the wail of sorrow, but will have as their song the unending Alleluia.

Joy to His ancient people, Your bonds He comes to sever, The work is done, the LORD hath won, And ye are free for ever. Joy to the ransomed nations, The foe, the raging lion, Is bound in chains while JESUS reigns The LORD of all in Sion. Joy to the Church triumphant, The SAVIOUR'S throne surrounding, They see His face, adore His grace, O'er all their sin abounding. Crowned with the mighty Victor, His royal glory sharing; Each fills a throne, His Name alone To heaven and earth declaring. Glory be to the FATHER, Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is; glory be to the SON, Who is King for evermore in Sion; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who defendeth the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Lu. O Glorious and Almighty GOD, in Whom the souls of the Blessed place all the confidence of their hope, grant that we, enlightened by Thy help, may be able to love Thee alway with a pure mind. (1.) O GOD, our praise and rejoicing, loose us from the chains of sin, that we who often fall as offenders, may be raised up by Thee as penitents. (1.) O LORD, Who liftest up them that are down, and loosest the prisoners, and givest sight to the blind; lift us up also when falls lay us low, loose us when sins bind us round about, and enlighten us when the cloud of ignorance surrounds us, that our soul may ever praise Thee and our life be lowly in faithful devotion, and because it is of Thy gift that we are, all our lifetime may serve Thee. (11.) O LORD, Who loosest the prisoners by the power of Thy Word, and enlightenest the blind with a moist salve of clay anointed with Thy holy spittle, loose, we pray Thee, the bonds of our sins, and break asunder the destruction which is an obstacle in our way; lift up those that are down, and illuminate the gladness of our minds with the teaching of Thy law, that as Thou guidest the righteous unto

Thyself, and receivest him in Thy pity with pardon, and as Thou art the loving and heedful guardian of orphan and widow, so keep us in this pilgrimage, that Thou mayest suffer us to go in, after our sins are pardoned, to the sweetness of eternity. (11.)

Overthrow, O LORD, with Thy mighty right hand, our way, going downwards into sin, lift us up when we are fallen, loose us when fettered by our evil works, love us when Thou hast made us righteous, and make us persevere for ever in Thy love. (1.)

Psalm 147

TITLE. LXX.: Alleluia, of Haggai and Zechariah. Vulgate Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. First portion: That CHRIST knows the number and names of the stars, which He Himself first set up. The Voice of the Apostles and the Church to the new people; or the Voice of the HOLY GHOST by the Prophet to the Gentiles, that they should strive to praise GOD, not vain idols. The Voice of CHRIST to the Church. Second portion: That CHRIST may fill His Church with peace, and abundance of spiritual wheat. The Voice of CHRIST to the Church, that it may praise the LORD the FATHER; or the Voice of the HOLY GHOST by the Prophets to the same, that she may not The LXX. and the versions derived from it, count this Psalm as cxlvi. and cxlvii., dividing it after v. 11. cease to praise CHRIST. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST to the Church concerning CHRIST.

VEN. BEDE. First portion: The subsequent text explains the words of its title, for Alleluia means Praise ye the Lord. Further, the fifth edition of this Psalm set it down thus, Praise ye Jah, that is, the Lord, because Jah is understood to be one of the ten Names of GOD. And these Jerome writing to Marcellus thus enumerates. The first name is El, that is, Mighty; then Elohim and Elohé, both of which mean God: whence they are often found doubled, as is the case with "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me," and "O GOD, Thou art my GOD, early will I seek Thee," and other like passages. The fourth is Sabaoth, which is Of Hosts. The fifth Heljon, which we call Most High. The sixth Esér eheie, which is read in Exodus, "I AM hath sent me." Seventh, Adonai, which we usually call Lord. Eighth Jah, which is applied to GOD only, and is heard in the last syllable of Allelu-ia. Ninth is the Tetragrammaton [] which is called Ineffable. Tenth, Saddai, that is Strong and able to do all things.

In the first place the Prophet exhorts the devout people to praise the LORD, Who setteth up the meek, and breaketh the necks of the proud. O praise the Lord. Secondly, he saith that the LORD ought to be heartily praised, Who granteth benefits which will profit His petitioners, because they who trust in their own strength cannot please Him. O sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving. Second portion: As usual,

we come back to Alleluia; but we feel no weariness in repeating it, and there is such honour given to this word, that though it is concealed in the Hebrew tongue, it is a known fact that it has not been translated into any other language, but whatever is dedicated to the Godhead, reverences the dignity of this word with loving devotion. In the first paragraph, the Prophet accosts Jerusalem, that is the City on high, that now made secure in her citizens, she ought to praise the LORD with continual rejoicing. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem. Secondly, he counts up at more length, in mystical expression, what great kindnesses the loving and merciful One hath bestowed on His people. He sendeth out His Word. These Psalms of the praise of David are so ordered, that they speak first of the laws of divine praise, and then of avoiding the sinfulness of the world. Thirdly, there is mention of the gathering together of the Church. Fourthly, when the Psalm is ended, he bids united Jerusalem celebrate the praises of the LORD, as she is known to be delivered from the divers perils of this world, and stablished in everlasting rest. Wherefore he adds that this most holy choir, gathered out of all parts of the world, should rejoice in threefold gladness, that in this most holy task, the grace of the Trinity might everywhere shine.

SYRIAC PSALTER. First portion: Of Haggai and Zechariah. Concerning Zerubbabel and Joshua the Priest, and Ezra, who were careful for the building of Jerusalem. For us praise with the doctrine of GOD. Second portion: Of Haggai and Zechariah, when they pressed on the completion of the Temple of Jerusalem. And praise with doctrine of GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A hymn with a doctrine of GOD. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm declaring praise. Gregorian. { Saturday: Vespers. [Second portion: vv. 12— Monastic. { 20. Corpus CHRISTI, Comm. B.V.M., Comm. Sarum. { Virg., Dedication: Vespers. Sarum also Christmas Day and Trinity Sunday: I. Vespers.]

Antiphons.

Gregorian. { First portion: To our GOD * let praise be pleasant. Second portion: Praise CHRIST the LORD * Monastic. { [Corpus CHRISTI: The LORD Who setteth peace in the borders of the Church, filleth us with the flour of wheat. Com. B.V.M.: Thou art fair, and pleasant for delights, O holy Mother of GOD. Com. Virg.: She is fair * among the daughters of Jerusalem. Dedication: All thy walls are precious stones, and the towers of Jerusalem shall be built up with jewels.] Ambrosian. First portion: As Gregorian. Second portion: For He hath stablished * the bars of thy gates. K. K. K. Parisian. First portion: The LORD’s delight is in them that fear Him * and put their trust in His mercy. Second portion: The LORD showeth His Word unto Jacob: His statutes unto Israel, He hath not dealt so with any nation. Lyons. Second portion: He bloweth with His wind, and the waters flow.

Mozarabic. First portion: Who healeth those that are broken in heart, and bindeth up their bruises * Great is our LORD; and great is His power. Second portion:

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem: Praise thy GOD, O Sion. 1 O praise the LORD, for it is a good thing to sing praises unto our GOD: yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful. Every work of man asks for payment, that we may be comforted in the midst of toilsome action with the hope of a fixed reward. In praising GOD the act has its reward, when that shall be the wages which is now the employment. For since it is a good thing to sing praises unto our God, we are sure that each of us will receive the promised gifts. He does so receive them, when in the fellowship of the angels it is the one reward of the Saints to be occupied in unceasing praise of GOD. And what can be a happier thing than to practise here what you hope to perform in future blessedness? And accordingly, in the Preface of the Canon Bellarmine.

A. in the Liturgy, when the Priest says to the people, ”Let us give thanks to our LORD GOD;” they answer, ”It is meet and right so to do;” and he then takes up the strain again, ”It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, Holy FATHER, Almighty, Everlasting GOD.” A joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful. The A.V. reads For it [to sing praises] is pleasant, and praise is comely. The Vulgate, midway between these versions, has Let praise to our God be pleasant and comely. And then the question arises, to whom is the praise to be pleasant? Some few take it of the spiritual delight of the singer himself, according to that saying of the Prophet, ”I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my GOD;” but the majority, following S. Augustine, say that praise is pleasant to GOD, and comely in itself, when it proceeds from a sincere heart in unison with the practical virtues of a holy life; since ”praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner, for it was not sent him of the LORD.”

2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem : and gather together the outcasts of Israel. H. A. Ezra v. 16; i. 8.

There has never been any doubt, from the time of Origen to the present day, that the primary reference of this verse is to the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Nehemiah, and the accepted theory now is that the Psalm was composed as an anthem to be sung at the dedication of the walls; as a thanksgiving for the return of the exiles. But the Christian expositors have naturally looked to the higher spiritual meaning, of the gradual building of Jerusalem above with living stones, of the assembling together in their country and home of all the pilgrims of Israel who are eagerly waiting to be released from the Babylon of the world; waiting for that signal when ”He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other,” into the unity of faith, and the bond of love. And the process of building began with His laying the chief corner-stone, even Himself, in His own Blood, ”that He should die, not for that nation only, but also that He should gather together in one the children of GOD that were scattered abroad.

On this foundation He laid the ”great stones, the costly stones, and hewed stones” of the Apostles and Prophets, and yet He still doth build, for ”then came the same Sheshbazzar the Prince of Judah, and laid the foundation of the house of GOD which is in Jerusalem, and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished. ”Ye,” says the great martyr S. Ignatius to the Church of Ephesus, ”are stones of the Temple of the FATHER, prepared for the building of GOD the FATHER, and drawn up on high by the engine of JESUS CHRIST, which is the Cross, making use of the HOLY GHOST as the rope, while your faith was the means by which ye ascended, and your love the way which led up to GOD.”

3 He healeth those that are broken in heart : and giveth medicine to heal their sickness. The story of the building and of the healing are one and the same. For the breaches of the walls were not due only to the fall of the rebel angels, but sinful man too went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves. Thither the Good Samaritan followed him, to recover the stone which belonged to His city, and replace it in its course ; to heal the broken heart by pouring in the oil of grace, to give the medicines of His holy Sacraments, kept in their place by the wholesome bandages of moral precepts, as He bindeth up the wounds (A.V., Vulg.) whereof man was half dead. Yet as it is not they that are whole that need a physician, but they that are sick ; it is only on the broken in heart that He can exert His skill. For the hard and stony heart which will not break, there are no medicines available, as for its ”wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” But the LORD JESUS, at the very outset of His ministry, declared in the synagogue of Nazareth that He it was of whom Isaiah spake when he foretold One Who should ”heal the broken-hearted,” and therefore that we may receive that blessing, we must needs break our hearts with penitence for our sins.

A. Isa. i. 6. 4 He telleth the number of the stars : and calleth them all by their names. The stars are certain lights in the Church, which comfort our night, all they of whom the Apostle speaks, ”blameless and harmless, the sons of GOD, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.” These stars, all those who are to reign with Him, GOD numbers ; all those who are to be gathered together with Him in the Body of the only Begotten SON He hath numbered, and does number ; whoso is unworthy, is not numbered amongst them. These are the stars of which is written, ”The stars shined in their watches, and rejoiced : when He calleth them, they say, Here we be ; and so with cheerfulness they showed light unto Him that made them,” the true spiritual offspring of Abraham, multiplied as the stars of heaven. And as in this world’s astronomy there are various names for different kinds of stars, so in the heavenly astronomy there

A. Phil. ii. 15. T A. are great groups and classes too, Apostles, Martyrs, Doctors, Confessors, Virgins; each one of whom is separately known to Him. And not only known, but guarded, and preserved, since the reason why we number things is lest any should be lost, and therefore it is added He calleth them all by their names, because they are written in the Book of Life. Wherefore the LORD saith Himself, ”He calleth His own sheep by name,” and again, ”I know whom I have chosen.” And of those that He has so chosen, albeit ”one star differeth from another star in glory,” yet each and all ”that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” 5 Great is our LORD, and great is his power : yea, and his wisdom is infinite.

A. A. Haymo. S. August. in S. Joann. 19. S. Bernard. de Consider. Great in His essence, and not only so, but in operation, for which reason His power, which is the visible manifestation of His Almightiness, is named in the second place, as an effect flowing from its cause. His wisdom is infinite. Literally, Of His wisdom there is no number. As wisdom is not measured by number, many take the word here as signifying the wonderful works done by GOD, of all which He is fully cognizant, seeing that He hath ”ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight;” but which man is unable to reckon. Others, however, explain the word as infinite, because that which can be numbered has an end, however remote. There is a third and mystical sense in which the clause is taken. There is no number of His Wisdom, because the Only-Begotten SON, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, is one with the FATHER in essence of Godhead; since the terms three and one, which we use in endeavouring to express the nature of Deity, do not imply arithmetical relations, because GOD cannot be numbered.

6 The LORD setteth up the meek : and bringeth the ungodly down to the ground.

It is not merely helpeth, but something much better, lifteth up. And what is this? Refreshing, cherishing, carrying. The Psalmist paints GOD as a tender Father, Who in His unspeakable providence and love, manages His little children and caresses them. There is no fear of harm coming to those in His divine bosom, seeing that the sword of evil fortune must pierce through GOD’s side and sweet affection before it can reach them. So too, He bringeth the ungodly down to the ground, with equal tenderness, because while they are lifted up in their pride, they are in danger of a fatal fall, but He puts them where they are safe, down on the ground of humiliation, till He is ready to take them too up in His arms for rest and shelter. And after all, He does but put them down to the very place whence the others are lifted up. It is God’s medicine, and the way He deals with those who make a difficulty over the mysteries, types, and hard places of Holy Writ. The door is shut in order that people may learn to knock; there is no intention of keeping them out. Be not angry therefore at finding it shut, be gentle and meek, and do not say, It would be better if what is here were said in this other fashion. How can you tell or judge what is

the way it ought to have been said? It has been said exactly as it ought to have been. A sick man does not take upon himself to revise his doctor's prescriptions; it is the doctor who knows how to modify them. Trust Him who cures thee. Be meek, and He will lift thee up. If you resist, hear what follows: He bringeth the ungodly down to the ground, and intellectual pride ends only too often in carnal sin and degradation, of the earth, earthy, mean and grovelling.

A. 7 O sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving: sing praises upon the harp unto our GOD. For sing, the LXX. has Begin; the Vulgate, uniting both ideas, Precent, that is, begin the song. A more literal rendering than any of these would be Answer, which implies the antiphonal response of a double choir, but here may be taken as the reply of the grateful heart of man to GOD, Who has spoken first by His acts of loving-kindness. The first answer then, is thanksgiving, or, with the LXX. and Vulgate, confession, the twofold acknowledgment of GOD's glory and man's sin. And that beginning made, comes next praises on the harp, the harmonious music of a life which lacks no string of the ten precepts of GOD's decachord, no skilled and tuneful fingering by hands active in His service. 8 Who covereth the heavens with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth: and maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herb for the use of men.

Passing over the literal and obvious meaning of these words, as needing no comment, the ancient expositors turn to the spiritual lessons to be drawn from them. And first, the clouds are the teachers of heavenly wisdom, drawn themselves from evilness and ignorance up into the higher air of divine contemplation by the attracting heat of the Sun of Righteousness, that their "doctrine may drop as the rain, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass," to satisfy a parched and thirsty world. So the Eastern Church says, "The Apostles, appearing like clouds full of divine light, rain down life-giving water upon all." Again, Menæa, A. Macmillan, Bible Readings in Nature.

the clouds which darken the face of heaven, and yet are so profitable to earth and man, may be understood of the types, figures, and mysteries of Holy Writ, which are designed to accommodate to man's understanding matters which if expressed as they are in the full clearness of God, would give no refreshment to our souls, just as a clear blue sky yields no rain. And finally, God causes our sky to be overcast with trouble, that we may rain tears, and He comfort and grace upon our hearts. Grass to grow upon the mountains. Let us begin by noting some of the properties of grass, before entering upon the lesson it teaches here. In the first place, it is the great laboratory of food for the world, taking up, assimilating, and vitalizing the inorganic matter it draws from the earth, the water, and the air, and making them fit for the support of those animals on which man himself lives. In its highest forms, the cereals, it is directly as well as mediately, human food. Its root is more fibrous and tenacious than any plant of similar size possesses; its growth is thick

and clustering; its stem is coated with flint, so as to be of amazing strength, the leaves are formed so as to push their way easily through the soil, and to present the least surface to the winds, and it grows spontaneously and freely upon great mountain heights, far above the level which man's husbandry can reach.

And many of these mountain grasses, instead of producing flowers and seed, bring forth perfectly formed plants, which strike root the moment the parent stem withers and falls to the ground, and become independent grasses. Were it otherwise, the stormy winds on these high levels would blow the seeds away, and the species would perish. The mountains, then, are the great Saints of God, whose lofty heights of wisdom, of holiness, of contemplation, form the fittests oil for that spiritual teaching which is to be the food for CHRIST's flock, the lovely carpet to cover what else would be the bare, hard earth. No creed save that of the Gospel can put-life into dead things, can go to everything for CHRIST, and to every one with CHRIST. None other is self-sown. All other creeds have had a human author, but this grows on heights which man's plough will not reach. None other grows on the far heights. A certain level of civilization and learning is fatal to mere human beliefs; the Buddhist, the Brahmin, the Moslem lose their faith with their ignorance, but the Cross surmounts the highest hills. No other creed is so tenacious of life, so strong, so deep-rooted, and yet so flexible, and none is found so widely diffused, ministering under such different aspects to such diverse races and temperaments. And herb for the use of man. These words are not in the Hebrew, and have been added by the LXX. from Ps. civ. 14.

Two interpretations are given of the herb, that it signifies simpler and easier teaching than the grass, though produced by the same teachers; while others understand that the mountains mean rich and powerful people, whose hearts GOD touches so that they minister support from their wealth to the preachers of His Word.

A. 9 Who giveth fodder unto the cattle : and feedeth the young ravens that call upon him. He gives fodder unto the cattle when He instructs His ministers to adapt their teaching to the needs of beginners, as S. Paul witnesses, saying, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in CHRIST. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat." He feedeth the young ravens which call upon Him, when He gives spiritual instruction to the children of sinners, especially such as have lived in the black darkness of idolatry; (whereby the whole Gentile Church is understood,) but who call upon Him, as did Cornelius the centurion, asking in faith for light. And in the fierceness and gross feeding of the black, unclean raven, which would not return to the Ark, we have a type of sinners in general. Yet GOD feeds them. Their evil does not make Him less good, He is not less their Father because they deny that they are His children. And if so, if He "provideth for the raven his food," will He, in the day of dearth

and calamity, forsake the meek and harmless dove, that mourneth continually in prayer before Him?

10 He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse : neither delighteth he in any man's legs. That is, it is not in the cavalry and infantry of an army, in the display of worldly craft and worldly power, that GOD takes delight, seeing that it has often been His pleasure to rout a great host with but a handful of men; so that "he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself, neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself, and he that is courageous among the mighty shall flee away in that day, saith the LORD." And as the horse is the type of wealth and power, so it is to be noticed that the LORD did not choose kings and rulers for His Apostles, but poor and lowly men; and further, that He did not choose, even amongst these, such as stood on their own merits, relying on their strength and ability to stand, but lifted up the simple out of the dust, to set him with the princes of the people. Wherefore it follows:

11 But the LORD's delight is in them that fear him : and put their trust in his mercy. He joins fear with hope (Vulg.) because fear without hope of pardon is of no use, nor does hope avail without fear beforehand, for otherwise it would be presumption. Judas A. the traitor feared, but did not trust in CHRIST's mercy, and therefore he despaired, and departed, and went and hanged himself. If you would as a sinner flee from GOD's wrath, fearing Him, flee to His mercy, and sin no more. GOD puts us to His school, and impresses on us a wholesome awe, not for His glory, but for our profit. To those who will not learn, who are froward and self-willed, who have neither fear nor hope, He shows Himself stern, but to all those who wish to profit by His lessons, who have faith in the wisdom of their Teacher, to all such He shows that He takes delight in His pupils, and will bring them through their very awe to that perfect knowledge of Himself which casteth out fear, because it is love.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem : praise thy GOD, O Sion.
The two names denote one Church under two aspects. S. Paul knew the first as the heavenly one, when he spoke of "Jerusalem above, which is free, and the mother of us all." And he knew what Sion meant who saith, "Ye are come unto Mount Sion and to the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven." Both of them, the Triumphant and Militant Church, have the praise of GOD as their one occupation. But they perform it in different ways. The Church Militant praises Him by persevering in works of mercy; the Church Triumphant by pure enjoyment and delight in Him, an occupation full of sweetness, interrupted by no trouble, weakened by no fatigue, disturbed by no cloud. Our work then will be to praise GOD and to love Him, "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O LORD, they shall be always praising Thee." Why? unless that they shall be always loving Thee. Why? unless that they shall be always beholding Thee.

A. Ay.

13 For he hath made fast the bars of thy gates : and hath blessed thy children within thee.

The truest bar of these gates, that by which they are fastened on the right hand and the left, is that Cross to which He Who is the Door was nailed. It is the bar of the heavenly as well as of the earthly Church, and it was in the might of its strong resistance that the gates of hell did not prevail against the Gospel, when all kings, and nations, and cities, and hosts of evil spirits, endeavoured to sweep it away. The lesser, but still important bars of the Church on earth are her great Apostles, doctors, and teachers, by whose vigour and watchfulness the assaults of heresy and unbelief are driven back, and of them, as of bolts and bars, it is written, ”Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and also the clear, definite statements of divine truth which mark the limits of belief, and guard men from wandering into error. Faith, hope, and charity, are three good bars against the devil and his angels, but faith faileth, hope grows feeble, and charity waxes cold, unless each and all be strengthened by the gifts of the HOLY GHOST. And hath blessed thy children. That is, not only made them happy, but also (according to a common Scriptural use of the word blessed) made them numerous, granting to the Church that she should increase and multiply, subdue and replenish the earth.

And in that it is added within thee, we are taught that there is no promise of blessing to those children of Jerusalem who go out of her. But how, if the LORD has indeed strengthened (A.V. and Vulg. the bars of the gates, does it come to pass that so many scandals and sorrows trouble the Church Militant? Why do so many foes steal in, why do so many children rush out? Because here the wheat and tares are mingled, this is the threshing floor, not the garner. It is not said that GOD has shot the bars of the gates, but that He has strengthened them, and that for future use; for the time when the Bridegroom comes, and they that be ready shall go in with Him to the marriage, and the door shall be shut. Then the foolish virgins will knock in vain, for those strong bars will be put to their predestined purpose. No foe may thenceforward enter in, for the bar of absolute holiness keeps sin aloof, ”and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither worketh abomination, or alie. No friends shall thenceforward pass out, for the bar of the sure confirmation of the blessed in CHRIST keeps them safe; as CHRIST Himself hath declared: ”Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My GOD, and he shall go no more out.

And hath blessed thy children within thee, since ”blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates to the city.”

14 He maketh peace in thy borders: and filleth thee with the flour of wheat. When a city is beleaguered by enemies, its borders are war, as is the case with unhappy

Babylon, but Jerusalem is too strong to be assailed, and no foe may cross the frontier of her territory. In that City on high, there is peace even in the borders, for the last and lowest Saint in heaven is filled with tranquil rejoicing. Here, in the Church below, albeit without are fightings and within fears, which will not cease until the pilgrim's march is ended, yet "being justified by faith, we have peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." Perfect peace we cannot have on earth, for the moment full and entire peace is in the soul of one single man, that instant it will be the possession of all the citizens A. A. Cd. S. Cyril. Hieros. Cat. Myst. 5. S. Just. M. Apol. i. 65.

of Jerusalem. There is another sense in which they explain He maketh peace in thy borders, that it is a prophecy of the Reunion of Christendom, when those Christian sects which border on the Church in doctrine and ordinances, shall no longer make war against her, but be reconciled in purest amity. And filleth thee with the fat of wheat (Vulg., A.V., marg.) There is no doubt of what is intended here, the Sacrament of the Bread of Life, found only within the borders of Jerusalem. And observe, how by the grouping of these two words, peace and wheat, we are taught how truly the Sacrament of the Altar is the bond of union and mutual charity amongst the children of Sion. Hence the ancient rite of the Kiss of Peace, which made a part of every Liturgy in the Early Church, from at least the time of S. Justin Martyr; and therefore it is well asked by Tertullian, "What kind of sacrifice is that from which men depart without peace?" Hear another ancient Christian writer, "We know nothing of Communion without peace. It is said in the Gospels, 'First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' If we cannot offer our gifts without peace, how much more is this true of receiving the Body of CHRIST?"

How happy are Thy servants, LORD, Who thus remember Thee! What tongue can tell our sweet accord, Our perfect harmony? Who Thy mysterious Supper share, Here at Thy table fed, Many, and yet but one we are, One undivided Bread. One with the Living Bread divine, Which now by faith we eat; Our hearts, and minds, and spirits join, And all in JESUS meet. So dear the tie where souls agree, In JESU'S dying love, Then only can it closer be, When all are joined above. That word filleth, or as the Vulgate reads, satisfieth, belongs to Jerusalem above, not Sion below. Here we are indeed fed with the fat of wheat, but we feed on the Word of GOD under the veil of the Sacrament, we drink the water of wisdom, but only from the droppings of Holy Writ, and therefore we are not satisfied yet, nay, our very blessedness here consists in hungering and thirsting after righteousness. But there the Saints shall taste the sweetness of the Eternal Word with no type nor veil between, there they shall put their lips to the very Source of wisdom, and no longer drink of the mere rills or droppings which come down to water the earth.

15 He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth : and his word runneth very swiftly. He did indeed send His commandment, the New Law of His kingdom, upon

earth, when He caused it to be preached to every nation under heaven, and His Word ran very swiftly, ”rejoicing as a giant to run his race,” when the Only-Begotten Son, the ”Almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of Thy royal throne,” to become Incarnate at Nazareth, to show Himself for a most brief time upon earth, and in the short space of three years’ ministry to renew the world; and then He spread abroad by the mouth of His Apostles the tidings of salvation with wonderful rapidity, so that ”their sound went out into all lands, and their words into the end of the world,” in the power of that Wisdom which ”reacheth from one end to another mightily;” reaching from India in the East to Britain in the West within a few years, whereas the Law had remained fifteen centuries shut up within the limits of one land and people.

16 He giveth snow like wool : and scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. The snow which God sends is not merely like wool in its fleecy texture and delicate whiteness, but because it serves, in despite of its own coldness, as a great coverlet to keep the earth sheltered and warm from the keen frost and bitter blasts of winter, lulling it as it were in healthful and restful sleep, so that the seeds and herbage are saved from blight, and suffered to grow, hidden beneath the pall. So the Latin poet expresses the idea: See, what a thick fleece of silent waters falls. The hoar-frost, powdered lightly over the ground everywhere, like ashes, also penetrates below the surface of the earth, and expanding as it does so, breaks up the soil, making it friable, and easier for plants to shoot upwards through; and kills much of the insect life which would destroy the vegetation if unchecked. So God takes sinners, cold and lifeless, with neither spiritual fervour nor practical activity, and transfigures them, so that as CHRIST’s raiment when He flashed forth His radiance for a moment on earth, ”became shining, exceeding white as snow;” conversely, this chill snow becomes the raiment of CHRIST, without spot or wrinkle—do but look at a pure expanse of snow, and see the full beauty of S. Augustine’s figure here—and keeps, in new-found charity, His members warm. And the frost, which breaks up the hard soil, and does more good the deeper it goes, what is it save those salutary afflictions which God sends, that sinners may

A. be softened, and fitted to receive the seed of His Word, till they themselves, once colder than the snow itself, may, kindled through and through with the fervour of divine love, become like ashes, tokens alike of fire and of penitence, the relics of a whole burnt-offering upon the altar of GOD, and are spread abroad as a fertilizing compost over the fields which will one day be ripe for harvest? 17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels : who is able to abide his frost?

Genebrar-dus. A. C. Cd. B. Acts xv. 10. S. Matt. vii. 9. A. The word , here translated morsels, means in most of the places where it occurs in the Bible, pieces of bread, exactly the LXX. ψωμοῦς, for this very ice, this wintry cold, is profitable to the earth, to fit it for bearing, for the future harvests, and thus matures the morsels

of bread which man will yet win from the soil in due season. S. Augustine, who explains that ice, more solid cold than snow or frost, denotes the most hardened sinners, not so much coarse and depraved ones, as hard, keen, clear enemies of the truth, not as ignorant of it, but deliberately resisting it, of whom Saul of Tarsus was a perfect type, when in his stern relentlessness he voted for and assisted at the death of the martyr Stephen, and yet in GOD's providence was cast forth to feed the Gentiles hungering for the Bread of Life; himself, as a member of CHRIST, being a morsel of that Bread. And when GOD did so send forth the mighty preacher, who was able to abide His frost? None, for the resistless glacier came down from the mountain height of divine contemplation, and levelled in its onward march the idol temples in the plain below. Two other interpretations of the text merit to be set down.

Ice is pure and translucent, and that pure and crystalline substance which is sent forth as morsels of bread is the most Holy Sacrament of CHRIST's Body, shining, heavenly, glorious, the pure and wondrous transformation of our earthly body, which He deigned to take as His own. Lastly, the ice, in its stern rigidity and coldness, is an emblem of the Mosaic Law, broken up by GOD's grace, since who could abide that frost? It was "a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," is the testimony of the Prince of the Apostles. But now, that all its figures have been made clear, all its shadows lost in the light, that which was as a stone given us by our FATHER has become bread, its hardness gone, its digestion easy. Who can abide His frost? Who is really in love with sin, who can bear to be cold and hard, unwarmed by the genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness?

Gen. xviii. 5; Levit. ii. 6; vi. 14; Judg. xix. 5; 1 Sam. ii. 36; xxviii. 22; 1 Kings xvii. 11, &c. His exposition is based on the Greek word for ice, κρύσταλλος, for the ancients believed crystal to be mineralised ice, petrified by extreme cold. Does any despair because he is snow and ice when he would fain be fire and heat? Let him be of good cheer, for 18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them : he bloweth with his wind, and the waters flow. The remedy for sin is at hand, the prison of winter is unlocked by bright sun and warm breezes, by the Incarnation of JESUS, and the Mission of the HOLY GHOST; the south wind blows through the garden of GOD, and its spices flow out. The waters flow, when the hard heart melts into penitent tears, the waters flow when all the mighty powers of heart and hand, but lately frozen up in unbelief, melt and come down in eloquent torrents of doctrine, and freed from the icy restraints of the Old Testament, irrigate the fields below, and the thankful nations bow them down and drink, as they did when the WORD, with His one cry of "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" melted the stern persecutor; when the Holy Spirit of GOD set him apart for the work of evangelizing the Gentiles; wherefore it follows:

A. 19 He showeth his word unto Jacob: his statutes and ordinances unto Israel. 20 He hath not dealt so with any nation: neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws. The younger people, the Gentile Church, has had the WORD, the Incarnate SON, manifested to it, before its eyes "JESUS CHRIST hath been evidently set forth." The WORD came first to the literal Jacob, the carnal Israel, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of GOD." The new Jacob has supplanted his elder brother, for "blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The first part of GOD's grace is showing His WORD, that we may embrace Him by faith, while we are still struggling as Jacob; the next is the process of sanctification through obedience when, after promising allegiance to our King, He explains to us the laws of His kingdom, and makes us Israel, princes with Him. He hath not dealt so with any nation. As He chose the Hebrews for His own peculiar people, intrusted them with the care of His oracles, was Himself their King and Lawgiver, and later vouchsafed to be born of the tribe of Judah, they were above all nations of the earth bound to hear and obey Him. But now these words, which once described their exalted privileges, are taken away from them, and applied to the Christian Church, gathered out of those very heathens who had no knowledge of His laws; but are now favoured by His grace, while vast tracts of the earth are even still overrun with false creeds, so that those who have been nurtured in the Gospel can only marvel at and bless the great goodness of GOD, Who has strengthened the bars of their gates, blessed

A. S. John i. 11. A. them within Jerusalem, made all their borders peace, filled them with the fatness of wheat, sent forth His great preachers for their learning, made the waters of the Old Testament flow down from their icy prison under the influence of the Spirit, and has kept all these mercies for them alone, so that this very election is the seventh of the graces He here bestows. Glory be to the FATHER, Who sendeth forth His Word; glory be to the SON, Himself the WORD, Who melteth sinners; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Wind that maketh the waters flow. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.

Lu. O GOD, Builder of the heavenly Jerusalem, Who both numberest the multitude of the stars, and callest them all by their names; heal, we pray Thee, them that are broken of heart, gather together the outcasts, and enrich us with Thine infinite wisdom. (1.) Lu. Strengthen, O LORD, the gates of Thy Church, and set peace in her borders, and vouchsafe to give her the fatness of spiritual wheat. (1.) Mozarabic. O GOD, Who healest them that are broken of heart, grant medicine for our wound, and Thou Who numberest the multitude of the stars, unite us with them that are predestined unto life, that Thy delight may be in us, and Thou mayest bid us be exalted in everlasting salvation. (11.) Mozarabic. O LORD, Who hast made Jerusalem the border of peace, bestow abundance of Thy peace on Thy believing

people, to rule us in immortality, and possess us in everlasting life. And Thou, O LORD, Who wilt satisfy us with the fulness of wheat, grant that what we now behold as a figure, we may enjoy, even Thee, in all things with the clearness of truth. (11.)

D. C. Quell, O LORD, the terrors and wars of spiritual wickedness, graciously make peace in our borders, strengthen the bars of the gates of Thine House, and bless us, the children of new grace, nor suffer the children of darkness to prevail against us any more. (1.)

Psalm 148

TITLE. LXX.: Alleluia, of Haggai and Zechariah. Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That all things were made or created by the command of CHRIST. The Voice of the Apostles to the people, inviting all to the praise of GOD the Creator. The Voice of CHRIST. Every creature is invited to the praise of GOD. Every creature of the world is called together to praise GOD. VEN. BEDE. The Prophet, mentioning a few, urges all creatures to the praises of the LORD; the rational and intellectual ones, in person; those which lack intellect or senses, through the means of those which join in praising the LORD with the wisest use of thought. In the first part he urges heavenly things to praise. O praise the Lord of heaven. Secondly, he counsels earthly things with allegorical allusion, to join in celebrating the LORD with devout mind, giving one sufficient reason to each, that it is fitting for the creature to praise its Author. Praise the Lord upon earth.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of Haggai and Zechariah. A discourse of GOD that, as beings above, so beings below should praise the glorious LORD, the LORD of Hosts, the Almighty GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A hymn with doctrine of GOD. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm proclaiming praise.

Various Uses. — Antiphons.
The Gregorian and Monastic vary for every day and festival. Parisian. A hymn for all His saints, for the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Lyons. Kings of the earth * and all people, praise ye the LORD. This Psalm is always said in the Western Church together with the two following, with one Antiphon and one Gloria, a custom of unknown origin, mystically explained by Durandus, Bishop of Mende, and Sicardus, Bishop of Cremona, as the triple battle-cry against the world, the flesh, and the devil, the joint anthem of Jews, Christians, and Gentiles, the praise of the Trinity in Unity. From them, named both in East and West Alvoi, Laudes, the office of Lauds derives its title. The Eastern Church recites them together as well as the West, and it was reserved for Cardinal Quignonez to part them, an example followed by the later French Breviaries.

1 [Alleluia] O praise the Lord of heaven : praise him in the height. 2 Praise him, all ye angels of his : praise him, all his host. The three immediately preceding Psalms (exlvi., exlvii. 1—11, exlvii. 12—20,) set forth in order the gradual developA.

ment of that most blessed hope which has been granted to us. The first is sung because of the hope of eternity and the expectation of the kingdom of heaven. The second follows, because of the building of the Holy City, and the assembling of the Saints, who are to come together to the fulness of the City. The third is a song of thanksgiving for the completed City, stablished in everlasting peace, and granted genial air by the Heavenly SPIRIT after the dry biting cold of the world. Therefore the order of the teaching is the same as that of the events, for according to the preachings of the prophets and Apostles, the order of that blessed Kingdom and eternal City is fixed in this wise: the change brought about by the Resurrection, the assemblage of the Saints, and in the joint habitation of the united citizens of the LORD. After this, when all are established in everlasting blessedness, the choir of heavenly virtues and powers is assembled in this next psalm to sing the praises of GOD, that all creation, now that the vanity of the world has been driven away, freed from the heavy toils of its functions, and taking breath at last in the blessed everlasting kingdom, may in joy and rest celebrate its GOD, now that it has been taken up into everlasting glory and bliss, according to the saying of the Apostle: ”For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of GOD.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. So this is the song of granted liberty, because all creation is at rest at last, loosed from bondage to mankind, and conformed to the sons of GOD. And therefore, most fitly, those very sons of GOD, the Angel hosts, are invited to begin the song from the heavens (LXX., Vulg., A.V.,) and that from no lowly station therein, but in the height where the Seraphim stand nearest to the Throne. They are to precent the song of the new creation, for man, though rejoicing in the message of redemption, knows not how to praise as he ought, and needs a voice to give the intonation of the Psalm. It is thus not a command, but a petition, that they may continue to do what they always are doing, but so that man may catch the strain.

From heaven the loud, the angelic song began, It shook the skies, and reached astonished man; By man re-echoed, it shall mount again, While fragrant odours fill the blissful plain. 3 Praise him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars and light. The Psalmist descends from the highest and invisible created beings to those which, though far lower in dignity, are yet the highest and most glorious objects in the visible universe; that what is greatest in light may praise Him first, since,

albeit not rational creatures, so as to be able to praise God directly, their wonderful radiance and beauty supplies unfailing material for man's songs of gratitude and awe; and because they serve as emblems of Him Who is the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of Light, and to Whom we sing: O Thou, the FATHER'S glory bright, Who art the Very Light of Light, Light's fountain and eternal spring, Thou Day the day illumining; Glide in, Thou Very Sun divine, With everlasting radiance shine, And on our inmost senses pour The SPIRIT'S splendour evermore.

S. Ambrose, The Hymn, Splendor Paternæ Gloriæ. And as CHRIST in His manhood praises the FATHER, ascribing all glory to Him, that God may be all in all, so too the Church, that moon which derives all her light from Him, and waxes and wanes in faith and brightness here in the world, together with all those righteous children of hers who shine with the brightness of the stars, praises Him too in one choral hymn of thanksgiving. The light, as something diverse from the orbs of brightness, also utters His laud, by typifying and disclosing Him. So the Abyssinian Church sings: Praise to the SAVIOUR, the glory of the Saints, The Light which hath come into the world; His clothing was as light upon the mount, But He is the true Light in Himself. Degua of Jared, Hymn of the Light. He came from a world of light, And that light hath come to us; He will lead us back unto that light, From whence He descended in love and pity.

* God is a God Who knoweth all things, Clad in righteousness, robed in light, A light announced Him, shining in the heavens, And He is come, the Pilot of the souls of the just. * He reigns over the treasures of light Who existed ere the worlds were made. He will manifest that light; He will give comfort in our sorrows; He will disperse the clouds and thick darkness, And lead us to our rest above, Alleluia, O Thou First-born of Zion! 4 Praise him, all ye heavens : and ye waters that are above the heavens. A. D. C.

Rather, ye heavens of heavens, as LXX., Vulg., and A.V., words implying at once their vast extent and their unsearchable height. Ye waters that are above the heavens. The mediæval commentators, following S. Augustine, take this phrase, in its primary sense, to mean what in their cosmology they described as the crystalline heaven, clear as water, wherein the stars are placed. Mystically, they give various explanations; sometimes identifying these heavens with the threefold hierarchy of the angels, each triply subdivided, which however must be rejected, as a mere repetition of the idea in the second verse. Otherwise they take the heaven of heavens to be the Blessed Virgin, as the actual dwelling of GOD, and the others to be divine contemplation of the doctrines of the Gospels, and the Apostles, Ye waters that be above the heavens. Origen, followed by S. Ambrose, understands these waters as purely spiritual symbols, not physical entities; and an English commentator tells us that they are the abundant graces of the HOLY GHOST, "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the Lamb." And

S. Peter Chrysologus tells us that the waters of penitential tears, the weeping of Mary Magdalene, are above the heavens, because they rise at once and directly into the very presence of GOD.

S. Bernard, Serm. on S. Benedict. Rupert in Gen. i. Jorgius Card. in Ps. i. Rev. xxii. 1. S. Pet. Chrys.Serm. 9. 5 Let them praise the Name of the LORD; for he spake the word, and they were made: he commanded, and they were created. A. Ps. ii. 7. S. John i. 1, 3; iii. 35. He spake the Word, when He said before all eternity, ”Thou art My SON, this day have I begotten Thee.” And they were made, for ”the Word was GOD, and all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” He commanded, for ”the FATHER loveth the SON, and hath given all things into His hand.” And therefore ”by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him.” And in that He not only made, but created them, His Divine, originating power, as well as His plastic and artistic wisdom is implied; and also the whole sentence shows the instantaneous result of the Divine fiat, for ”GOD calleth those things which be not as though they were.” And from this the author of the

I can find no reference in any commentator I have examined to what strikes myself as the most obvious spiritual in- terpretation of the words, that ”sea of glass, mingled with fire,” on which the Apocalyptic harpers stand. treatise on the Sacraments, coeval with S. Ambrose, and usually printed amongst his works, draws this lesson: ”The Word of CHRIST makes this Sacrament. What Word of CHRIST? Doubtless that whereby all things were made. The LORD commanded, and the heaven was made; the LORD commanded, and the earth was made; the LORD commanded, and the seas were made; the LORD commanded, and every creature was made. See how efficacious is CHRIST’s Word. If there then be such power in the Word of the LORD JESUS, in that He is GOD, that things non-existent should begin to be, how much more efficacious (at least in man’s way of looking at the question) is it in causing a change in things already existing. Before consecration it was not the Body of CHRIST, but after consecration I tell thee it is now the Body of CHRIST. He spake the Word, and it was made.”

6 He hath made them fast for ever and ever: he hath given them a law which shall not be broken.

Here two things are set before us, the permanence and the cosmic order of creation. Each created thing is not only formed to endure, in the type or the development, if not in the individual, but has its place in the universe fixed by GOD’s decree, that it may fulfil its appointed share of working out His will. They raise a question as to the words, for ever and ever, how they can be reconciled with that prophecy, ”Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come unto mind;” a prophecy confirmed by the LORD Himself, saying, ”Heaven

and earth shall pass away," and seen fulfilled in vision by the Beloved Disciple. And they answer that just as man dies and rises again to incorruption, having the same personality in a glorified body, so it will be with heaven and earth. Their qualities will be changed, not their identity, in that new birth of all things. The law which He hath given to all heavenly things, to the Angel hosts, and to that bright and glorious City whence we are exiled pilgrims, is that of everlasting praise, their one task where there are no sins to struggle against, no wants to minister to. And in creation He has assigned great honour to man, while man has made for himself great wretchedness. The stars and the elements serve man, and yet man knows not his Creator. The whole world obeys GOD, is mindful of His law, man alone remembers it not.

A. A. All true, all faultless, all in tune, Creation's wondrous choir, Opened in mystic unison, To last till time expire. And still it lasts; by day and night, With one consenting voice, All hymn Thy glory, LORD, aright, All worship and rejoice. Man only mars the sweet accord, O'erpowering with harsh din The music of Thy works and word, Ill-matched with grief and sin. A. It is time for such discord to cease; and cease it can, for that WORD which made all things hath become flesh to save man, and lift him up from the state of sin. Only believe His promise, for He who clad Himself with death for thee in the womb of the Virgin Mother will clothe thee with life for Himself in His equality with the FATHER. And therefore the anthem of praise is not to be confined to heaven: 7 Praise the LORD upon earth: ye dragons and all deeps;

D. C. He begins with the lowest part of creation, the huge seamansters of the ocean. And some of the mediæval commentators very strikingly dwell on the two words dragons and abysses here found in LXX. and Vulgate, to teach us that even the "great red dragon" himself and all his brood, in the very depths of hell itself, are forced, however reluctantly, to praise the Lord, by working out His ends when striving to do their own evil will, and thus obeying His laws. "All that GOD suffereth him [the devil] to do, turneth us to joy, and him to shame and pain. And he hath as much sorrow when GOD giveth him leave to work, as when he worketh not; and that is for he may never do as ill as he would, for his might is all locked in GOD's hand." Hugh of S. Victor, however, who explains this, as well as the succeeding verses, of various orders of Saints, thinks great eminence to be signified by the huge size of the dragons, and profound wisdom in the depths where they lie; and he gives as examples of his meaning such names as Abraham, Isaiah, SS. Peter and John, S. Stephen, and S. Nicolas.

8 Fire and hail, snow and vapours: wind and storm, fulfilling his word.

Bellarmine. Haymo. C. Hugo Vict. In the literal sense, this enumeration teaches two lessons; that these are all agents of good, not of evil, in the world; and that they are under the absolute control of GOD. Here too there is a double current

of interpretations, one school taking all these as descriptive of sinners of various kinds, either forced unwillingly to work out GOD's purposes, or doing so joyfully after conversion; while the other view sees in every vocable some separate type of holiness. According to the former view, fire, that is, lightning, means men of fierce and burning passions; hail, which crushes the grain, those who persecute the Saints; snow, those cold in sin; vapours, or smoke, such as are proud and yet black with defilement:—the Vulgate here reads ice, and this is explained as frozen in unbelief:—stormy wind, still fiercer persecutors than the hail, but all fulfilling His word when converted. The great French theologian takes the words quite differently. With him fire denotes those fervid and glowing in charity; hail, great preachers who pour down stern and lashing rebukes on sinners; snow, those white in purity; ice, such as by stern self-restraint check whatever in themselves is too lax or flaccid—smoke, curling upward as a symbol of prayer, would have brought out the meaning better—and all these in their several ranks in the Church cheerfully doing the will of God. Nor is there any real contrariety between the two views, for the opposing aspects merely denote the different results of the very same qualities when guided by God and when left to the caprice of self-will. Each is a good servant, but a bad master, as we may learn from noting that it was the very same fiery temper which urged Saul of Tarsus to the death of Stephen, and afterwards exhibited itself in his burning and unceasing zeal for the spread of that faith he once denied.

9 Mountains and all hills : fruitful trees and all cedars ; 10 Beasts and all cattle : worms and feathered fowls ;

In giving a mystical sense to these verses, the commentators who explain them for the most part of sinners are unable to make out their case completely; because of the all but invariable use of fruit-trees and cedars in Holy Scripture as types of desirable qualities. But no such difficulty presents itself to the other view; according to which the mountains are Saints eminent for holiness, hills those who have begun well; fruitful trees those who are zealous in good works, especially that of teaching others; cedars those who are incorrupt and lofty in contemplation; wild beasts, those who live a solitary life : cattle, such as dwell in peaceable and useful companionship with others; creeping things, those who quietly and steadily busy themselves in the work of active life; feathered fowl, such as rise on high in heavenly meditation. It is to be observed, however, that very few indeed of the mediæval expositors give any but the obvious literal meaning to vv. 7—10, and they chiefly employ themselves in mentioning the reasons which make all these objects in nature matter for devout thought and reverent praise of God. And this is the spirit of that great prayer in the Preface of the Clementine Liturgy: "Thou createdst all things out of nothing by Thine Only-begotten Son, begotten before all ages by no other means than Thy will, Thy power, and Thy goodness;

God the Word, the Only-begotten Son, the Living Wisdom, the First-born of every creature, the Angel of Thy great counsel, Thy High Priest, but Lord and King of all sensible and intellectual creatures, Who was before all things, and by Whom all things were made. Thou, O eternal God, didst make all things by Him, and by Him too dispensest Thy providence over them; for by the same that Thou didst graciously bring all things into being, by Him Thou continuest all things in well-being; the God and Father of Thine Only-begotten Son; Who by Him didst make first the Cherubim and Seraphim, the Ages, Thrones, Archangels, and Angels, and after these didst by Him create this visible world, and all things which are therein. For it is Thou Who hast fixed the heaven like an arch, and stretched it out like the covering of a tent; and didst establish the earth upon nothing by Thy will alone; Who hast established the firmament, and prepared the night and the day, bringing light out of Thy treasures, and darkness to overshadow it, that under its covert the living creatures of this world might take their repose. Thou hast appointed the sun to rule the day, and the moon to govern the night; and moreover hast inscribed in the heavens a choir of stars for the honour of Thy glorious majesty.

Thou hast made water for drink, and for cleansing, the vital air for respiration, and conveyance of sounds by the tongue's striking of it, and the hearing which co-operates with it, so as to perceive the voice when it is received by it, and falls upon it. Thou madest fire for our consolation in darkness, and for the relief of our necessities, that we might be both warmed and enlightened by it. Thou didst divide the great sea from the land, making the one navigable, and the other a basis for our feet in walking; the former Thou hast replenished with small and great beasts, the latter too both with tame and wild; and hast moreover furnished it with various plants, crowned it with herbs, beautified it with flowers, and enriched it with seeds. Thou didst constitute the great deep, and didst set about it a mighty hollow; seas of salt water stand as an heap bounded on every side with barriers of sand; sometimes Thou dost swell it by the wind, so as to equal the high mountains, and sometimes smooth it into a plain; now making it rage with a tempest, then stilling it with a calm, for the ease of mariners in their voyages. The earth, which was made by Thee, through Christ, Thou hast encompassed with rivers, watered with currents, and moistened with springs which never fail; Thou hast girt it about with mountains, that it may not be moved at any time;

Thou hast replenished and adorned it with fragrant and medicinal herbs, with many and various kinds of living creatures, strong and weak, for food and for labour, tame and wild; with the dull harsh noises of those creatures which move upon the earth, and the soft sprightly notes of the gaudy many-coloured birds which wing the air; with the revolution of years, the number of months and days, the regular succession of the seasons; with the courses of the clouds big with rain, for the production of fruits, the support of living creatures: where also the winds take their stand, which blow at Thy command, and for the refreshment of trees and plants. And Thou hast

not only created the world, but man likewise the citizen of it; manifesting in him the beauty and excellency of that beautiful and excellent creation."

11 Kings of the earth and all people : princes and all judges of the world ; 12 Young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the Name of the LORD: for his Name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth. 13 He shall exalt the horn of his people;

Here at last is the direct appeal to man, as the highest of earthly beings, to take up his part in the great antiphon of laud. It is the energising of that prayer of the Coptic Church: "Thou Who hast ordained amongst men the steadfastness of the bodiless choirs; Thou Who hast imparted to those on earth the song of the seraphim; accept our voices also with the invisible ones, number us with the heavenly powers, that we also, casting from us away unseasonable thoughts, may with them say and cry aloud as they also exclaim with unceasing voices and unfailing mouths, and may bless Thy majesty." Kings and princes praise GOD when they bear rule for the good of their people, judges when they decide with equity all cases which come before them. And there is a special force in the words all people, foreshowing that the worship of the true GOD was not to be confined within the limits of a single nation, but to spread all over the world. The young men are those who "are strong, and the word of GOD abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one;" the maidens all those who have pure and holy souls, who serve GOD in a chaste spirit, even if they be amongst the wedded, but above all such as are near to Him in the Religious Life; while all others are included under the remaining heads. Then comes the reason; no longer, as in the fifth verse, the constraining force of an external law too strong to be broken. That suffices for the inanimate creation: but man must have his reason and will convinced ere he will bow. His Name only is excellent; that Name of JESUS Who only is Holy, Who only is the LORD, Who only is Most High, with the HOLY GHOST, in the glory of GOD

Hugo Vict. I S. John ii. 14. Genebrardus. S. Luke i. 68. S. Albertus Magnus. the FATHER, having a Name which is above every name, before which every knee must bow. He exalteth the horn of His people, according to the thanksgiving of Zacharias, first, by His Incarnation, next, by His Passion, then by His Resurrection and Ascension, and lastly by the dignity and glory He bestows upon those who honourably bear the Christian name. This, then, is the reason why man is summoned to take his part in the anthem of exulting praise begun by the citizens of the Church Triumphant: Come, let us sing the Song of songs, The Saints in heaven began the strain, The homage which to CHRIST belongs: Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain. Slain to redeem us by His Blood, To cleanse from every sinful stain, And make us kings and priests to GOD; Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain.

To Him Who suffered on the Tree, Our souls at His soul's price to gain, Blessing, and praise, and glory be: Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain. To Him, enthroned

by filial right, All power in heaven and earth proclaim, Honour, and majesty, and might; Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain. All his saints shall praise him: even the children of Israel, even the people that serveth him. [Alleluia.] Z. A.

The Hebrew of the first clause here is simply Praise of all His saints. That is, as they variously take it, God is Himself the praise of His holy ones; or the act of lifting up the horn of salvation is the matter of their praise; or yet again, praise is the peculiar right and possession of His true people. Others may entreat His mercy, those only whom He has redeemed have the full privilege of lauding and blessing Him for priceless bounties. The LXX. and Vulgate read, A hymn for all His saints. What is a hymn? A song with praise of God. If you praise God, and do not sing, it is not a hymn, yea rather, if you sing, and do not praise God, it is not a hymn you utter; if you sing and praise something which is not God, song and praise together do not make you utter a hymn. A hymn, then, has these three properties, song, praise, and that of God. So this hymn is for all the children of the true spiritual Israel, even the people that draweth near unto Him (LXX., Vulg., A.V.,) not that which rejected and departed from Him. And it is truly said near, for the world to come as well as for this one, since it would be easier for heaven and earth to be annihilated than that any man who takes delight in the praises of GOD should not be saved. What is then the hymn peculiar to these His Saints? What but that very Alleluia which closes the Psalm?

This is the strain, the eternal strain, the LORD of all things loves: Alleluia. This is the song, the heavenly song, that CHRIST Himself approves: Alleluia. Wherefore we sing, both heart and voice awaking, Alleluia. And children's voices echo, answer making, Alleluia. And so: Glory be to the FATHER, Who spake the Word; glory be to the SON, the WORD by Whom all things were made; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who sent forth the stormy wind to fulfil His Word to His Apostles. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Collects.

O GOD, Supreme and Most High power of the heavenly dwellings, grant unto Thy servants that as all things which we behold were created by Thy command, so what Thou enjoinest may be observed under Thy keeping. (1.) All Thine Angels praise Thee, O LORD, acknowledging Thee as the Creator, and doubt not that every creature in heaven and earth is preserved and ruled by Thy workmanship. Grant to our souls, therefore, that we may give glory to Thee in all Thy works, and that Thou, the Sun of Righteousness, mayest ever enlighten us with Thy glorious rays, that we, so illumined, may be able to shun the darkness of the night. (11.) Let all the Angels and Powers praise Thee in the height, O LORD; let all things which have their origin from Thee their Maker, praise Thee from the earth; so that Thou Who art praised by the united laud of heavenly beings mayest take delight in the service of earthly ones. (11.)

O glorious GOD, worthy of all praise, make us, we beseech Thee, praise Thee worthily with Thine angels and all creation; that Thou mayest unite us in eternal glory to those angel hosts which chant devout praise to Thee for evermore. (1.) Gottschalk, The Sequence, Cantemus cuncti melodiam.

Psalm 149

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

Argument.
ARG. THOMAS. That the praise of CHRIST should be celebrated in all Churches. The Voice of CHRIST to the faithful concerning the Resurrection, judgment to come, promising rest to them who suffer for His Name, and to give them power over all that afflicted them. The Praise of CHRIST in all Churches, and for the holy Martyrs who suffered for CHRIST. VEN. BEDE. We are instructed to have this name in use in every way, seeing that it is aptly fitted to both the Old and New Testaments: to the Old, where the miracles in Egypt and the blessings at the Red Sea are described; to the New, in the present Psalm, wherein we are enjoined to Sing a new song unto the Lord. In the first paragraph the Prophet saith that a new song should be sung to CHRIST the LORD in divers ways, Who of His loving-kindness hath built up universal Jerusalem out of the whole world. O sing unto the Lord a new song, &c. Secondly, describing the joys and virtues of the Saints, he saith that vengeance shall be the lot of sinners, glory of the righteous. The Saints shall be joyful in glory.

In the foregoing Psalm he urged all creatures to the praises of the LORD; here he hath further more plainly and specially signified that Israel ought to sing a new song, and be joyful in its own LORD, Who caused it to be gathered together out of the multitude of the Gentiles. And mention is made of the power which is to be given to the Saints in that judgment, that the might of the LORD may be acknowledged in their glory. SYRIAC PSALTER. Concerning the new temple. And this Psalm is anonymous. Praise with doctrine of GOD. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A hymn with prophecy. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of counsel with a song.

Various Uses.
Gregorian. Monastic. Ambrosian. Eastern Church. Parisian. Saturday: Terce. Lyons. Friday: Lauds. Quignon. Friday: Lauds.

Antiphons.
Parisian. Ascribe unto the LORD * worship and strength. Lyons. Let Israel rejoice

in Him that made him. 1 [Alleluia.] O sing unto the LORD a new song: let the congregation of saints praise him.

No one who hath not ”put off the old man with his deeds” shall sing the new song; nay, it is further necessary to ”put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,” in order to be able to sing it. And a new song, looked at historically, is a glorious and especial chant, which is sung in honour of some prosperous success and victory; but in the allegorical sense, it is a canticle of the New Testament. For then all things were made new,—a new creation, a new man, a new life, new commandments, new grace, new promises, new sacraments, new precepts. And the New Testament is called by that name not merely because of its date, but also because of the nature of the things which happened under it, seeing that all things have been made new, and above all, man, for whose sake all the others existed. The old man has an old song, the new man a new song. The old song is the Old Testament, the new song the New Testament. In the Old Testament the promises are temporal and earthly; whoso then loveth temporal things sings the old song; but he who desires to sing the new song, must love things eternal. And this song is further that of peace and charity. It cannot be sung apart from the congregation of the Saints, from the united canticle of ”all the whole earth.

He who does not sing in this wise—with the whole earth—sing what he will, does not sing the new song. With his tongue he may utter Alleluia all day and all night, but it is not the voice of the singer, but the conduct of the doer, which has to be noted. I ask and say, What art thou singing? He answers, Alleluia. What does ”Alleluia” mean? Praise ye the Lord. O come, let us praise the LORD together. If thou art praising the LORD, and I am praising the LORD, why are we at discord? Charity praiseth the LORD, discord blasphemes Him. Where then are we to praise Him together? His praise is in the Church of the Saints, in the Catholic Church, not in the congregations of sectaries, far less in the assemblies of the wicked, who set themselves, in the synagogue of Satan, in the congregation of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, against the true Aaron, the true and holy Priesthood, which is only in the Church of the Saints, either now on pilgrimage or reigning in heaven, and in both places sacrificing the oblation of praise and thanksgiving; for of Zion it is written, ”Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.”

It is truly a new song they sing, for the matter of it never grows old, the delight in it never grows weary, for that delight is always fresh in love, and even fresher in practice. It is truly new, because it renews mens’ minds with eternal blessedness. And so we read: ”Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old: Behold, I will do a new thing.” Sing not, therefore, with Lucifer, who began with loud voice an anthem in heaven, saying, ”I will ascend A. Gillebert. Serm. 4 in Cant. U Isa, xiv. 14. into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of GOD, I will be like the Most High,” a voice beginning in pride, then going on to suggestion,

and ending in a shriek of despair. Sing not with Adam's three dissonant tones of credulity, consent, and excuse; but sit down at the feet of the New Man, and learn from Him to begin from the lowest note, saying, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart."

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him : and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King. Ric. Hamp. All those Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile, are bid to rejoice, for GOD is worshipped chiefly by faith, hope, and love; and the companions and fruits of these are righteousness, peace, and joy. In Him that made him. The literal Hebrew is plural, in Them that made him, which the Jewish commentators interpret as a form of honour, but in which Christians see the mystery of the most Holy Trinity shadowed. While all Israel, including those angelic "princes with GOD" in heaven, rejoice in the Creator, it is the special privilege of the children of Sion, the Saints of the Church Militant here on earth, to be joyful in their King, their Anointed Priest and Monarch, bearing to them a special personal relation which He does not to any other beings in creation. Wherefore the Church saith, "Yet have I anointed my King upon my holy hill of Sion." And this is the sense which the Rabbins give to the passage, interpreting it of the future gladness of Israel in their King Messiah. Yes, adds Cassiodorus, they shall indeed be joyful when they see Him the Almighty, Him the Bestower of everlasting rewards, Whose future coming in majesty they have believed here. What bounds will there be to that joy of beholding that LORD of all things, Whom we believe to have died here for the salvation of all? We cannot know the measure of that gladness, but we know it will surpass all imaginable good, for the Truth hath promised it.

3 Let them praise his Name in the dance : let them sing praises unto him with tabret and harp.

A. For dance the LXX. and Vulgate have choir, χόρφ, choro, and they all explain it as a figure of the unity of the Faith, inasmuch as a choir is a band of persons singing harmoniously together, while any erroneous doctrine would be a false note, destructive of the perfect melody. And S. Ambrose alleges that the introduction of choirs into the Christian Church was not so much for musical effect as for the purpose of symbolizing concord of mind. Psalmody, says he, unites those who were at variance, allies opponents, reconciles the offended. Who could help forgiving a man along with whom he had been uttering the same voice to God? It is surely a great bond of unity that all the multitude of the people should unite in one choir. The strings of a harp are unequal in length, but the symphony is one. The Hebrew is, however, as rightly given by the English versions, dance, and this strengthens the type, because dancing is the rhythmical movement of the body in time to the notes of music; and thus implies, besides unity of faith, also combined and harmonious action in orderly and graceful fashion.

We may praise the Name of God in the dance without infringing CHRIST's precept as to entering into our closets for private and secret prayer, at other times than those when we join in public worship, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," by taking care that however parted we may be in body from our fellows in CHRIST, we shall be at one with them in heart and soul. With tabret and harp. The tabret or tambourine, skin strained upon wood, is a type of crucifixion to the world, and of bodily mortification, for the skin is that of a dead animal; while the harp, resembling the tabret in so far that the immediate agent of sound is strained to the wooden framework, also denotes active compliance with the ten commandments of the moral law.

A. G.

4 For the LORD hath pleasure in his people : and helpeth the meek-hearted. When GOD looked on the finished work of creation, inclusive of man, at the beginning of the world, He had pleasure in it, and said "It is good." And He will say the same in the new creation, when man, corrupted and disfigured by sin, shall be restored to the image of GOD, and that by the reconciliation made through the Body and Blood of that High Priest Whose atonement GOD has solemnly pledged Himself to be pleased with and to accept, for "the LORD sware, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;" and again, "This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased." But His pleasure is in His people, in those who have submitted to His sceptre, not in the subjects of the prince of this world. And helpeth the meek-hearted. This is a very poor and inexact rendering. The LXX. and Vulgate are much better, He shall exalt the meek unto salvation, raising them to His own right hand in the judgment. But the literal sense is even more than this, as the A.V. rightly gives it, He shall beautify the meek with salvation, that is, not only in the sense of giving costly robes and precious gems instead of the torn, soiled, and dishevelled garb of sorrow, "to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," but in giving them the Pearl of great price for their ornament, to adorn them with JESUS.

H. Gen. i. 31. G. Ps. cx. 4. S. Matt. iii. 17. Origen. 5 Let the saints be joyful with glory : let them rejoice in their beds. A. The Saints rejoice even here in the glory of GOD, in their beds, in the peaceful secrecy of divine contemplation, in their hearts and consciences, as knowing that the night is far spent and the day at hand, and as being secure and at peace under the wings of GOD, so as to fear no night-alarm from the foe, as it is written, "I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." Next, it is taken of the felicity of the souls of those righteous who sleep in the grave, awaiting the Resurrection, in which sense the verse makes part of the Responsory at Nones on

All Saints' Day and the feasts of Many Martyrs. So Adam of S. Victor, in one of his greatest sequences,

The Sequence. Jam in lecto cum dilecto, To our dearest lie we nearest, Resting by Him, singing nigh Him, For the nuptials come apace. And lastly, the majority of the commentators take the words of the final consummation of bliss in the many mansions of the Kingdom of Heaven, where the Saints rest from their labours. 6 Let the praises of GOD be in their mouth : and a two-edged sword in their hands. A. Here is the sword-dance of the Saints, as they fight and sing together.

It is more than praises, for the A.V., high praises, agreeing with LXX. ὑψώσεις and Vulgate exaltationes, better expresses the Hebrew. These very praises, according to the Rabbins and to S. Chrysostom, are the two-edged sword, which in the hands of the Saints does far more to discomfit these foes than any worldly prowess, just as it was Moses, rather than Joshua, who discomfited Amalek in Rephidim. S. Augustine does not quite accept this view, though coming near to it. According to him the two-edged sword is the Word of GOD, smiting out of Old and New Testament, having temporal promises and consolations in one edge and eternal ones in the other. This sword divides men from their nearest and dearest when their ties become incompatible with duty towards GOD, and while thus severing, yet consoles him who had courage to cut boldly with it, even if he smites off his own right hand. And this sword of the Word is said to be in their hands, not in their mouths, because of the vigour and effect with which they use it. So we read that there "came the word of the LORD by the hand of Haggai the prophet." This sword, which the LORD came to send upon earth rather than peace, first severed the Jews from the Gentiles, and now it cuts Christians away from the allurements of the world. Again, it is taken of the victory of the Gospel by the mouths of the Apostles, when, like Judas Maccabæus, they "encountered their enemies with invocation and prayer, so that fighting with their hands and praying unto GOD with their hearts," they overcame all the might of Paganism. Yet again, they take the words of that share of the Saints in the judicial power of Him out of Whose mouth goes "a sharp two-edged sword," to smite the sinner, and "cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites." Wherefore follows:

Hag. i. 1, marg. S. Matt. x. 34. C. Arnobius. Rev. i. 16. S. Matt. xxiv. 51. 7 To be avenged of the heathen : and to rebuke the people. 8 To bind their kings in chains : and their nobles with links of iron. These verses, which the Rabbins hold to be a prophecy of a literal vengeance of Israel upon the Gentile monarchies in the days of King Messiah, and which may well have edged the sword of Bar-Cochab, have also been as terribly misconstrued by nominal Christians. It was with them as his slogan that Thomas Münzer the Anabaptist preached the savage War of the Peasants; it was with them that in the next century Caspar Scioppius, on the Roman Catholic side, stirred up the yet more disastrous Thirty Years' War with his Classicum Belli

Sacri, (”Clarion of the Holy War,”) a book written, says Bakius, with blood, not with ink. For us, the Apostle warns us that ”the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through GOD for the pulling down of strongholds,” so that it is in ”the meekness and gentleness of CHRIST” that our work is that of ”casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of GOD, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”

”Now, brethren,” exclaims S. Augustine, ”you have seen the Saints armed; watch the slaughter, watch the glorious battles. If there be a general, there is also a soldier; if a soldier, an enemy; if a war, there is a victory. What have these done with the two-edged swords in their hands? Used them to be avenged of the heathen. See if it have not been done, and that daily, for we do it ourselves by speech. See in what fashion the nations of Babylon have been slain. When Babylon had the power to persecute Christians, she slew the body, but could not touch GOD. Now she is repaid twofold, for Pagans are extinguished, and idols broken in A. 1 Cor. i. 26.

pieces. How then, you ask, are Pagans slain? How but by becoming Christians? If I look for a Pagan, I cannot find him—he is a Christian, therefore the Pagan is dead. If they are not killed, what is the force of that saying to Peter, ”Kill, and eat? And lest you might literally suppose that men were smitten with the sword, blood shed, wounds made in the flesh, it follows by way of explanation, To rebuke the people. Let that two-edged sword of rebuke go forth of you, cease not, God has given it you. Say to your idolatrous friend, if there be one left to say it to, ’What sort of man art thou, to neglect Him who made thee, and to worship that which thou madest thyself? A carpenter is better than his work. If thou art ashamed to worship a carpenter, art thou not ashamed to worship what he made?’ When he begins to feel ashamed, when he begins to be pricked, the sword has made a wound, it reaches his heart, and he will die that he may live. To bind their kings in chains, and their nobles with links of iron. We know of kings made Christians, and of Gentile nobles made Christians. God chose the weak things of this world to confound the strong. CHRIST came for the good of all, but He chose that the Emperor should be benefited by a fisherman, not a fisherman by an Emperor, and He chose things of no weight in the world.

He filled them with the HOLY GHOST, He gave them two-edged swords, He taught them to preach the Gospel, and to go throughout the world. The world raged, the lion lifted himself up against the Lamb, but the Lamb proved stronger than the lion. The lion was conquered by his own fury, the Lamb conquered by suffering. The hearts of men were turned to the face of CHRIST, kings and nobles began to be moved at the miracles, at the fulfilment of prophecy, at the swift movement of mankind to one Name. . . . Many now who have nobility and even kingly power are Christians. They are as in chains, and in links of iron. Lest they should go on

to unlawful things they have submitted to chains, chains of wisdom, chains of the Word of God. But why are they links of iron, and not of gold? They are iron so long as they fear; let them love, and the iron will be gold. What was true of Paganism fifteen centuries ago is true still of any false doctrine which Gospel preachers can still smite with the two-edged sword of Scripture and spiritual censures, and they can still bind with the strong fetters of powerful argument the leaders of unbelief. They "shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains shall they come over, and they shall fall down to thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee.

And finally, it is taken of the sentence the Saints shall assist in passing at the Last Judgment on the obstinately impenitent, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

9 That they may be avenged of them, as it is written : Such honour have all his saints. [Alleluia.] The first clause should run, as in LXX., Vulgate, and A.V., To execute on them the judgment written. That is, foreordained, fixed, indelible, as though cut upon a pillar of marble. So GOD speaks by the Prophet: "Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense, into their bosom." Again, as it is written, that is, judging by regular equitable process, according to divine law, and not by caprice or favour. And so those commentators who take the verse of the Church Militant lay down that ecclesiastical judges are to decide in matter of doctrine according to the ruling of the Fathers, and in matter of sentence in agreement with the formal precedents of ecclesiastical law, neither smiting too gently nor too hard. Such honour have all His Saints, because the judicial power of CHRIST is not shared with the Apostles only, but with all the righteous, and so it is written, "In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble, they shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and the LORD shall reign for ever." So is it with the Saints throughout the world, so deal they in every nation, so they exalt GOD in their mouths, so they rejoice in their beds, so they are beautified with salvation, so they sing the New Song, so they say with heart, voice, and life, Alleluia. Amen.

Glory be to the FATHER, the Maker of Israel; glory be to the SON, the King of the children of Sion; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who giveth honour unto His Saints. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O GOD, Author of all goodness, Who exaltest all meekness that humbly confesseth Thee, grant that as Thou makest the Saints to be joyful in glory, so Thou wouldst vouchsafe to keep the present Church undefiled by the pleasures of this world. (1.) We sing unto Thee, O LORD, in the Church of the Saints, and make our thanksgiving unto Thee. Grant us to set forth Thy praises, that task wherein we believe we shall obtain an eternal reward. (11.) Let Thy praise, O LORD, resound in the

congregation of the Saints, and the heart of the faithful ever rejoice in Thee, let the faithful people exult with joy in the merits of the Saints, and let us who utter praise in Thine honour, obtain the promised joys with all Thy Saints. (11.) A. Mozarabic, For the Saints. D. C. O LORD, Who hast made us, grant us that loving Thee, we may rejoice and be glad in Thee, that Thy pleasure may be in us, and Thou mayest exalt us to the salvation of everlasting blessedness. (1.)

Psalm 150

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia. ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is to be praised in all His Saints by spiritual harmony. The Voice of CHRIST after overcoming the world comforting them that rejoice in His Kingdom. CHRIST showeth praise in all. The Prophet urgeth posterity, as well as the living, to be instant in the duty of song. The Voice of CHRIST after overcoming the world, rejoicing in His Kingdom. Further this last Psalm hath, because of the Decalogue, Praise ye ten times, and because of the four Gospels wherein the LORD is praised, containeth four things, that is, in the Saints, in the firmament, in noble acts, in multitude. Finally, there are eight kinds of musical instruments, because of the eighth day, whereon the LORD rising again from the dead, taught that His Church should rise again in the worldly flesh, and reign with Him in the eighth age, where every spirit, that is, every man, made spiritual, shall praise the LORD.

VEN. BEDE. The City of GOD is counselled, that being gathered out of the compass of the world, it should sing praises to the LORD with voice and mind. This Psalm, lifted up to that harmonious country of All Saints, ought not to have any division, because it hath brought the end of the whole with the might of the indivisible Trinity. Its intention truly is that the LORD should be praised out of the imagination of the Saints. O praise the Lord in His Saints. SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. An exhortation to general praise of those things which are written and sealed by the SPIRIT. EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A general exhortation to a hymn. S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm declaring praise. Also, of glorying in the LORD. Parisian. Praise ye the LORD in His Saints, praise Him according to the multitude of His greatness. Lyons. In His Saints * praise ye the LORD.

1 [Alleluia.] O praise GOD in his holiness : praise him in the firmament of his power. To the Jewish mind, the first meaning of this verse would be that the Temple was intended by the earlier phrase, the Ark of the Covenant by the latter. To us, it is a call for earth and heaven to join in GOD’s praise, men in His sanctuary of the Church Militant here on earth, angels in that which is the chief visible token of Divine power, the spacious firmament of heaven. Yet again, it is not impossible to

take the Prayer Book rendering, and so to understand GOD's holiness as the first ground of praise, and His power as the second.

But the LXX. and Vulgate rendering, In His holy [ones or places], usually understood as In His Saints, is that which has been the theme of the Church for many ages, and that without any departure from the truest sense. For our bodies are the Temple of the HOLY GHOST, a shrine more beautifully and skilfully formed than any which a mortal architect can rear, and the earliest Fathers are never tired of telling us that a pure soul is the truest sanctuary of the LORD, in which His spiritual altar stands. But even in praising His most eminent servants, we are praising Him, their LORD, for all their holiness consists of their imitation of Him, and their power to imitate Him comes of His justifying grace : while the firmament of His power is that He, undergoing death for the salvation of all men, overcame death itself with its wicked author by the power of His might, burst asunder the gates of hell, healed the doubting by His Resurrection, and brought them that believe finally to the kingdom of heaven, stablishing them there so surely that there is no room left in them for weakness or failure ; so that the most illustrious of His Saints, especially the Apostles, who resisted bravely every adversary, may well be styled the firmament of His power, starry with resplendent virtues.

2 Praise him in his noble acts : praise him according to his excellent greatness.

GOD is to be praised, not merely because He dwells in Heaven, but because He dwells there as Almighty ruler and LORD of all ; He is to be praised for His great manifestations of power on behalf of Israel, in the Exodus, the giving of the Law, the conquest of Canaan, and the like ; and also, rising from these tangible proofs of His might, because of the infinite majesty which He thus shadowed forth. It is thus the LORD JESUS calls on us to recognize and adore His Godhead: "Believest thou not that I am in the FATHER, and the FATHER in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the FATHER that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the FATHER, and the FATHER in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My FATHER. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the FATHER may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it.

And thus, keeping to the key-note of the first verse, we are here bidden to praise GOD for every great deed of holiness or power wrought by His Saints, and the more eminent such appears, the more bound are we to refer it to the unseen worker by and in Whose Name they were all done. If it be asked, How can we praise GOD according to His excellent greatness, in any sort of proportion to what is infinite, S. Gregory will answer: "We most truly give in full the acts of Divine power when we know ourselves unable to give them fully. We speak most eloquently, when we

are silent in amazement at them. When our feebleness tries to narrate the works of GOD, the way to use the tongue is to praise by adequate silence what we are not able adequately to comprehend, and he praises GOD according to His excellent greatness who feels that he utterly breaks down in any effort at fulfilling His praise. And we can do this in another way also, by referring to Divine grace, not to our own strength, whatever good thing is wrought in or by us.

Non tua, vir, virtus, quâ pugnas, sed tibi CHRISTUS In cruce donavit quando moriens superavit. Thy strength in fight is not thine own, CHRIST gave it unto thee, His dying gift, O man, what time He conquered on the Tree. 3 Praise him in the sound of the trumpet: praise him upon the lute and harp. O never let in silence fall our trumpets' high and thrilling call, For as the trumpet's note is high, so holy praise makes melody. The trumpet is the warrior instrument, and either calls to the battle or proclaims a victory. Hence the trumpet praises CHRIST as He is our Captain and King. He is praised by the trumpet-voice of His great preachers, whom He bids "to cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice as a trumpet," whom He sends to compass the walls of the spiritual Jericho to make them totter to their ruin, that the armies of the LORD may go up and take the city.

They thunder—their sound It is CHRIST the LORD! Then Satan doth fear, His citadels fall! As when the dread trumpets Went forth at Thy word, And one long blast shattered The Canaanite's wall. Santol. Victorin. The Hymn Supreme, quales, Arbiter, for Apostles. The trumpet needs to be held with the hand, and so the preacher must work as well as speak. And, whereas the mouth-piece of the trumpet is much smaller than its bell, whence its voice finally issues, we learn the lesson that the preacher ought to be far stricter with himself than with his hearers. The trumpet is also the signal of victory, and thus when the sound of the Archangel's trump shall proclaim the final overthrow of Satan, death, and sin, the Saints will praise the LORD for His triumph. The lute, or psaltery, as LXX. and Vulgate have it, as specially used in religious music, denotes service to GOD. They take it as the decachord, and remind us that it sounds from above, so that it denotes the glorification of the soul. The harp, a more secular instrument, used at weddings and other festivals, praises CHRIST the Bridegroom, and summons to His marriage-feast. Sounding from below, it praises Him for deliverance from sorrow, and rejoices in the glorification of the body.

C. A. 4 Praise him in the cymbals and dances : praise him upon the strings and pipe. Cymbals ought to be, as in A.V. timbrel, or drum, as LXX. and Vulgate; meaning the small tabret or tambourine played with the hand : Drums clearly teach how mortal flesh ought to be mortified In all its members, seeing they are made of dead beasts' hide. Strained to the wood on every side, dry, and sounding under blows, they serve as a type of the Martyrs, and of all who are crucified to the world, uttering praise to GOD most clearly when most severely afflicted. And dances, or, as LXX. and

Vulgate, choir, denoting peaceful fellowship, and joint harmonious action, which, S. Gregory reminds us, cannot A. S. Greg. Mag. Hom. 8 in Ezek. Haymo. be safely disregarded by those who play the drum. Strings, as very thin and strained with great tension, are types of all those who macerate the body with fasts and vigils, and are tightly fastened by the nails of the Cross, straining upwards towards God, and giving forth sweet tones when touched by His fingers. The pipe, or hand-organ, formed of several tubes of unequal length fastened together, signifies the harmonious concord of different graces and virtues, whether in one person or in many, united together by the band of charity.

5 Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals : praise him upon the loud cymbals.

B. A. Arnobius. S. Greg. Nyssen in Psalm i. 9. A. C. The difference of these instruments seems to be that the former were smaller and clearer-toned, intended to accompany the voice; the latter louder and deeper, such as are used to clash in military music. Haymo very happily points out that as cymbals are always used in pairs, they may fitly denote those who ”consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works,” and to the praise of God. They are well-tuned, from the holiness of their deeds and words in accordance with the Divine will, loud in their clear boldness and in their full rejoicing. The Old and New Testaments, too, in their wondrous agreement and harmony, are well-tuned cymbals; as are also the heart and lips of a Saint when in prayer or praise. And when the two great choirs of Angels and men shall join together, blending in concord, and filling heaven and earth with melody, then God shall be praised upon the loud cymbals. In this great concert for the marriage-feast of the Lamb, all the modes of producing musical tunes are named, breath for the trumpet and pipe, vibration of strings in psaltery and harp, blows for the beat of drum and clash of cymbals, all which are spiritual types of ourselves, and then, lest aught should be lacking, lest the understanding should fail to accompany the voice, the Psalmist ends his great song with the words:

6 Let every thing that hath breath : praise the LORD. [Alleluia.

When, at the creation of man, God made him a sentient and rational being, it is written that ”He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul;” and that same breath is meant here: so that the words ought to run, Let every breath [or with Vulgate, spirit] praise the Lord. It is with a most deep significance that these words form the antiphon to this Psalm when it is used in the Office of the Dead, as teaching us that when the body is crumbling in the grave, the soul is alive to God, and the whole being of man can say, ”I sleep, but my heart waketh,” which stands as the noble epigraph over the tombs of the kings of Spain in the Escurial. And as this vital breath comes directly from God, there is a deep truth in S. Augustine’s interpretation, that those who live the true life of the soul, those who are spiritual, are chiefly called on here to praise the LORD, and to praise Him not here alone, where the drum and stringed instruments tell of mortification

and suffering, and the cymbals teach the need of mutual aid, but in the full glory of heaven, where flesh, now incorruptible, and spirit are agreed, and the song of one is that of both.

This great ”Book of the Wars of the LORD,” in which, as in no other, are set forth all the combats and victories of the spirit over the flesh, and of the Saints over Satan and his angels, began with a beatitude, ”Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsels of the ungodly,” and leads the advancing pilgrim along the Way to the Land of everlasting blessedness and praise. The first, and second, and third Books of the Psalter close with ”Amen, Amen,” noting man’s perseverance in prayer, and firm confidence in God. The fourth book, with its foretaste of glory, blends the song of Moses and of the Lamb, and ends with ”Amen, Alleluia; but the fifth, wherein the wars have ceased for ever, terminates in that song of heaven alone, which has itself no termination, coming as the crown of CHRIST’s victories and judgments, as it is written, ”And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the LORD our God: For true and righteous are His judgments: And again they said, Alleluia. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many nations, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth.

So, with the melody of heaven echoing around me, I, by the waters of Babylon, hang up this harp of the LORD, after striving to sing His song in a strange land, saying to Him as I do so: ”And now, O LORD GOD, if in this work, I have said anything which is Thine, Thine own will recognize it; and if I have said anything which is mine, do Thou and Thine forgive it. What I have said of Thine, receive; what I have ignorantly uttered of mine own, pardon; and bring us to that vision where we can no longer err, O LORD JESU CHRIST, to that happy life of praise and blessing where the unending song is uplifted.

A. Hugo Card. Ps. i. 1. Now from all men be outpoured Alleluia to the LORD; With Alleluia evermore The SON and SPIRIT we adore. The Se- Praise be done to the Three in One. Glory be to the FATHER, in the firmament of His power; glory be to the SON, for His noble acts wrought for the salvation of mankind; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, in Whose might every spirit praiseth the LORD, and saith, Alleluia. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Collects.
O GOD, Thyself the sweetest song of our harmony, Who biddest us utter the notes of our heart, at one time with breathings, at another with weepings, grant that as we sing them together with spiritual devotion, we may be numbered in everlasting choirs, and praise Thee with all Saints. (1.) O GOD, Who art the object of praise from the zeal of the Angels, and takest pleasure also in the worship of men, not as needing us for aught, but to find room in us for displaying Thy goodness, Who

willest that the habit of Thy praise should be the fruit of praising; hearken to our prayers, and grant that the clear confession of our faith may be Thy trumpet; our lips, and the well-attuned service of our inward and outward being, Thy cymbals; our souls, Thine harps; and all together sweetly sing in clear strains the praise of Thy mercy. (11.)

What praise, O LORD, can Thy creature offer unto Thee? Profitest Thou aught by human praise, and needest Thou and lovest the praises of them of the earth, Who, all praiseworthy, art laudably praised in Thy Saints, and celebrated with such acclamation? But Thou art pleased to receive even a part of praise, because Thou art alone pleased to give full praising as the reward of our praising. Grant therefore, O LORD, that there may be somewhat in us worthy of worthily praising Thee. Let the powers of the heavenly host unceasingly laud Thee, and the mightiness of thanksgiving pour in celebrating Thy mightiness. Let the herald voices of the Prophets praise Thee gladly with the trumpets, and let sweetness itself bring forth the strains of psaltery and harp. Let perfect holiness sound to Thee on the tabrets, and the holy organs of the Virgins surround Thee on the throne. Let the hearts of all sound sweetly to Thee in constant meditation, and sound aloud with pleasant clang on spiritual instruments; that every creature sounding to Thee on the cymbals with the faith of the lips, may cry with unceasing energy, and every spirit address Thee with Thy due praise, that the whole ransomed creation may exult with Thee in perfect blessedness. (11.)

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