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Psalms: With Introduction and Marginal Notes

James G. Carleton

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THE PSALTER OF THE CHURCH

THE PRAYER BOOK VERSION OF
THE PSALMS

WITH INTRODUCTION AND MARGINAL
NOTES

BY

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PREFACE

THIS handbook of the Prayer Book Psalter is designed to meet the case of the many Church people who would welcome help—if given in a concise and easily apprehended form—towards a better understanding of the Psalms, but for whom the study of elaborate and diffuse commentaries is out of the question. The special feature of the present book is the printing of the Psalter and the explanatory notes side by side in parallel columns. By this arrangement the reader is enabled to take in the meaning of a passage at a glance; and the weariness of carrying the eye to the foot of the page, or of turning to the end of the volume for the comment, is avoided.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge my obligation to the Syndics of the University Press for undertaking the publication of the book. I also desire to thank the Rev. H. J. Lawlor, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History, University of Dublin, for his great kindness in reading the proofs, and for many valuable suggestions.

J. G. C.

June, 1909.

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‘I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.’ 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

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I.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

THE Psalter formed a portion of the last of the three sections—named respectively ‘the Law,’ ‘the Prophets’ and ‘the Writings’ or ‘the Sacred Writings’—into which the Old Testament, as we now call it, was popularly divided by the Jews before the Christian era. Our Lord referred to this threefold division when He summed up all Scripture as ‘the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms’ (St Luke xxiv. 44)—‘the Psalms’ here giving their name to ‘the Writings’ probably either because they were placed first in that section, or because the books which it contained were largely of a poetical character.

The Psalter itself was divided into five Books (now indicated for the English reader in the Revised Version), viz. Book I. Ps. i.—xli., Book II. Ps. xlii.—lxxii., Book III. Ps. lxxiii.—lxxxix., Book IV. Ps. xc.—cvi., Book V. Ps. cvii.—cl.

The end of each of the first four Books is marked by a doxology, Ps. cl. constituting the doxology at the end of Book V. and of the Psalter.

An examination of the Psalter leads to the conclusion that it grew up gradually, and reached its present form by the combination of several collections of poems.

The division into Books is itself an indication of this. But besides, we observe that many of the Psalms have Titles which assign them to certain authors. In the first Book, for example,

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practically all the Psalms are attributed to David. It may reasonably be regarded as having once existed as a separate Psalm-book which was perhaps the nucleus of the future Psalter. Another collection of Psalms is suggested by the Title 'of the sons of Korah' (xlii.—xlix., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii.), another by that 'of Asaph' (l., lxxiii.—lxxxiii.) prefixed to each. A group of Psalms has the common inscription 'A Song of Ascents' (cxx.—cxxxiv.); another is marked by having the call to praise—'Hallelujah'—either at the beginning or end, or in both places (civ.—cvi., cxi.—cxiii., cxv.—cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi.—cl.).

The use of Divine Names, also, bears witness to the composite character of the Psalter. In the first Book, 'Jehovah,' generally rendered 'the LORD' in our English Versions, is almost exclusively employed. In the second and third, 'Elohim,' translated 'God,' is mainly used until Ps. lxxxiv. is reached, when 'Jehovah' again becomes prominent, and continues so throughout the fourth and fifth Books.

Another fact which points to the original independence of various parts of the Psalter is the repetition of the same Psalm wholly or in part in different books. Thus Ps. xiv. and xl. 16 ff. in Book I. appear again as Ps. liii. and lxx. in Book II.; and Ps. lvii. 8—12 and lx. 5—12 in Book II. recur as Ps. cviii. in Book V. And it is noteworthy, as evidencing the revising hand of an editor, with regard to the Psalms which Book I. has in common with Book II., that where 'Jehovah' occurs in Ps. xiv. and xl. 16 ff., it has been changed into 'Elohim'—universally in Ps. liii., partially in Ps. lxx.

The frequent quotation of earlier in later Psalms, and evident additions to Psalms made at subsequent times, are significant in the same direction.

A further proof of compilation is the manifest grouping together of Psalms which are akin in subject-matter. Thus in Book I. the Psalms are chiefly of a personal character; they express the joys and sorrows and aspirations of individuals. In Books II. and III. the national element is foremost. We find

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here mainly prayers and thanksgivings which took their rise from public dangers and deliverances. And again in Books iv. and v., the Psalms are, generally speaking, of a liturgical character. They are specially suited for use in Divine worship, and many of them probably were composed for that purpose.

The ascription of several of the Psalms in the Titles (retained in the Authorized and Revised, but not in the Prayer-Book Version) to David and others cannot be regarded as decisive of the question of authorship. Internal evidence proves that some of these Psalms could not have been composed by those to whom they are thus assigned. Psalms xx., xxi. and cx., for instance, though entitled Psalms of David, are plainly addressed to a king, and not written by a king: and Ps. lxix., likewise attributed to David, has allusions which make it impossible to date it earlier than the captivity.

At the same time we should not be justified in wholly dis regarding the Titles as if they gave no guidance at all in the question of authorship. It would be difficult to account for the tradition which ascribes so many of the Psalms to David—and it is with regard to him that the problem chiefly confronts us—if none or comparatively few were written by him. And we have independent witness to the truth of the Title in one instance. Psalm xviii. appears also in 2 Sam. xxii., and is assigned to David both in the Psalter and in the history.

The uniformity with which, as has been before noticed, all the Psalms in Book i. are ascribed to David has been explained in this way: namely that this Book originated in a collection of David's Psalms, to which others, not all by him, were added later on, and that the Title 'Psalms of David' which belonged to the original collection was subsequently prefixed in the singular to each Psalm.

We have here, in fact, the first stage of that extension of nomenclature by which eventually the entire Psalter became known as the Psalms of David—the name of the primary and principal author of the Psalter being given to the whole.

In this commentary the Title a ‘Psalm of David’ is quoted when it confirms what on other grounds seems to be the authorship: the historical notice also, peculiar to the ‘Psalms of David,’ of the special occasion on which the Psalm was composed, is cited when it appears to give help to the interpretation of the Psalm.

The poetry of the ancient Hebrews, in the opinion of many scholars, was written in metre, based upon accent; but the laws of that metre are almost wholly conjectural, and it obviously cannot be represented in a translation. There is, however, a feature generally recognized as characterizing Hebrew poetry, namely a system of parallelism which, as it belongs to the meaning and not to the mode of expression, retains its essence when translated. This system admits of much flexibility and assumes various forms which are generally distributed into three typical classes.

1. *Synonymous parallelism.* Here clauses correspond one with another in such a way that the second repeats the sense of the first in different terms. Instances of this kind are of constant occurrence in the Psalter. Take for example Ps. xv.:

‘LORD, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle:
 Or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?’

and Ps. xxi. 1, 2:

‘The king shall rejoice in thy strength, O LORD:
 Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.
 Thou hast given him his heart’s desire:
 And hast not denied him the request of his lips.’

2. *Antithetic or contrasted parallelism.* Here the two lines are contrasted by an opposition of terms or sentiments or both. We have two instances in immediate succession in Ps. xx. 7, 8:

‘Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses:
 But we will remember the Name of the LORD our God.

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They are brought down, and fallen :
 But we are risen, and stand upright.’

3. *Synthetic or constructive parallelism.* Here the parallelism consists only in the similar form of construction, the two parts of the couplet corresponding in respect of the shape and turn of the sentence, noun, for example, answering to noun, or verb to verb, or interrogative to interrogative. This kind of parallelism is not always easily discerned. A clear example may be found in Ps. cxlviii. 7—13 :

‘Praise the LORD upon earth :
 Ye dragons, and all deeps ;
 Fire and hail, snow and vapours :
 Wind and storm, fulfilling his word ;
 Mountains and all hills :
 Fruitful trees and all cedars, &c.’

It can easily be seen that this feature in Hebrew poetry—the mutual relationship between each part of the couplet—may render valuable aid in the elucidation of obscure or ambiguous passages. In the Revised Version, the Psalms and other poetic portions of the Old Testament are printed so as to exhibit the parallelism.

A characteristic of some Psalms which cannot be preserved in a translation is the arrangement of the initial letters of the clauses or verses or pairs of verses, as the case may be, in the order of the alphabet.

**Alphabetical
 Psalms**

This arrangement is, as a rule, found only in Psalms of a special kind, those, namely, that give expression to thoughts—bearing on a single topic, and presenting it in different lights—more or less loosely strung together. By the acrostic system an artificial bond of connection is supplied which serves as a help to the memory. In Ps. cxix. this system is carried out with greater elaboration than elsewhere (see note prefixed to that Psalm). The other alphabetical Psalms are ix., x., xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxlv.

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II.

THE PSALTER OF THE CHURCH.

The Version of the Psalms which finds place in the Book of Common Prayer is naturally the one with which English Church people are most familiar and which they love best. From their earliest years they have joined in the recitation of the Psalms in this Version as a part of Divine worship: it is connected in their minds with the most solemn associations; and has been a factor of inestimable importance in the building up of their spiritual life.

The Prayer Book Psalter of the present day is practically the same as that of the first English Prayer Book (1549), which was taken from the Authorized Version of that date, commonly called the 'Great Bible.'

In the 'Great Bible' (1539) although the translation of the other books was made from the original Hebrew or Greek, the Psalms were transferred, with some alterations, from Coverdale's Bible (1535) which was a translation 'out of Douche [i.e. German] and Latyn into English' as the title-page states. Hence it is that in many places, the rendering of the Prayer Book Version follows the Vulgate—the Latin Bible—where the latter differs from the Hebrew. In King James's Version (1611) now known as 'the Authorized,' the Psalms, like the other books, were translated directly from the original, and are, on the whole, more correctly rendered than in the Prayer Book Version. It should however be noted that, in several instances, the scholars who have given us the Revised Version (1885) have thought well to return to the Prayer Book renderings. At the final English Revision of the Prayer Book (1662), while the Epistles and Gospels were conformed to the Authorized Version, yet the old Version of the Psalms, having become familiar to worshippers, and being more rhythmical and better adapted for chanting than the new, was allowed to retain its position of honour.

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The Vulgate Psalter A few words seem needed with reference to the Vulgate Psalter from which, as we have seen, the Prayer Book Psalms, in large measure, derive their origin. This was the Psalter used in the Church services at the time of the Reformation; and the Psalms being then popularly known by their first words in Latin, these were retained as headings in the English Version, furnishing an evidence, cognizable by all, of the connection between the former and the latter.

The Psalter in the Vulgate together with the rest of that Version is the work of St Jerome (end of fourth century), but, unlike the other books, it is not a direct translation from the original. It is a revision of the Old Latin Psalter, which in St Jerome's days was hallowed in people's minds by use in private devotion and in public worship. This Psalter had in early Christian times been translated from the Septuagint, the Greek Version from which the quotations from the Old Testament in the New are generally taken, and which, with the Greek New Testament, formed the Bible of the primitive Greek-speaking Church. Hence it arises that in most cases in which the Prayer Book Version agrees with the Vulgate against the Hebrew, the rendering may ultimately be traced to the Septuagint. St Jerome made a subsequent translation of the Psalms from the Hebrew, but it was not admitted into the Vulgate, and, as happened in a later age in these countries, the old familiar Version maintained its place in Church worship and in popular affection.

The Prayer Book Psalter cannot claim to be a perfect Version; still, in the main, it fairly represents the original; and whatever inaccuracies it contains, we have means at hand in the Revised Version for their correction. To a large extent it is its own interpreter, and it has instructed and cheered the hearts of thousands who have sought no further guidance to its meaning than its own words afford them.

But while this is undoubtedly the case, it is likewise true that the Prayer Book Version is by no means in all parts easy to be

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understood ; indeed, here and there, we meet with passages which are absolutely unintelligible. Some of these obscure places are peculiar to itself, some it shares with the Authorized and even with the Revised Version : for it occasionally happens that the most accurate rendering of the original needs explanation before its meaning can be grasped.

If then the worshipper is not content to utter words which are without signification to him, if he is desirous of ‘singing with the understanding,’ it is of essential consequence that he should seek external aid for the elucidation of the Psalter.

The object of the present work is to render this aid to those who through want of time or opportunity are unable to consult more detailed commentaries, or even to check the Prayer Book Psalter with the Revised Version.

An explanation of the plan adopted is given further on (see p. xxx).

There are some words of frequent occurrence in the Psalter which may conveniently be considered here.

Some words explained ‘Godly,’ ‘holy,’ ‘saint.’ These words, in many instances, translate a single Hebrew word, which, in the opinion of most modern scholars, should rather be explained according to the meaning given to it in the R.V. margin of Ps. iv. 3, ‘one that he [the LORD] favoureth’—the reference being primarily not to the character of the person, but to his position of privilege as a member of the chosen race.

‘Soul.’ The Hebrew word thus translated frequently means ‘self’ or ‘life,’ and should be so understood when the context requires either of these senses.

‘Poor.’ There is little difference in the Hebrew between the word thus rendered and another word which is translated ‘meek,’ ‘lowly’ or ‘humble’: in fact the Hebrew margin frequently directs the one to be substituted for the other. The two words, therefore, may be regarded as practically interchangeable, and

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each may be interpreted according to the requirements of the passage.

‘Hell,’ ‘the pit,’ ‘the grave.’ These words represent the Hebrew ‘Sheol’ which is left untranslated in the Revised Version. ‘Sheol’ corresponds to the Greek ‘Hades,’ and signifies the under-world regarded as the abode of departed spirits.

‘LORD’ when thus printed represents ‘Jehovah’ in the original. The Jews, from feelings of reverence, shrank from pronouncing the Sacred Name, and substituted for it a word equivalent to the English ‘Lord.’ Their example was followed by the translators of the Septuagint; and from it the usage found its way through the Vulgate into the English Bible. In a few passages the word ‘GOD’ represents ‘Jehovah’ (see p. xxx).

‘The Name of the LORD’ expresses the complex notion of God’s Person and character as He has revealed them in Exod. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5—7 and elsewhere.

‘Heard’ is generally replaced in R.V. by ‘answered’ when the reference is to prayer granted. It has not been thought necessary to note this in the margin, as prayer ‘heard’ is equivalent to prayer ‘answered.’

‘Save,’ ‘salvation,’ ‘redeem,’ ‘redemption.’ These words, as used by the Psalmists, primarily refer to temporal deliverance personal or national.

‘People’ frequently represents a Hebrew plural word meaning ‘nations,’ and in such cases the R.V. clears up the meaning by substituting ‘peoples.’

‘Heathen.’ This word signifying in the original non-Israelitish peoples seems more expressive than the R.V. substitute ‘nations.’

‘Quicken.’ The Hebrew word thus rendered varies in meaning between ‘give new life to,’ ‘preserve alive,’ and ‘refresh.’

III.

SOME FEATURES OF THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF
 THE PSALMS.

The Psalmists wrote before Christ ‘abolished death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel’ (2 Tim. i. 10). Little had been revealed to them about the existence that survives death. Thus while they have a vivid realization of communion with God, and absolute trust in His mercy, they generally write as those whose interests are confined to the present condition of things. When they refer to a future life it is usually in gloomy terms, as to a vague and shadowy state of being that hardly deserved the name of life when compared with the activity of ‘the life which now is.’ The dead are ‘in the darkness’ (cxl. 3); they are ‘no more’ (xxxix. 15); they dwell ‘in the land where all things are forgotten’ (lxxxviii. 12); they are ‘cast off’ by God and ‘remembered by Him no more’ (lxxxviii. 4). ‘The dust’ cannot ‘give thanks to God or declare His truth’ (xxx. 10).

These despondent thoughts were the natural outcome of the teaching of the Law which restricted the scope of its rewards and penalties to the present world. The devout Israelite who recognized his call as one of the chosen race to carry out God’s will, to bear witness for Him before the nations and prepare the way for the ultimate triumph of righteousness, knew of no other sphere than the life in the flesh in which he could fulfil his Divinely appointed destiny. He had no revelation of a further field of active service beyond the grave.

It is worthy of note that this class of passages is not without parallel in the New Testament. Our Lord’s own words are, ‘We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work’ (St John ix. 4).

Even though the Christian is assured that when he dies, other and doubtless more important work will be provided for him,

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still he must recognize this world as the scene of the only kind of activity of which he has distinct knowledge.

But it would be wrong to regard the Psalms as devoid of all hope of a blissful immortality. We must put an unnatural interpretation on the following passages, among others, if we do not see in them this hope more or less distinctly expressed. ‘Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in Thy presence is fulness of joy ; in Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore’ (xvi. 12). ‘As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness’ (xvii. 16). ‘God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol : for He shall receive me’ (xlix. 15). ‘Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory’ (lxxiii. 23). The Psalmists had, now and again, visions of the future life with God which are lit up well-nigh with the brightness of the Christian revelation.

We find occasionally in the Psalms prayers for vengeance upon wicked enemies, and expressions of exultation on their fall, which sound out of harmony with the spirit of Christianity (see in particular xxxv. 4—8, xl. 17, 18, lviii. 6—8, lix. 11—15, lxix. 23—29, cix. 5—19).

This language has been explained by attributing it to the imperfect standard of morality of Old Testament times which our Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere, has contrasted with the higher requirements He expects from His followers.

But to leave the matter there would be to do an injustice to the Psalmists.

There are certain considerations to which we must give due weight before we can form a just estimate of these Imprecatory Psalms, as they are generally called.

They are not prompted by feelings of irritation or desire for personal revenge. The appeal for vengeance is made to God and judgement is left in His hands. Side by side, too, with the strongest denunciations we find sentiments of kindness and

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goodwill towards the offender (see xxxv. 13, 14, cix. 3, 4). The motive of the Psalmists is essentially zeal for God's righteousness, the triumph of which was delayed so long as wickedness had the upper hand. The Psalmists had not the clear revelation, made to us, of a future state of retribution. Here or not at all, they believed, punishment would overtake the ungodly. When, then, in this world they saw might prevailing against right, the wicked persecuting the good, was it not, from their point of view, an imperative duty to implore God to vindicate His honour and manifest His righteous rule over the world in the only way in which, in their opinion, this could be effected, namely by the visible overthrow of the wicked?

And this duty must have seemed all the plainer when the enemies who oppressed them were foreigners; for Israel was the people of Jehovah, and its foes were His. If the chosen race were subjected to the tyranny of strangers, it would appear that Jehovah was unable to protect His own: His promises would seem to have failed, and the cause of truth and righteousness to be in jeopardy.

But again, we have been taught more distinctly than those under the Old Covenant to distinguish between wrong and the wrong-doer, to hate the one and love the other; and yet we are far from concluding that this duty forbids us in all cases to desire that the sinner may receive the due reward of his deeds. The state enacts penalties against transgressors; the magistrate condemns not merely crimes but criminals, and we approve. If we hear of some vile act of iniquity, we earnestly hope that justice will overtake the offender; we rejoice when the supremacy of the law is vindicated by his punishment.

It should more over be borne in mind that the disorganized state of society in which the Psalmists lived prevented them from relying, as we can, on the orderly working of the law to bring criminals to account. They had to commit the maintenance of their just cause solely to God, the Supreme Judge, and implore Him to check the wicked in their career of violence.

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And if they pray for the overthrow of foreign oppressors, we should reflect that we also feel justified in praying that our king may ‘vanquish and overcome all his enemies’; though we, unlike the Psalmists, suppress all reference to the horrors which success in war implies.

Instead of apologizing for these Psalms we should rather earnestly take to heart and profit by the practical lesson they have to teach us. Their authors by their righteous hatred of sin as an offence against God impress upon Christians the truth, to which the New Testament also distinctly testifies, that the stern side of religion is as real as the merciful; that God’s compassion is not exercised by an indiscriminate benevolence; that His salvation cannot reach the impenitent; that the wicked are in rebellion against Him, and unless they sue for peace a fearful retribution awaits them. These Psalms are a standing protest, needful at all times, against lack of moral earnestness, and the danger of thinking lightly of sin.

Another feature in the Psalms which sometimes causes perplexity is the presence in them of assertions of up-
Claims to
integrityrightness and of obedience to the commandments, also confident appeals to God to judge the hearts of the writers, which seem to savour of self-righteousness. The chief passages of this kind are vii. 8, xvii. 3—5, xviii. 20—24, xxvi., xxxii. 7, lxiv. 4, lxxxvi. 2, ci. 3, cxix. 101, 110, 128, 168.

In some cases where these sentiments occur the context proves that the Psalmist is merely protesting his innocence of some specific charge brought against him (see vii. 3, 4). But, in general, before taking upon ourselves to pass adverse criticism upon the Psalmists, we should make sure that we do not misinterpret or press beyond their due significance the moral terms that they apply to themselves.

We have seen above (p. xvi) that the word translated ‘holy,’ ‘godly,’ ‘saint,’ is now given by most scholars the meaning ‘one favoured by God.’ Such epithets as ‘righteous,’ ‘perfect,’ ‘clean,’ ‘innocent,’ need not be taken as implying more than honesty of

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purpose, a right direction of the will, the character of the man who is sincerely desirous of serving God. They are declarations of integrity which may be paralleled with St Paul's assertions, 'I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day' (Acts xxiii. 1), 'I know nothing against myself' (1 Cor. iv. 4). They are Old Testament claims to the possession of the 'honest and good heart' of the Parable of the Sower (St Luke viii. 15). They are not declarations of sinlessness; for the Psalter is pervaded by a sense of sin, and of the need of pardon and renewal; and sometimes in the same Psalms which contain protestations of rectitude we find humble confession of guilt and prayer for mercy (see xxvi. 11, xxxii. 6, lxxxvi. 2, 16, cxix. 25, 176).

Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the Psalmists living, as they did, before the Holy Ghost came in His fulness to 'convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness,' to enlighten the conscience and reveal the spiritual demands of God's law, would find it easier than we should to satisfy themselves that they had fulfilled God's requirements. Thus we may shrink from employing, as our own, words of self-approval which they were able to use with all sincerity, and which from their stand-point betokened no lack of humility. But we need not think that this impairs the value of these passages for us Christians or makes them less suited for our lips. The deepest consecration which the Psalms possess for us is that they were used by Christ during His earthly life, that He made their words His own. Any difficulty we have of interpreting them, any scruple about employing them in worship, vanishes when we regard them as His utterances. The more ample the assertions of innocence and integrity, the more worthy are they of the Perfect Man.

Of all the books of the Old Testament the Psalter is most frequently quoted in the New as pointing forward to Christ and His Church. Our Lord has repeatedly appealed to the testimony of the Psalms to Himself. The foreshadowing of Christ in the Psalter takes, to speak

Predictions of
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generally, one of four forms. He is set forth as a King, as a Sufferer, as the Son of Man, as God—the supreme Judge of the world.

Christ as King. (Ps. ii., xviii., xx., xxi., xlv., lxi., lxxii., lxxxix., cx., cxxxii.) These Royal Psalms, as they have been named, usually have for their immediate subject the reigning king, either David or one of his successors, and they are generally called forth by some critical event in the history of the nation. Their authors have before their minds the Divine promise made to David and his house through the Prophet Nathan: ‘I took thee from the sheepcote...that thou shouldest be prince over my people, over Israel...When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed...and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men...but my mercy shall not depart from him....And thine house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever’ (2 Sam. vii. 8—16).

This promise, the charter of the Davidic line, the Psalmists treat of and develop as circumstances prompt them. They dwell on the predestined glories of the house of David—often sharply contrasted with present abasement: they lament the apparent failure of the promise, and appeal to God to grant fulfilment of it: they see visions of a future period when the king of David’s line will reign victoriously over all nations of the world. Although the Psalmists themselves may not have been conscious of it, we see that they claimed for David and his house such powers and prerogatives, and for his kingdom such extent and duration, as were destined to be realized only in the Divine Son of David, and in His universal and everlasting dominion.

In other parts of the Psalter, besides the Royal Psalms, the kingdom of Israel is identified with that of God, and the incorporation with it of all the peoples is predicted. In particular may

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be mentioned the series of triumphal Psalms which were probably composed on the occasion of the overthrow of Sennacherib's host in the reign of Hezekiah. (Ps. xlv. — xlviii., lxvi., lxxv., lxxvi.)

Christ as Sufferer. Passages from the following Psalms are quoted in the New Testament as having been fulfilled in certain details of our Lord's sufferings, xxii., xxxv., xli., lxix., cix.

These Psalms bear, in themselves, plain evidences of having been written to describe the personal experiences of men passing through severe bodily and spiritual anguish. But they were servants of God unjustly afflicted, and being such, their afflictions, unknown to themselves, foreshadowed those of the Great Servant of the Lord, the Man of Sorrows. And besides this, it was divinely ordered that certain features in their sufferings should prefigure some of the circumstances which attended Christ's Passion, and even that what the Psalmists evidently meant to be metaphorical descriptions of their trials should come literally true in the details of the Crucifixion. The words of the Psalmists were thus, according to the New Testament phrase, 'fulfilled,' that is they received a new and deeper meaning.

Christ as the Son of Man. Psalms which emphasize the dignity of man and attribute to him universal dominion (viii.), which delineate the perfect human character (xv.), which picture the ideal fellowship with God (xvi.), which proffer, on the part of man, unreserved surrender to God's will (xl.)—these reach forward for their adequate fulfilment to the Son of Man, the Sinless, who is one with the Father, and unto whom all authority hath been given in heaven and on earth.

Christ as God. In other Psalms (chiefly l., lxviii., xciii., xcv. — c.) the visible appearance of Jehovah upon earth is announced as a Conqueror to confound His enemies, as a Judge to vindicate the righteous, as a Saviour to deliver the oppressed. His reign of righteousness and joy is proclaimed. All peoples are bidden to

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worship and obey Him. Here we have witness borne to the Advent of Christ under yet another aspect—the aspect which regards it as the Coming of God Himself in visible form. These visions of the Psalmists whatever they meant for them, to Christian readers speak plainly of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

In considering the testimony which the Psalms bear to Christ, it would be unreasonable to confine our attention to the passages quoted in this sense in the New Testament. Our Lord said of the Hebrew Scriptures, ‘these are they which bear witness of Me’ (St John v. 39); and His words authorize us to read those Scriptures with the conviction that He is to be found everywhere in them. Thus the references to the Psalms which occur in the New Testament are to be regarded merely as specimens of the rich store of Messianic allusion which Christians may expect to find in the Psalter.

And in making this use of the Psalms we are but continuing what has been the practice of Christians from the commencement. They have always followed the example set them by the New Testament writers in looking beyond the original purport of the Psalms, and discerning in them a meaning fuller and more spiritual than the literal—a meaning which must have transcended the thoughts of the authors, because it needed for its elucidation the light of the Gospel.

It may, indeed, be truly said that the Psalms were written rather for Christians than for God’s ancient people. The Psalter passed as an inspired Hymn-book from the Temple to the Church. Was not this divinely foreseen event providentially arranged for? Must we not believe that the Psalmists were supernaturally guided to make their utterances such as would be patient of a higher interpretation than that of which they themselves were conscious; so that after the passing of the few centuries still allotted to the dispensation of ‘Israel after the flesh,’ those utterances might be fitted, throughout all subsequent ages, to

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express the devotional thoughts, the aspirations, the prayers and praises of the 'Israel of God'?

The Church of Christ is the successor of the Jewish, the inheritor of her privileges, traditions and titles of honour. This fact gives us the key to the Christian interpretation of the Psalms. We see that the hopes which centred in David and his line and kingdom received their fulfilment in his Divine Son, the King of Kings. We see that what is said of Israel or Jacob, must be applied, on the principle of continuity, to the wider family into which Israel developed, to those who in Christ are 'Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.' The names 'Sion' and 'Jerusalem' describe for us the Catholic Church in its militant or triumphant stage. 'Saints,' 'redemption,' 'salvation,' and many another term are glorified with their higher Gospel meaning. The undefined sense of fellowship with God is exalted into participation in the Divine Nature through membership with Christ.

The use to which the Church puts the Psalter in Divine worship is the most prominent assertion of her right to understand the Psalms mystically, that is, to interpret them from the standpoint of her higher knowledge of things spiritual. The Church has claimed these Hebrew poems, composed under the dim light of an imperfect revelation, as her own, she has made them the expression of her public devotions. She has ordered their daily recitation, and, by appending the *Gloria Patri* to each, has intimated the sense in which she would have them understood. And further, by her system of Proper Psalms she has given detailed guidance in spiritual interpretation. For by assigning fixed Psalms for use on the Great Days that commemorate the cardinal events of redemption, she testifies that these hymns of the Ancient Church are invested in her mind with special Christian meanings, that they proclaim truths which their authors—'prophets and righteous men' of old—'desired to see' and yet 'saw not.'

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TABLES OF PROPER AND SPECIAL PSALMS.

PROPER PSALMS.

	Matins.	Evensong.
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*Ash Wednesday	6, 32, 38	102, 130, 143
Good Friday	22, 40, 54	69, 88
Easter Day	2, 57, 111	113, 114, 118
Ascension Day	8, 15, 21	24, 47, 108
Whitsunday	48, 68	104, 145

Additional in American Prayer Book.

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Circumcision	40, 90	65, 103
Epiphany	46, 47, 48	72, 117, 135
Purification	20, 86, 87	84, 113, 134
Annunciation	89	131, 132, 138
Easter Even	4, 16, 17	30, 31
Trinity Sunday	29, 33	93, 97, 150
Transfiguration	27, 61, 93	84, 99, 133
St Michael's	91, 103	34, 148
All Saints' Day	1, 15, 146	112, 121, 149

* The Psalms appointed for Ash Wednesday, including the 51st (in the Communion Service), have from very early times been known as the Penitential Psalms.

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SPECIAL PSALMS AT MATINS AND EVENSONG AND IN OCCASIONAL OFFICES.

Matins : 95, Invitatory ; 148, second alternative for Te Deum [Ireland] ; 100, alternative for Benedictus.

Evensong : 98, alternative for Magnificat ; 92, *vv.* 1—4, second alternative for Magnificat [America] ; 67, alternative for Nunc Dimittis ; 103, *vv.* 1—4, 21, 22, second alternative for Nunc Dimittis [America].

Matrimony : 128 or 67.

Visitation of the Sick : 71 [130 America].

Burial of the Dead : 39, 90.

Churching of Women : 116 or 127.

Communion : 51.

Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea—Thanksgiving after a storm : 66, 107.

King's Accession : 20, 101, 121.

Service for the first Sunday on which a minister officiates in a new cure [Ireland] : 84, 122, 132.

Office of Institution [America] : 122, 132, 133, 68 or 26.

Harvest Thanksgiving [Ireland] : 65, 67, 103, 104, 145, 147.
(Two or more to be used.)

Consecration of a Church [English Convocation, 1712, Ireland, America] : 24, 84, 122, 132.

Consecration of a Graveyard [Ireland] : 49 or 115.

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PLAN OF COMMENTARY

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The notes are placed side by side with the text.

When the comment is simply in the words of the Revised Version (often identical with the Authorized, in which case the letters R.V. are not prefixed), or of the R.V. margin, it is printed in italics, the passage corrected in the text being indicated by small brackets. When the comment is other than, or supplementary to, the Revised Version, it appears in Roman type.

In passages where the Prayer Book Version, though not a literal translation, is a fair paraphrase of the meaning, and also where a slight inaccuracy does not materially affect the sense, it has not been thought necessary to give the Revised Version.

The text is printed as it appears in the Prayer Book with the following exceptions. 'LORD' or 'GOD,' when either word represents 'Jehovah' in the original (see p. xvii), is distinguished, as in the Authorized and Revised Versions, and in the American Psalter, by small capitals. The usage of R.V. has also been adopted in the removal of initial capitals in cases where they might mislead the reader; and in printing the more accurate 'cherubim' for 'cherubims.' Besides, a few alterations have been made in punctuation and by the insertion of parentheses, when needed by the sense of the passage.

A short introduction has been prefixed to each Psalm describing its theme, and, in some cases, the circumstances under which it was probably written, the Title being quoted in whole or in part where it seemed to throw light on these points (see pp. xi, xii.)

Quotations from Holy Scripture are made according to the Revised Version.

Abbreviations.—A.V. = Authorized Version, R.V. = Revised Version, A.R.V. = Authorized and Revised Versions, P.B.V. = Prayer Book Version, mg. = margin, Vulg. = Vulgate Sept. = Septuagint.