

## THE PSALMS AS LYRICS

liturgy must have been to exert a mighty power over the religious life of the nation by bringing the people into fellowship with a God deemed worthy of such adoration.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PSALMS AS A SUMMARY OF SACRED LEARNING

That the Sacred Learning which is summarized in the Book of Psalms is sublimated into Song, detracts but little from its practical utility; for figures of speech have a recognized meaning of their own, and parallelism conduces to ultimate precision when couplets are quoted rather than clauses. A proof-text from the Psalms is generally as effective as one taken from the Law or the Prophets. The temporal and personal colouring may, indeed, in some measure fade from a psalm when held under the microscope of logical analysis, and yet may leave an abiding outline of permanent teaching. Prayers and praises rise on rapid wing to heaven, but their didactic presuppositions are generally clear enough to lead the listener forwards into the learning of theological and psychological lessons which will be found worthy to abide with him as a scholar, after they have by their spiritual influence moved him to become a worshipper. The only question is, how to collect and fix the rays of light radiated from struggling and adoring souls. The simplest method will be, to place in alphabetical order a few leading words which will occasion references to such psalms and verses of psalms as treat of the word or topic named.

If this course should impart to the present chapter something of the unattractive features of index and concordance, this will need no apology when it is remembered that the primary intention of this Introduction is, not to induce the curious to *read* the Psalms, but to give practical assistance to such as, having many times read them, are at length eager to devote to them patient study.

AGES.—Probably the time has not yet come when, unaided, the English reader can readily perceive and remember the latitude with which the Hebrew word *'olam* is used throughout the O.T. Primarily derived from a stem which simply means *what*

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

*is concealed*, this word, when applied to time, comes to denote concealed and so indefinite duration. By the force of modern usage, however, the English phrase "for ever" is apt to carry the ordinary mind beyond this, and when hardened by dogmatic theologians may be put to a strain it will not bear. Hence the present translator is not as yet prepared wholly to forego the circumlocutory rendering "age-abiding" or "to times age-abiding." Nevertheless he clearly perceives how heavy and cumbrous this translation is apt to become, especially in some connections. Impressed with the practical success of Dr. Weymouth's phrase, adopted for corresponding use in the N.T., "to the ages,"—this lighter and easier phrase has been cautiously employed in the present translation. The following examples will serve as a specimen of the effect of this idiomatic rendering:—5:11, 9:5-7, 10:16, 12:7, 15:5. The word occurs nearly 150 times throughout the Psalter; Ps. 145:13 is the chief instance in which the word is used in the plural, and definitely hardened into "ages" with "all" prefixed.

ANOINTED.—The Heb. word *mashiah* ("messiah," "christ," "anointed") occurs 10 times in the Psalms (namely in 2:2, 18:50, 20:6, 28:8, 84:9, 89:38, 51, 105:15, 132:10, 17); and about 30 times elsewhere in the O.T. *Christos* ("christ") is its uniform Greek (Septuagint) representative. Broadly it (or its verb) is used of priests (Lev. 4:3, 5, 16), prophets (1 K. 19:16), and kings (1 K. 1:34); and therefore it is not surprising that it should be especially employed of David and the heirs with him of the covenant of kingship announced by the prophet Nathan (2 S. 7). In several of the above references in the Psalter, the primary allusion is to the holder of the typical messiahship for the time being (as in 84:9), although in some cases the allusion is couched in such terms as to point onwards to THE Messiah ultimately to come in David's line. Outside the Psalter, one of the most beautiful and pathetic references to a typical Messiah is found in Lam. 4:20. In one of the above instances (105:15) the term "messiah" in the plural is used of the patriarchs, simply to signify their consecration to the office of speaking for God and to show the inviolability of their persons. The reference to THE Messiah himself in 2:2 is plain from the scope of the psalm. There are many references to the Messiah in the Psalms where this particular official name is not mentioned.

## PSALMS—SUMMARY OF SACRED LEARNING

EARTH.—“The earth” (Heb. *erez*) figures in the Psalms more largely than do “the heavens”; but does not severely tax the expositor. Still there are some interesting points about it demanding careful consideration: the chief of which is, whether the original word should be rendered “earth” or “land.” It all depends on the extent of the outlook; which may generally be gathered from the scope of the context, or from particular terms therein. The importance of the right determination may be seen in 37, in which the alternative “earth” “or land” is maintained throughout, and in the Exp. of 100, where conflicting considerations are weighed. The earth is regarded as resting on primeval waters (24:1, 136:6), to which poetic allusions may possibly be found (in 40:2). Nevertheless it is firmly and abidingly founded (104:5); though not beyond the possibility of destruction or change (102:25, 26). Perhaps with allusion to its primeval emergence from the wild waters of chaos it is said to have been “born” (90:2), and to this event dramatic reference is probably made (104:6, 8). Jehovah visits the earth with his bountiful showers (65:9); and, indeed, it is full of his goodness (33:5, 104:13, 24). To be wholly of earth is, however, a matter of reproach (10:18); and a prevailing tendency to earth may be ground for lamentation (44:25; cp. 119:25). As contrasted with its “lower parts” (doubtless synonymous with Hades, 63:9), the earth’s surface is styled “the land of the living” (116:9, 142:5). In a picture of surpassing beauty, Truth is depicted as springing like a vigorous growth out of earth (85:11): surely a prophetic word.

*The World* (Heb. *tebhel*: “perh. as orig. productive”—O.G.) forms an excellent synonym for “the earth.” It is to be found as follows:—9:8, 18:15, 19:4, 24:1, 33:8, 50:12, 77:18, 89:11, 90:2, 96:10, 13, 97:4, 98:7, 9.

HADES.—This word occurs 16 times in the following version of the Psalms; namely, 6:5, 9:17, 16:10, 18:5, 30:3, 31:17, 49:14, 14, 15, 55:5, 86:13, 88:3, 89:48, 116:3, 139:8, 141:7. It always stands for the Heb. *sheol*, a word which is found 65 times in the O.T., and of which in the Septuagint, *hades* is the Greek representative. Besides these 65 examples of the word in the O.T., there are 10 more in the N.T. in which “hades” occurs, in its own right, in the Greek original, still in the same sense as *sheol* in the Hebrew Bible. The great gain of employing the same word throughout the English Bible—whether as a transla-

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

tion or as a reproduction of an original word—is, that it brings into line, to the English eye and ear, all the direct allusions by name to the subject of Hades; and, in all reason, 75 examples ought to enable every English student to judge for himself what Hades in the Bible means—whether place or state or both, and whether the same now as it ever has been, or more or less changed by the coming of the Messiah.

“Hades” is the under-world considered as the realm of the dead. It includes the grave (49:14, 141:7), but is wider, and deeper: wider, inasmuch as it embraces such dead as have received no burial (Gen. 37:33, 34, Jonah 2:2); and deeper, in that it is set in contrast with the heavens for height (Job 11:8, Amos 9:2). It is so far synonymous with both “death” and the “grave” that it may frequently be employed for either without serious change of meaning (*e.g.*, 6:5); and yet some things are affirmed of “hades” which cannot well be spoken of mere death or the grave—as, for example, “hades” has for inhabitants “shades” or “ghosts” (Heb. *repha'im*) (Job 25:6, Prov. 2:18, 9:18, 21:16, Isa. 14:9, 26:14, 19, Ps. 88:10), and is divisible into lower and higher (Deu. 32:22, Ps. 86:13), the lower hades being in one case pointedly expressed as “the well of the pit” (Ps. 55:23). It is undeniable that, before the coming of the Messiah, “hades” was invested with deep gloom, and caused, even in the minds of the godly, strong aversion, leading to earnest prayers to be saved from it and devout thanks for deliverance from the immediate prospect of entering it (18:4-6, 30:3, 116:1-6). Not always, it is true, was this aversion felt; and, in one remarkable case, Job (14:13) is heard crying out:—

Oh that in hades thou wouldst hide me!

That thou wouldst keep me secret, until the turn of thine anger!

That thou wouldst set for me a fixed time and remember me!

Notwithstanding such occasional sighing for “hades” as a relief,—not without some hope of deliverance,—the description of hades given by Dr. Driver in his Parallel Psalter (Glossary I., “*sheol*”) is scarcely too strong, when he says:—“The inhabitants of which pass a dim and shadowy existence, unworthy of the name of life, cut off from the memory and protecting help of God (Ps. 88:5), and where the voice of praise is for ever hushed (Ps. 6:5, 30:9, 88:10-12, 115:17, Is. 38:18).” At the same time it should be remembered, as against the extreme view that death ends all,

## PSALMS—SUMMARY OF SACRED LEARNING

that the very existence of such a place or state as hades is one of extreme significance. It seems expressly to wait some future development.

Turning now to the list of passages in the Psalms in which the "hades" is mentioned, and at once dismissing those in which the word appears as a mere synonym of "death" and "the grave," and so serve more for general impressiveness than for specific teaching,—what do we find?

Doubtless we may gather up several incidental lessons; such as the graphic way in which the bones of the hastily buried, or the unburied, are described in the last passage in the list as lying scattered about the mouth of hades—which sustains the position that hades includes the grave; and such as the basis furnished, by the existence of a lower hades and the well of the pit (55:15, 23), for the teaching of our Lord (in Lk. 16), that whatever may be the measure of unconsciousness generally experienced by the selfish and unsaved dead, yet that it is possible they may be *aroused* to an acute consciousness of pain and to remorseful memories and apprehensions. Rising, however, far above these incidental lessons, is the prospect opened up by at least two of these hadean passages in the Psalms of a Divine Victory over hades. One of these (49:15) is indeed general and theocratic rather than messianic; but it is positive in terms and highly inspiring: "God will do for me what with all your wealth ye rich men cannot do for yourselves, far less for each other: he will ransom my soul—my entire personality: out of the hand of Hades will he take me, as Enoch was taken according to the startling story in Genesis." On the whole this sudden outburst of promise looks towards transformation without dying rather than to actual resurrection. The other and earlier passage (16:10) just as strongly makes for resurrection after dying, inasmuch as the flesh so rests securely, that, although the body of the speaker should enter hades, yet should he not be abandoned to hades. This was either fulfilled in David or in one of David's line for whom prophetically he spake. Jesus of Nazareth, rising from the dead and ascending to the Father's right-hand, has, in beginning and pledge, abolished death and revolutionised hades: of the dwellers in which he has become Lord (Rom. 14:9) and of the keys of which he has taken possession (Rev. 1:18).

HEART.—"All scholars know that the Hebrew word commonly rendered 'heart' is used very largely to denote not so much the seat of the emotions as the seat of thought." So proclaims

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

the Preface to the Standard American Revision; but there is still need of insistence in making more widely known among Bible readers this far-reaching fact, inasmuch as misapplications of Scripture are extensively prevalent, based on the erroneous assumption that, as in popular speech, so in the Bible, a strong contrast may be assumed to exist between the "heart" and the "head." The mischief done by this single error is enormous, seeing that the disparagement thereby cast upon the "understanding" in matters of religion is often pushed to such an extreme as to exaggerate the emotional element not only to an unscriptural but to a practically dangerous degree. Nevertheless, let the emotions receive their due; and let the article "Reins," below, be well considered.

HEAVENS.—"The heavens" (Heb. *shammayim*) hold a conspicuous place in the Psalms. Always plural in the Hebrew, probably owing to the primary conception of "height," and so "height above height," and generally "the heights," the word has in it enough of amplitude to include varying degrees of elevation; such as that in which winds blow (78:26) and birds fly (8:8, 79:2) and that in which moon, stars (8:3) and sun (19:4) appear; until it includes the dwelling-place of Jehovah himself (115:3; cp. 1 K. 8:30 ff.). The elevation of "the heavens" above the earth is sometimes expressed (103:11) and often implied (14:2=53:2, 102:19). "The heavens" were made by Jehovah (33:6, 96:5, 115:15, 121:2, 124:8, 134:3, 136:5, 146:6); and accordingly he is above them (57:5, 11=118:5 and 113:6) and so, in fact or in prayer, is his "glory" (113:4, 148:13). In some sense, Jehovah has reserved "the heavens" to himself, in contrast to the earth as the assigned portion of the sons of men (115:16); in some sense also, as would seem, man's dominion over the earth is to be used as a means of uplifting Jehovah's glory above "the heavens" (8:1 Exp.). Notwithstanding Jehovah's omniscience (139:7-10) and his peculiar rule in Zion (99:1, 2), his throne is emphatically in "the heavens" (2:4, 11:4, 103:19, 123:1): there his attendants wait upon him, and from thence his messengers go forth (103:20, 21). The heavens were made with understanding (136:5), are ancient (68:33—though Del. thinks this text refers to "primeval" heavens, "in their origin reaching further back than the terrestrial heavens of the second and fourth days of creation"), are holy (20:6; cp. Mt. 6:10), and are enduring (89:29), although they may ultimately perish (102:26—in view of which cp. Isa. 65:17). This brief

## PSALMS—SUMMARY OF SACRED LEARNING

survey invests with deepened interest the gathering of all things in heaven and earth under one head (Eph. 1:10), and their reconciliation (Col. 1:20), as also the prospect of a practical descent of heaven to earth (Rev. 21:3, 4).

*The Skies* (or "fleecy clouds"—Heb. *shahakim*) are an interesting synonym of "the heavens," chiefly because used to exalt man's conceptions of the Divine Government: see—18:11, 35:5, 57:10, 68:34, 77:17, 78:23, 89:6, 37, 108:4.

HOW HAPPY.—It is worthy of note that the first word in the Psalter is a word expressive of emotion, being "an exclamation: O the blessedness of so and so"—Del. "A less solemn expression than *Blessed*, without any explicit reference to God. To Heb. word is often rendered *Happy* in the A.V. (as Ps. 127:5, 144:15, 15, 146:1, Deut. 33:29, Job 5:17, Prov. 3:13, 14:21, 16:20, 28:14); and it ought for distinctness to be so rendered always"—Dr. It occurs in the Psalter 26 times:—1:1, 2:12, 32:1, 2, 33:12, 34:8, 40:4, 41:1, 65:4, 84:4, 5, 12, 89:15, 94:12, 106:3, 112:1, 119:1, 2, 127:5, 128:1, 2, 137:8, 9, 144:15, 15, 146:5.

HUMBLE(D).—A man may be outwardly humbled without becoming inwardly humble: which suggests how great a difference in moral value may exist between two words nearly identical in form. Just about as great a difference in meaning is found between the two Hebrew words '*anaw* and '*ani*, the former, according to Dr. Driver, is used "of one who humbles or submits himself voluntarily, esp. under the hand of God," and the latter signifies "one *humbled* involuntarily by external circumstances." Instead of going so far afield as to call the latter "poor," with Driver and others, the venture is made in the following translation to trust to the addition of the letter "d," which is quite significant to careful readers, and closely imitates the slender difference between the two Hebrew forms, at the same time it is well adapted to keep in mind the additional circumstance, well set forth by Driver when he further says: "nevertheless they do not differ greatly in application, especially in the Psalms, both being designations of the pious servants of Jehovah, the one term describing them from the point of view of their external condition, the other from that of their mental character or disposition." Incidentally, a lesson in various readings and in the inevitable risks of transmission, may be gleaned from the following initial examples of one of these words, which must show the dullest scholar how the inevitable happens in a case depending on the

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

length of a down stroke, no miracle intervening to prevent it: namely, 9:12, 18, 10:12, 17. Moreover the decided difference in sense even where there is no diversity of application, will instruct learners to be careful how they read.

JEHOVAH.—The employment of this English form of the Memorial name (Exo. 3:18) in the present version of the Psalter does not arise from any misgiving as to the more correct pronunciation, as being Yahweh; but solely from practical evidence personally selected of the desirability of keeping in touch with the public ear and eye in a matter of this kind, in which the principal thing is the easy recognition of the Divine name intended; as to the *meaning* of which every reader can continue to judge according to the evidence before him. If the persistent use of the form Yahweh, only had the effect of keeping the English reader in mind of the almost certain significance of this gracious name as equivalent to "The Becoming One," then the price of novelty and difficulty of recognition would not be too great to pay. But as the chief evidence of the significance of the name consists not nearly so much in its pronunciation as in the completeness with which it meets all requirements—especially as explaining how the Memorial name was fitted to become such, and to be the pre-eminent covenant name that it confessedly is, it has been thought desirable to fall back on the form of the name more familiar (while perfectly acceptable) to the general Bible-reading public. For a more complete statement of the derivation and meaning of this name, reference may be made to the present writer's "Emphasised Bible," Introduction, Chapter IV. See further "General Reflections" at the close of Pss. 92-99 and "Exposition" of 102.

KINDNESS.—It will appear incredible to such as have chiefly regarded Jehovah as revealed in the terrors of Sinai or through his judgments on his enemies, that the noun for "kindness" occurs 127 times in the Psalms alone, generally as attributed to himself as one of his own attributes. Yet this is strictly correct. If "loving kindness" is in form simplified to "kindness" in order to bring it into line with the adjective "kind," and if we are content to conclude that "mercy," *when needed* (as it so often is), is involved in "kindness," and so consistently render the one Hebrew word *hesedh* by the one English word "kindness" thereby securing uniformity,—then all the impressiveness and significance of the constant recurrence of the word "kindness" throughout these "Songs of Zion" will be realised. No

## PSALMS—SUMMARY OF SACRED LEARNING

student worthy of the name will deem it superfluous that all the occurrences of this consoling and inspiring word are here set forth for convenient reference at any moment:—5:7, 6:4, 13:5, 17:7, 18:50, 21:7, 23:6, 25:6, 7, 10, 26:3, 31:6, 16, 21, 32:10, 33:5, 18, 22, 36:5, 7, 10, 40:10, 11, 42:8, 44:26, 48:9, 51:1, 52:7, 8, 57:3, 10, 59:10, 16, 17, 61:7, 62:12, 63:3, 66:20, 69:13, 16, 77:8, 85:7, 10, 86:5, 13, 15, 88:11, 89:1, 2, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49, 90:14, 92:2, 94:18, 98:3, 100:5, 101:1, 103:4, 8, 11, 17, 106:1, 7, 45, 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43, 108:4, 109:12, 16, 21, 26, 115:1, 117:2, 118:1, 2, 3, 4, 29, 119:41, 64, 76, 88, 124, 149, 159, 130:7, 136:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 138:2, 3, 141:5, 143:8, 12, 144:2, 145:8, 147:11. To observe the companion words with which this term is frequently and significantly paired, will add an additional interest to the study hereby furnished.

*Men of kindness* may be regarded by some as an awkward circumlocution for representing the companion word *hasidh*, closely related to the abstract noun *hesedh*, "kindness"; but in a version so literal as the present, and under pressure of the great desirability of revealing the relation between the two Hebrew words, some awkwardness may be forgiven. Among the various translations which have been put forward to represent *hasidh*, none could be more acceptable than the familiar term "godly" provided that term could be relied upon to suggest likeness to God in respect of his attribute of kindness. In any case, it seems extremely desirable to keep this suggestion well in evidence by the most effective means within our reach. Even then the precise phase of relationship between the men of kindness and the God of kindness would remain undetermined: whether as descriptive of such as are the especial objects of Jehovah's kindness, or of those who are honoured to be the representatives and reflectors of that kindness among men. Judging from the fact that some critics regard the word as of passive and others as of active formation, and that the evidence of usage leans about equally in either direction,—the probability is that *hasidh* is a middle term which has absorbed into itself both of these delightful conceptions, and so signifies those who at one and the same time receive and reflect the kindness of God. It is all the more desirable that a happy term should be found, already possessed of this amount of flexibility or by consent invested therewith, because of the evidence, which though slight seems sufficient, to show that the Levites, as a tribe, were

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

the abiding official representatives of the kindness of Jehovah; and that from this appropriation the term was further used to denote the entire class of Ideal Israelites. The primary grounds for thinking of the Levites in this connection are discovered in the significant application of the term to Levi himself in Deu. 33:8, in the facility with which in Ps. 132:9, 16 the term would specify an especial class to accompany "priests" (which would naturally be Levites), and in the original calling of the tribe of Levi to be the representatives of all their brethren of the remaining tribes. With these elementary probabilities floating in the careful reader's mind, it is believed that he will be glad for a second series of references to be appended in which the *hasidhim* or men of kindness are mentioned in the Psalms:—4:3, 12:1, 16:10, 18:25, 30:4, 31:23, 32:6, 37:28, 43:1, 50:5, 52:9, 79:2, 85:8, 86:2, 89:19, 97:10, 116:15, 132:9, 16, 145:10, 17, 148:14, 149:1, 5, 9.

KINGDOM.—The Psalms are peculiarly rich in instruction as to the Coming Kingdom of God upon earth. The reader who will study in succession Psalms 2, 45, 72, 92-99, and 110,—first independently of the author's expositions, for the purpose of maturing a judgment of his own,—and then entering into a comparison with the views set forth by the writer of these Studies,—will probably not feel any need of an extended summary in this chapter. The chief things to bear in mind as preliminaries to a profitable investigation are: *First*, a clear apprehension of the vast difference between the physical and moral spheres of the Divine Government, in that, within the former realm, God speaks and it is done without fail, disobedience being an impossibility; whereas, within the latter—the moral—realm, the promulgation of Jehovah's will is always in fact, even if not in form, an appeal to created wills, calling for but not compelling obedience; and, *second*, that in point of fact Jehovah is always and unchangeably the absolutely rightful ruler of all the universe. There is always an abiding reign of God—whether of right in the moral world or of effectuating force in the natural world—which never begins, never lapses, never ends. Jehovah never abdicates the throne of his own essential supremacy. In regard of this, his reign never waits, never comes, never goes. The more clearly this is seen and the more firmly it is held, the more constant will be the perception that where undeniably such movements and changes are predicated, there some especial phase or form or manifestation of the Divine Kingdom must be intended.

## PSALMS—SUMMARY OF SACRED LEARNING

Thus David's throne, David's reign, David's Kingdom must be some conditioned form of Jehovah's own reign. So with the Messiah's Kingdom—whether considered as a continuation of David's or as its antitype—it must always be Jehovah's absolute reign only as conditioned and modified by the intervention of the Messiah. The only other caution which needs to be borne in mind, is formally treated of in the following exposition of Psalm 2, where it is pointed out that, according to the evidence undeniably present in the sacred text, Messiah's reign will combine the two principles of suasion and force. It only remains to add, that a careful discrimination between the Church and the Kingdom which has been scrupulously maintained throughout the following Expositions (cp. 45, 87, 102, 105), appears strongly to make for the awakening conclusion, that a goodly number of the Psalms are emphatically Songs of Messiah's Coming Kingdom which await the fulfillment of the necessary conditions to render them in deed and in truth fitted in all their length and breadth to be sung throughout the whole ransomed earth (cp. *e.g.* 66 & 92-99 and General Reflections). To see that only then can they be sung with conscious fitness of self-appropriation, is to discover exactly how they can even now be sung by faith.

REINS.—The Heb. *kelayoth*, “as seat of emotion and affection” (O.G.), has by no means received the attention from Bible readers which it deserves. The “reins” were “regarded by the Hebrews as the springs of *feeling*: hence, when it is said of God that He trieth (or seeth) the ‘hearts and reins’ it implies that he is cognisant of man's emotions and affections, not less than of his thoughts”—Dr. The word for “reins” is found in the following places in the Psalms: 7:9, 16:7, 26:2, 73:21, 139:13, with which Job 19:27, Prov. 23:16, Jer. 11:20, 12:2, 17:10, 22:12 may be usefully compared. See also “Heart.”

RIGHTEOUSNESS.—“Righteousness” is not only the love and practice of what is right—which may be distinguished as *ethical*; and the rightful righting of such as have been in the wrong—which may be named *evangelical*; but also the righting of the wronged by the punishment of those who have injured them—and this for convenience we term *vindictory* righteousness, a species of righteousness which—as towards those in whose behalf it is wrought—is synonymous with “kindness” and “salvation”; and which figures largely in the prophets, especially Isaiah and in the Psalms. From Isaiah may be selected, as good examples, 48:18 and 62:1; and, in the Psalms, the following

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

places may be consulted:—22:31, 24:5, 31:1, 33:5, 35:28, 36:6, 10, 40:9, 10, 48:10, 65:5, 71:15, 85:10, 11, 94:14, 15, 98:2, 3, 103:6, 17, 111:7, 8, 119:40, 137, 138, 142, 132:9, 16 (cp. 2 Ch. 6:41), 143:1, 11, 145:7, 17.

In such connections as the above the word "judgment" itself assumes the meaning of *vindication*: 1:5, 35:23, 72:4, 103:6, 140:12, cp. Isa. 40:27, 49:4.

SELAH.—The precise significance of this word must be said to be still uncertain. That it generally implies a *pause* may safely be asserted; though the object of the pause remains obscure. That it practically serves as a musical *Nota bene*, and by an interlude of musical instruments makes impressive the fact or sentiment just uttered, is with some eminent scholars a favourite theory. The most ingenious and probable conclusion, drawn from actual usage, is that suggested by Dr. Bullinger in "Things to Come"; namely, that it virtually says: "Such being the case then note what follows;" and, to suggest as much without dogmatically affirming it, the symbolic device has here been adopted of a double "fist" with fingers pointing both ways, which may at least hold the place until more conclusive evidence has been secured. That the word is chiefly confined to old psalms suggests the doubt whether it was not originally a mere copyist's acknowledgement of some peculiarity in his exemplar now wholly and hopelessly lost in obscurity.

SOUL.—If the convenience of translators were the chief thing to be considered, it could be wished they might rely on the English word "soul" as the uniform rendering of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, and leave it to the English reader to discriminate between the divergent shades of meaning involved in the various usages. Whether "soul" stand for "principle of life" (as in 7:3) or as "principle or organ of feeling" (as in 6:3) the observant reader could soon judge; and he might not be long before waking up to the fact that, as Dr. Driver beautifully expresses it, "soul" is frequently used "as a pathetic circumlocution for the personal pronoun, esp. where it is desired to represent a person as vividly conscious of some emotion or experience whether pleasurable or painful, 3:1 ('that say of *my soul*' = 'that say *of me*,' but of 'me' represented as keenly sensible of what is said), 11:1, 25:13 ('his soul' = he himself, but depicting him as keenly sensible of the enjoyment described)." But when *nephesh* is freely used to convey the motion of *desire*, *appetite* or *greed*, then it seems desirable for a translation to say so plainly; since "Aha, our

## PSALMS—SUMMARY OF SACRED LEARNING

soul" (35:25), "Give me not over to the soul of my enemies" (27:12), are scarcely intelligible to the untrained English reader. It may be doubted whether Driver has given quite enough prominence to the simple idea of personality as filling the word "soul," though undoubtedly he recognises it. See our Exposition of 16:10; and cp. Eze. 18:4. Apart from any nice shades of meaning in the word "soul," the broad psychological fact remains that by means of it a man is solicited to exercise his marvellous capacity of projecting himself from himself, to view himself from without himself, and to address himself in the language of expostulation and exhortation; of which 42:5, 11, 43:5 and 103:1, 2, 22 (see Expositions) are memorable examples.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PSALMS AS A STIMULUS TO HOLY LIVING

Holy Living is here regarded as something more than righteous conduct; just as being is more than doing, and holiness goes beyond righteousness. Correct conduct in all its forms is necessarily included, but holy living has in it the vitality and the bloom which spring from communion with a holy God. To such living, the Psalms are, by experience, found to supply a mighty stimulus.

That they should do so, lies in the very nature of things. Not only do they emphasise character in a remarkably varied and persistently recurring way, but they set the sympathetic soul in pursuit of character by moving the deepest springs of desire and endeavour. They bring the soul into contact with God, in the highest and most spiritual acts of adoration, praise and prayer. To use the Psalms devoutly, is to come into the presence-chamber of the All-Holy. One has only to consider the proportion of direct address to Deity which the Psalms contain, to perceive the extent to which the man who sincerely uses them commits himself to sentiments of penitence, confidence, adoration, love, desire; so as to place himself under moral compulsion either to mean what he says, or to desist from saying it,—unless he would recklessly embark on the repugnant course of daring hypocrisy.