

**THOUGHTS FOR THE PRESENT
HOUR. CHIEFLY TAKEN FROM
THE ADMIRABLE ESSAYS OF
AMBROSE SERLE, ENTITLED
"HORÆ SOLITARIÆ"**

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Thoughts for the Present Hour. Chiefly Taken from the Admirable Essays of Ambrose Serle,
Entitled "Horæ Solitariae" by Thomas Dowell

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THOMAS DOWELL

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OF

AMBROSE SERLE,

ENTITLED

“HORÆ SOLITARÆ.”

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EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO
THE ESSAYS.

"THESE Essays principally regard the essential Divinity of the GREAT REDEEMER, and the proof of it is taken from the names and titles which are ascribed to him in the Bible, and more especially in the Old Testament. This method is used partly to show that the ancient believers were apprized of his Divine nature, and partly to demonstrate (contrary to a strange and ignorant opinion which has circulated in these days) that the declarations of this Divine Nature in Christ are as positively expressed in the one Testament as in the other; both members of the Sacred Volume forming one Revelation of the truth of God, in prophecy and fulfilment, and mutually attesting and confirming the whole. Indeed, as a valuable writer justly observes, "The New Testament can never be understood and explained but by the Old." If the names, therefore, which God hath ascribed to his Divine Nature, in order to raise proper ideas of himself and his grace to men, and which consequently are peculiar to the Divine Nature; if these are by Him or by his inspiration applied to the Messiah, they are not and cannot be falsely applied. If the titles then are truly his, the sense of those titles must as truly belong to him; and consequently he will stand declared to be JEHOVAH with respect to his own proper subsistence, and God and Man in one Christ, with respect to his office in the redemption of sinners.

The title "*Horæ Solitariae*" is prefixed to these papers, because they were the retired employment only of such parts of the author's time as were disengaged from

the duties of a public station, and the subject on which they treat was his great consolation under the loss of an affectionate and valuable friend. The Divinity and all-sufficiency of the Great Redeemer, he found by a little experience, to be a source of peace when none could be found in aught beside; and he will rejoice even in a more perfect state of being, if the solitary hours appointed him on earth shall be made useful to others, or if those who walk and love to walk in a retired path (which, alas! is too little trod by Christians in this evil world) shall find satisfaction in these considerations, which afforded a true and solid pleasure to him. Experience will, however, testify this great truth, that the grace of an Almighty Saviour alone can triumph over all exterior circumstances, and when human expectations and human aids are at their lowest ebb, can roll in a tide of joy which shall never roll back again throughout eternity."

"We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks."—*Isaiah xxvi. 1.*

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks."—*Psalm xlviii. 12, 13.*

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."—*Psalm xviii. 2.*

"And they that know thy NAME will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."—*Psalm ix. 10.*

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."—*Psalm xxxiii. 12.*

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."—*Isaiah xxvi. 4.*

THOUGHTS FOR THE PRESENT HOUR.

J E H O V A H.

Ps. LXVIII. 4.

“O sing unto the Lord, and sing praises unto his name: magnify him that rideth upon the heavens, as it were upon an horse, praise him in his name JAH, and rejoice before him.”

WE learn from the book of Numbers,* that the commencement of this sublime and beautiful Psalm was made use of by Moses, whenever the ark was lifted up and set forward before the armies of Israel in their progress towards the promised land of Canaan. *“Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered, let them also that hate him flee before him.”* So, in like manner, the Church would celebrate now the praises of her Redeemer, rising from

* Numbers x. 35.

the dead, and going before his faithful people to the true land of promise—the heavenly Canaan—when his enemies, the powers of darkness, sin, and death, were scattered, and they that hated him fled before him. In the words of the text we are invited to magnify with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, the glorious Jehovah, “*who was, and is, and is to come* ;” who, deriving being from none, gives it to all, and who, as Redeemer of his people, is exalted above the heavens, and all the powers therein, acknowledged and glorified by saints and angels, feared and trembled at by ungodly men and evil spirits. And we learn beyond all doubt from the 18th verse in this Psalm, that it is addressed expressly to the second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity. “*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*”*

This address is plainly applied by Saint Paul to our Saviour; indeed, of whom else could it be said, “*Thou hast ascended on high* :” Thou, O Christ, who didst descend, from the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, to the lower parts of the earth, art again ascended, “*Thou hast led captivity captive.*” Thou hast conquered the conqueror, bound the strong one, Satan, redeemed human nature from the grave, and triumphantly carried

* Eph. iv. 8. Horne on the Psalms.

it with thee to the throne of God: *Thou hast received gifts for men*, even the promise of the Spirit; art ready to bestow these gifts and graces, even upon *thy enemies*, upon those who have broken thy laws; and of such as these, art willing to form thy Church, "*That the Lord God may dwell among them*," that they may be an "*habitation of God through the Spirit*."

Here then, we have both the Psalmist, and the great Apostle,* manifestly uniting to set forth together, the spiritual triumph of Christ over his enemies, his conversion of those who rebelled against him, through the gifts and graces of his Spirit; and the final establishment of his Church upon earth: Here we have an instance (of which there are countless others) of an exact agreement between the Old and New Testament, shewing, that the sacred volume forms but one revelation of the truth of God, in prophecy and fulfilment, mutually attesting and confirming the whole: and since a due consideration of every proof which testifies of the divinity, and all-sufficiency of the great Redeemer, must ever bring with it an assurance of peace and consolation to all who truly believe in his name, let us take comfort from the striking testimony afforded by this remarkable Psalm. The whole of it is plainly addressed to one Person, and that Person—we have just seen—is Christ: while, in the words of the text, a name is given to him,

* Eph. iv. 4.