

abled cries as in despair, because having at last reached the stream-bed finds that there is no water there, and which now, from the mere impulse of nature, because it is ready to succumb, and is unable longer to go without drink, breaks the air with its desperate cry for water in the dried-up bedding; because presently it must faint if water does not come.

This impulse of nature, this passionate desire, this almost dying of thirst after God on the part of the soul, this consuming longing after the living God, is the exalted, striking, enchanting character of this Psalm, which at the same time puts us to shame. For how many have been the moments in your life when, without the pressure of need, or solicitation from another, or sting of conscience, from a purely natural impulse of soul you have thirsted after the living God? You feel and appreciate, in listening to these moving tones, in singing yourself this glorious song, that not only at times, but always, this ought to be the state of the heart; that God created you for this purpose; that his plan concerning you intended such glorious longing in you after God; that every time this plan ceased to operate in you, you fell from the heights of your nature; and that you sin against grace, when at least in your reborn nature this pressure, this thirst, this intense longing for the living God can be silent.

As through exhaustion blood cries for water, and utterly fails unless relieved, so we have received a nature from God which, normal and unhurt, must cry after God or faint. Piety which at times imagined that it already stood strong and secure, here feels itself sink away, because it