

what is good and true, a certainty that what is pure and beautiful is worth holding on to, whatever may happen ; a nearness to GOD, a quiet confidence in Him.

It is all in a subdued minor key, but swelling up at intervals into a chord of ravishing sweetness.

There is never the least note of loudness, none of that terrible patriotism which defaces many of the psalms, the patriotism which makes men believe that GOD is the friend of the chosen race, and the foe of all other races, the ugly self-sufficiency that contemplates with delight, not the salvation and inclusion of the heathen, but their discomforture and destruction.

The worst side of the Puritan found delight in those cruel and militant psalms, revelling in the thought that GOD would rain upon the ungodly fire and brimstone, storm and tempest, and exulting in the breath of His displeasure. Could anything be more alien to the Spirit of Christ than all that ?

But here, in this melancholy psalm, there breaths a spirit naturally Christian, loving peace and contemplation, very weary of strife.

I have said it is autobiographical ; but it must be remembered that it was a fruitful literary device in those days to cast one's own thought in the mould of some well-known literary character.

In this psalm I have sometimes thought that the writer had Daniel in mind--the surroundings of the psalm suit the circumstances of Daniel with singular exactness. But, even so, it was the work of a man, I think, who had suffered the sorrow of which he wrote.

Let me try and disentangle what manner of man he was.

He was young and humble ; he was rich, or had opportunities of becoming so ; he was an exile, or lived in uncongenial society ; he was the member of a court where he was derided, disliked, slandered, plotted against, and even persecuted.

We can clearly discern his own character. He was timid, yet ambitious ; he was tempted to use deceit, and hypocrisy, to acquiesce in the tone about him, he was inclined to be covetous ; he had sinned, and had learnt something of holiness from his fall ; he was given to solitude and prayer. He was sensitive, and his sorrows had affected his health ; he was sleepless, and had lost the bloom of his youth.

All this and more, we can read of him, but what is the saddest touch of all is the isolation in which he lived. There is not a