

their applicability to the Psalms to which they are prefixed. And without the formality of continual quotation, we shall freely avail ourselves of the labours of Gesenius, Tholuck, and Hengstenberg.

"To the chief musician upon Ayeleth Shahar." Psalm xxii. This enigmatical expression, Ayeleth Shahar, evidently must be translated "the hind of the morning." As the hind possesses no weapons of either attack or defence, it has been regarded by all eastern nations as an emblem of persecuted innocence. This part of the title is, therefore, descriptive of the sufferings of Messiah, which are very vividly portrayed in the first part of the Psalm. But what is the meaning of the combined expression, the hind of the morning? Luther thus translates the entire title, "A Psalm of David, sung concerning the hinds who are hunted in the morning," denoting the earnest and implacable hatred with which Messiah was pursued by his numerous foes. This interpretation is, however, too forced and artificial. As a hind is the well known metaphor for persecuted innocence, so the usual idea conveyed by the figurative use of the morning, is that of "prosperity coming after misfortunes."—This title is therefore applicable to the entire Psalm, in which David describes Messiah's unexampled sufferings, and then he contemplates the increase and prosperity of his kingdom. "Besides," as Hengstenberg remarks, "the morning points, in this place, to the fact so prominently brought forward by the evangelists, that Christ rose at the dawn of day." Their united testimony on this subject is, that the resurrection of Christ took place "early, when it was yet dark; very early; very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun; and as it began to dawn." It is intimated that as the natural sun rose from the east, and gradually dissipated the darkness of night till every object glowed with a living splendour, so, at the same moment, the sun of righteousness burst from the tomb, dispelled the darkness of error and of sin, rendering it certain that his light and influence shall steadily increase, till the gospel day shall issue in the cloudless glory of the millennium. Then "all ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord."

"To the chief musician Al-taschith Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave." Psalms lviii., lviii., lix. Al-taschith literally means, "Destroy not." It seems to have been the leading sentiment which David revolved in his mind, when in danger of his life from the hatred of Saul. And it evidently contains the essence of the three Psalms to which it is prefixed. It seems to have an especial reference to the prayer of Moses for the rebellious among the Israelites, when threatened with national destruction. "O Lord, destroy not thy people and thy inheritance." But what is the meaning of Michtam? Luther, after Aben Ezra, renders it "a short golden ode," either on account of its excellence, or, as the translation of the Septuagint would seem to imply, that it was a poem engraved in golden letters on a pillar. But the word, by a common interchange of kindred letters, may be easily translated "a writing," leaving it to be determined by the nature of the subject what kind of writing is intended. The entire title may, therefore, be rendered thus: "To the chief musician, Destroy not, a writing of David when he fled from Saul in the cave."

"A song of Degrees." Psalm cxx. This is the title of fifteen Psalms, of which four are attributed to David, and one to Solomon. The other ten do not bear the names of their respective authors. Our English version accords with the Jewish expositors in translating the title, A song of Degrees; because it has been alleged these fifteen Psalms were sung on the fifteen steps leading from the court of the men to the court of the women, in the Jewish temple. But there is not a particle of evidence that such a practice, or even such steps ever existed; and hence this exposition has been generally abandoned. The best rendering undoubtedly is, "Pilgrim-Songs;" a title derived from the circumstance that they were sung by the people as they journeyed from their respective homes, three times a year, to present themselves before the Lord. As they went in tribes and families to present themselves before the Lord, they enlivened the fatigues of the journey with the songs of Zion. Thus the cxxi. Psalm was evidently sung when the pilgrims caught the first glance of the mountains of Jerusalem; and the cxxii. describes their feelings when they stood before the gates of Jerusalem, earnestly desiring to enter the house of the Lord; and to worship in the beauties of holiness. It has been thought also, that the ten nameless Psalms were composed during the time that the building of the temple was interrupted by the

Samaritans, and that this sufficiently accounts for the air of pensive and melancholy sadness which pervades them.

"To the chief musician, even to Jeduthun, a Psalm of David" Psalm xxxix. It is generally agreed that David's object is to confer special honour on Jeduthun, one of the masters of music in the temple.

"To the chief musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim, Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath" Psalm lvi. The literal meaning of this inscription is, "To the chief musician, of the dumb dove among strangers, a writing of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath." The dove is an appropriate image of defenceless innocence, and has doubtless an allusion to the preceding Psalm—"Oh, that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest." David was dumb in the midst of his enemies; he had inflicted much injury upon the Philistines, and naturally expected to be put to death; and as he knew not what plea to offer in his own defence, he betook himself to prayer. The title is, therefore, very appropriate to David's peculiar circumstances, and is admirably descriptive of his faith and fears in, perhaps, one of the most critical periods of his eventful history.

"A song or Psalm for the sons of Korah. To the chief musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite." Psalm lxxxviii. Some maintain that Leannoth means to sing, and that Mahalath is a peculiar instrument, and then they very quietly tell us that Mahalath is "a word on the meaning of which nothing whatever can be said." But if, with Luther, we view the entire title as descriptive of the subject of the Psalm, and not of the mode of singing it, the difficulty entirely disappears. Mahalath signifies sickness, weakness, whether physical or moral, and Leannoth will denote deep tribulation, that is, the sickness of deep tribulation. Luther has exactly expressed the idea in his version of the Scriptures,—*"A Psalm-song of the children of Korah, sung respecting the sickness of the miserable."* Sickness is, of course, to be understood in a moral sense, that moral disorder which is the result and punishment of sin, and which has pervaded all the faculties and susceptibilities of the soul. And the subject of this Psalm fully justifies its title. In many of the Psalms the cloud of affliction passes from the horizon, and the sun of prosperity bursts forth to cheer the pilgrim at the end of his journey; but here his complaints and lamentations are heard till the very end. "The day rises in clouds and sets in darkness." It is generally conceded that Maschil, derived from a word to teach, signifies instruction, a didactic poem. We are evidently taught, in this place, that sin is equally a crime against God, and an injury inflicted on ourselves, and that we must have recourse to God alone for its removal. The meaning of this title, therefore, is,—*"A Psalm-song of the children of Korah. To the chief musician, sung respecting the sickness of the miserable, a didactic poem of Heman the Ezrahite."*

"Shiggaiion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite." Shiggaiion is derived from a word which signifies to err, to wander, whether in a physical or moral sense. And it seems to denote the various plottings and crimes of Saul and his confederates against David. It occurs only in this Psalm and in Habakkuk, a chapter in which the prophet describes the transgressions and punishments of the wicked. The title of our Psalm may, therefore, be rendered "Erring, composed by David, in which the Psalmist describes the inveterate malice of his enemies, and earnestly prays for their destruction, that his own soul might be delivered."

"To the chief musician upon Shushaneduth, Michtam of David," &c. Psalm lx. Hengstenberg, who gives the only intelligible meaning of this title, renders it "The lily of testimony." Eduth, testimony, uniformly refers to the law of God, as existing in the five books of Moses, because it bears testimony against transgressors. The lily denotes something lovely, and, therefore, the lily of the testimony must mean something lovely contained in the law. Such a title is admirably descriptive of the entire drift of the Psalm, which abounds in promises to the people of God, and inspires them with courage in the midst of their enemies. It commences with a trust in God, which the raging enemy and the trembling earth cannot shake, and it closes with accents of triumph and of victory. "Through God we shall do valiantly, for He it is that shall tread down our enemies."

There are several titles of the Psalms which are sometimes thought