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THE CHRISTIAN USE OF THE PSALTER

BY THE

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Impleta sunt quæ concinit
David fidelis carmine

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PREFACE

This little book, based on three Lectures delivered to the S. Paul's Lecture Society in January, 1908, is not intended so much for the scholar as for the plain man who goes to Church and loves the Prayer Book, but finds the Psalms sometimes puzzling. They are certainly the most difficult, though the most characteristic, part of the daily offices of the Church. What has been attempted in these Lectures is not to explain them in detail, but to suggest the broad lines of interpretation which seem always to have been in the mind of the Church in her use of the Psalter. A few additional helps have been suggested in the Notes.

CULHAM, 1908.

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The Christian Use of the Psalter

LECTURE I

PART I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Haereditate acquisivi testimonia tua in aeternum:
Quia exsultatio cordis mei sunt.

The Christian use of the Psalter is as old as Christianity itself. The new-born Catholic Church, returning from her earliest conflict with the kingdoms of this world, found the most natural expression of her faith and her need in the words of the 2nd Psalm:

> Why did the Gentiles rage,
> And the peoples imagine vain things?
> The kings of the earth set themselves in array,
> And the rulers were gathered together,
> Against the Lord, and against His Anointed.
> (Acts iv. 25, 26, R.V.)

{2} Before this, on the very birthday of the Church, the chief of the Apostles had appealed to the witness of "David," for the Resurrection and Triumph of the Holy One (Pss. xvi., cx. in Acts ii. 25-8, 34, 35). And even earlier, during the ten days of waiting, the great Psalms of righteous wrath (thought so impossible by many to-day) had supplied the prophecy of the fall of Judas:

> Let his habitation be made desolate,
> And let no man dwell therein;

and the justification of the election of Matthias:

> His office let another take.
> (Pss. lxix. and cix. in Acts i. 20.)

So harmoniously did the praise-book of the Jewish Church pass into the service of Christ; so clearly did the first believers recognise that the Spirit of Christ was the same Who had spoken by "David." This immediate appropriation of the Psalter as a book of Christian witness is remarkable evidence to the felt unity and continuity of the two Covenants. No book of the Old Testament, with the exception of Isaiah, is so frequently quoted in the New as the book of Psalms.

{3} But still more remarkable is the influence of the Psalter on Christian *worship*. The Church exists in the world not only as the teaching, but also as the worshipping community. As the ages pass she ceases not to bear the witness of her praise and thanksgiving to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. From the beginning she showed a tendency to do this in ordered and liturgical forms. The Apostolic Church continued steadfast in "the prayers" (Acts ii. 42, R.V.). The expression implies not merely a daily gathering for worship, but the offering of that worship in a

fixed and orderly manner, suggested, no doubt, by the existing Jewish services. Whatever may have been the actual form of "the prayers" in the first age of the Church, or whatever stages they may have passed through, there can be no doubt that they are the germ of all the rich later developments of the liturgy of the Church, such as are represented in the Middle Ages by the Missal and the Breviary, and to-day by our own Book of Common Prayer.

The regular services of the Church fall naturally into two classes. The Eucharist, the service of the Altar, took the place of the sacrificial worship of the Temple. The Divine Office, the service of the Choir, may have been suggested by the services of the Synagogue. But if so, there is one
{4} most significant difference. The Christian Church made a much fuller public use of the Psalms than the Synagogue ever seems to have done.[1] The Psalms in the Jewish Church seem to have been adjuncts or embellishments of the service, rather than its central feature. The Divine Office of the Christian Church practically is the Psalter. The readings from other parts of Scripture, so prominent in the Synagogue service, fall now into a secondary place. The recitation of the Psalms, which appears from very early times as the characteristic Christian devotion, became the very centre and core of the sevenfold daily Choir Office of the mediæval Church. The whole Psalter in theory was said through once a week, mainly at Mattins (the midnight office), while selected Psalms formed the chief part of the subsequent services of the day.[2] The English Reformers, however hastily and trenchantly they may have cut down and simplified these services of the Breviary, showed the true Catholic instinct in this at least, that they provided as the leading feature of Morning and Evening Prayer an unbroken and systematic recitation of the
{5} Psalms. In this respect their claim was justified that they had provided an order "much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old Fathers."[3] It was a return from mediæval complications to a more primitive ideal.

What, then, was this book of praise and worship which the Catholic Church found ready to hand, and made unhesitatingly her own, and which has set the standard and provided the chief material for her continual voice in the ear of God? The Psalter, as we know it now, had been for some time before Christ the recognised praise-book of Israel. Its Hebrew name is simple and significant—*Tehillim*, "praises." Its historical origins and growth are still indeed wrapt in obscurity, and to discuss them would be alien from our present purpose. Suffice it to say that there seems no conclusive reason for discrediting the universal Jewish and Christian tradition that the Psalter begins at least with David. Some of the earlier and more personal psalms are naturally felt to reflect his character and youthful struggles. Nor is it unreasonable to believe that
{6} the later historical books are substantially correct in making him the founder of the Temple choir (1 Chron. xv.; Ezra iii. 10). Doubtless the majority of the Psalms belong to a later age, and their collection is due to the scrupulous care and reverence of the period of Jewish history which begins with Ezra. The singers of the Temple after, perhaps even before, the Captivity formed various collections of sacred lyrics, which passed under characteristic names, some being entitled "Psalms of David" (though not of necessity all his work); others bearing the names of ancient leaders of the Temple choir, like Asaph, or of the guilds of singers, like "the sons of Korah." Another collection with a distinct individuality would be the "songs of degrees" or "ascents" (cxx.-cxxxii.), the pilgrim-songs of the faithful Israelites as they journeyed from their homes to keep the annual feasts at Jerusalem. At some unknown time these different collections, or selections from them, must have been brought together into one. Many scholars consider that the compilation cannot have been complete before the age of the Maccabees, as more than one Psalm is thought to refer to the agonies of faithful Israel during that great national crisis (e.g. Pss. xliv., lxxiv., lxxix., lxxx.). But it must have been substantially complete by the time that the
{7} Septuagint translation was made (in the second century B.C.); and so ancient then were the titles of the Psalms in the Hebrew that these Alexandrine scholars seem to have been frequently puzzled by them.

This collection of 150 Psalms, whenever precisely it may have been made, was divided into five books, each ending with an outburst of praise to the God of Israel.[4] The key to this somewhat artificial arrangement is no doubt to be found in the desire to make the Psalter correspond with the Pentateuch. "Moses," says a Rabbinical commentator (Midrash *Tillim*), "gave five-fifths of the Law, and correspondingly David gave the book of *Tehillim*, in which are five books." Of this Dr. Cheyne says, "The remark is a suggestive one: it seems to mean this—that the praise-book is the answer of the worshipping community to the demands made by its Lord in the Law, the reflexion of the external standard of faith and obedience in the utterance of the believing heart." This criticism is so illuminating that it may well suggest the first great principle in our own Christian use of the Psalter.

{8} I. The Psalter is the inspired answer of praise which human faith is privileged to make to God's revelation. It is the "new song" put in the mouth of humanity by its Creator. "Thou preparest their heart, and Thine ear hearkeneth thereto" (Ps. x. 19).

This is surely a very great thought. The Old Testament is the record of God's gradual unveiling of Himself to His elect, whom for the world's sake He had chosen out of the world. The revelation was not indeed to them alone. God had spoken in many ways, more than even the Church yet recognises, to the heathen world. Yet to Israel God gave that highest privilege of receiving and keeping the true knowledge of Himself, of His unity, His universality, His moral

being, His holiness, His love, and of the demand which this knowledge makes on human conscience. The unknown author of 2 Esdras, looking back on history after the great blow had fallen on Jerusalem, has expressed this in vivid and pathetic language: "Of all the flowers of the world Thou hast chosen Thee one lily: and of all the depths of the sea Thou hast filled Thee one river: and of all builded cities Thou hast hallowed Sion unto Thyself: ... and among all the multitudes of peoples Thou hast gotten Thee one people: and unto this people, whom Thou
{9} lovedst, Thou gavest a law that is approved of all" (2 Esd. v. 24-7). In the Psalter God has provided, as it were, for His people the words of praise in which their thankful hearts may express their love and loyalty to what He has revealed.

This feature, the glad response to revelation, is stamped upon the Psalter from end to end. Thus the 1st Psalm describes the secret of human blessedness:

His delight is in the law of the Lord:
And in His law will he exercise himself day and night.

The 9th Psalm is an outburst of thanksgiving to "the Name" of God, Who is revealed as the moral Governor of the world. The 19th couples the self-revelation of God in nature, God Whose glory the heavens declare, with the revelation given in the Law, which is, as it were, the sun in the moral world restoring the soul and enlightening the eyes. The 25th reads like a comment from man's heart on the great proclamation of God's Name given to Moses in the "cleft of the rock"—"The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ex. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5-7). So the Psalmist prays, as it were, in answer:

{10} Call to remembrance, O Lord, Thy tender mercies:
And Thy loving-kindnesses, which have been ever of old.
O remember not the sins and offences of my youth:
But according to Thy mercy think Thou upon me, O Lord,
for Thy goodness.

The 40th offers the response of a converted will to what is found and recognised in the Law:

In the roll of the book it is written of me:
I delight to do Thy will, O my God.
(R.V.)

The 78th recounts the long history of rebellious Israel as in itself part of the "testimony" of God. The mingled record of deliverance and failure, of judgment and hope, is in itself "a parable," a "dark saying of old," which faith can read and make answer to. The 131st expresses the very fundamental spirit of faith, the essential temper and attitude of the Church, the spirit of humility, of intellectual submission, of obedience, which is the same under the Gospel Dispensation as under the Old Covenant.

{11} Lord, I am not high-minded:
I have no proud looks.
I do not exercise myself in great matters:
Which are too high for me.

But the most remarkable illustration of this characteristic attitude of the believer is the 119th Psalm. It is like a piece of music, every verse a subtle and harmonious variation on one dominant theme. It is the voice of the converted soul, learning the one lesson which man must learn in this world's school, if he is to attain his true being—learning to be ever turning away from self, from one's own doubts, troubles, persecutions, sufferings, to rest on what God has revealed in His statutes, His judgments, His testimonies, His laws. Nor is it without a subtle propriety that this Psalm is arranged as an acrostic under the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. These letters are, as it were, the rudiments out of which man is enabled to exercise his characteristic gift of articulate speech; and in the acrostic Psalms they are visibly consecrated to His service Who made the mouth of man. And each part of the 119th Psalm consists of eight verses, a
{12} significant Hebrew number, the symbol of the Resurrection and the restoration of all things in that eighth day, the octave of eternity, which is yet to come, and will complete the work of the seven days of the first creation.

This Psalm, which expresses the unchanging spirit of true religion, was most naturally appropriated by Christian devotion to form the services for the working part of each day, beginning at Prime, when "man goeth forth to his work and his labour" with that benediction which comes on labour done with a pure motive in God's Name:

Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way:
And walk in the law of the Lord,

and ending at None, the hour of the death of the Lord, when day visibly declines, with the confession that the worker, as he looks back, must always make:

> I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost:
> O seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments.

It was like a stream of water, crossing unexpectedly a dusty way—*mirabilia testimonia tua*! In
{13} psalm and antiphon, inexhaustibly fresh, the soul seemed to be taking refuge, at that undevout hour, from the sordid languor and the mean business of men's lives, in contemplation of the unfaltering vigour of the Divine righteousness, which had still those who sought it, not only watchful in the night, but alert in the drowsy afternoon.[5]

We can scarcely exaggerate the value, in our own time especially, of this use, not only of the 119th Psalm, but of the whole Psalter, as the response of the Church and the human soul to the revealed word of God. These times of Christ have indeed filled and enriched the early conception of "the Name" of God. We have learned to see in the Trinity the justification of belief in the Divine Unity; we have learned more of the Fatherhood of God in the face of His only Son; we have learned that the Cross is the key to human suffering; we have learned the Catholic nature of the Divine sovereignty: nevertheless the foundation teaching of the Psalmists as to the relation of the creature to his Creator remains unchanged. We still find in the Psalter a guide for our uncertain footsteps in our journey back to God. Is not the answer to every problem of faith, even such
{14} mysteries as the existence and continuance of evil, or the calamities that fall on the just, still to be found as the author of the 73rd Psalm found it, in returning and rest upon the God Who has made *Himself* known to suffering man?

> My flesh and my heart faileth:
> But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

The prevailing thought of the 119th Psalm, that God's revelation is fixed and permanent and the law of human life, marks the great separation between the world and the Church. Such a belief is abhorrent and distasteful always to the natural mind, while it is familiar to and welcomed by the Catholic Church, as it was by the Jewish. The Church's witness to the world is of a revelation from above: she has *received* it; she may not alter it without apostasy. Her mission in the world is not to be the mirror of each succeeding phase of human thought, nor merely the consecration of human aspirations, but rather to speak with a supernatural authority, to tell men what God is and what is His will, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." And the Church can only deliver her message aright, in the face of the frowns of the princes of this world,
{15} so long as worship gladdens and confirms her witness, so long as she herself finds her joy in contemplating her treasure and returning thanks for it to the Giver.

As the devout Israelite found in the Psalter the natural expression of an intelligent devotion to the God Who had revealed Himself in Law and Prophets, so the Christian Church, with no break of continuity, found the Psalter still adequate to express her joy in her fuller knowledge. For that fuller knowledge was strictly in line with the old. The faith of Israel had not been changed, but carried forward, developed, illuminated. In the Law the Gospel lay hid, and the Christian Church felt in the old words of devotion no outworn or alien accents, but living utterances of the Spirit of Life, which renewed their youth with hers. So from the beginning she found strength and comfort in her warfare for the truth, in the praises of Israel. From the beginning she based her ordered worship on the services of Temple and Synagogue. The choirs of the Catholic Church find their most lasting and characteristic voice not in hymn or anthem, but in—

> "The chorus intoned
> As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned."

{16} II. A second great principle of the Christian use of the Psalter will be found in its humanism. The Psalms are profoundly human. They sympathise with the soul of man in all his varied efforts after God. They find a voice for him in his battles for truth and right, in his moments of defeat as well as his victories, in his doubts no less than his certainties. They put words into his mouth as he contemplates the variety, the beauty, and the law of nature, or the injustice, the obstinacy, the treachery of men. The Psalms make his bed in his sickness; they strengthen him in the inward agonies of faith; they go with him to the gates of death, and farther still, even to God's "holy hill and His dwelling"; they point him to the eternal morning, when he will wake up and be satisfied with God's likeness (*cf.* Pss. civ., x., xli., lxxvii., lxxxviii., xliii., xvii.).

We have all no doubt felt something of this abiding sympathy of the Psalter. Dean Church expressed it very remarkably in a letter written by him shortly before his death:

The thought of what is to take the place of things here is with me all day long, but it is with a strange mixture of reality and unreality, and I wish it did me all the good it might. Books are not {17} satisfactory—at least, I have always found it so. It seems to me that there is nothing equal to letting the Psalms fall on one's ears, till at last a verse starts into meaning, which it is sure to do in the end (*Life and Letters*, p. 409, ed. 1897).

The Psalter has in this way endeared itself to many generations of struggling and dying men, and appealed even to many who were alien from its spirit. It has interwoven itself with striking scenes and moments of history, as when Hildebrand chanted "He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn" (ii.) before the encircling hosts of emperor and anti-pope; or when S. Athanasius, on that night of fear when the imperial soldiers had blockaded the doors of the church, and the fate of the faith of Nicæa seemed to hang in the balance, bade the deacon intone that Psalm which tells of God smiting great kings, "for His mercy endureth for ever" (cxxxvi.); or when Henry V. turned his face to the wall and died, confessing that his ideal was unfulfilled, and that God, and not he, must "build the walls of Jerusalem" (li.).

This humanism of the Psalter makes it pre-eminently a Christian possession, for Christianity is human through and through. It is the religion of "the soul which is by nature Christian." It redeems and consecrates, as no other religion could ever dare to do, all the fulness of man's {18} being. And why? Here we touch the innermost secret of the Psalter. It is the book of the Incarnation. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." God Himself has taken to Himself a human soul and spirit as well as a human body. And the Incarnate Word found on earth the voice of His communing with the Father, as the faithful of His own adopted nation did, in the words of the Psalms. These words rise naturally to His lips in the supreme agony on the Cross; they must have provided His prayers and thanksgivings, we may reverently imagine, not only in the public services which He attended, but in His home at Nazareth, and in His lonely vigils of prayer. He gathered together in Himself all the human experiences of the past which are reflected in the Psalter. Hence the Psalter is also the characteristic voice of His Church, that Church which was founded by Him, and is united to Him, and is the assembly of the first-born of humanity calling Him "Lord" and Mary "Mother."

The consideration of these great truths will be reserved for subsequent lectures; but it would be impossible to speak of general principles in our Christian use of the Psalter without pointing {19} out on the very threshold its indissoluble connection, historically and doctrinally, with the "Author and Finisher of our faith," and with His Church "the household of faith."

III. Once again, the Psalter is appropriate for Christian use because it is the book of Hope. The world estranged from God is without hope. The heathen looked back to a golden age; Virgil stands almost alone in his dream of its possible return.[6] The Israel of God is the fellowship of the future. It feels itself in harmony with an increasing purpose of God. The great revelation to Moses of the Name of God, "I will be that I will be" (Ex. iii. 14, R.V. marg.), left its mark on all subsequent history. So the Old Testament writers, under every imaginable difficulty and persecution and reverse, among the treacheries of friends, as well as the attacks of a hostile heathen world, are ever straining forward to a coming of God and a Kingdom of God. Like the spirits in Virgil's vision:

> Stabant orantes primi transmittere cursum,
> Tendebantque manus ripæ ulterioris amore.[7]

{20} The Psalms throughout delight in this attitude. The most casual reader is struck by the constancy with which an outlook of hope and joy succeeds to the sorrow and stress of the opening verses of Psalm after Psalm. Even the darkest have their gleams of promise. And so the Christian Church, having learned what the hope of Israel meant, found the Psalms come naturally to her lips. She could sing with fuller meaning of the rising up again of the righteous (xli.), of the deliverances from the stormy waters and from the wandering out of the way in the wilderness (cvii.), of the bringing up of the sufferer "from the deep of the earth again" (lxxi.). The Psalter was and is to the Christian not merely the reflection of his characteristic sorrows and trials, but the book of the Resurrection, of the restitution of all things, of the doing away of the imperfect and the coming of the perfect.

> Thou shalt shew me the path of life; in Thy presence
> is the fulness of joy:
> And at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
> (xvi. 12.)

{21} Thus the Psalter is ours, for it is the new song of gratitude to Him Who has given us the Catholic Faith; it is ours because it is the book of Him Who has redeemed us by making Himself one with us, and "taking the manhood into God"; it is ours because it has not merely the human

consecration of ages of Christian use, but it is the channel which the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the Church, seems deliberately to have chosen in which to make His ineffable intercession for the sons of God who wait for their adoption, "the redemption of the body" (Rom. viii. 19-27). Appreciation of the Psalter grows with the devout use of it. The obligation to recite it month by month in the daily office is one of the best gifts the Church has given to her priests; and both priest and laity alike will find increasingly that the Psalms need no apology. They are the noblest and most comprehensive form of public worship; they are the most truly satisfying book of private devotion.

[1] Note A, p. 101.

[2] Note B, p. 102.

[3] "Concerning the Service of the Church," the original Preface to the Prayer Book.

[4] xli. 13, lxxii. 18-19, lxxxix. 50, cvi. 46, cl.

[5] Walter Pater, *Gaston de Latour*.

[6] Virgil, *eclogue* iv.

[7] Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 313, 314 (*cf.* Heb. xi. 13):

> Praying, they stood with hands of love outspread,
> If but that farther shore each might be first to tread.

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PART II. DIFFICULTIES

Servus tuus sum ego:
Da mihi intellectum ut sciam testimonia tua.

Besides general principles, we are also to consider some of the general difficulties in the use of the Psalter as a Christian book. The Psalms are certainly not easy. Nothing as great as they are ever could be easy. None of the books of the Bible yield their secret except to labour and prayer, and the Psalms present special difficulties of their own. These are of various kinds and need various methods of approach. There is a difficulty inherent in the very origin and history of the Psalms. They are translated somewhat imperfectly from an ancient language, not akin to our own —a language which, if not difficult in itself, is rendered so by the comparative scantiness of its literature. The Psalms, humanly speaking, are the work of a race widely different from ourselves in habits and in modes of thought and expression. They contain allusions to events and circumstances imperfectly known or realised to-day. Most of our interpretation of these things is
{23} necessarily guess-work. The same Psalm may be ascribed with equal probability, by scholars of equal learning and reverence, to periods many centuries apart. Was the sufferer of Ps. xxii. David or Jeremiah, or is it altogether an ideal portrait? Was the coming of the heathen into God's inheritance of Ps. lxxix. that of the Babylonians in the sixth century B.C. or of the soldiers of Antiochus in the second? Who was the "king's daughter" in Ps. xlv. and who "the daughter of Tyre"? Is the Temple of the Psalms ever the first Temple, or is it always the second? Such problems still wait an answer. Again, there are difficulties inherent in Hebrew thought. It is intensely concrete and personal, in contrast with our more usual abstractions and generalities. The Psalmists speak habitually of "the wicked" and "the ungodly," where we should more naturally speak of the qualities rather than the persons. They ignore, as a rule, immediate or secondary causes, and ascribe everything in nature or human affairs to the direct action or intervention of God. Thus a thunder-storm is described:

> There went a smoke out in His presence:
> And a consuming fire out of His mouth,
> so that coals were kindled at it.
> (xviii. 8.)

{24} And thus a national calamity:

> Thou hast shewed Thy people heavy things:
> Thou hast given us a drink of deadly wine.
> (lx. 3.)

Such ways of describing God's work in Nature or His providence are partly, of course, due to

the fact (often overlooked by the half-educated) that the Psalms are poetry and not prose. For the same reason inanimate objects are personified: "the earth trembled at the look of Him," "the mountains skipped like lambs"; the mythical "Leviathan" appears both as a title of Egypt (lxxiv. 15) and as an actual monster of the deep (civ. 26). God Himself, again, is spoken of in language that might seem more appropriate to man. He is "provoked," and "tempted." He awakes "like a giant refreshed with wine." He is called upon, not to sleep nor to forget, to avenge, to "bow the heavens and come down."

Nor do the Psalms in their literal meaning rise always above the current and imperfect religious conceptions of their time. The moral difficulties involved in this will be considered a
{25} little later, but it may be interesting to point out here some examples which bear on the progressiveness of revelation in the Old Testament by which heathen ideas became, under God's guidance, "stepping-stones to higher things." The Psalms seem sometimes to speak as if "the gods of the heathen" really existed and were in some way rivals of the God of Israel, universal and supreme though He is acknowledged to be. They are spoken of as "devils" as well as idols. They are called upon to "worship Him" (*cf.* cvi. 36, xcvii. 7, 9, cxxxviii. i).

Again, the Psalmists' horizon is, for the most part, limited to this present life, which is regarded as if it were the chief, almost the only, scene in which moral retribution would be worked out. And occasionally there appears the primitive Hebrew idea of the after-world as the vague and gloomy Sheol, like the shadowy Hades of Homer, where the dead "go down into silence," where, instead of purpose and progress, there is but a dawnless twilight, the land "without any order" of Job (xlix., lxxxviii., cxv. 17).

And yet the more one studies and uses the Psalms in the light of other Scriptures and the Church's interpretation, the more it is found that these partial, at first sight erroneous,
{26} conceptions have still their practical value for Christians. There is nothing in them that is positively false, and they suggest, on the other hand, aspects of truth which we tend to forget. Thus in the instances given above, by "the gods of the heathen" the Christian may well be reminded of the continued existence and influence in the heathen world of the powers of evil, of the malignant warfare that is still being waged by "principalities and powers" against light and truth. The ancient conception of the shadowy abode of the dead has also its value. Even the Lord Himself could speak of the night coming "when no man can work" (John ix. 4), and such Psalms as the 49th and the 115th may serve to remind us that this life is a time of work and probation in a sense that the life after death is not, that the grave cannot reverse the line that has been followed here nor put praises in the mouth of those who have never praised God "secretly or in the congregation" in this world. And again, the "present-worldliness" of the Psalter may well point the duty of Christians in respect of what they see and know around them here. Many are content, while repeating pious phrases about heaven, to ignore the fact that this present human life is the great sphere of Christian activity, and that whether the Church is able to regenerate
{27} human society here or not, it is her business to try to do it, as fellow-workers with Him—

> Who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong:
> Who feedeth the hungry.
> (cxlvi. 6.)

Have we not a remarkable witness to the continuity of the Holy Spirit's teaching, and to the fact that not "one jot or one tittle" of the law is to remain unfulfilled, in the way that these apparent imperfections and limitations of the Psalter fall into their place in connection with the later revelation?

Another obvious difficulty of the Psalter lies in the frequent obscurity of connection between verse and verse, in the rapid transitions, in the uncertainty as to the sequence of thought, or the meaning of the Psalm as a whole. This difficulty, as it bears upon the liturgical use of the Psalms, has been increased by the abolition of the *antiphons*, which in the pre-Reformation offices certainly helped at times to suggest a leading thought, or to guide the worshipper as to the Church's intention in the recitation of this or that Psalm. (Note C, p. 104.) Sometimes indeed, the
{28} connection between the verses of a Psalm is really very slight, more a matter of suggestion or association than of logic. Such is the case in "proverbial" Psalms, like the 33rd, 34th, and 37th, or the 119th. But in others it is well worth the effort to gain a continuous view of the Psalm as a whole. A simple commentary will give this, or even sometimes the R.V. alone, or the headings in the A.V., such as the very suggestive one prefixed to the 110th: "1 The kingdom, 4 the priesthood, 5 the conquest, 7 and the passion of Christ." (Note D, p. 106.)

There are also difficulties caused by a real obscurity in the Hebrew, or by mistranslations. Here, again, a comparison with the R.V. is of great value. The meaning of the 87th springs to light at once when we read "This one was born there," instead of the mysterious "Lo, there was he born," etc. The Psalm refers not to the birth of the Messiah, but to the new birth of individuals out of the heathen races who thus become citizens of Sion. "So let indignation vex him, even as a thing that is raw" (lviii. 8), becomes certainly more intelligible as "He shall take them away with a whirlwind, the green and the burning alike" (a metaphor from a traveller's fire of brushwood, blown away by a sudden wind); and even if "the beasts of the people" remains still obscure in Ps.
{29} lxviii. in the revised translation, its "why hop ye so, ye high hills?" is more significant when it is read—

Why look ye askance, ye high mountains:
At the mountain which God hath desired for His abode?

Sometimes the alteration of a single word makes the difference between obscurity and sense, as in xlix. 5, where "the wickedness of my heels" becomes intelligible as "iniquity at my heels"; or in Ps. xlii., where "Therefore will I remember thee concerning the land of Judah and the little hill of Hermon" is made clear at once by the substitution of "from" for "concerning." The verse is the cry of the exile, who, far away in northern Palestine, among the sources of the Jordan, yearns for the Temple and its services, which he is no longer able to visit.

Doubtless the reasons which prevented the older version of the Psalms being changed in the Prayer Book in the seventeenth century, when other passages of Scripture were revised, still hold good. Neither A.V. nor R.V. are so well adapted for music, nor have they endeared themselves to
{30} the worshipper by daily use. Those who have time and opportunity may discover for themselves more exact meanings or clear up difficulties by private study. But even those who have not may find that there are better uses of the Psalter than a merely intellectual grasp of its meaning. Possibly an occasional obscurity may even have a humbling or awe-inspiring effect on the mind. The strange version of the Vulgate of Ps. lxxi. 14, though incorrect, is not without its point:

Quoniam non cognovi litteraturam,
introibo in potentias Domini.[1]

Learning by itself can never lift the soul on the wings of devotion and worship. The unlearned, Christ's "little ones," have in every age found a voice that spoke to them in the liturgy of the Catholic Church, even though its accents were inarticulate, and its message music rather than words. Such considerations may prevent us distressing ourselves because something, perhaps much, in the Church's book of praise is unintelligible and must remain so.

Two practical suggestions may be offered here to those who find themselves hindered in devotion by the difficulties of the Psalter, by its rapid transitions, or its constantly varying tone.
{31} The leading purpose of the Psalter in the Church's use is expressed in its Hebrew title, *Tehillim*, "praises." "We shall do well," says Dr. Cheyne, "to accustom ourselves to the intelligent use of this title, and to look out in every psalm for an element of praise." It is good to allow this thought to dominate our mind while the Psalms are being read or sung in the Church's service. For this and for that our fathers in the Faith thanked God; for what He had revealed, or promised or done. And He is the same, He changes not. Ever and anon as the service proceeds, a verse will suggest some ground of thanksgiving for ourselves or for the Church we love. We need to keep our minds, like our bodies, in the attitude of praise and aspiration, like that exiled lover of his nation who wrote Ps. cvi.:

Remember me, O Lord, according to the favour that Thou
bearest unto Thy people:
O visit me with Thy salvation;
That I may see the felicity of Thy chosen:
And rejoice in the gladness of Thy people,
And give thanks with Thine inheritance.
(cvi. 4, 5.)

{32} Not only the attitude of praise should be cultivated, but also that of sympathy. This will be especially fruitful as we take upon our lips these constantly recurring expressions of penitence, struggle, and sorrow. These are certain to be at times unreal to us, unless we can remember that we recite them not merely for ourselves, but as part of the Church's intercession for the world, in which it is our privilege to take part. Others are suffering under the burden of sin and grief, others are overwhelmed with sorrow, racked with pain, harried by the slanderer and the persecutor. It is such as these that we remember before God, as fellow-members of the one body. And will not such a remembrance, such sympathy, bring us very near to our blessed Lord's own use of the Psalter in His days on earth, Who "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses"?

Yet beyond all these difficulties of language, history, and modes of thought, whether they yield to study or not, there are outstanding *moral* difficulties of the Psalter. Some of the Psalms appear to be inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, or even with the moral sense of mankind,
{33} educated as it has been for so long in the Gospel-school. This objection seems at first sight a more serious difficulty than any of the others; but before it can be satisfactorily dealt with, another and more fundamental question must be faced. What is the attitude, as a whole, of the objector to the revealed word of God? There are those to whom the Psalms seem to speak altogether in an alien tongue, who find the recitation of them in the Church's service "tedious" (a reason alleged recently as one of those which keep people from attending church), to whom the

119th Psalm appears to be "mechanical and monotonous," whose very expression in church proclaims them "bored." Such feelings may be only the result of ignorance, or lack of effort, or inherited misconceptions. Or the reason may lie deeper. The worship of the Catholic Church can only be understood by those who are of the mind of the Church, who have learned to place themselves in the believer's attitude towards God and His revelation.

However much the word "conversion" may have been abused, and turned into a mere catchword or shibboleth, it is unquestionable that the Christian religion demands a fundamental change of mind and attitude, a change which does not come by education only, nor by any natural
{34} process. There is a hidden wisdom in the Church which to the natural man is "foolishness" (1 Cor. ii. 14); it can only be learned by those who humbly set themselves to be taught by the Spirit. This change, come it suddenly or very slowly, must have its effect upon the whole man, his intellect, as well as his heart and will. "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof." Especially will it rule our attitude towards Holy Scripture. Without such a change neither historical nor grammatical explanations can make the Scripture sweet or even intelligible. Not least will our comprehension of the Psalter be influenced by it. How impossible is it really to say, "Lord, what love have I unto Thy law," if one has never realised that there is a law of God, supreme and absolute, to be read in the Scriptures and in the witness of the Church; and that only in obedience to this law can man find his true self and "walk at liberty." It is vain to seek to be critics before we are disciples. And the Psalter is clearly meant for the initiated, not for him who merely follows the crowd. The Divine Office, which the Psalter fills and dominates, is the means whereby the instructed faithful express their unchanging delight in, and loyalty to, what they have received freely from God. It is not the Church's message to the unconverted world, nor the voice of man's natural desires and
{35} sympathies, undisciplined by grace. The Catholic temper, the mind of the Church, is an absolute first principle in the right use of the Church's book of praise, and the key to its chief difficulties.

Bearing this in mind, let us endeavour to face, in conclusion, this moral difficulty of some parts of the Psalter—a difficulty which undoubtedly causes pain and uncertainty to some who are really devout, and which has led many to ask for a revised or expurgated Psalter for the public services. First, there is what appears to be the self-righteousness of the Psalter. Side by side with the most perfect expressions of humility and penitence, there are found protestations of innocence and purity which, if they were merely personal, we should rightly hesitate to make our own. But the "I" of the Psalter is not merely personal; it is the collective voice of the Church, and of the Church in her ideal aspect, such as we confess her in the Creed—"one, holy, Catholic." It is the voice of the great company of the holy souls from the beginning of the world, on earth and beyond the veil. It is with these that we recite our psalms, with these that we humbly associate ourselves, it is their righteousness that we seek to make our own, for it is the righteousness of Christ.

{36} And if the "I" of the Psalter is the self-expression of the Communion of Saints, still more is it the voice of the King of Saints, the immaculate Lamb, in whose Name we offer our worship.

But there is still the problem of the Psalms of Imprecation. What can we say of their apparent fierceness and vindictiveness, their reflection of the stormy passions and bitter warfare of a primitive age? There is much indeed that can be rightly urged, here, as in the other Old Testament writings, from the point of view of the difference between Hebrew modes of expression and our own, and from the progressive character of revelation, much that may help to remove prejudice and clear away apparent inconsistencies. But the larger view of the Psalter as the book primarily of the Church is of still greater importance. The imprecations of the Psalms, though expressed in so vividly personal a manner, are no more personal than the protestations of innocency. They express rather that age-long passion for righteousness, that burning belief in a moral Judge of the world Who must do right, which have always been the Church's saving salt among the corruptions and indifference of the world. It is this spirit that inspires them, rather
{37} than the thirst for vengeance or the vindication of self. They express the Church's belief that there is a world-conflict ever proceeding between the cause of God, the cause of truth and right, and the passions of men urged on by the powers of evil.

> For lo, Thine enemies make a murmuring:
> And they that hate Thee have lift up their head.
> They have imagined craftily against Thy people:
> And taken counsel against Thy secret ones.
> (lxxxiii. 2, 3.)
>
> Lay hand upon the shield and buckler:
> And stand up to help me.
> Bring forth the spear and stop the way
> against them that persecute me:
> Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.
> (xxxv. 2, 3.)

This sense of an irreconcilable conflict between the malignity of evil and the will of God, between the carnal mind and that reflection of God's will which He has implanted in the human conscience, is much to seek in our own day. We are too much inclined to minimise the reality of
{38} sin, and to imagine that it is disappearing before civilisation and the growth of gentler ways and

sentiments. The Psalmists knew better—they knew that the battle was to the death, and that God alone can win His own victory; and they express, sternly and roughly perhaps, but with the utmost sincerity, their undying faith that He will; that the overthrow of malice and falsehood and treachery must one day be manifested,

> God shall suddenly shoot at them with a swift arrow,

and that the part we each have played in the battle will be the true measure of our worth.

> All they that are true of heart shall be glad.
> (lxiv.)

In this sense we may even repeat the dreadful conclusion of the Babylonian exiles' Psalm:

> Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children:
> And throweth them against the stones.
> (cxxxvii.)

For what are Babylon and her children but the powers of falsehood, oppression, and cruelty? and
{39} blessed still and ever is he who is afire with indignation against such things, who scorns any easy compromise with them, who burns to deal a blow at them for Jerusalem's sake!

And there is still another justification for the continued use of these Psalms, which will be understood by those who have begun to be disciples in the Church's school. The Psalms are not merely the response to revelation, they are part of that revelation themselves. The Church uses them not as mere human utterances, but as the inspired words which God Himself has given her, and which the Lord Jesus consecrated by His own personal use of them. God cannot contradict Himself. The Gospel may expand the Law, or do away with its letter in order to bring out the underlying spirit, but it cannot abrogate it. If there were a real discrepancy between the imprecatory Psalms and the New Testament, it would be scarcely conceivable that the first word of Scripture quoted in the first history of the Church would be that sentence already alluded to:

> Let his habitation be made desolate:
> And let no man dwell therein.

The severities of the Psalms are matched by the severities of the Gospels. There is no real
{40} difference between our Lord's sentence on the scribes and Pharisees, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," and the sentence which the Holy Spirit puts into our mouth against the hypocrite and the traitor, "Let his children be fatherless: and his wife a widow" (cix. 8). God is still "a God of judgment" and a "consuming fire," and there is a "wrath of the Lamb" revealed, even though He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

God has, as it were, put upon our lips, in these Psalms, His own great condemnation of sin, and made us our own judges. We recite, remembering that it is His word, and not our own, the denunciation of the sensual and the covetous, the traitor and the liar, the persecutor, the slanderer, and the hypocrite. From this point of view the recitation of such Psalms as the 69th or the 109th should be an exercise of personal humility, of godly fear for ourselves and others, and might well bring to our mind often that other great challenge of the Spirit:

> Why dost thou preach My laws, and takest My covenant in thy mouth?
> Whereas thou hatest to be reformed:
> And hast cast My words behind thee.
> (Ps. l. 16, 17.)

{41} These are considerations which surely ought to be well weighed before we seek to make the Psalter a book of "smooth things" only, or eliminate any part of its witness. There are no short or easy methods applicable to its deeper difficulties. Like all the ultimate problems of faith, they fade away only before the uncreated Light of the Spirit of God, when He visits the heart.

> I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear:
> But now mine eye seeth *Thee*.
> (Job xlii. 5.)

[1] "Inasmuch as I know not man's learning, I will enter into the mighty works of the Lord."

{43}

LECTURE II

CHRIST IN THE PSALTER

Paravi lucernam Christo meo.

Jewish and Christian tradition alike connect the Psalter with the great name of David. Whether David himself wrote any of the Psalms or not is a question that may continue to agitate the minds of scholars. But there can be no question that the permanency of the throne of David and the Divine promises on which it rested are leading thoughts in the Psalter. The starting-point must be sought earlier in the Old Testament, in the great oracle communicated by Nathan to David (2 Sam. vii., referred to directly in Ps. lxxxix. 20, etc.), "Thy throne shall be established for ever." In this was recognised from the first something more than a mere promise of the long continuance of the crown in the family of the son of Jesse. It carried with it some special sanction
{44} and blessing over and above the ordinary Divine authority of heaven-anointed kings. The words "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son" seemed to imply a peculiar and unique relationship between God Himself, the true King of Israel, and His earthly representative. The comment ascribed to David himself is significant: "Is this the manner of *man*, O Lord God?" No mere human sovereignty, however glorious or firmly settled, would satisfy such a prophecy as this.

The thoughts of the pious in Israel must have dwelt often and deeply in after-time upon this promise and its connection with the Divine calling of the sacred nation and her mission in the world. It is remarkable how persistently this thought of the permanence and supernatural character of the Davidic sovereignty recurs in the prophetic writings—even when the crown had passed to an unworthy head, or seemed to have been plucked off for ever. Jeremiah, when the clouds are gathering thickly round the doomed city, foretells that the covenant of David will be as lasting as that of "the day and the night in their season," and that the seed of David will be unnumbered "as the host of heaven and the sand of the sea" (Jer. xxxiii.). Ezekiel from his far-off
{45} exile by the waters of Babylon, while he proclaims the Divine sentence against the degenerate son of David—"Remove the mitre, and take off the crown: this shall be no more: ... I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, ... until He come Whose right it is"—predicts the time when Judah and Ephraim shall be one, and "David My servant shall be their prince for ever" (Ezek. xxi. 26, 27, xxxvii. 15-28). Haggai, in the days of the Return, continues the promise to the uncrowned prince, Zerubbabel—"I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. ii. 23).

It is not to be wondered at that in the Psalter, the inspired response of worshipping Israel to the revelation of God, we should find Psalms that rejoice in this indestructible and royal hope, Psalms that look beyond present failures and imminent perils to a perfect fulfilment of what God had spoken "sometime in visions to His saints." Thus the 2nd Psalm tells triumphantly of the Divine "law" or "decree" concerning David's son, and sees in it the assurance of a world-wide empire, the discomfiture of the raging of the nations and the gathering of the kings of the earth:

> Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee.
> {46} Desire of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance:
> And the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.

The 18th describes the Almighty riding on His chariot of whirlwind and storm, coming down from heaven itself in His condescension, to pluck His anointed out of "many waters," "to deliver him from the strivings of the people, and to make him the head of the heathen." The 45th tells, with "the pen of a ready writer," of this everlasting sceptre and throne, founded on truth and righteousness, of a king to whom Divine titles are given, "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," and sees in the marriage of this king with a foreign princess the earnest of a kingdom over all the earth. The 72nd describes not only the prosperity, but the moral greatness of this empire stretching from sea to sea, "from the river to the ends of the earth." Not like the giant empires of the East, founded on aggression and cruelty, with no motive but the monstrous pride of their founders and rulers, the Davidic king is to be the champion of the poor, the needy, and the helpless:

> He shall deliver their souls from falsehood and wrong:
> {47} And dear shall their blood be in his sight.

The 89th, while it tells how God has found David His servant and anointed him with holy oil, and made him "His first-born, higher than the kings of the earth," is bold to face in those later days the agonising problem of the apparent failure of all this lofty promise:

> But Thou hast abhorred and forsaken Thine anointed:
> And art displeased at him.
> Thou hast broken the covenant of Thy servant,
> And cast his crown to the ground.

"Lord, how long? ... Lord, where are Thy old loving-kindnesses? ... Remember, Lord!"

The 132nd, also apparently a Psalm of a later age, though ascribed to David, dwells with joy on David's love of the sanctuary of God, pleads for the fulfilment of the promise, asks that the lamp may not be put out, nor the face of God's anointed "turned away" in confusion.

{48} Rightly are such Psalms as these called "Messianic." We feel that even those who originally wrote them looked for more than "transitory promises." They were learning to look for the redemption of Israel and of the world itself through Israel and her kings. They were bold to believe, even when the crown was gone and the purple faded, and Israel was no longer a sovereign state, that the ancient word of God to David could never be exhausted. So when at last the great message of the Archangel came to the virgin of the house of David, it was felt by those who had read aright the history of their nation that here was no mere fanciful resuscitation of a dead past, but the vindication of God's undying purpose: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto 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" (Luke i. 32, 33).

It was therefore strictly legitimate, and in line with all the history of revelation, that the Christian Church should adopt these Messianic Psalms as her own thanksgiving for the mysteries of the Incarnation. Thus on Christmas Day she welcomes the Nativity in some of the Psalms
{49} already alluded to—in that which tells of the reconciliation of mankind with one another and with God under the figure of the marriage between the anointed King and the king's daughter "all glorious within" (xlv.); in that which pleads the great promises to him who so loved God's presence that he would not "suffer his eyes to sleep nor his eyelids to slumber" until he had found a permanent resting-place for that presence among men (cxxxii.); or in that, again, which in the strength of faith can gaze even on the casting down of the throne and the breaking of the covenant, resting still on God's faithfulness among "the rebukes of many people" (lxxxix.).

But there are other Psalms which, if they cannot strictly be called Messianic, yet bear their witness to another aspect of the same great hope of Israel. In the voice of prayer, or joyful confidence, they look forward to some *coming* of God to earth, some visible manifestation of His righteousness and His world-wide purpose:

> For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth:
> And with righteousness to judge the world,
> and the people with His truth
> (xcvi. 13),

{50} or—

> Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down:
> Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
> (cxliv. 5.)

In the 85th, one of the Psalms appointed for Christmas Day, this advent of God is spoken of in words which are re-echoed in the prologue to S. John's Gospel (i. 14) as a dwelling or "tabernacling" of God's glory, not in the darkness of a Holy of Holies (as the later Jews imagined the Shekinah), but as a new and permanent fact in the moral order of the world:

> For His salvation is nigh them that fear Him:
> That glory may dwell in our land.
> Mercy and truth are met together:
> Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
> Truth shall flourish out of the earth:
> And righteousness hath looked down from heaven.

In such prophetic visions as these, as well as in the Psalms that speak of the glories of the
{51} Messianic King, the Christian conscience has rightly recognised definite predictions of the coming of Christ, of Him Who was both "the effulgence of God's glory" (Heb. i. 3) and also, by His human birth, the Son of David and King of Israel, and Who manifested the holiness of God in human flesh and blood. He Himself, when He came, selected from the Psalms one striking phrase, in which both ideas, the Divine glory and the human calling, are combined. For He quotes, as a witness to Himself and as a corrective of imperfect views, the 110th Psalm (again a proper Psalm for Christmas Day), where the Messianic King is spoken of both as Ruler and Victor and Priest of humanity, and as standing also in a unique relationship to God, which exalts Him far above any mere earthly connection with David:

> The Lord said unto my Lord:
> Sit thou on My right hand—
> If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?

(Matt. xxii. 45.)

But besides all these prophecies, which look onward to the great outcome of Israel's history, there is another and wider sense, as the Christian Fathers apprehended, in which the whole
{52} Psalter is the book of the Incarnation and speaks of Christ. "David," says S. Jerome, "on his harp and ten-stringed lute, sings throughout of Christ, and brings Him up from the dead." However fanciful and over-subtle the early Christian commentators may seem to us in their working out of this idea, they had grasped a profound truth. When we once recognise that Christ, knowing Who He was and why He came into the world (*cf.* John xiii. 1), must in the Jewish services or in private prayers have recited the Psalms with a perfect intention, and found in them the true expression of Himself, with regard both to the eternal Father and to His brethren, we are compelled to admit the possibility of each verse of the Psalms having some bearing on the Incarnation. It is a conclusion which might at first sight seem extravagant; but it forces itself upon us as we realise the true humanity of the Saviour. He is "the Son of Man"; He took of the substance of His Virgin-mother the fulness of human nature; He has a human body, a human soul, a human spirit; He is "the second Adam," the great Head of our race, Who, in the striking phrase of S. Irenaeus, has "summed up" (*recapitulavit*) all humanity and all the long history of man. "For verily, not of
{53} angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii. 16). He has gathered into Himself all truly human experience, the hopes of humanity, and its sufferings; its infinite pathos, its capacity of sorrow and of joy, its progress towards God, and its final apprehension and vision of God.

This is the key to the most constant feature of the Psalter, the portrait of the Righteous Sufferer. Whether we regard it as the personification of the holy nation or the self-expression of human conscience in its moral witness and its conflicts, it is an ideal that is only fulfilled in the Just One, Jesus Christ. He appeared in the world as the pattern Man, in Whom the Divine image is perfected and Whose moral nature corresponds with that holiness which is God's essential character. He appeared, too, as the perfect realisation of the filial spirit, that spirit of sonship which is the true attitude of the creature towards the Creator. Therefore it is in Christ Himself that the witness of the Psalms to righteousness, their expression of man's effort towards his ideal, is taken up, illuminated, made perfect. Therefore it is that a New Testament writer is found applying directly and without question to Christ not only the descriptions of the self-revealing
{54} God of the Old Testament, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands" (Heb. i. 10, from Ps. cii.), and the portrait of the Messianic King, "The sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom" (*ib.*, from Ps. xlv.), but also the description of *man* in his ideal excellence and supremacy:

> Thou madest him a little lower than the angels;
> Thou crownedst him with glory and honour,
> And didst set him over the works of Thy hands
> (Heb. ii., from Ps. viii.),

and that word in which some unknown psalmist and prophet had consecrated the free obedience of his will to God, as a higher offering than the sacrifices of the Law:

> Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith,
> Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not,
> But a body didst Thou prepare for Me;
> In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin
> Thou hadst no pleasure:
> Then said I, Lo, I am come
> {55} (In the roll of the book it is written of Me)
> To do Thy will, O God."
> (Heb. x., from Ps. xl.)

This line of interpretation may be followed out with great spiritual profit in the varied aspects of the Psalms. The thanksgivings of the Psalter are in the same spirit as those recorded by the Evangelists from our Lord's own lips, as when He thanked the Father for the revelation made to babes rather than to the wise and understanding (Matt. xi. 25), or at the grave of Lazarus gave thanks that His prayer was heard (John xi. 41). The prayers of the Psalter might well be those in which the Incarnate Son communed with the Father. For He fought our human battle with the human weapons of faith and prayer. The great description given by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews of Christ as "the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. xii. 2), implies One Who inaugurated our effort of faith by Himself first taking part in it, and Himself perfectly accomplished it by bearing to the very final and utmost strain our human temptations. Hence we may hear the voice of Christ Himself in those pathetic outcries of the Psalter; in its appeal of faith
{56} as the Righteous One wrestles with doubt and depression or faces the contradiction of sinners; in its stedfast hold on God even when sin is triumphing, and a world created good seems given over into the hand of the wicked. All these utterances have a new meaning, a fuller efficacy, when we recognise in them the words of the "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." There is nothing either fantastic or presumptuous in this reading of the Gospel in the Psalter. Did not He Himself vouchsafe to shew us something of this human struggle of faith in the words spoken on the eve of

His Passion, when He confessed that His soul was troubled, and He would fain have said, "Father, save Me from this hour" (John xii. 27)? Did He not lift the veil even further in admitting us to the dark sanctuary of Gethsemane, in suffering us to hear even His utterances from the Cross?

The fourth Word from the Cross, so often misunderstood, is the opening of the 22nd Psalm. This cry at the climax of the Passion is really the voice of faith, faith triumphing over desolation of spirit, faith holding on by the unseen, amidst the falling away and the vanishing for the time of every consolation. It is not *merely* "Why didst Thou forsake Me?" but it is "My God, My God," the
{57} fundamental confession of a personal faith in a personal God, seeing Him Who is invisible, waiting for Him Who hides His face, believing, even though His truth and justice seem blotted out of the world, that God is, and that He is still "enthroned upon the praises of Israel" (v. 3). And this faith finds its last utterance of peace and thanksgiving and renewed consciousness of union with the Father in the seventh Word, again from the Psalter, "Into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Ps. xxxi. 6).

One of the most fruitful lines of Christian meditation will be found in this Christological aspect of the Psalms. It throws a wonderful light on the inner life of our Lord, and gives the Psalter a value which no merely literary study could give.

The five Psalms appointed by our Church for Good Friday are a rich storehouse of the secrets of the Passion. The 22nd and the 69th bear upon it very directly, and present many points of similarity. In each the sufferings of the Righteous are described minutely and pathetically, in each these sufferings lead on to triumph and to the assurance of their world-wide efficacy:

> All the ends of the earth shall remember themselves,
> and be turned unto the Lord:
> {58} And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him.
> (xxii. 27.)
>
> For God will save Sion, and build the cities of Judah:
> That men may dwell there and have it in possession.
> The posterity also of His servants shall inherit it:
> And they that love His Name shall dwell therein.
> (lxix. 36, 37.)

Each, again, in its picture of undeserved suffering, brings out the true nature and the malignity of *sin*. In the 22nd sin is portrayed in its cruelty and its irrational character, as if men led by it were but wild beasts, "wild oxen," "bulls of Bashan," "dogs," and "lions." In the 69th we see its ingratitude, and its pitiless and causeless malice, and the fact that, whatever its immediate object, it is really directed against God Himself:

> For Thy sake I have suffered reproach.
> * * * * *
> The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me.

{59} Both these Psalms, again, contain what we must confess to be definite predictions of details of the Passion. The 22nd tells of the very words and gestures which the chief priests and Pharisees in their blindness made use of to insult the Crucified:

> All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
> They shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying,
> He trusted in God, that He would deliver him:
> Let Him deliver him now, if He will have him.
> (*Cf.* Matt, xxvii. 39-43.)

Another startling prediction is that of the piercing of the hands and the feet. No such punishment was used by the Jews, or endured, as far as we know, by any of the martyrs of the Old Testament. All the four Evangelists, again, note the literal fulfilment of xxii. 18:

> They part my garments among them:
> And cast lots upon my vesture.

Indeed, this 22nd Psalm along with Isaiah liii. stands forth beyond all the other writings of
{60} the Old Testament as a witness which is proof against all attempts to explain it away, to the truth that "the Spirit of Christ" was in the prophets "testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ " (1 Peter i. 11).

The 69th (like the 40th) may have been originally suggested by the persecution of the

prophet Jeremiah, when he was thrown into the miry cistern (Jer. xxxviii.); but it contains an anticipation of Calvary, whose fulfilment is described by all the Evangelists, in the wine mingled with myrrh, and the vinegar and gall offered in mockery before the Crucifixion:

> They gave me gall to eat:
> And when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

S. John, the nearest to the Cross and to the heart of the Crucified, tells us moreover that this verse was consciously appropriated by Christ Himself, when, "knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, He saith, I thirst" (John xix. 28).

Each of the other proper Psalms for Good Friday bears its witness to the suffering Christ. The 88th, at first sight one of the most difficult in the Psalter, a Psalm whose darkness seems scarcely illuminated by any ray of hope, is clearly chosen to illustrate Christ's desolation on the Cross, the
{61} Three Hours of darkness, His Burial and His descent into Hades. The Sufferer is absolutely alone, lover and friend are in darkness; He is fighting the battle with that last enemy of mankind, the King of Terrors, yet overcoming the sharpness of death by faith and patient endurance; He is looking on to the dawn of Easter:

> Unto Thee have I cried, O Lord:
> And early shall my prayer come unto Thee;

or—

> In the morning shall my prayer come before Thee (R.V.).

May not even those strange words "from My youth up Thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind" have been on the lips and in the thought of the "Man of Sorrows" as the Cross cast its shadow over Him, perhaps from His earliest years? "For not even our Lord Jesus Christ Himself," says *The Imitation* in one of those chapters which sweeten the tears of the world, "was ever one hour without the anguish of His Passion as long as He lived" (*Imit.* ii. 12).

Both the 40th and the 54th suggest that inner secret of the Atonement which the writer of
{62} the Epistle to the Hebrews has fixed upon as giving Christ's Passion its universal efficacy:

> An offering of a free heart will I give Thee.
> (liv. 6.)
>
> I come—that I should fulfil Thy will, O my God.
> (xl. 9, 10.)

"By which will we have been sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 10). For the Passion is the supreme oblation of the freewill of man, the re-direction into the right attitude of that high faculty by which man had sinned and fallen originally, the consecration of it to its true end, voluntary obedience to God. "Not My will, but Thine be done"; that Christ as man should bring the human will perfectly into conformity with the will of God is what "in the volume of the book"—*i.e.* in the writings of all the line of prophets—was written of Him; for this "the body was prepared" for Him in the pure flesh of the Virgin-mother; for this His "ears were opened," that as child and youth and man He might perfectly hear and obey the word of the Father.

{63} But the 15th verse of the 40th Psalm suggests an obvious difficulty in the application of the Psalms as a whole to Christ personally:

> My sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not
> able to look up:
> Yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head,
> and my heart hath failed me.

How can we ascribe these words, or any of the confessions of sin in the Psalter, to the sinless Lamb of God? Are not these at least all our own? And yet He Himself must on earth have repeated them. In their original meaning they referred either to personal or national guilt. In either sense the recitation of them, at first sight, would seem to be alien and external to His pure conscience. But do they not take a deeper and more solemn tone when we consider them in the light of the prophet's great description of the Atoning Sufferer, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. liii. 6), or of S. Paul's statement, "Him Who knew no sin, He made to be sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. v. 21)? Such words as these contain more than the mere bearing of the punishment of sin; they imply some inward connection between the Sufferer and the sin. Indeed,
{64} rightly understood, they help to remove the difficulty that many have felt as to the apparent injustice or unreality of a vicarious Atonement. Christ was not merely a Victim suffering for human sin; He was man's Creator taking that sin upon Himself. Thus these expressions of penitence in the Psalter may be regarded as the voice of the sympathetic love of the Sin-bearer, the love which stands by the sinner's side, and feels with him so intimately that it makes its own

what is not its own but utterly alien and hateful, makes it its own that it may burn it up in the flame of love. So in these Psalms we may hear the Son of Man confessing and making reparation for all the age-long sin of man; speaking of it as if it were His own sin, so closely has He made Himself one with us in our extremest need.

Cardinal Newman, in one of the most eloquent of his sermons, "The Mental Sufferings of our Lord in His Passion," has developed this thought in language whose daring is only justified by its devotion. It is a description of Christ kneeling alone in Gethsemane:

His very memory is laden with every sin which has been committed since the Fall, in all regions of the earth, with the pride of the old giants, and the lusts of the five cities, and the
{65} obduracy of Egypt, and the ambition of Babel, and the unthankfulness and scorn of Israel. Of the living and the dead and of the as yet unborn, of the lost and of the saved, of Thy people and of strangers, of sinners and of saints, all sins are there.... It is the long history of a world, and God alone can bear the load of it.... They are upon Him, they are all but His own. He cries to His Father as if He were the criminal, not the victim. His agony takes the form of guilt and compunction. He is doing penance, He is making confession, He is exercising contrition with a reality and a virtue infinitely greater than that of all saints and penitents together; for He is the one Victim for us all, the sole satisfaction, the real penitent, all but the real sinner.[1]

Connected closely with these confessions of sin, these outcries of suffering and expiation, with the *Miserere* and the *De Profundis*, are those solemn declarations of God's wrath upon the impenitent sinner which have already been alluded to in a previous lecture. Viewed as the utterances of the Son of Man such Psalms are more rightly to be called *judicial* than denunciatory. It is He to Whom all judgment has been committed by the Father, He Whose
{66} coming into the world was inevitably "for judgment," Who seems here to be delivering sentence. He is taking up and confirming the fragmentary utterances of older days, in which the human conscience, imperfectly perhaps, and not without some mixture of personal feeling, yet on the whole rightly, had cried out against falsehood and wrong, and appealed to the wrath of God. The words of such a Psalm even as the 109th might have been used by Him Who twice scourged the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, and Who denounced in words that burn like fire through the centuries the cruelty and hypocrisy of scribes and Pharisees; Who Himself in mercy warned us of the outer darkness and the unquenched flame.

But the Psalms not only illustrate the Passion of Christ in its mercy and judgment; they also supply words befitting His Resurrection and Triumph. It may be true that there is no clear or continuous line of prophecy in the Old Testament concerning the life after death. But it is at least equally true that the belief is there, grasped in moments of intuition by the saints of Israel, disappearing for a time like a buried river, but coming ever and anon again to the surface. So in the Psalms there are certainly evidences of the undying hope of the faithful that truth and justice
{67} must one day visibly triumph, and that man, in proportion as he is true to these things and therefore true to God, Whose nature they are, and true to himself, as made in God's image—man must also be immortal. He will not go down into silence; an endless future opens before him, as yet unfathomed and unknown, but certain. So in the Psalms which the Christian instinct, illuminated by the Spirit of Pentecost, seized upon in its first words of witness (Acts ii. 25-8) as prophetic of Christ, we have the assurance:

> I have set God always before me:
> For He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.
> Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced:
> My flesh also shall rest in hope.
> For why? Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell:[2]
> Neither shalt Thou suffer Thy Holy[3] One to see corruption.
> (Ps. xvi. 9-11.)

{68} And again:

> As for me, I will behold Thy presence in righteousness:
> And when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.
> (Ps. xvii. 16.)

So again, in that profoundly spiritual Psalm, the 73rd, the writer turns from the puzzles of the moral order and the misgivings of his own heart, and seeks refuge in the abiding fact of his personal fellowship with God. He finds *there* the assurance not only that the wicked will pass away "like a dream when one awaketh," but that the righteous is undying:

> My flesh and my heart faileth:
> But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

Such Psalms as these find their full meaning only in the light of Easter. The Resurrection of Christ was no mere portent or isolated miracle; it was strictly in line with all that man had risen up to in his highest spiritual intuitions in the past. It is true, in a much fuller sense than that of accomplishing a mere prediction, that Christ "rose again, according to the Scriptures."

This essential immortality of the righteous, through his union with God, is implied throughout
{69} the Easter Psalms, especially in the 118th (part of "the Egyptian Hallel"), words which must have been recited by the Lord and His Apostles at the Passover Supper, in the very imminence of the Passion.

> The voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous: ...
> I shall not die, but live:
> And declare the works of the Lord.

Ascension Day completes the triumph of man raised to immortality through his union with God in Christ. It inaugurates the accomplishment of man's ideal, in the eternal mediatorial reign of Christ as the Head of the human race. The appointed Psalms are again most suggestive. The 8th sings triumphantly of the supremacy of man over all the works of God, man crowned "with glory and worship." The 15th and the 24th describe the moral perfections which are the condition of this exaltation:

> Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle:
> Or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill?
> Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life:
> And doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth
> from his heart.
> * * * * *
> {70} Whoso doeth these things:
> Shall never fall.
> (xv.)

The 21st and the 108th look back to the promises to David and to the typical character of his wars and victories. They shew that these events were part and parcel of the Divine warfare; they were a foretaste of the triumph of God Himself. They suggest that the Ascension of Christ, while it gathers into itself all the moral victories of the past, is the beginning of a new order. It brings in a Catholic empire of truth and righteousness, which, in spite of puzzles and warfare and contradictions, parallel to those which vexed the heart of the prophets of old, is now absolutely certain in its hope:

> Who will lead me into the strong city:
> And who will bring me into Edom?
> Hast not Thou forsaken us, O God:
> And wilt not Thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?
> O help us against the enemy:
> For vain is the help of man.
> Through God we shall do great acts:
> And it is He that shall tread down our enemies.
> (cviii.)

{71} Thus, to him who, by God's mercy, has learned the Catholic Faith, the Psalms are full of Christ from end to end. He reads Christ in them, not by a pious imagination, but as the legitimate and only perfect key to their meaning and their use by the Church. In the Psalms he worships Christ as God:

> Thy seat, O God, endureth for ever.
> (xlv. 7.)

In the Psalms he worships with Christ as the Son of Man, with Him Who alone could say rightly:

> My soul hath kept Thy testimonies:
> And loved them exceedingly.
> (cxix. 167.)

The human sorrows and struggles which cry out in the Psalter have been taken into the sacred heart of Him Who is the Word of the Father, and the King and Priest and Prophet of humanity, in Whom is fulfilled the saying:

> He sent His Word, and healed them:
> And they were saved from their destruction.
> (cvii. 20.)

This Catholic secret of the Psalter, writ large as it is over the history of the Church's worship,
{72} is yet something that eludes mere human research, and is a stumbling-block to human learning and scholarship. It can only be taught by that "hidden wisdom" of which S. Paul has told us (1 Cor. ii.), the wisdom given often to the weak of this world, the wisdom of the Spirit Who dwells in the Church, and makes her "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15).

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, xvi.

[2] *i.e.* Sheol, Hades, the grave or place of departed souls.

[3] *i.e.* godly or pious, a characteristic word of the Psalmists, implying not only consecration but active devotion to God.

{73}

LECTURE III

THE CHURCH IN THE PSALTER

Gloriosa dicta sunt de te:
Civitas Dei.

It has already been pointed out that the personal element in the Psalms, vivid and even passionate as it appears, if they are read as mere lyrics, has been transformed by the Church's use of them as her hymns of worship. The "I" of the Psalter has become the voice of the worshipping community.

The Jews themselves recited the personal Psalms in a national sense. Even such an intensely personal confession of sin as the 51st Psalm becomes through the last two verses (possibly added by a later pen) the confession of national penitence and the voice of national hope:

O be favourable and gracious unto Sion:
Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.

{74} But besides such liturgical adaptations, whether of letter or spirit, many of the later Psalms, especially those which clearly belong to the period of the second Temple, were written intentionally for the nation as a whole. "We" predominates, instead of the earlier "I." In these Psalms the nation reviews her past history, or cries out against her present oppressors, or looks onward to liberty and enlargement in the future.

But the nation which thus finds her voice in the Psalms is of a different spirit from the kingdoms of this world. Her patriotism is of a higher order. She is conscious of a Divine vocation, separating her from the nations of the heathen:

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt:
Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.
(lxxx. 8.)

What time as they went from one nation to another:
From one kingdom to another people;
He suffered no man to do them wrong:
But reproved even kings for their sakes;
Touch not Mine Anointed:
And do My prophets no harm.
(cv. 13-15-)

{75} She has a treasure committed to her keeping, which others have not:

He sheweth His word unto Jacob:
His statutes and ordinances unto Israel.
He hath not dealt so with any nation:
Neither have the heathen knowledge of His laws.
(cxlvii. 19-20.)

She has a hope that burns within her, which to the world would be foolishness:

The Lord hath chosen Sion to be a habitation for Himself:
He hath longed for her.
This shall be my rest for ever:
Here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.
(cxxxii. 14, 15.)

In other words, the community which speaks in the Psalter is more than a nation; she is a theocracy, a Church. Her characteristic names are prophetic; they suggest supernatural dealings and a heavenly calling. She is "Israel," heiress of him who "persevered with God" and won the
{76} blessing; she is the "seed of Abraham," in which it was promised that "all the nations of the earth should be blessed"; she is "Sion," the "stronghold," "Jerusalem," name of ideals, "vision" or "possession" or "foundation"—"of peace"! It is as this sacred congregation, this *ecclesia*, that the nation rejoices in the Psalms in her calling and illumination, sorrows over her failures, prays in her warfare, waits for her glory.

It is not surprising that the Catholic Church recognised here her own portrait, or that the outlines sketched in the Psalter have been filled with light and colour and detail during the Christian centuries. The Catholic Church instinctively felt herself to be the true successor of the Israel of the Psalms. The ancient titles were retained, but in a fuller meaning. To S. Paul the Church is the "Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16) in contrast to the "Israel after the flesh." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells his Christian readers that they are "come unto Mount Sion" (xii. 22). S. Peter applies to the Church the old titles given to Israel in the Law, "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter ii. 9). S. John in the Apocalypse sees the new Jerusalem, having not only the names of "the twelve apostles of the Lamb" on her jewelled foundations, but
{77} the names of the "twelve tribes of the children of Israel" on her gates of pearl (Rev. xxi. 12, 14). Old things had passed away, the sacred people of God remained, but no longer confined to the narrow boundaries of Palestine, nor to the dispersed descendants of Abraham: her children were "princes in all lands," all who were "of faith" were counted her seed. The Church knew herself to be the Israel of the future, custodian of a greater treasure, called to a grander work.

The Psalter indeed demands this higher interpretation. Just as the portrait of the Righteous One would have been an unfulfilled ideal had not Christ made it His own, so the glowing descriptions of Israel would have been but pious dreamings had not the Catholic Church risen up out of the fallen tabernacle of David. As the songs of the Temple falter and die away, the new spirit of praise clothes itself in the ancient forms. "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, Glory to the Righteous" (Is. xxiv. 16). The very words of the Psalter become transfigured like the garments of the Lord on the holy mount.

Nor is this passing away of the glory of old Israel into the greater glories of the Catholic
{78} Israel of God without some foreshadowing in the Psalter itself. In the 22nd, the great Psalm of the Passion, the Sufferer passes from the dogs and lions and the mocking faces that surround him to contemplate the far-off fruit of his anguish. He seems to see "a great congregation," in the midst of which he himself hereafter will praise God Who has heard his prayer. Mysteriously it seems to rise, this "seed," this "people that shall be born," out of the very hopelessness and desolation of the Cross. "All the ends of the earth" are united in it, "all the kindred of the nations" worship there. The rich and the poor alike have their place in this kingdom of the future. And the special characteristic of this new creation of God will be the sharing in a sacrificial feast, the Sufferer's thanksgiving, his Eucharist in which he "pays his vows." Here "the meek shall eat and be satisfied," here eating and worshipping are strangely intermingled—a prophecy unread and unfulfilled until the Church learnt the secret "in the same night that He was betrayed."

"Therefore we, before Him bending,
This great Sacrament revere;
Types and shadows have their ending,
For the newer Rite is here."

{79} This ecclesiastical aspect of the Psalter is of very high importance. There is perhaps no part of the Christian faith which is more difficult for "the natural man" than "the Holy Catholic Church." An erroneous or imperfect idea of the Church seems to pass muster, among Christians even, so much more readily than error in other matters of faith. All through Christian history the true idea of the Church has been obscured, now by imperialism, with its misleading traditions of the Roman Empire; now by nationalism, as if the Church were only the religious aspect of a civil community; or again by individualism, as if she were no more than a collection of separate units. Erastianism and Puritanism in turn have led men astray. The warning against such things is written largely enough in the history of ancient Israel. The Jews of our Lord's time, while insisting keenly, even bitterly, on their separation from the Gentiles, were for the most part forgetful of what that separation really involved. Their ambition to be separate from the nations of the earth only meant for them a worldly and selfish exclusiveness. In earlier days the clamour for a king, the thirst for alliances with Egypt and Assyria and Babylon, had displayed in the opposite manner
{80} much the same spirit. Religious privileges, that Divine calling which had made them a nation, were to be used as a means to worldly advancement and security. In the Psalter there stands out a truer conception of the Church as the spiritual commonwealth, a kingdom of God in the world,

but not of this world's spirit, organised for higher ends than self-protection or self-development, aiming not at conquest but at the conversion and good of mankind, glorying not in privilege but in vocation, not in self but in the law of God. And this is the pattern for all time. The Christian Church may find in the Psalter her own just self-expression in a fuller manner than ever ancient Israel did or could. Indeed, we may trace indelibly stamped on the Psalter the true lineaments of the ideal Church.

First in the Psalter there is the note of *comprehensiveness*. The heathen, the nations, so often denounced or prayed against in the Psalms, are, after all, not so much those who are outside the boundaries of Israel as those who are alien from her spirit. They are communities, societies, untouched by grace, governed by passion and worldly ambitions rather than by conscience or the Divine law. And side by side with threats and foreboding of their utter destruction in the day of
{81} God there are glimpses here and there of the possibility of their conversion, and even of their becoming one family with Israel. The great Psalm of Whitsunday, the 68th, passes from the thought of God wounding the head of His enemies, of His warriors dipping their feet in the blood of the vanquished, to the hope of the princes coming out of Egypt, and Ethiopia making haste to stretch out her hands unto God. So, again, the 47th Psalm looks forward to the essential sovereignty of God over all the earth being recognised even by this world's rulers:

> The princes of the people are joined unto the people
> of the God of Abraham.[1]

And lest it should be thought that such hopes referred only to an empire of external rule, like that of Solomon's, we have the startling predictions of Ps. lxxxvii. Here the people of Rahab (Egypt) and Babylon, the Philistines, the Tyrians, the Ethiopians, all types of the obstinate and idolatrous heathen world, are pictured as forsaking their natural lineage and descent to be born
{82} again in Zion, enrolling themselves there as citizens of the Lord's glorious foundation upon the holy mountains, finding there their joy and the fount of their inspiration.

> The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the peoples:
> This one was born *there*.
> They that sing as well as they that dance shall say,
> All my fountains are in Thee. (R.V.)

Surely this is one of the most remarkable foreshadowings in the Old Testament of the catholicity of the Church, and of that new birth of Baptism by which men of every race and tongue are grafted into the one body, "where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11). In this and in many other Psalms (*cf.* lxvii., xcviii., c.) we confess the essentially *missionary* vocation of the Church; that she calls to all mankind, not to the Western nations only, nor to the progressive and civilised only. Hers is the one faith for all men, her citizenship unlimited by any barriers of race or temperament.

{83} If the catholicity of the Church is so clearly sketched in the Psalter, no less clear is her *social* ideal. The poor, the oppressed, those who have no helper, are equally called to share in Israel's hope and her gifts. God Himself is her pattern, Who—

> Taketh up the simple out of the dust:
> And lifteth the poor out of the mire;
> That He may set him with the princes:
> Even with the princes of His people.
> (cxiii.)

The Messianic King will count the blood of the poor and needy equally precious with that of the rich and great (lxxii.). The Sufferer of the Passion Psalm (xxii.) looks forward, as we have seen, to the result of his triumph, in not only calling the "fat ones of the earth" to eat and worship at his table, but in finding there an equal place for—

> Even him that cannot keep his soul alive.
> (xxii. 30, R.V.)

These are lessons which we have as yet gone but a little way in learning. Yet the Psalter, as we recite it day by day, puts in our own mouth the condemnation of exclusiveness and pride and
{84} of deafness to the complaint of the poor; it makes us confess at least the Catholic ideal of unity, of universal justice, of the imperishable value of the individual life, of the transformation of human society in the light of the Divine sovereignty of Christ.

The two lines of the Church's activity just alluded to, missionary and social, so prominent in the Psalms, are calling to-day so loudly for self-humiliation and new effort, that they may profitably be dwelt on a little further. The Psalmist's prophecy of the kings of Arabia and Saba bringing gifts (lxxii.) is still largely unfulfilled. The East is still almost untouched. Asia has not yet brought her characteristic gift to Christ. She is still under the dominion of imperfect religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam. And yet India is our possession; Japan is our pupil. "The way of the

kings of the East" is already "prepared" (Rev. xvi. 12), but where is the adequate response from English Christianity? "Who is blind but My servant, or deaf as My messenger that I send?"

And turning homewards, what are we to say of these grotesque and monstrous contrasts between wealth and poverty, luxury and squalor in England to-day, where rich and poor alike are baptized? What of the immoralities of commerce, of the bad work of the labourer as well as the
{85} swindling of the capitalist? Does not the spirit of the Psalter cut across it all like the keen breath of the mountain wind? Yet Englishmen are spending time and energy in ritual debates and persecutions, and educational and social strife. Worse still, the rich and intellectual, for some prejudice or political motive, are eager to deny the poor the beauties of worship or the definiteness of the Catholic Faith.

> Surely Thou hast seen it:
> For Thou beholdest ungodliness and wrong.
> (x. 15.)

In view of these unfulfilled ideals of the Church, the Psalter provides us in such Psalms as the 78th, the 79th, or the 106th with confession of sin and failure under the figure of Hebrew history. The recitation of these may well remind us not merely of personal faults but of our own share in the shortcomings of the Church of God:

> We have sinned with our fathers:
> We have done amiss and dealt wickedly.

For the Church as well as ourselves we are taught to pray, "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts." The sorrows and desolations of Zion are never represented in the Psalms as being *merely* the
{86} effect of heathen malice, though they are so largely that, but as calls to look back upon history, and also to look within, to consider what unfaithfulness there may have been and is, what "starting aside like a broken bow" in our fathers and in ourselves.

From this point of view the penitential Psalms"[2] might profitably be used not merely as the expression of personal penitence, but as an act of reparation, an offering to God of our sorrow for the worldliness and imperfections of His Church; as an incentive also to effort, that we may do our part to remove the "reproach of the heathen," to restore the Church from within, to seek her unity and peace.

There is, however, another side to the problem of the Church's failures. Israel and Jerusalem are constantly described in the Psalms as being the marks for the malignity and opposition of external enemies. Indeed, a persistent note of the Church, Jewish as well as Christian, is the hatred which she awakens in the powers of this world. The object of suspicion and attack from Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon in early days, Jerusalem fares no better after the humiliation of the
{87} Captivity. The attempts to rebuild the Temple and restore the city arouse the bitterest hostility from the surrounding peoples, a hostility not merely political, but traceable to a deeper cause. The attempts of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C. to break down Jewish separation and to destroy Jewish worship are marked by the same spirit, working in a more arrogant and brutal manner. Our Lord Himself promises no smoother or more popular course for His faithful ones. "Ye shall be hated of all men." S. Paul recognises the same antagonism running throughout the history of the elect: "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. iv. 29).

The Psalter will not allow us to shut our eyes to this malignant and persecuting attitude of the world. The enemies of the Righteous find a place in almost every Psalm. The malice of human nature at its worst seems to be marshalled against Him, in slander and ingratitude and treachery. But there is also the opposition of the heathen as a whole against Israel. The vicissitudes of her history are typical; they illustrate a permanent principle which is found working from age to age.
{88} It was not less active nor less brutal in the first three Christian centuries than it was in the days of Antiochus. To-day, though its attack is less outwardly cruel, the spirit which prompts it is just as deeply seated, and more malignant perhaps in proportion as it is veiled. The Church has not merely to contend with the hatred of those who have chosen and loved evil, and find the righteous a standing reproach. There is gathered against her also the world's steady resentment of spiritual authority; the world's antipathy against all that refuses to come to terms, or water down its witness to suit changing fashions of men's thought. It is the same spirit which in earlier days called the Christians "the enemies of the human race," and in these later times directs its sneers and opposition against the Creeds, the Sacraments, the priesthood—"the spirit of Antichrist."

The 44th Psalm, perhaps belonging to the time of the great Maccabæan struggle, makes its pathetic appeal to God amidst the scorn and blasphemy of the heathen, and, what is worse, the bitterness of apparent failure and defeat which seem to justify the heathen.

> My confusion is daily before me:
> The shame of my face hath covered me:

{89}

For the voice of the slanderer and blasphemer:
For the enemy and avenger.

Faith indeed does not fail the Psalmist: he clings to God; he still recognises the hand of God throughout these sufferings; he prefers to attribute them to God rather than to man:

Thou makest us to turn our backs upon our enemies: ...
Thou lettest us be eaten up like sheep: ...
Thou sellest Thy people for nought:
And takest no money for them.

Nevertheless, it is all a puzzle, a bewildering maze in which faith seems walking blindfold, like the Lord Himself when the malice of the high-priest's servants bandaged His eyes and smote Him in derision and bade Him prophesy! The light of God's presence seems to have gone out of the world:

Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face:
And forgettest our misery and trouble.

Very similar is the 74th Psalm, with its same high consciousness of faithfulness to God, the
{90} same agonising sense of contradiction in the enemies of God being suffered to break down the carved work of the sanctuary, the same feeling of helplessness and lack of guidance. The adversaries' banners are manifest enough, *their* tokens are clear; but with the faithful it is otherwise:

We see not our tokens, there is not one prophet more.

O God, how long! ... Remember! ... Arise! ... Forget not!

Probably of the same period is the 79th, written apparently in the very hour of the heathen triumph, when the Temple is defiled, Jerusalem "an heap of stones," the blood of the righteous flowing on every side like water. And there is still the characteristic turning away from self and personal humiliation to the thought of the dishonour done to God Himself. For to the faithful the honour of God is dearer than their own liberty or life.

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy Name:
O deliver us, and be merciful unto our sins, for Thy Name's sake.

The 83rd belongs perhaps to an earlier age. It seems to recall the great confederacy of the
{91} nations against Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx.). The Psalmist cries out to God against the gathering hordes who have no interest in common, except their mutual hatred of Israel and Israel's God. It is a sorry catalogue: Edomites, Ishmaelites, Moabites, Hagarens; Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistines, Tyrians, Assyrians:

"All the warring hosts of error
  Sworn against her, move as one."

But the hot indignation which prays that this rabble of malice and mischief may be swept like the stubble before the whirlwind, consumed like the dry grass before the mountain fires, is yet tempered with a higher thought. Defeat may lead to conversion and to a better mind:

Make their faces ashamed, O Lord:
That they may seek Thy Name.

Once again, the 102nd Psalm breathes out the pathetic appeal of the exile, or the lonely, friendless watcher over the desolations of the holy city. His heart is "smitten down and withered like grass"; he has "eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled his drink with weeping." But his fasting and tears are not for himself; there is the eternal background of hope; God is unchanging;
{92} future generations will know again the happiness of worship and service—his sorrow is for Zion:

Thy servants think upon her stones:
And it pitieth them to see her in the dust.

Do not experiences and prayers like these come home to Christians with a curious sense of

familiarity? Is not this tragedy of faith repeated in every age? In every Christian generation it has been "given" to the Beast to war against the saints and overcome them (Rev. xiii. 7). His undying malice has too often been seconded by the impotence, the lack of unity, the fear of truth and its consequences, which have marred the Christian defence.

We find eloquent illustrations of this unceasing, heart-sickening warfare in such moments of history as that in the fourth century, when "the whole world groaned and marvelled to find itself Arian";[3] in the seventh and eighth, when the armies of Islam swept away the divided and bickering Churches of the East and that Church of North Africa, once so glorious, where holiness
{93} had not kept pace with zeal; in the fifteenth, when Constantinople fell, and the great cathedral of S. Sophia passed into the hands of the Turks, and this very day, where once Christian worship was offered, and Christian emblems high on its walls still make their silent protest,

> "Moslem prayers profane
> At morn and eve come sounding;"

in the sixteenth, when the fair abbeys of England were despoiled and suffered to fall into ruin, through covetousness and irreligion masquerading under the garb of piety; in the seventeenth, when the voice of the Church's worship was stifled, and the faithful were interrupted in their very Christmas Communion by the levelled muskets of the Cromwellian troopers[4]; in our own day, when liberality can tolerate everything except the Catholic Faith? Verily these Hebrew Psalms are a Christian possession for ever. They speak to us and speak for us in accents of undying truth, and every year that passes verifies their witness and points more sharply their appeal.

But not only does the Psalter tell of the Church and her ideals, of her warfare and her
{94} failures, it insists with equal conviction on her *stability*. God's great promise to the line of David carried with it the preservation of David's city. The attacks of the heathen seemed to have reached their climax when Sennacherib's army had taken all the fortified cities of Judæa, and Jerusalem was left isolated and helpless (2 Kings xix.). Yet when human hope was gone, the prophet's word rang out with the certainty of faith. "I will defend this city to save it, for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake." The sequel was one of the most startling catastrophes in history. The Assyrian hosts were destroyed in a single night, and Assyrian invasions ceased. Again, in a later generation, when the promise seemed at last to have failed, and the Temple had fallen, the city was burnt and her king and citizens in captivity, the prophets never waver in their vision of a future restoration when sin has been repented and national guilt expiated. Zerubbabel and Joshua, Ezra and Nehemiah, Judas Maccabæus and his descendants, restore and maintain Temple and city to last till "the fulness of the time," when the true meaning of the Davidic promises was revealed.

The sense of this supernatural continuance has left its mark on the Psalms. The rout of the Assyrian armies is commemorated in one at least, the 76th:

{95}
> The proud are robbed, they have slept their sleep:
> And all the men whose hands were mighty have found nothing.
> At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob:
> Both the chariot and horse are fallen.

The secret of victory preludes the Psalm. Jerusalem is the seat of God's special presence:

> At Salem is His tabernacle:
> And His dwelling in Sion.

The 46th may also refer to the same event. The flood of heathen invasion is breaking itself in vain against the walls of the city of God:

> God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed:
> God shall help her, and that right early.

The great historical Psalm, the 78th, speaks at its close of the hill of Sion and the Temple "built there on high" as coeval with the earth itself; its foundation is "like the ground which He
{96} hath made continually."[5] And the later Psalms seem even to unite Sion and Jerusalem and the sacred nation with the very eternity of God Himself:

> This shall be My rest for ever.
> * * * * *
> The Lord thy God, O Sion, shall be King for evermore.
> * * * * *
> Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem:
> Praise thy God, O Sion.
> For He hath made fast the bars of thy gates:
> And hath blessed thy children within thee.
> (cxxxii. 15, cxlvi. 10, cxlvii. 12, 13.)

The end of earthly Jerusalem, when it came, was no less significant than her long continuance. The double destruction of the city by the Roman armies (A.D. 70 and A.D. 135) was consummated by the strangeness of the failure of Julian the Apostate to rebuild and re-establish the Temple; flames burst out from the foundations and the workmen fled in terror.[6] But long before this the Christian Church had recognised that in her world-wide citizenship and her
{97} worship, confined no longer (as the Lord had foretold) either to Jerusalem or a mountain in Samaria, she had inherited in fuller measure these promises of continuance. Had it not been said, when the great Apostle made his confession of Christ's Divinity, "Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"? And in this consciousness the Catholic Church rightly appropriated to herself the songs of Sion's confidence. Just as early Christian art set above the altars the figure of the living Christ enthroned as the Eternal King of the universe, so the Church has always known in her darkest moments that her continuance is as certain as her Master's throne; and that as He remains the same, though the heavens and the earth decay, and are changed as a garment, the promise of the 102nd Psalm is hers for ever:

> The children of Thy servants shall continue:
> And their seed snail stand fast in Thy sight.

Once again, the Psalmists feel that as Israel, the Church, is in a sense partaker in God's own eternity, so she is, even on earth, a shadow of His essential beauty, she appeals with His
{98} attractiveness to the soul of man. Hence the Christian finds in the Psalter words in which he may express his joy in his calling in the Church, his love and delight in his heavenly citizenship; words which may also remind him that, in spite of all the failures and littlenesses of the visible Church, it is through her that he is in touch with the ideal and the invisible.

Thus in no mere partisan or ecclesiastical spirit we are invited in the Psalms to express our love of the Catholic Church. On Whit Sunday, the Church's birthday, we take up the ancient strain of affection:

> The hill of Sion is a fair place, and the joy of the whole earth.

We gaze with awe upon her jewelled foundations and her jasper walls; we wander with delight in her spacious golden streets:

> Walk about Sion, and go round about her:
> And tell the towers thereof.
> Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses:[7]
> That ye may tell them that come after.
> For this God is our God for ever and ever:
> He shall be our guide unto death.
> (xlviii.)

{99} In another Psalm, the 122nd, one of the pilgrim-psalms recited of old as the faithful drew near to Jerusalem, we contemplate with joy and self-forgetfulness the ideal unity of the Church as the true centre of the earth, and as "the seat of judgment" to which all this world's shams and shadows must come sooner or later for their reformation or their sentence:

> O pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
> They shall prosper that love thee.
> Peace be within thy walls:
> And plenteousness within thy palaces.
> For my brethren and companions' sakes:
> I will wish thee prosperity.
> Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God:
> I will seek to do thee good.

It is an aspiration that should find an echo in the heart of every faithful son of the Church, especially in such "a day of trouble and of rebuke and blasphemy" as our own.

Thus while we recognise in the Psalter the expression, put into our lips by the Holy Spirit, of our own personal struggles and joys and sorrows in the spiritual life, while we remember with
{100} awe and gratitude that the Eternal Son of God Himself here speaks and prays and suffers as one of us, we shall find here also the voice of our corporate consciousness, our life and worship as citizens even on earth of that "Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all."

And so as we conclude every Psalm in the Church's service with the *Gloria*, with that confession of our faith which prophets and kings would fain have known and knew not, let us lift up our hearts and give glory to the Father, Who has revealed to us His Name; glory to the Son, Who has vouchsafed in all things to be made like unto us His brethren; glory to the Holy Ghost, Whose word and power in the Church is undying, Who is still bringing forth from the ancient treasury old things which are ever new.

> Gloria Patri, et Filio:

Et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper:
Et in sæcula sæculorum.
Amen.

[1] The princes of the people are gathered together, To be the people of the God of Abraham. (R.V.)

[2] vi., xxxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx., cxliii.

[3] "Ingemuit totus orbis et se Arianum esse miratus est" (S. Jerome).

[4] Evelyn's Diary: Dec. 25, 1657.

[5] The earth which He hath established for ever (R.V.).

[6] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, c. xxiii.

[7] "Consider her palaces" (R.V.).

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NOTES

A. The extent to which the Psalms were used liturgically by the Jews in Temple and Synagogue is not at all fully known. The following list of uses is interesting in itself, but probably does not by any means cover the whole field. And it seems certain, from the free and natural way in which the Psalms are referred to in the New Testament, that, even if a comparatively small number were used in the public services, the Psalter must have been very familiar indeed to the pious Jew of our Lord's time and have formed practically his book of private devotion.

DAILY IN THE TEMPLE (AND PROBABLY ELSEWHERE):

First day. Ps. xxiv. The earth is the Lord's, etc.

Second day. Ps. xlviii. Great is the Lord.

Third day. Ps. lxxxii. God standeth in the congregation.

Fourth day. Ps. xciv. O Lord God, to Whom vengeance belongeth.

{102} *Fifth day*. Ps. lxxxi. Sing we merrily unto God our strength.

Sixth day. Ps. xciii. The Lord is King.

Sabbath day. Ps. xcii. It is a good thing to give thanks.

THE PASSOVER, AND ON OTHER GREAT FESTIVALS. The Hallel, probably Pss. cxiii.-cxviii.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES:

First day. Ps. cv. O give thanks.

Second day. Ps. xxix. Bring unto the Lord.

Third day. Ps. l. 16. But unto the ungodly said God.

Fourth day. Ps. xciv. 16. Who will rise up with me.

Fifth day. Ps. xciv. 8. Take heed, ye unwise.

Sixth day. Ps. lxxxi. 6. I eased his shoulder. Pss. cxx.-cxxxiv. Songs of Degrees.

Seventh day. Ps. lxxxii. 5. They will not be learned.

NEW MOON OF SEVENTH OR SABBATICAL MONTH. Ps. lxxxi. Sing we merrily.

DEDICATION. The Hallel, as at the Passover.

PRESENTATION OF FIRST-FRUITS. Ps. cxxii. I was glad. Ps. xxx. I will magnify Thee, O Lord.

B. The allusions to the singing of Psalms in the New Testament shew that it was from the first a recognised Christian devotion, both in public and private (Acts xvi. 25; 1 Cor. xiv. 26; Eph. v.
{103} 19; James v. 13). This is borne out by the evidence of the Christian Fathers (see, for example, S. Athanasius' *Epistle to Marcellinus*; S. Aug. *Confess.* ix. 8; S. Jerome, Ep. xlvi.). But it was no doubt the rise of the monastic life in Egypt and its subsequent spread over the whole Church in the fourth and fifth centuries that led by its disciplined devotion to the systematic arrangement of the Psalter for daily services and to its continuous recitation. Many of the early monks, indeed, recited the whole Psalter daily; but the Western use, settled traditionally by S. Gregory the Great, aimed at a weekly recitation, and this system in theory dominated the Breviary services all through the Middle Ages.

The normal arrangement of the Psalter in the daily offices was, roughly speaking, as follows:

At *Mattins*, Ps. i.-cix., divided into nine "Nocturns," three of which were said on Sunday, and one on each of the following week-days, beginning each day with the 95th, the Invitatory Psalm.

At *Lauds*, Pss. lxiii., lxvii., cxlviii.-cl., with certain other varying Psalms.

At *Prime*, always Ps. liv. and the first four portions of the 119th, and one varying Psalm.

At *Terce*, the next six portions of the 119th.

At *Sext*, the next six portions of the 119th.

At *None*, the last six portions of the 119th.

At *Vespers*, Pss. cx.-cxlvii., divided into seven portions, omitting the 119th.

At *Compline*, iv., xxxi. 1-6, xci., cxxxiv.

{104} Thus the bulk of the Psalms were said at the two offices which corresponded most closely to our Morning and Evening Prayer; some few were said daily, the 51st was said at every one of the offices, and the others were said weekly.

But in practice a festival arrangement of the Psalms, in which a much smaller number, and chiefly of the shorter Psalms, were recited, was largely substituted for the normal or ferial use, thus justifying the criticism of our Reformers, "Now of late time a few of them have been daily said and the rest utterly omitted."

The following special uses are also interesting:

THE OFFICE OF THE DEAD:

Vespers (the "Placebo"): cxvi., cxx., cxxi., cxxx., cxxxviii.

Mattins (the "Dirge"): v., vi., vii.; xxiii., xxv., xxvii., xl., xli., xlii.

Lauds: li., lxv., lxiii., cxlviii.-cl., cxlv.

PREPARATION FOR MASS: lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvi., cxvi. 10., cxxx., xliii.

THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS: cl.

C. Antiphons were originally verses sung as a refrain between each verse of the Psalms, one side of the choir taking the former and the other the latter. The refrain varied at different seasons and festivals. An example of this early and more elaborate use survived in the Breviary in the treatment of the Venite as an Invitatory Psalm. But gradually, for the sake of brevity, this
{105} method was abandoned, and the normal use of antiphons in the Breviary was simply after (or on festivals before and after) each Psalm or set of Psalms. The advantage of the antiphon lay in the fact that it shewed at once with what particular intention the Psalm was sung, as the same Psalm naturally might be sung on many different occasions and with reference to a different season or festival. But the very complex nature of the antiphons or "anthems" led the English Reformers to abandon them altogether; "many times," as they said, "there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out." The only traces of antiphons left in the Prayer Book are: (1) "O Sapientia," in the Kalendar on December 16, the first words of the first of the "Greater Antiphons" to the Magnificat, which began on that day and continued till Christmas

Eve, each commencing with some striking Old Testament title of the Messiah; (2) in the Litany, the repetition of the words, "O Lord, arise," etc., shews that this is the antiphon to the Psalm "O God, we have heard" (perhaps originally the whole of Ps. xliv., but now one verse only); (3) the words "O Saviour of the world," etc., in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick. The last is the best example: the antiphon connects the recitation of Ps. lxxi. with the Passion of our Lord; the {106} *intention* of the Psalm is thus shewn to be the association of our sufferings in sickness with the Cross of Christ (*cf.* the second exhortation in the same office).

D. Helps to the study of the Psalter.

Literal Meaning:

Kirkpatrick, in the *Cambridge Bible* (3 vols.). The Introduction is extremely useful, and an excellent list of the literature bearing on the Psalter is also given.

Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*.

Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*.

Barry, *Teacher's Prayer Book*.

Mystical and Spiritual Meaning:

Neale and Littledale, *Commentary on the Psalms* (4 vols.). This has a very valuable Introduction on the Psalms as used in the offices of the Church, and a dissertation (in vol. i.) on the mystical and literal interpretation of the Psalms.

Walpole, *The People's Psalter*.

General:

Prothero, *The Psalms in Human Life*.

Marson, *The Psalms at Work*.

Church, *The Sacred Poetry of Early Religions*, in *The Gifts of Civilisation*. *The Discipline of the Christian Character*, iii.

Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, lect. vii.

Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament*, c. xii.

Alexander (Archbishop), *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ*.

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APPENDIX

Brief Suggestions as to the Christian Use of each Psalm

The following suggestions, which follow the lines of the preceding lectures, do not claim any special authority, except in cases noted, where the New Testament or the Church's actual use has appropriated a Psalm to some particular Christian application.

PSALM i. *Beatus vir*

The Church's witness to the blessedness of the life of holiness, based on obedience to the revealed Word of God (the great example of which is the life of Christ Himself); with which is contrasted the eternal failure of the ungodly.

PSALM ii. *Quare fremuerunt gentes?*

Acts iv. 25-28. Easter Day, morning (Prayer Book)

{108} The futile warfare of the princes of this world against Christ and His Church. The certainty of Christ's victory and His universal kingdom, as seen in His Resurrection and Ascension.

PSALM iii. *Domine, quid multiplicati?*

[Introit for Second Mass on Easter Day, in 1549 Prayer Book]

Christ's victory in His Resurrection over all His enemies; the blessedness of His Church.

PSALM iv. *Cum invocarem*

The deliverance of Christ from the contradiction of sinners. The Church's certainty of salvation in Christ, both in this life and in that which is to come, contrasted with the doubts and uncertain riches of the world.

[One of the Compline Psalms, in which the Christian commends himself to sleep in Christ.]

PSALM v. *Verba mea auribus*

A Psalm illustrating the life of prayer, public and private; witnessing to prayer and meditation as the source of inward strength and guidance, both in the life of Christ and in that of His people, in the face of this world's treachery and cruelty.

[One of the Psalms for the Dirge (whence it derives its name, ver. 8, "Dirige"), referring to God's leading the departed soul through the attacks of evil spirits to its rest in Him.]

{109} PSALM vi. *Domine, ne in furore*

Ash Wednesday, morning (Prayer Book)

The prayer of the human soul suffering the temporal punishments, bodily and mental, of sin. Christ Himself endured these sufferings to the utmost, not for Himself, but for His people, and in this sense it, with the other penitential Psalms, may be called a Psalm of the Incarnation.

PSALM vii. *Domine, Deus meus*

The declaration of the Innocency of Christ against the persecution and treachery of His enemies; His appeal to the Father's justice.

PSALM viii. *Domine, Dominus noster*

Heb. ii. Ascension Day, morning (Prayer Book)

The glory of God's Name (or revelation of Himself) in nature and in the Incarnation. The triumph and universal empire of Christ as the Son of Man, and the Second Adam.

PSALM ix. *Confitebor tibi*

Thanksgiving for the triumph of God's righteousness in Christ, which is the pledge of the future destruction of all evil.

PSALM x. *Ut quid, Domine?*

Continues the thought of Ps. ix., and prays for the manifestation of God's righteousness in
{110} Christ, in view of the continuance of evil, the apparent immunity of the wicked, and their unceasing warfare against the Church.

PSALM xi. *In Domino confido*

A Psalm of the Passion of Christ; His faith in the Father's righteousness, and in the ultimate overthrow of the wicked.

PSALM xii. *Salvum me fac*

A prayer of Christ and His Church against the evil tongues of the wicked; with these are contrasted the purity and certainty of the Divine revelation, "the words of the Lord."

PSALM xiii. *Usque quo, Domine?*

A prayer of Christ and His faithful ones in view of the approach of death.

PSALM xiv. *Dixit insipiens*

Rom. ii. 10-18

The judgment of the world's unbelief, contrasted with the Church's faith, and her hope in the coming of Christ.

PSALM xv. *Domine, quis habitabit?*

Ascension Day, morning (Prayer Book)

The human perfections of Christ, enthroned in heaven as the Son of Man.

{111} Also a picture of the saintly life, in union with Christ, Who is God's tabernacle among men (Rev. xxi. 3).

PSALM xvi. *Conserva me, Domine*

Acts ii. 25-28. [Introit for Easter Day, Prayer Book of 1549]

Christ's devotion to the Father; His preservation through death and the grave; His Resurrection and eternal joy at the right hand of the Father.

PSALM xvii. *Exaudi, Domine*

A prayer of Christ and His Church against the temptations of the world, in view of the hope of the Resurrection and the Life everlasting.

PSALM xviii. *Diligam te, Domine*

The triumph of Christ (under the figure of David); His universal empire.

PSALM xix. *Coeli enanant*

Rom. x. 18. Christmas Day, morning (Prayer Book)

The Church's thanksgiving for God's Word in Nature, in the Incarnation, in the Bible; and her prayer for faithfulness.

{112} PSALM xx. *Exaudiat te Dominus*

King's Accession (Prayer Book)

The Church's witness to Christ her King as He goes forth to battle in the power of His finished sacrifice. Suitable also as a prayer for a Christian ruler, whose strength is in Christ.

PSALM xxi. *Domine, in virtute tua*

Ascension Day, morning (Prayer Book)

The Church's joy in the triumph of Christ; in the Father's answer to His prayer, and in His

glorious coronation as the Son of Man.

PSALM xxii. *Deus, Deus meus*

Matt. xxvii. 35-46 (with parallels in other Evangelists), Heb. ii. 12. Good Friday, morning (Prayer Book)

Christ's prayer in His Passion and Crucifixion; His prophecy of the calling of His Church, and of the Eucharist. (See above, pp. 77, 78.)

PSALM xxiii. *Dominus regit me*

John x. 1-16, 26-29

The Church's confession of faith in Christ the Good Shepherd, and in His sacramental gifts.

PSALM xxiv. *Domini est terra*

Ascension Day, evening (Prayer Book)

The joy of the Church and of the angels in the Ascension of Christ, the King of Glory.

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PSALM xxv. *Ad te, Domine, levavi*

A confession of faith in the Name of God; the Church's prayer for deliverance from temptation and adversity.

PSALM xxvi. *Judica me, Domine*

A prayer of Christ as He approaches His Passion; and of the Christian priest when about to offer the Holy Eucharist.

PSALM xxvii. *Dominus illuminatio*

The hope of Christ and His Church in the Fatherhood of God; a prophecy of the Resurrection and the Holy Eucharist (vv. 6, 7).

PSALM xxviii. *Ad te, Domine*

The prayer of Christ for deliverance from His enemies; and for His Church (ver. 10).

PSALM xxix. *Afferte Domino*

The Church's thanksgiving for the sovereignty of Christ over all the powers of nature, and over His Church.

PSALM xxx. *Exaltabo te, Domine*

A thanksgiving of Christ and His Church for the Resurrection.

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PSALM xxxi. *In te, Domine, speravi*

S. Luke xxiii. 46

Christ's prayer in His Passion and Crucifixion; His exhortation to His Church (vv. 26, 27).

PSALM xxxii. *Beati, quorum*

Rom. iv. 6-8. Ash Wednesday, morning (Prayer Book)

The Church's confession of sin, and the blessedness of forgiveness through faith in Christ. (See on Ps. vi.)

PSALM xxxiii. *Exultate, justi*

The Church's thanksgiving for creation and redemption, and for her own exceeding blessedness in being called to be the people of the Lord.

PSALM xxxiv. *Benedicam Domino*

A thanksgiving of Christ for His Resurrection. His call to His Church to obedience, to holiness, to courage.

PSALM xxxv. *Judica, Domine*

A prayer of Christ against the persecution and false witness of His enemies, and on behalf of those who love Him.

PSALM xxxvi. *Dixit infustus*

{115} The Church's witness to the awfulness of sin; her confession of hope in the blessedness of the life eternal in contrast with the doom of the ungodly.

PSALM xxxvii. *Noli cemulari*

A Psalm of a proverbial character; the testimony of the Church's experience of the justice of God, in spite of the apparent prosperity of the wicked: it expresses the *restfulness* of the life of faith.

Cf. ver. ii with Matt. v. 5.

PSALM xxxviii. *Domine, ne in furore*

Ash Wednesday, morning (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of Christ bearing in loneliness and silence the burden of human sin, confessing it on man's behalf to the Father, and praying for our salvation.

PSALM xxxix. *Dixi, custodiam*

Burial of the Dead (Prayer Book)

Continues in some respects the tone of the previous Psalm. It may be regarded as a Psalm of Christ bearing the sorrow of man's mortality, and interceding on man's behalf with the Father.

PSALM xl. *Expectans expectavi*

Heb. x. 5-10. Good Friday, morning (Prayer Book)

{116} A Psalm of Christ's Incarnation, Passion, Sin-bearing, and Resurrection; it expresses the secret of His Atonement (see above, pp. 61, 62) and His fulfilment of O.T. prophecy (ver. 10).

PSALM xli. *Beatus qui intelligit*

John xiii. 18

A Psalm of Christ's compassion; and of the treachery of His enemies, especially of Judas.

PSALM xlii. *Quemadmodum*

[Introit for Burial of the Dead, Prayer Book of 1549]

A Psalm of Christ's human soul in His earthly pilgrimage, and in the prospect of death; His desire to return to the Father. Hence also suitable for the Christian soul in sickness and dying.

PSALM xliii. *Judica me, Deus*

A continuation of the previous Psalm. Christ speaks in it to the Father as He approaches His Passion, and contemplates with joy the sacrifice He is about to offer for man. Hence this Psalm has long been used in the Church as the immediate preparation of the Priest for offering the Holy Eucharist.

PSALM xliv. *Deus, auribus*

Rom. viii. 36

{117} The appeal of the suffering and persecuted Church to Christ; her confession of faithfulness to that which He has entrusted to her keeping.

PSALM xlv. *Enructavit cor meum*

Heb. i. Christmas Day, morning (Prayer Book)

The Church celebrates the Incarnation under the figure of a royal marriage. The bridegroom is Christ Himself, described in vv. 3-9; the bride, the King's daughter, is the Church destined to spread into all lands. The "daughter of Tyre" is symbolical of the heathen world coming to Christ. The "queen" (or queen-mother) of ver. 10 has often been interpreted of the Blessed Virgin.

PSALM xlvi. *Deus nosier refugium*

A Psalm of the Church's confidence: she is conscious of the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit (ver. 4, R.V.) within her; and confesses that this is her eternal strength amidst the warfare and tumult of the world.

PSALM xlvii. *Omnes gentes, plaudite*

Ascension Day, morning (Prayer Book)

The joy of the Church in the glorious Ascension of Christ; and in His universal sovereignty, which all the world will ultimately acknowledge.

PSALM xlviii. *Magnus Dominus*

Whitsun Day, morning (Prayer Book)

{118} The joy of the Church in her ideal beauty and her steadfastness; and her sure hope of ultimate victory over all the powers of this world.

[The Psalm should be compared both with the promise of Christ in Matt. xvi. 18 and the picture of the perfected Church in Rev. xxi., xxii.]

PSALM xlix. *Audite hæc, omnes*

The Church's meditation upon the vanity of human riches and greatness in view of death; the need of man's redemption through Christ alone (vv. 7, 8); the certainty of the resurrection of the faithful through the Resurrection of Christ.

PSALM 1. *Deus deorum*

The second advent of Christ as the final Judge of the world, and especially of His Church.

PSALM li. *Miserere mei, Deus*

Ash Wednesday (Commination Service)

The Church's confession of sin, and of failure to fulfil her great vocation in the world; her prayer to Christ for forgiveness and restoration. (See on Ps. vi.)

PSALM lii. *Quid gloriaris?*

The Church's challenge to "the prince of this world" and to Antichrist; and the confession of her own eternal hope in Christ.

{119} PSALM liii. *Dixit insipiens*

See on Ps. xiv.

PSALM liv. *Deus, in nomine*

Good Friday, morning (Prayer Book)

A prayer of Christ in His Passion, and His self-consecration to the Father.

PSALM lv. *Exaudi, Deus*

A prayer of Christ in His loneliness and desolation, amidst the treachery of His enemies and especially of His false disciple.

PSALM lvi. *Miserere mei, Deus*

Christ's complaint to the Father against the contradiction of sinners; His confidence in the Father's word, and His sure hope in His Resurrection.

PSALM lvii. *Miserere mei, Deus*

Easter Day, morning (Prayer Book)

The Psalm of Christ "glorified" through His Passion and Resurrection.

PSALM lviii. *Si vere utique*

Christ's judgment upon sinners; the vindication of Divine justice.

{120} PSALM lix. *Eripe me de inimicis*

A prayer of Christ in His Passion against the malice of His enemies; His denunciation of their impenitence; His hope of the Resurrection and the final vindication of Divine justice.

PSALM lx. *Deus, repulisti nos*

A prayer of the scattered and persecuted Church, and the answer of the triumphant Christ (under the figure of David's victories).

PSALM lxi. *Exaudi, Deus*

A prayer of the scattered Church, praying to be established on the rock of Christ; her confession of faith in the eternal royalty of Christ.

PSALM lxii. *Nonne Deo?*

The Church's confidence in Christ her rock in contrast with the falsehood of the world and the deceitfulness of riches; her faith in the ultimate manifestation of the Divine justice.

PSALM lxiii. *Deus, Deus meus*

A prayer of the exiled Church; her joy in worship, and her confidence in the sovereignty of Christ.

PSALM lxiv. *Exaudi, Deus*

{121} A prayer of Christ in His Passion; the prediction of the overthrow of the Jewish nation, and the continual testimony of this overthrow to the truth of Christ.

PSALM lxv. *Te decet hymnus*

The Church's hope of her heavenly inheritance in Christ, and of the regeneration of the earth by the river of His spiritual gifts. The Psalm seems to be a forecast of the joy and prosperity of "the new heaven and the new earth."

PSALM lxvi. *Jubilate Deo*

Thanksgiving after a Storm at Sea (Prayer Book)

The thanksgiving of the Church in the conversion of the world; she looks forward to the end of this world and her deliverance from its sufferings, and contemplates her entrance into the eternal worship of heaven.

PSALM lxvii. *Deus misereatur*

Alternative to Nunc Dimittis; Holy Matrimony (Prayer Book)

The joy of the Church in the conversion of the world to Christ; her hope of God's blessing upon all her works.

PSALM lxviii. *Exurgat Deus*

Whitsun Day, morning (Prayer Book)

{122} The triumphant procession-hymn of the Catholic Church in her progress through the world; rejoicing in the gifts of the ascended Christ, and in the hope of the conversion of the heathen.

PSALM lxix. *Salvum me fac*

Matt. xxvii. 34; John ii. 17, xix. 28, 29; Rom. xv. 3. Good Friday, evening (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ; a denunciation of Divine vengeance upon the Jews; concluding with a prophecy of the calling and continuance of the Church.

PSALM lxx. *Deus in adjutorium*

A Psalm similar in tone to the preceding; it may be applied to Christ in His Passion, or to the faithful ones who suffer with Him, and look to Him as Redeemer.

PSALM lxxi. *In te, Domine, speravi*

Visitation of the Sick (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of Christ sharing our human life with its vicissitudes and troubles—born of Mary, increasing in wisdom and stature, suffering persecution, proclaiming the Gospel, dying, and rising "from the deep of the earth again" (ver. 18). Consequently it is a Psalm of the saintly life in its conformity to Christ,

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PSALM lxxii. *Deus, indicium*

Matt. ii. 1-11

The Church's joy in Christ, as the Son of David and the King of humanity. The peace and justice of His Kingdom are described, its universality and eternity.

PSALM lxxiii. *Quam bonus Israel!*

A Psalm of the inward struggle and victory of *faith*. Christ Himself may be heard speaking in it, as He is "the author and finisher of our faith," and in His human soul fought for us the battle of faith. So the Psalm becomes the Church's testimony to the individual believer of that ultimate answer to the trials of faith which is found in union with God through Christ.

PSALM lxxiv. *Ut quid, Deus?*

A Psalm of the Church, persecuted and despoiled, appealing to the eternal sovereignty of Christ over nature and man, as it has been revealed in all the history of the Church, both under the old covenant and the new.

PSALM lxxv. *Confitebimur tibi*

A dialogue, as it were, between Christ and His Church. He asserts His sovereignty over the world, His justice, and its ultimate vindication.

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PSALM lxxvi. *Notus in Judæa*

A Psalm of the victory of Christ; of "the wrath of the Lamb," and the final judgment of the world.

PSALM lxxvii. *Voce mea ad Dominum*

Like Ps. lxxiii., a Psalm of the struggles of faith. The thought of God's past work in His Church as revealed in history, and of His eternal years, is the Church's consolation when He seems to hide His face.

PSALM lxxviii. *Attendite, populе*

Matt. xiii. 35; *cf.* xxiii. 37

The voice of Christ recounting the history of His Church, His patience and mercy with backslidings, His many deliverances; ending with His own Incarnation and personal rule of His Church, under the figure of David's call to the throne.

PSALM lxxix. *Deus, venerunt*

A prayer of the Church, especially of the martyrs and confessors, in time of persecution and bloodshed.

PSALM lxxx. *Qui regis Israel*

A prayer of the Church when the light of God's presence waxes dim, when Christ's vineyard is
{125} broken into by secular oppression. The Church prays that Christ's power may again be made known (ver. 17) and that she herself may be converted.

PSALM lxxxi. *Exultate Deo*

The Church's joy in her past deliverances; the warning voice of Christ (ver. 6 onwards) shewing that the Church's own failures in loyalty are the cause of her oppressions. Greater

faithfulness would have brought deliverance, and greater joy in Christ's sacramental gifts (ver. 17).

PSALM lxxxii. *Deus stetit*

John x. 34-6

The voice of Christ bearing witness to the ideal greatness of man, and to man's failure in his responsibility as God's vicegerent in the world, especially in the administration of justice. He Himself is set forth as the true and perfect Judge of the world.

PSALM lxxxiii. *Deus, quis similis?*

A prayer of the Church against the confederacy of her enemies. She prays that their defeat may lead to their conversion to Christ.

PSALM lxxxiv. *Quam dilecta!*

A Psalm of the Church in her pilgrimage through this world. She expresses especially her joy
{126} in public worship, the comfort which the hope of the heavenly worship brings amidst human sorrows, and her eternal hope in Christ.

PSALM lxxxv. *Benedixisti, Domine*

Christmas Day, morning (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the Church's joy in the Incarnation, as the proof of forgiveness for the past, and the beginning of a new and better world.

PSALM lxxxvi. *Inclina, Domine*

A Psalm of Christ and of the Christian soul, renewing the dedication of self to God, praying for strength against the trials of the world, and for the manifestation to the world of God's presence with those who love Him.

PSALM lxxxvli. *Fundamenta ejus*

A Psalm describing the catholicity of the Church, and the new birth of Baptism whereby members of all nations become her citizens and find in her the source of all joy and refreshment.

PSALM lxxxviii. *Domine Deus*

Good Friday, evening (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of Christ's desolation, the darkness on the Cross, His death and burial and descent into hell.

{127} PSALM lxxxix. *Misericordias Domini*

Christmas Day, evening (Prayer Book)

The Church's praise for the promises of the Incarnation, and their fulfilment in the line of David. The certainty of the eternal reign of Christ and the preservation of His Church. At ver. 37 the tone changes to prayer respecting the present eclipse of Christ's glory, and the failures of His Church. The Psalm ends, as it were, with the appeal of Christ Himself to the Father (49-50) for His suffering Church.

PSALM xc. *Domine, refugium*

Burial of the Dead (Prayer Book)

The Psalm of the Church's hope in the eternity of God, and the unfailing nature of His

purpose to restore man in Christ, in contrast with man's mortality, his short life and earthly failure.

PSALM xci. *Qui habitat*

A Psalm of the trust of Christ and of the Christian soul in the providence of God, in the continual ministry of the angels, and in the final discomfiture of the powers of evil.

PSALM xcii. *Bonum est confiteri*

A thanksgiving of Christ for His Resurrection and for the eternal hope of His Church.

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PSALM xciii. *Dominus regnavit*

A Psalm of the sovereignty of the ascended Christ; His supremacy over nature and the storms of this world.

PSALM xciv. *Deus ultionum*

A prayer of the Church for the second coming of Christ, and the manifestation of the Divine justice; ending (ver. 12, etc.) with the expression of the Church's patience, her acceptance of tribulation, and her sure confidence in the coming of Christ.

PSALM xcv. *Venite, exultemus*

Heb. iii. 7-iv. 11. Morning Prayer, daily (Prayer Book)

The Church's prelude to worship: the expression of her joy and trust in God's creation and preservation; her daily warning against failure through unbelief (like Israel of old) to enter into God's rest.

PSALM xcvi. *Cantate Domino*

The Church's outburst of joy in the universal sovereignty of Christ. She calls to the heathen world to acknowledge Him, and looks forward with rapture to His second Advent.

PSALM xcvii. *Dominus regnavit*

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The Church's declaration to the world of the sovereignty of Christ, and of His second Advent. She reminds herself of the moral fruits of Christ's kingdom, and of the Christian joy which springs from His service.

PSALM xcviii. *Cantate Domino*

Alternative to Magnificat (Prayer Book)

The triumph song of the Church in the redeeming work of Christ, in which she calls all nature and the heathen world to join.

PSALM xcix. *Dominus regnavit*

Again, a Psalm of the sovereignty of Christ. The Church sings of the essential holiness of His kingdom, of His mercy and His chastisements, and calls on the world to worship Him.

PSALM c. *Jubilate Deo*

Alternative to Benedictus (Prayer Book)

The Church's triumphant call to all the world to worship with her; she confesses her dependence on Christ, and the unfailing truth of His Gospel.

PSALM ci. *Misericordiam et judicium*

King's Accession (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the Church testifying her desire and endeavour to imitate both the mercy and the justice of Christ, and to exercise just discipline over her members, remembering the judgment-
{130} seat of Christ. A Psalm also appropriate to a Christian ruler, as the minister of Christ.

PSALM cii. *Domine exaudi*

Heb. i. 10-12. Ash Wednesday, evening (Prayer Book)

This may be regarded in part as appropriate to our Lord weeping over Jerusalem; in a wider sense it is a Psalm of the faithful sorrowing over the decay of the Church, offering their penitence, looking forward to restoration, and trusting in the changelessness of Christ, Who remains the same though earth and heaven pass away, and has promised the like continuance to His Church.

PSALM ciii. *Benedic, anima mea*

A Psalm of the Church's thanksgiving for God's forgiveness in Christ, for His love in the past and the certainty of its continuance in the future. Angels and saints and the powers of nature are summoned to join in this thanksgiving.

PSALM civ. *Benedic, anima mea*

Whitsun Day, evening (Prayer Book)

The Church's witness to the immanence of the Word in all creation; she recognises this in the beauty, the order, the preservation of all forms of varied life. Especially in the renewal of natural
{131} life (vv. 30-5) she recognises and praises the life-giving activity of the Holy Spirit, and sees in it a prophecy of the restoration of all things in the Resurrection to their first perfection, and the final overthrow of evil.

PSALM cv. *Confitemini Domino*

A Psalm of the Church's thanksgiving as she reviews her history and the providence which has preserved her in all vicissitudes, and considers the eternal inheritance which is the reward of obedience.

PSALM cvi. *Confitemini Domino*

Also an historical Psalm, in which the Church in time of exile and persecution recalls God's providence, and her many failures; she places her trust in the intercession of Christ, of Whom Moses was a type, and prays for her restoration.

PSALM cvii. *Confitemini Domino*

Thanksgiving after a Storm at Sea (Prayer Book)

The Church celebrates the age-long compassion of God towards the wanderer, the prisoner, the sufferer, as seen in the salvation of His Church, and in the Incarnation of the Word (ver. 20). The refrain (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31) exhorts to thanksgiving, and especially to the offering of the Holy Eucharist (ver. 22).

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PSALM cviii. *Paratum cor meum*

Ascension Day, evening (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of Christ glorified in His Resurrection, praying for His Church and foretelling His future victories (under the figure of David's wars). The last three verses seem to be the prayer of the Church and the voice of her confidence of ultimate triumph in Christ.

PSALM cix. *Deus laudem*

Acts i. 20

A Psalm of Christ's judgment upon impenitent sinners; His prayer for Himself in His Passion, and for His Church in whose sufferings at the hands of sinners He Himself is crucified afresh.

PSALM cx. *Dixit Dominus*

Matt. xxii. 41-5 (parallels in Mark and Luke); Acts ii. 34, 35; Heb. i. 13, v. 6-vii. Christmas Day, evening (Prayer Book)

The Church's witness to the Divinity of Christ, to His eternal Priesthood, His warfare, sufferings, and victory.

PSALM cxi. *Confitebor tibi*

Easter Day, morning (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of Christ praising the Father for His Resurrection; in which His Church also joins,
{133} commemorating the Eucharist (ver. 5), the new and eternal covenant, and the sacredness of the truth committed to her keeping.

PSALM cxii. *Beatus vir*

The Church's testimony to the blessedness of the life of faith, hope, and charity, of which she has seen the perfect example in Christ Himself.

PSALM cxiii. *Laudate, pueri*

Easter Day, evening (Prayer Book)

The world-wide joy of the Church in the Catholic faith of the Incarnation, by which man is exalted from the dust of Adam's fall, and is no longer "subject to vanity," but made equal to the angels.

PSALM cxiv. *In exitu Israel*

Easter Day, evening (Prayer Book)

The Church's song of deliverance through the mighty power of the Resurrection. A Psalm also of the Christian soul delivered from the Egypt of this world, and crossing the Jordan of death to the joy of the heavenly Canaan.

PSALM cxv. *Non nobis, Domine*

A continuation of the previous Psalm: the Church's joy in the living God, in Whom she hopes for life eternal; she calls upon priests and people alike to praise Him.

{134} PSALM cxvi. *Dilexi, quoniam*

Churching of Women (Prayer Book)

A thanksgiving of Christ and His Church for the Resurrection; with reference especially to the offering of the Eucharist, and the joy of Holy Communion, and also to the final rest and thanksgiving of the saints in Paradise.

PSALM cxvii. *Laudate Dominum*

The Church's call to the heathen world to praise God by conversion to the faith of Christ.

PSALM cxviii. *Confitemini Domino*

Matt. xxi. 9, 42, xxiii. 39 (with parallels in Mark and Luke). Easter Day, evening (Prayer Book)

The great Psalm of thanksgiving by Christ and His Church for the Resurrection, the victory over death and the judgment of the prince of this world. A Psalm especially appropriate for Sunday, and as a prelude to the Church's worship in the Holy Eucharist.

[It is the special Psalm for Sunday at Prime in the Breviary.]

PSALM cxix. *Beati immaculati*

The characteristic Psalm of the Catholic Church, in which she expresses her loyalty to and joy
{135} in all that God has revealed and commanded. It is animated throughout by the spirit of *sonship*, of which the perfect realisation is seen in Christ Himself. It may therefore be regarded as a Psalm of Christ, with Whom the Church associates herself in its recitation.

PSALM cxx. *Ad Dominum*

A Psalm of the pilgrim Church praying for peace and deliverance from the ceaseless and bitter warfare of this world.

PSALM cxxi. *Levavi oculos*

Accession Service (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the Church's pilgrimage through this world's perils, as she journeys towards the eternal hills and the city of God.

PSALM cxxii. *Lætatus sum*

The joy of the Christian soul in the Catholic Church and in Catholic worship. The hope of the Church in her pilgrimage towards the heavenly Jerusalem and the throne of Christ.

PSALM cxxiii. *Ad te levavi oculos meos*

A Psalm of the pilgrim Church amidst this world's scorn and contempt, expressing her absolute dependence upon Christ.

{136} PSALM cxxiv. *Nisi quid Dominus*

Part of the Hymn of Thanksgiving for a Victory at Sea (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the pilgrim Church's deliverance from the storms and waves of this troublesome world; her unshaken confidence in Christ.

PSALM cxxv. *Qui confidunt*

The confidence of the pilgrim Church in the unceasing protection of Christ against the attacks of an evil world, and the apostasy of false Christians.

PSALM cxxvi. *In convertendo*

The joy of the pilgrim Church in her great deliverance from the captivity of this world; her hope that through tribulation she will be made perfect.

PSALM cxxvii. *Nisi Dominus*

Churching of Women (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the pilgrim Church confessing that her progress and her enlargement cannot be the fruit of human care and labour, but of the grace of Christ only.

PSALM cxxviii. *Beati omnes*

Holy Matrimony (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the pilgrim Church celebrating the consecration of human life and labour through the Incarnation.

{137} PSALM cxxix. *Sæpe expugnaverunt*

A Psalm of the warfare and persecutions of the pilgrim Church, and of the vanity and fruitlessness of the attacks of her enemies.

PSALM cxxx. *De profundis*

Ash Wednesday, evening (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the sorrows, the ceaseless watching, and the undying hope of the pilgrim Church. Especially appropriate to the souls of departed Christians, the Church Expectant, who wait for the second Advent.

PSALM cxxxi. *Domine, non est*

A Psalm of the pilgrim Church expressing her humility, her submission to revelation, her unceasing trust in Christ.

PSALM cxxxii. *Memento, Domine*

Christmas Day, evening (Prayer Book)

A Psalm in which the pilgrim Church joyfully commemorates before God the Incarnation of His Son, and His age-long indwelling within her; and His gift in the Eucharist (ver. 16); and expresses her faith in the eternal sovereignty of Christ.

PSALM cxxxiii. *Ecce, quam bonum!*

A Psalm in which the pilgrim Church expresses her joy in her essential unity, the gift of the
{138} unction of the Holy Spirit poured upon her from the ascended Christ.

PSALM cxxxiv. *Ecce nunc*

A Psalm of the pilgrim Church as she contemplates her entry into the eternal sanctuary, the heavenly city of Christ, and the fellowship of the angels in their unceasing praise.

PSALM cxxxv. *Laudate Nomen*

The Church's thanksgiving for her calling in Christ, and the eternal rule of Christ over nature and man; she expresses her confidence in the living Christ Who dwells within her, in contrast with this world's idolatries.

PSALM cxxxvi. *Confitemini*

A Psalm of the Church's thanksgiving for the eternal mercy of Christ, as seen in creation, and in her own history and deliverances, and also in His abiding gift of the Eucharist (ver. 25).

PSALM cxxxvii. *Super flumina*

A Psalm of the sorrows of the Church in her captivity in this world, where she is persecuted and misunderstood. She expresses her loyalty to her heavenly calling, her desire for "Jerusalem which is above," and her warfare with Babylon, for whose overthrow she confidently waits.

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PSALM cxxxviii. *Confitebor tibi*

A Psalm of Christ and His saints, giving praise for the Resurrection, the hope of the conversion of the world, the Church's final deliverance, and the "redemption of the body."

PSALM cxxxix. *Domine, probasti*

A Psalm of the creature to the Creator, celebrating His omnipresence, His wisdom, His claim to love; praying for sincerity and the gift of perseverance. It is appropriate to Christ in His sacred manhood, in which He is "inferior to the Father" (Athanasian Creed); and therefore also a Psalm of the Church in which the human body and soul are regenerate and consecrated by the Incarnation.

PSALM cxl. *Eripe me, Domine*

A Psalm of Christ's warfare and Passion; pronouncing the overthrow and judgment of the wicked, and the eternal continuance of His Church.

PSALM cxli. *Domine, clamavi*

A Psalm of the Church's devotion to Christ; her humility in accepting rebuke and tribulation; her unceasing spirit of prayer.

PSALM cxlii. *Voce mea ad Dominum*

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A Psalm of Christ's prayer to the Father in His Passion and Death, and His longing for the gathering together of His Church to Himself as the fruit of His Resurrection.

PSALM cxliii. *Domine, exaudi*

Ash Wednesday, evening (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of prayer for those who suffer with Christ; of preparation for death, and hope of the Resurrection, through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

PSALM cxliv. *Benedictus Dominus*

A Psalm of the triumph of Christ (under the figure of David), and of the eternal blessedness of His Church through Him.

PSALM cxlv. *Exaltabo te, Deus*

Whitsun Day, evening (Prayer Book)

A Psalm of the everlasting joy of the Church in Christ her King, in the Holy Eucharist (ver. 7), in the Communion of Saints, and in the certainty of the answer to prayer.

PSALM cxlvi. *Lauda, anima mea*

Like the preceding, a Psalm of the Church's thanksgiving for the eternal sovereignty of Christ in its mercy and its judgment.

PSALM cxlvii. *Laudate Dominum*

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The joy of the Church in her calling and preservation by Christ, in the Gospel committed to her trust, and in the truth that all things temporal as well as eternal are hers in Christ, Who is Lord of all.

PSALM cxlviii. *Laudate Dominum*

The Church's call to the angels, to all the powers of nature, and to all estates of men to give thanks to Christ, with her.

PSALM cxlix. *Cantate Domino*

A Psalm of the Communion of Saints, in which the living and departed (ver. 5) unite to praise Christ their King, and ascribe to Him their victory over the powers of this world.

PSALM cl. *Laudate Dominum*

The eternal song of praise of the Church militant and triumphant, in which man's powers and development are consecrated to their true end, the giving of glory to the eternal Trinity.

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