

## PSALM XCVIII.

**TITLE AND SUBJECT.**—*This sacred ode, which bears simply the title of "A Psalm," follows fitly upon the last, and is evidently an integral part of the series of royal Psalms. If xcvi. described the publication of the gospel, and so the setting up of the kingdom of heaven, the present Psalm is a kind of CORONATION HYMN, officially proclaiming the conquering Messiah as Monarch over the nations, with blast of trumpets, clapping of hands, and celebration of triumphs. It is a singularly bold and lively song. The critics have fully established the fact that similar expressions occur in Isaiah, but we see no force in the inference that therefore it was written by him; on this principle half the books in the English language might be attributed to Shakespeare. The fact is that these associated Psalms make up a mosaic, in which each one of them has an appropriate place, and is necessary to the completeness of the whole; and therefore we believe them to be each and all the work of one and the same mind. Paul, if we understand him aright, ascribes Psalm ninety-five to David, and as we believe that the same writer must have written the whole group, we ascribe this also to the son of Jesse. However that may be, the song is worthy to rank among the most devout and soul-stirring of sacred lyrics.*

**DIVISION.**—*We have here three stanzas of three verses each. In the first, 1—3, the subject of praise is announced; in the second, 4—6, the manner of that praise is prescribed; and in the third, 7—9, the universal extent of it is proclaimed.*

### EXPOSITION.

**O** SING unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

2 The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

1. "*O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things.*" We had a new song before (Ps. xcvi.) because the Lord was coming, but now we have another new song because he has come, and seen and conquered. Jesus, our King, has lived a marvellous life, died a marvellous death, risen by a marvellous resurrection, and ascended marvellously into heaven. By his divine power he has sent forth the Holy Spirit doing marvels, and by that sacred energy his disciples have also wrought marvellous things and astonished all the earth. Idols have fallen, superstitions have withered, systems of error have fled, and empires of cruelty have perished. For all this he deserves the highest praise. His acts have proved his Deity, Jesus is Jehovah, and therefore we sing unto him as the LORD. "*His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory*"; not by the aid of others, but by his own unweaponed hand his marvellous conquests have been achieved. Sin, death, and hell fell beneath his solitary prowess, and the idols and the errors of mankind have been overthrown and smitten by his hand alone. The victories of Jesus among men are all the more wonderful because they are accomplished by means to all appearance most inadequate; they are due not to physical but to moral power—the energy of goodness, justice, truth; in a word, to the power of his *holy* arm. His holy influence has been the sole cause of success. Jesus never stoops to use policy, or brute force; his unsullied perfections secure to him a real and lasting victory over all the powers of evil, and that victory will be gained as dexterously and easily as when a warrior strikes his adversary with his *right hand* and stretches him prone upon the earth. Glory be unto the Conqueror, let new songs be chanted to his praise. Stirred by contemplating his triumphs, our pen could not forbear to praise him in the following hymn:—

Forth to the battle rides our King;  
He climbs his conquering car;  
He fits his arrows to the string,  
And smites his foes afar.

Convictions pierce the stoutest hearts,  
 They bleed, they faint, they die ;  
 Slain by Immanuel's well-aimed darts,  
 In helpless heaps they lie.

Behold, he bares his two-edged sword,  
 And deals almighty blows,  
 His all-revealing, killing word  
 'Twixt joints and marrow goes.

Anon arrayed in robes of grace  
 He rides the trampled plain,  
 With pity beaming from his face,  
 And mercy in his train.

Mighty to save he now appears,  
 Mighty to raise the dead,  
 Mighty to stanch the bleeding wound,  
 And lift the fallen head.

Victor alike in love and arms,  
 Myriads before him bend ;  
 Such are the Conqueror's matchless charms,  
 Each foe becomes his friend.

They crown him on the battle-field  
 Of all the nations King ;  
 With trumpets and with cornets loud  
 They make the welkin ring.

The salvation which Jesus has accomplished is wrought out with wonderful wisdom, hence it is ascribed to his right hand ; it meets the requirements of justice, hence we read of his holy arm ; it is his own unaided work, hence all the glory is ascribed to him ; and it is marvellous beyond degree, hence it deserves a new song.

2. "*The Lord hath made known his salvation,*"—by the coming of Jesus and by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, by whose power the gospel was preached among the Gentiles. The Lord is to be praised not only for effecting human salvation, but also for making it known, for man would never have discovered it for himself ; nay, not so much as one single soul would ever have found out for himself the way of mercy through a Mediator ; in every case it is a divine revelation to the mind and heart. In God's own light his light is seen. He must reveal his Son in us, or we shall be unable to discern him. "*His righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.*" This word "righteousness" is the favourite word of the apostle of the Gentiles ; he loves to dwell on the Lord's method of making man righteous, and vindicating divine justice by the atoning blood. What songs ought we to render who belong to a once heathen race, for that blessed gospel which is the power of God unto salvation, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." This is no close secret ; it is clearly taught in Scripture, and has been plainly preached among the nations. What was hidden in the types is "openly shewed" in the gospel.

3. "*He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel.*" To them Jesus came in the flesh, and to them was the gospel first preached ; and though they counted themselves unworthy of eternal life, yet the covenant was not broken, for the true Israel were called into fellowship and still remain so. The mercy which endureth for ever, and the fidelity which cannot forget a promise, secure to the chosen seed the salvation long ago guaranteed by the covenant of grace. "*All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*" Not to Abraham's seed alone after the flesh, but to the elect among all nations, has grace been given ; therefore, let the whole church of God sing unto him a new song. It was no small blessing, or little miracle, that throughout all lands the gospel should be published in so short a time, with such singular success and such abiding results. Pentecost deserves a new song as well as the Passion and the Resurrection ; let our hearts exult as we remember it. Our God, our own for ever blessed God, has been honoured by those who once bowed down before dumb idols ; his salvation has not only been heard of but seen among all people, it has been experienced as well as explained ; his Son is the actual Redeemer of a multitude out of all nations.

4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth : make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

5 Sing unto the LORD with the harp ; with the harp, and the voice of a Psalm.

6 With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

In these three verses we are taught how to praise the Lord.

4. "*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth.*" Every tongue must applaud, and that with the vigour which joy of heart alone can arouse to action. As men shout when they welcome a king, so must we. Loud hosannas, full of happiness, must be lifted up. If ever men shout for joy it should be when the Lord comes among them in the proclamation of his gospel reign. John Wesley said to his people, "Sing lustily, and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep ; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan." "*Make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise ;*" or "*Burst forth, and sing, and play.*" Let every form of exultation be used, every kind of music pressed into the service till the accumulated praise causes the skies to echo the joyful tumult. There is no fear of our being too hearty in magnifying the God of our salvation, only we must take care that the song comes from the heart, otherwise the music is nothing but a noise in his ears, whether it be caused by human throats, or organ pipes, or far-resounding trumpets. Loud let our hearts ring out the honours of our conquering Saviour ; with all our might let us extol the Lord who has vanquished all our enemies, and led our captivity captive. He will do this best who is most in love with Jesus :—

" I've found the pearl of greatest price,  
My heart doth sing for joy ;  
And sing I must, a Christ I have,  
Oh, what a Christ have I ! "

5. "*Sing unto the Lord with the harp.*" Skill in music should not be desecrated to the world's evil mirth, it should aid the private devotions of the saint, and then, like George Herbert, he will sing,—

" My God, my God,  
My music shall find thee,  
And every string  
Shall have his attribute to sing."

Martin Luther was thus wont to praise the Lord, whom he loved so well. God's praises should be performed in the best possible manner, but their sweetness mainly lies in spiritual qualities. The concords of faith and repentance, the harmonies of obedience and love are true music in the ear of the Most High, and better please him than "heaving bellows taught to blow," though managed by the noblest master of human minstrelsy. "*With the harp.*" A very sweet instrument of music, and capable of great expression. The repetition of the word is highly poetical, and shows that the daintiest expressions of poetry are none too rich for the praise of God. His worship should be plain, but not uncouth, if we can compass elegancies of expression there are occasions upon which they will be most appropriate ; God, who accepts the unlettered ditty of a ploughman, does not reject the smooth verse of a Cowper, or the sublime strains of a Milton. All repetitions are not vain repetitions, in sacred song there should be graceful repeats, they render the sense emphatic, and help to fire the soul ; even preachers do not amiss when they dwell on a word and sound it out again and again, till dull ears feel its emphasis. "*And the voice of a Psalm,*" or with a *musical voice*, as distinguished from common speech. Our voice has in it many modulations ; there is the voice of conversation, the voice of complaint, the voice of pleading, the voice of command, and there ought to be with each of us the voice of a Psalm. Man's voice is at its best when it sings the best words in the best spirit to the best of Beings. Love and war must not monopolise the lyric muse ; the love of God and the conquests of Immanuel should win to themselves man's sweetest strains. Do we sing enough unto the Lord ? May not the birds of the air rebuke our sullen and ungrateful silence ?

6. "With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise." God's worship should be heartily loud. The far resounding trump and horn well symbolise the power which should be put forth in praise. "Before the Lord, the King." On coronation days, and when beloved monarchs ride abroad, the people shout and the trumpets sound till the walls ring again. Shall men be more enthusiastic for their earthly princes than for the divine King? Is there no loyalty left among the subjects of the blessed and only Potentate? King Jehovah is his name; and there is none like it, have we no joyful noise for him? Let but the reigning power of Jesus be felt in the soul and we shall cast aside that chill mutter, drowned by the pealing organ, which is now so commonly the substitute for earnest congregational singing.

Say, if your hearts are tuned to sing,  
Is there a subject greater?  
Harmony all its strains may bring,  
But Jesus' name is sweeter.

Who of his love doth once partake,  
He evermore rejoices;  
Melody in our hearts we make,  
Melody with our voices.

7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

8 Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together

9 Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

7. "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof." Even its thunders will not be too grand for such a theme. Handel, in some of his sublime choruses, would have been glad of its aid to express his lofty conceptions, and assuredly the inspired Psalmist did well to call in such infinite uproar. The sea is his, let it praise its Maker. Within and upon its bosom it bears a wealth of goodness, why should it be denied a place in the orchestra of nature? Its deep bass will excellently suit the mystery of the divine glory. "The world, and they that dwell therein." The land should be in harmony with the ocean. Its mountains and plains, cities and villages, should prolong the voice of jubilee which welcomes the Lord of all. Nothing can be more sublime than this verse; the muses of Parnassus cannot rival the muse of Zion, the Castalian fount never sparkled like that "fount of every blessing" to which sacred bards are wont to ascribe their inspiration. Yet no song is equal to the majesty of the theme when Jehovah, the King, is to be extolled.

8. "Let the floods clap their hands." The rolling rivers, the tidal estuaries, the roaring cataracts, are here summoned to pay their homage, and to clap their hands, as men do when they greet their sovereigns with acclamation. "Let the hills be joyful together," or in concert with the floods. Silent as are the mighty mountains, let them forget themselves, and burst forth into a sublime uproariousness of mirth, such as the poet described when he wrote those vivid lines—

"Far along,  
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,  
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,  
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,  
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,  
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud."

9. "Before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth." Still more music such as made the stars twinkle with their soft kind eyes suited his first coming at Bethlehem, but his second advent calls for trumpets, for he is a judge; and for all earth's acclamations, for he has put on his royal splendour. The rule of Christ is the joy of nature. All things bless his throne, yea, and the very coming of it. As the dawn sets the earth weeping for joy at the rising of the sun, till the dewdrops stand in her eyes, so should the approach of Jesu's universal reign make all creation glad. "With righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." This is the joy of it. No tyrant and no weakling is he, to oppress the good or to indulge the vain, his law is good, his action right, his government the embodiment of justice. If ever there was a thing to rejoice in upon this poor, travelling earth, it is the coming



of such a deliverer, the ascension to the universal throne of such a governor. All hail, Jesus ! all hail ! Our soul faints with delight at the sound of thine approaching chariots, and can only cry, "Come quickly. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus !"

Keble's version of the last four verses is so truly beautiful that we cannot deny our readers the luxury of perusing it :—

"Ring out, with horn and trumpet ring,  
In shouts before the Lord the King :  
Let ocean with his fulness swing  
In restless unison :

"Earth's round and all the dwellers there,  
The mighty floods the burden bear,  
And clap the hand : in choral air  
Join every mountain lone.

"Tell out before the Lord, that he  
Is come, the Judge of earth to be,  
To judge the world in equity,  
Do right to realm and throne."

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Title.*—The inscription of the Psalm in Hebrew is only the single word *מִזְמֹר* Mizmor, "Psalm" (whence probably the title "orphan Mizmor" in the Talmudic treatise *Avodah Zara*).—*J. J. S. Perowne.*

*Title.*—Hengstenberg remarks, "This is the only Psalm which is entitled simply 'a Psalm.' This common name of all the Psalms cannot be employed here in its general sense, but must have a peculiar meaning." He considers that it indicates that this is the lyric accompaniment of the more decidedly prophetic Psalm which precedes it,—in fact, the Psalm of that prophecy. He also notes that in the original we have in verses 5 and 6 words akin to the title brought into great prominence, and perhaps this may have suggested it.

*Title.*—It is at least interesting to notice that a song of Zion which so exults in the king's arrival should be called pre-eminently *מִזְמֹר* Mizmor ; as if the Psalm of Psalms were that which celebrates *Israel, and the earth at large, blessed in Messiah's Advent.*—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

*Whole Psalm.*—A noble, spirit-stirring Psalm. It may have been written on the occasion of a great national triumph at the time ; but may, perhaps, afterwards be taken up at the period of the great millennial restoration of all things. The victory here celebrated may be in prophetic vision, and that at Armageddon. Then will salvation and righteousness be openly manifested in the sight of the hostile nations. Israel will be exalted ; and the blessed conjunction of mercy and truth will gladden and assure the hearts of all who at that time are Israelites indeed. Godliness will form the reigning characteristic of the whole earth.—*Thomas Chalmers.*

*Whole Psalm.*—The subject of the Psalm is the praise of Jehovah. It consists of three strophes of three verses each. The first strophe shows *why*, the second *how* Jehovah is to be praised ; and the third *who* are to praise him.—*Frederick Fysh.*

*Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm is an evident prophecy of Christ's coming to save the world ; and what is here *foretold* by David is, in the Blessed Virgin's Song, chanted forth as being *accomplished*. David is the *Voice*, and Mary is the *Echo*.

1. DAVID. "O sing unto the Lord a new song." (The *Voice*.)

MARY. "My soul doth magnify the Lord." (The *Echo*.)

2. DAVID. "He hath done marvellous things." (The *Voice*.)

MARY. "He that is mighty hath done great things." (The *Echo*.)

3. DAVID. "With his own right hand and holy arm hath he gotten himself the victory." (The *Voice*.)

MARY. "He hath showed strength with his arm, and scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." (The *Echo*.)

4. DAVID. "The Lord hath made known his salvation; his righteousness hath he openly showed," &c. (The *Voice*.)  
 MARY. "His mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation." (The *Echo*.)
5. DAVID. "He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel." (The *Voice*.)  
 MARY. "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy." (The *Echo*.)

These parallels are very striking; and it seems as if Mary had this Psalm in her eye when she composed her song of triumph. And this is a farther argument that the whole Psalm, whether it record the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, or the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, is yet to be ultimately understood of the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, and the proclamation of his gospel through all the nations of the earth: and taken in this view, no language can be too strong, nor poetic imagery too high, to point out the unsearchable riches of Christ.—*Adam Clarke*.

*Verse 1.*—"O sing unto the Lord a new song." This is man's end, to seek God in this life, to see God in the next; to be a subject in the kingdom of grace, and a saint in the kingdom of glory. Whatsoever in this world befalleth us, we must sing: be thankful for weal, for woe: songs ought always to be in our mouth, and sometimes a new song: for so David here, "*sing a new song*:" that is, let us put off the old man, and become new men, new creatures in Christ: for the old man sings old songs: only the new man sings a new song: he speaketh with a new tongue, and walks in new ways, and therefore doth new things, and sings new songs; his language is not of Babylon or Egypt, but of Canaan; his communication doth edify men, his song glorify God. Or a new song, that is, a fresh song, *nova res, novum canticum*, new for a new benefit, Eph. v. 20: "*Give thanks always for all things*." It is very gross to thank God only in gross, and not in parcel. Hast thou been sick and now made whole? praise God with the *leper*, Luke xvii.: sing a new song for this new salve. Dost thou hunger and thirst after righteousness, whereas heretofore thou couldst not endure the words of exhortation and doctrine? sing a new song for this new grace. Doth Almighty God give thee a true sense of thy sin, whereas heretofore thou didst draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with cart ropes, and wast given over to work all uncleanness with greediness? *O sing, sing, sing*, a new song for this new mercy.

Or *new*, that is, no common or ordinary song; but as God's mercy toward us is exceeding marvellous and extraordinary, so our thanks ought to be most exquisite, and more than ordinary: not new in regard of the matter, for we may not pray to God or praise God otherwise than he hath prescribed in his word, which is the old way, but new in respect of the manner and making, that as occasion is offered, we may bear our wits after the best fashion to be thankful.

Or, because this Psalm is prophetic, a *new* song, that is, the song of the glorious angels at Christ's birth, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*," (Luke ii. 14); a song which the world never heard before: that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head is an old song, the first that ever was sung; but this was no *plain song*, till Christ did manifest himself in the flesh. In the Old Testament there were many old songs, but in the New Testament a new song. That "unto us is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," is in many respects a *new song*; for whereas Christ was but shadowed in the Law, he is showed in the Gospel; and *new*, because sung of new men, of all men. For the sound of the Gospel is gone through all the earth, unto the ends of the world (Rom. x. 18); whereas in old time God's old songs were sung in Jewry: "His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion," Psalm lxxvi. 1, 2.—*John Boys*.

*Verse 1.*—"A new song." O ye who are new in Christ, though formerly old in the Old Adam, sing ye to the Lord.—*Psalter of Peter Lombard*, 1474.

*Verse 1.*—"He hath done marvellous things." He has opened his greatness and goodness in the work of redemption. What *marvels* has not Christ done? 1. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. 2. Born of a virgin. 3. Healed all manner of diseases. 4. Fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes. 5. Raised the dead. 6. And what was more *marvellous*, died himself. 7. Rose again by his own power. 8. Ascended to heaven. 9. Sent down the Holy Ghost. 10. And made his apostles and their testimony the instruments of enlightening, and ultimately converting, the world.—*Adam Clarke*.

*Verse 1.*—"His right hand." Since the Psalmist says, that Christ hath gotten him the victory by his right hand and his arm, it is not only a demonstration of his divine and infinite power, but also excludes all other means, as the merits of saints and their meretricious works.—*Martin Luther.*

*Verse 1.*—"Holy arm." The creation was the work of God's fingers: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers," Ps. viii. 3; redemption a work of his arm; "His holy arm hath gotten him the victory": yea, it was a work of his heart, even that bled to death to accomplish it.—*Thomas Adams.*

*Verse 1.*—A clergyman in the county of Tyrone had, for some weeks, observed a little ragged boy come every Sunday, and place himself in the centre of the aisle, directly opposite the pulpit, where he seemed exceedingly attentive to the services. He was desirous of knowing who the child was, and for this purpose hastened out, after the sermon, several times, but never could see him, as he vanished the moment service was over, and no one knew whence he came, or anything about him. At length the boy was missed from his usual situation in the church for some weeks. At this time a man called on the minister, and told him a person very ill was desirous of seeing him; but added, "I am really ashamed to ask you to go so far; but it is a child of mine, and he refuses to have any one but you; he is altogether an extraordinary boy, and talks a great deal about things that I do not understand." The clergyman promised to go, and went, though the rain poured down in torrents, and he had six miles of rugged mountain country to pass. On arriving where he was directed, he saw a most wretched cabin indeed, and the man he had seen in the morning was waiting at the door. He was shown in, and found the inside of the hovel as miserable as the outside. In a corner, on a little straw, he beheld a person stretched out, whom he recognised as the little boy who had so regularly attended his church. As he approached the wretched bed the child raised himself up, and, stretching forth his arms, said, "His own right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory," and immediately he expired.—*K. Arvine.*

*Verse 2.*—"The Lord hath made known his salvation." By the appearance of his Son in the flesh, and the wonders which he did. "His righteousness hath he openly shewed," etc., in the gospel, to all men; that righteousness which is called the "righteousness of God," and which is enjoyed by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference. Rom. iii. 22.—*B. Boothroyd.*

*Verse 2.*—"The Lord hath made known," etc. The word *נִתְּנָה* denotes not only a publication and promulgation, but also a clear and certain demonstration which produces conviction and causes the matter to be laid up in the mind and memory and preserved: for the proper signification of the root *נָתַן* is to lay up what is to be preserved. The word *נִתְּנָה* is added, which properly means to uncover, to be uncovered, hence *he revealed or uncovered*, that it might be both naked and clear, for the purpose of more fully illustrating the character of the manifestation of the Gospel, opposed to what is obscure, involved in shadows and types, and veiled in legal ceremonies. Of which the apostle treats expressly in 2 Cor. iii. Lastly, when it is added, that in the sight of the nations this uncovering is done, it signifies that this salvation pertains to them also, that it comes to them without distinction, since the Gospel is nakedly and clearly announced. From which it also clearly appears, that the matter and reason of the new song are found in such a singular event, since God who formerly permitted the nations to walk in their own ways, now under Messiah calls all without distinction to salvation through faith and newness of life.—*Venema.*

*Verse 2.*—"Made known:" He says not, *He shewed*, but *He made known*. Adam knew him, and predicted concerning him, "A man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh." Abel knew him, who offered the lamb; Seth knew him, and called upon him; Noah knew him, and saved all the race in the ark; Abraham knew him, and offered up his son to him. But because the world had forgotten him and worshipped idols, the Lord made his Jesus known, when he sent the Word in flesh to the Jews, and revealed his righteousness to the nations, when he justified them through faith. Wherefore did he reveal him to the nations? Because of his mercy. Wherefore did he make him known to the Jews? Because of his truth, that is, his promise.—*Honorius, the Continuator of Gerhohus.*

*Verse 3.*—"He hath remembered his mercy and his truth." The Psalmist very properly observes, that God in redeeming the world "remembered his truth," which







of Palestine, and that they fell sweetly on the ear, mingling with the songs of birds, and the scent of flowers in spring. The ploughman as he guided his plough chanted the hallelujah, and the reaper, the vine dresser, and the shepherd sang the songs of David. "These," he says, "are our love songs, these the instruments of our agriculture." Sidonius Apollinaris makes his boatmen, as they urge their heavily-laden barge up stream, sing Psalms, till the river banks echo again with the hallelujah, and beautifully applies the custom, in a figure, to the voyage of the Christian life.—*J. J. S. Perowne.*

5.—"The voice of a Psalm." In D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature" there is a very curious piece upon Psalm-singing, in which he mentions the spread of the singing of Psalms in France, which was first started among the Romanists by the version of Clement Marot, the favoured bard of Francis the First. In Marot's dedication occur the following lines:—

"Thrice happy they, who may behold,  
And listen in that age of gold!  
As by the plough the labourer strays,  
And carman 'mid the public ways,  
And tradesman in his shop shall swell  
Their voice in Psalm or canticle,  
Singing to solace toil; again  
From woods shall come a sweeter strain!  
Shepherd and shepherdess shall vie  
In many a tender Psalmody;  
And the Creator's name prolong,  
As rock and stream return their song!  
Begin then, ladies fair! begin  
The age renew'd that knows no sin!  
And with light heart, that wants no wing,  
Sing! from this holy song-book, sing!"

The singing of these Psalms became so popular that D'Israeli suggests that "it first conveyed to the sullen fancy of the austere Calvin the project" of introducing the singing of Psalms into his Genevan discipline. "This infectious frenzy of Psalm-singing," as Warton almost blasphemously describes it, rapidly propagated itself through Germany as well as France, and passed over to England. D'Israeli says, with a sneer, that in the time of the Commonwealth, "Psalms were now sung at Lord-Mayor's dinners and city feasts; soldiers sang them on their march and at parade; and few houses which had windows fronting the streets, but had their evening Psalms." We can only add, would to God it were so again.—*C.H.S.*

*Verses 5, 6.*—These were, literally, the instruments most in use among the Jews, and a spiritual signification has been attached to each instrument. They seem to me to represent the cardinal virtues, the *harp* implying prudence; the *psaltery*, justice; the *trumpet*, fortitude; and the *cornet*, temperance.—*Bellarmino.*

*Verses 5, 6.*—It is evident that the Psalmist here expresses the vehement and ardent affection which the faithful ought to have in praising God, when he enjoins musical instruments to be employed for this purpose. He would have nothing omitted by believers which tends to animate the minds and feelings of men in singing God's praises. The name of God, no doubt, can, properly speaking, be celebrated only by the articulate voice; but it is not without reason that David adds to this those aids by which believers were wont to stimulate themselves the more to this exercise; especially considering that he was speaking to God's ancient people. There is a distinction, however, to be observed here, that we may not indiscriminately consider as applicable to ourselves everything which was formerly enjoined upon the Jews. ¶ I have no doubt that playing upon cymbals, touching the harp and the viol, and all that kind of music which is so frequently mentioned in the Psalms, was a part of the education; that is to say, the puerile instruction of the law: I speak of the stated service of the temple. For even now, if believers choose to cheer themselves with musical instruments, they should, I think, make it their object not to disserve their cheerfulness from the praises of God. But when they frequent their sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends

to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints only in a known tongue, 1 Cor. xiv. 16. The voice of man, although not understood by the generality, assuredly excels all inanimate instruments of music; and yet we see what Paul determines concerning speaking in an unknown tongue. What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound? Does any one object that music is very useful for awakening the minds of men and moving their hearts? I own it; but we should always take care that no corruption creep in, which might both defile the pure worship of God and involve men in superstition. Moreover, since the Holy Spirit expressly warns us of this danger by the mouth of Paul, to proceed beyond what we are there warranted by him, is not only, I must say, unadvised zeal, but wicked and perverse obstinacy.—*John Calvin.*

*Verses 5, 6.*—The song and the stringed instruments belonged to the Levites, and the trumpets to the priests alone. Kitto says the trumpets did not join in the concert, but were sounded during certain regulated pauses in the vocal and instrumental music. The harps and voices made the sweetness, while the trumpets and horns added the strength; melody and energy should combine in the worship of God.—*C. H. S.*

*Verse 6.*—“*Trumpets.*” חֲצֹצְרוֹת, *Chatsotseroth*: here only in the Psalter. These were the straight trumpets (such as are seen on the Arch of Titus) used by the priests for giving signals. Numb. x. 2—10; 1 Chron. xv. 24, 28, etc. The *shofar*, שׁוֹפָר (*cornet*), was the ordinary curved trumpet, cornet, or horn.—*William Kay.*

*Verse 6.*—“*Trumpets.*” The word here used is uniformly rendered *trumpets* in the Scriptures, Num. x. 2, 8—10; xxxi. 6; *et al.* The trumpet was mainly employed for convening a public assembly for worship, or for assembling the hosts for battle. The original word, חֲצֹצְרָה, *chatsotserah*, is supposed to have been designed to imitate “the broken pulse-like sound of the trumpet, like the Latin, *tarantantara.*” So the German *trarara*, and the Arabic, *hadâtera*. The word here used was given to the long, straight trumpet.—*Albert Barnes.*

*Verse 6.*—“*Trumpets.*” The trumpet served the same purpose, in a religious and civil sense, as bells among Christians, and the voice among Mohammedans. Indeed, it is understood that Mohammed directed the voice to be employed, in order to mark a distinction between his own sect and the Jews with their trumpets and the Christians with their bells.—*Kitto's Pictorial Bible.*

*Verse 6.*—“*With trumpets.*” Origen calls the writings of the evangelists and the apostles *trumpets*, at whose blast all the structures of idolatry and the dogmas of the philosophers were utterly overthrown. He teaches likewise that by the sound of the *trumpets* is refigured the trumpet of the universal judgment, at which the world shall fall in ruin, and whose sound shall be joy to the just, and lamentation to the unjust.—*Lorinus.*

*Verse 6.*—“*Before the Lord, the King.*” Since it is distinctly added *before Jehovah the King*, and the words, *with trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise*, are used, there seems to be a reference to that public rejoicing commonly manifested at the coronation of kings, or the celebration of undertakings for the public safety. This idea is not foreign to the present passage, since Jehovah is represented as King and Saviour of the people.—*Venema.*

*Verses 7, 8.*—“*Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands.*”

And thou, majestic main!  
A secret world of wonders in thyself,  
Sound his stupendous praise, whose greater voice  
Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall.

—*James Thomson.*

*Verses 7, 8.*—These appeals to nature in her great departments—of the sea in its mighty amplitude, and the earth with its floods and hills—form, not a warrant, but a call on Christian ministers to recognise God more in their prayers and sermons as the God of Creation, instead of restricting themselves so exclusively to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. Do the one, and not leave the other undone.—*Thomas Chalmers.*

*Verses 7, 8.*—The setting forth the praise of Christ for the redemption of sinners,

may not only furnish work to all reasonable creatures; but also if every drop of water in the sea, and in every river and flood, every fish in the sea, every fowl of the air, every living creature on the earth, and whatsoever else is in the world: if they all had reason and ability to express themselves; yea, and if all the hills were able by motion and gesticulation to communicate their joy one to another; there is work for them all to set out the praise of Christ.—*David Dickson.*

*Verses 7—9.*—Matthew Henry on these verses quotes from Virgil's 4th Eclogue the verses (of which we subjoin Dryden's translation) in which the poet, he says, "either ignorantly or basely applies to Asinius Pollio the ancient prophecies which at that time were expected to be fulfilled;" adding that Ludovicus Vives thinks that these and many other things which Virgil says of this long looked-for child "are applicable to Christ."

O of celestial seed! O foster son of Jove!  
See, lab'ring Nature calls thee to sustain  
The nodding frame of heav'n, and earth, and main!  
See to their base restor'd, earth, seas, and air;  
And joyful ages, from behind, in crowding ranks appear.

*Verse 8.*—"Let the floods clap their hands." The clapping of the hands being a token of delight and approbation, and the striking or dashing of the water in a river being, for the noise of it, a resemblance of that, *the rivers* are here said to *clap their hands.*—*Henry Hammond.*

*Verse 8.*—Though the language be figurative, so far as it gives a voice to the inanimate creation in its various departments, yet, like all the figurative language of Scripture, it expresses a truth—that which the Apostle has stated without a metaphor in the express revelation that the "creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." And this because the reason of that bondage will no more exist. It is the consequence of sin: but when the world shall be subjected to the righteous rule of its coming King (as predicted in the last verse of this Psalm), then earth and all creation shall own its present Lord, and join its tribute of praise to that of Israel and the nations, and the redeemed and glorified church.—*William De Burgh.*

*Verse 9.*—The Psalter is much occupied in celebrating *the benign fruits which Christ's reign is to yield* in all the earth. It will be a reign of HOLINESS. This is its proper and distinctive nature. Under it, the ends of the earth will fear God, and rejoice in his salvation. It will be a reign of JUSTICE. Under it, the wars and oppressions and cruelties, the unequal laws and iniquitous institutions that have so long vexed and cursed the world, shall find a place no more. This happy reformation is usually foretold in the form of a proclamation that the Lord is coming "to judge the earth." It is important, therefore, to keep in mind the true sense and intention of that oft-repeated proclamation. It does not refer, as an unwary reader might suppose, to the Judgment of the Great Day. There is no terror in it. The Psalms that have it for their principal burden are jubilant in the highest degree. The design of the proclamation is to announce Christ in the character of a Peaceful Prince coming to administer equal laws with an impartial hand, and so to cause wrong and contention to cease in the earth. This is Christ's manner of judging the earth. What he has already done in this direction enables us to form a clear conception of what he will yet set himself to do. When he designs to accomplish great and salutary reforms in the political and social institutions of a people, he begins by dislodging bad principles from men's minds and planting Scriptural principles in their stead; by purging evil passions from men's hearts, and baptizing them with the Spirit of truth and justice, godliness and lovingkindness. A sure foundation having been thus laid for a better order of things, he will by some storm of controversy, or of revolution sweep away the institutions in which injustice has entrenched itself, and will thus make it possible for righteousness to have free course. Oh what a store of comfort for the down-trodden, the enslaved, the needy, is laid up in the announcement that the Lord is coming to be the avenger of all such! Well may all the creatures be invited to clap their hands for joy at the thought that he has taken this work in hand; that he sitteth upon the floods; and that the storms that agitate the nations are the chariot in which he rides to take possession of the earth, and make it an abode of righteousness and peace.—*William Binnie.*



## HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Verse 1.*—"A new song." The duty, beauty, and benefit of maintaining freshness in piety, service, and worship.

*Verse 1.*—"He hath done marvellous things." I. He hath created a marvellous universe. II. He has established a marvellous government. III. He hath bestowed a marvellous gift. IV. He hath provided a marvellous redemption. V. He hath inspired a marvellous book. VI. He hath opened a marvellous fulness. VII. He hath effected a marvellous transformation.—*W. Jackson.*

*Verse 1.*—"The victory." The victories of God in judgment, and in mercy: especially the triumphs of Christ on the cross, and by his Spirit in the heart, and in and by the church at large.

*Verse 2.*—"The Lord hath made known his salvation." I. The contents of which it is composed. II. The reasons for which it has been provided. III. The price at which it has been procured. IV. The terms on which it shall be imparted. V. The way in which it must be propagated. VI. The manner in which its neglect will be punished.—*W. J.*

*Verse 2 (first clause).*—I. What is salvation? II. Why it is called the Lord's:—"Salvation is of the Lord." III. How he has made it known. IV. For what purpose. V. With what results.—*E. G. Gange.*

*Verse 2.*—The great privilege of knowing the gospel. I. *In what it consists.* 1. Revelation by the Bible. 2. Declaration by the minister. 3. Illumination by the Spirit. 4. Illustration in daily providence. II. *To what it has led.* 1. We have believed it. 2. We have so far understood it as to growingly rejoice in it. 3. We are able to tell it to others. 4. We abhor those who mystify it.

*Verse 2.*—Salvation's glory. I. It is divine—"his salvation." II. It is consistent with justice—"his righteousness." III. It is plain and simple—"openly showed." IV. It is meant for all sorts of men—"heathen."

*Verse 3 (first clause).*—The Lord's memory of his covenant. Times in which he seems to forget it; ways in which even in those times he proves his faithfulness; great deeds of grace by which at other times he shows his memory of his promises; and reasons why he must ever be mindful of his covenant.

*Verse 3 (last clause).*—"All the ends of the earth." I. Literally. Missionaries have visited every land. II. Spiritually. Men ready to despair, to perish. III. Prophetically. Dwell on the grand promises concerning the future, and the triumphs of the church.—*E. G. G.*

*Verse 3.*—"All the ends of the earth have seen," &c. I. The greatest foreigners have seen it; many have "come from the east and the west;" Greeks, Peter's hearers, the Eunuch, Greenlanders, South Sea Islanders, Negroes, Red Indians, &c., &c. II. The ripest saints have seen it; they are at the right end of the earth, stepping out of the wilderness into Canaan, &c. III. The vilest sinners have seen it; those who have wandered so far that they could get no farther without stepping into hell. The dying thief. The woman who was a sinner. Those whom Whitfield called "the devil's castaways."—*W. J.*

*Verse 4.*—The right use of noise. I. "Make a noise." Awake, O sleeper. Speak, O dumb. II. "Make a joyful noise." The shout of deliverance, of gratitude, of gladness. III. "Make a loud noise, all the earth." Nature with her ten thousand voices. The church with myriad saints. IV. "Make a joyful noise unto God." Praise him alone. Praise him for ever.—*E. G. G.*

*Verse 6.*—Joy a needful ingredient of praise. The Lord as King, an essential idea in adoration. Expression in various ways incumbent upon us, when praising joyfully such a King.

*Verses 7, 8.*—Nature at worship. The congregation is—I. Vast. Sea, earth, rivers, hills. II. Varied. Diverse in character, word, aspect, each from the other, constant and alike in this alone, that *all, always* worship God. III. Gladsome. In this like the worshippers in heaven, and for the same reason—sin is absent.—*E. G. G.*

*Verse 8.*—The song of the sea, and the hallelujah of the hills.

*Verse 9.*—The last judgment as a theme for thankfulness.

*Verse 9.*—"Before the Lord." Where we are, where our joy should be, where all our actions should be felt to be, where we shall be—"before the Lord." Enquire—What are we before the Lord? What shall we be when he cometh?