

ment from the minister's point of view lies in the surplice and stole he wears, the way he sits formally as a judge in the place of God himself, the action of holding his hand extended towards the penitent, and the sign of the Cross he makes over him. All this is, of course, subservient to the words which he pronounces as a liturgical formula of the gravest type. The penitent, too, plays an active part in this liturgy by walking to the seat of absolution, kneeling down gravely as a sign of humility and contrition and pronouncing his sins in the accents of the *Confiteor*, simply and before the whole Church of heaven and on earth—'to all the saints and to you, father'. Priest and penitent should therefore consider their liturgical functions in this sacrament and perform them as the act of 'public worship' which is implied in those functions.



## THE LAST PSALM OF ALL

By

GILES BLACK, O.P.

**A**LLELUIA! ALLELUIA! *Praise ye the Lord*, you whom he has made, you whom he has redeemed, you to whom he has promised heaven; praise him who has so greatly loved you. Praise him *in his holy places*, in his church and tabernacle where day and night he waits your praise; praise him in the soul which he has given you and where by grace he dwells.

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise ye him in the firmament of his power.* Regard by day the sun, set in the concave depths of the sky. Look by night upon the moon with her attendant stars. These he hath made and an infinitude of other creatures hidden from our eyes. But what are these compared with that glorious heaven which he is always making ready for those who love him?

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise ye him for his mighty acts*, and how mighty they are! He has created all things and he holds them always in being. He has created you. He has redeemed you. He makes you holy, he

sanctifies you. All the myriad living things in air, on earth, in the sea, are all the perfect work of his wise hands.

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise ye him according to the multitude of his greatness, and not least praise him because of his abounding mercy. With the Saint of Lisieux say again and again: 'It is mine to glorify his infinite mercy, and to contemplate his other attributes therein'.*

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise him with a sound of trumpet. See to it that you proclaim aloud all that God is, and all that he has done for you—for you who have done almost nothing for him. Purpose then to do more for him and*

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise him with psaltery and harp with stringed instruments. As the winds of heaven draw sweet melody from the strings of the aeolian harp, so let the grace of God make soft harmony for him with the love-strings of your heart.*

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise him with timbrel and choir. Be so merry in God as to desire to make music and sing and dance before him, as King David of old sang and danced before the ark of the Covenant, before the face of the Lord.*

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise him with strings and organs. Sound forth God's praise on every musical instrument. With every fibre of your being praise him always.*

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise him on high sounding cymbals. In the heights and in the depths of you praise him who is sweetness and joy itself*

Hail Jesu, leader to light,  
 in soul thou art full sweet!  
 Thy love shines day and night,  
 that strongs me in this street.<sup>1</sup>

Praise him! Praise him!

*Praise him on cymbals of joy. Make joyful music to God in the thoughts of your mind and in the loves of your will, for he is himself Joy, ineffable joy.*

<sup>1</sup> Street = way, i.e. strengthens me in this life. This and the subsequent verses are taken from the Lyrics of Richard Rolle (p. 270), edited by Frances M. M. Comper.

Hail Jesu, price of my prayer,  
 Lord of majesty!  
 Thou art joy that lasts aye,  
 all delight thou art to see;  
 Praise him! Praise him!

*Let every spirit praise the Lord. Sursum corda!* Up with your hearts!  
 Up with them to heaven.

Give me grace as thou well may  
 thy lover for to be.  
 My longing wends never away  
 till that I come to thee.  
 Praise him! Praise him!



### THE PSALMODY OF A HOLY HERMIT

While I was sitting in the chapel, and chanting psalms at night before supper, as I could, I heard as it were the tinkling music of stringed instruments, or rather of singers, over my head. And while my whole heart and all my desires were engrossed in prayer and heavenly things, suddenly, I know not how, I felt within a symphony of song, and I overheard a most delightful heavenly harmony, which remained in my mind. For straightway while I meditated, my thought was turned into melody of song, and for meditation I, as it were, sang songs. And that music voiced itself even in my prayers and psalmody; and by reason of the interior sweetness which was outpoured upon me, I was impelled to sing what before I had only said. Not publicly, forsooth, for I did it only before God the Creator.—*Richard Rolle's account of his experience of spiritual song.*