

《The Treasury of David (Vol. 2)(C.H. Spurgeon)》

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Psalm 16

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TITLE. MIGHTAM OF DAVID. *This is usually understood to mean THE GOLDEN PSALM, and such a title is most appropriate, for the matter is as the most fine gold. Ainsworth calls it "David's jewel, or notable song." Dr. Hawker, who is always alive to passages full of savour, devoutly cries, "Some have rendered it precious, others golden, and others, precious jewel; and as the Holy Ghost, by the apostles Peter and Paul, hath shown us that it is all about the Lord Jesus Christ, what is here said of him is precious, is golden, is a jewel indeed!" We have not met with the term Michtam before, but if spared to write upon Psalms 56, 57, 58, 59, and 60, we shall see it again, and shall observe that like the present these psalms, although they begin with prayer, and imply trouble, abound in holy confidence and close with songs of assurance as to ultimate safety and joy. Dr. Alexander, whose notes are peculiarly valuable, thinks that the word is most probably a simple derivative of a word signifying to hide, and signifies a secret or mystery, and indicates the depth of doctrinal and spiritual import in these sacred compositions. If this be the true interpretation it well accords with the other, and when the two are put together, they make up a name which every reader will remember, and which will bring the precious subject at once to mind. THE PSALM OF THE PRECIOUS SECRET.*

SUBJECT. *We are not left to human interpreters for the key to this golden mystery, for, speaking by*

the Holy Ghost, Peter tells us, "David speaketh concerning HIM." (Acts 2:25.) Further on in his memorable sermon he said, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." (Acts 2:29-31.) Nor is this our only guide, for the apostle Paul, led by the same infallible inspiration, quotes from this psalm, and testifies that David wrote of the man through whom is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins. (Acts 13:35-38.) It has been the usual plan of commentators to apply the psalm both to David, to the saints, and to the Lord Jesus, but we will venture to believe that in it "Christ is all;" since in the ninth and tenth verses, like the apostles on the mount, we can see "no man but Jesus only."

DIVISION. The whole is so compact that it is difficult to draw sharp lines of division. It may suffice to note our Lord's prayer of faith, verse 1, avowal of faith in Jehovah alone, 2, 3, 4, 5, the contentment of his faith in the present, 6, 7, and the joyous confidence of his faith for the future (8, 11).

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "Preserve me," *keep, or save me*, or as Horsley thinks, "*guard me*," even as bodyguards surround their monarch, or as shepherds protect their flocks. Tempted in all points like as we are, the manhood of Jesus needed to be preserved from the power of evil; and though in itself pure, the Lord Jesus did not confide in that purity of nature, but as an example to his followers, looked to the Lord, his God, for preservation. One of the great names of God is "the Preserver of men," (Job 7:20,) and this gracious office the Father exercised towards our Mediator and Representative. It had been promised to the Lord Jesus in express words, that he should be preserved, Isaiah 49:7, 8. "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people." This promise was to the letter fulfilled, both by providential deliverance and sustaining power, in the case of our Lord. Being preserved himself, he is able to restore the preserved of Israel, for we are "preserved in Christ Jesus and called." As one with him, the elect were preserved in his preservation, and we may view this mediatorial supplication as the petition of the Great High Priest for all those who are in him. The intercession recorded in John 17 is but an amplification of this cry, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." When he says, "preserve me," he means his members, his mystical body, himself, and all in him. But while we rejoice in the fact that the Lord Jesus used this prayer for his members, we must not forget that he employed it most surely for himself; he had so emptied himself, and so truly taken upon him the form of a servant, that as man he needed divine keeping even as we do, and often cried unto the strong for

strength. Frequently on the mountain-top he breathed forth this desire, and on one occasion in almost the same words, he publicly prayed, "Father, save me from this hour." (John 12:27.) If Jesus looked out of himself for protection, how much more must we, his erring followers, do so!

"O God." The word for God here used is EL (Heb.), by which name the Lord Jesus, when under a sense of great weakness, as for instance when upon the cross, was wont to address the Mighty God, the Omnipotent Helper of his people. We, too, may turn to *El*, the Omnipotent One, in all hours of peril, with the confidence that he who heard the strong crying and tears of our faithful High Priest, is both able and willing to bless us in him. It is well to study the name and character of God, so that in our straits we may know how and by what title to address our Father who is in heaven.

"For in thee do I put my trust," or, *I have taken shelter in thee.* As chickens run beneath the hen, so do I betake myself to thee. Thou art my great overshadowing Protector, and I have taken refuge beneath thy strength. This is a potent argument in pleading, and our Lord knew not only how to *use* it with God, but how to yield to its power when wielded by others upon himself. "According to thy faith be it done unto thee," is a great rule of heaven in dispensing favour, and when we can sincerely declare that we exercise faith in the Mighty God with regard to the mercy which we seek, we may rest assured that our plea will prevail. Faith, like the sword of Saul, never returns empty; it overcomes heaven when held in the hand of prayer. As the Saviour prayed, so let us pray, and as he became more than a conqueror, so shall we also through him; let us when buffeted by storms right bravely cry to the Lord as he did, "in thee do I put my trust."

Verse 2. *"O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord."* In his inmost heart the Lord Jesus bowed himself to do service to his Heavenly Father, and before the throne of Jehovah his soul vowed allegiance to the Lord for our sakes. We are like him when our soul, truly and constantly in the presence of the heart-searching God, declares her full consent to the rule and government of the Infinite Jehovah, saying, "Thou art my Lord." To avow this with the lip is little, but for *the soul* to say it, especially in times of trial, is a gracious evidence of spiritual health; to profess it before men is a small matter, but to declare it before Jehovah himself is of far more consequence. This sentence may also be viewed as the utterance of appropriating faith, laying hold upon the Lord by personal covenant and enjoyment; in this sense may it be our daily song in the house of our pilgrimage.

"My goodness extendeth not to thee." The work of our Lord Jesus was not needful on account of any necessity in the Divine Being. Jehovah would have been inconceivably glorious had the human race perished, and had no atonement been offered. Although the life-work and death-agony of the Son did reflect unparalleled lustre upon every attribute of God, yet the Most Blessed and Infinitely Happy God stood in no need of the obedience and death of his Son; it was for our sakes that the work of redemption was undertaken, and not because of any lack or want on the part of the Most High. How modestly does the Saviour here estimate his own goodness! What overwhelming reasons

have we for imitating his humility! "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" (Job 35:7.)

Verse 3. "*But to the saints that are in the earth.*" These sanctified ones, although still upon the earth, partake of the results of Jesus' mediatorial work, and by his goodness are made what they are. The peculiar people, zealous for good works, and hallowed to sacred service, are arrayed in the Saviour's righteousness and washed in his blood, and so receive of the goodness treasured up in him; these are the persons who are profited by the work of the man Christ Jesus; but that work added nothing to the nature, virtue, or happiness of God, who is blessed for evermore. How much more forcibly is this true of us, poor unworthy servants not fit to be mentioned in comparison with the faithful Son of God! Our hope must ever be that haply some poor child of God may be served by us, for the Great Father can never need our aid. Well may we sing the verses of Dr. Watts:

"Oft have my heart and tongue confess'd
How empty and how poor I am;
My praise can never make thee blest,
Nor add new glories to thy name.
Yet, Lord, thy saints on earth may reap
Some profit by the good we do;
These are the company I keep,
These are the choicest friends I know."

Poor believers are God's receivers, and have a warrant from the Crown to receive the revenue of our offerings in the King's name. Saints departed we cannot bless; even prayer for them is of no service; but while they are here we should practically prove our love to them, even as our Master did, for they are *the excellent of the earth*. Despite their infirmities, their Lord thinks highly of them, and reckons them to be as nobles among men. The title of "His Excellency" more properly belongs to the meanest saint than to the greatest governor. The true aristocracy are believers in Jesus. They are the only Right Honourables. Stars and garters are poor distinctions compared with the graces of the Spirit. He who knows them best says of them, "*in whom is all my delight.*" They are his Hephzibah and his land Beulah, and before all worlds his delights were with these chosen sons of men. Their own opinion of themselves is far other than their Beloved's opinion of them; they count themselves to be less than nothing, yet he makes much of them, and sets his heart towards them. What wonders the eyes of Divine Love can see where the Hands of Infinite Power have been graciously at work. It was this quicksighted affection which led Jesus to see in us a recompense for all his agony, and sustained him under all his sufferings by the joy of redeeming us from going down into the pit.

Verse 4. The same loving heart which opens towards the chosen people is fast closed against those who continue in their rebellion against God. Jesus hates all wickedness, and especially the high

crime of idolatry. The text while it shows our Lord's abhorrence of sin, shows also the sinner's greediness after it. Professed believers are often slow towards the true Lord, but sinners "*hasten after another god.*" They run like madmen where we creep like snails. Let their zeal rebuke our tardiness. Yet theirs is a case in which the more they haste the worse they speed, for *their sorrows are multiplied* by their diligence in multiplying their sins. Matthew Henry pithily says, "They that multiply gods multiply griefs to themselves; for whosoever thinks one god too little, will find two too many, and yet hundreds not enough." The cruelties and hardships which men endure for their false gods is wonderful to contemplate; our missionary reports are a noteworthy comment on this passage; but perhaps our own experience is an equally vivid exposition; for when we have given our heart to idols, sooner or later we have had to smart for it. Near the roots of our self-love all our sorrows lie, and when that idol is overthrown, the sting is gone from grief. Moses broke the golden calf and ground it to powder, and cast it into the water of which he made Israel to drink, and so shall our cherished idols become bitter portions for us, unless we at once forsake them. Our Lord had no selfishness; he served but one Lord, and served him only. As for those who turn aside from Jehovah, he was separate from them, bearing their reproach without the camp. Sin and the Saviour had no communion. He came to destroy, not to patronize or be allied with the works of the devil. Hence he refused the testimony of unclean spirits as to his divinity, for in nothing would he have fellowship with darkness. We should be careful above measure not to connect ourselves in the remotest degree with falsehood in religion; even the most solemn of Popish rites we must abhor. "*Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer.*" The old proverb says, "It is not safe to eat at the devil's mess, though the spoon be never so long." The mere mentioning of ill names it were well to avoid,—"*nor take up their names into my lips.*" If we allow poison upon the lip, it may ere long penetrate to the inwards, and it is well to keep out of the mouth that which we would shut out from the heart. If the church would enjoy union with Christ, she must break all the bonds of impiety, and keep herself pure from all the pollutions of carnal will-worship, which now pollute the service of God. Some professors are guilty of great sin in remaining in the communion of Popish churches, where God is as much dishonoured as in Rome herself, only in a more crafty manner.

Verse 5. "*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.*" With what confidence and bounding joy does Jesus turn to Jehovah, whom his soul possessed and delighted in! Content beyond measure with his portion in the Lord his God, he had not a single desire with which to hunt after other gods; his cup was full, and his heart was full too; even in his sorest sorrows he still laid hold with both his hands upon his Father, crying, "My God, my God;" he had not so much as a thought of falling down to worship the prince of this world, although tempted with an "all these will I give thee." We, too, can make our boast in the Lord; he is the meat and the drink of our souls. He is our portion, supplying all our necessities, and our cup yielding royal luxuries; our cup in this life, and

our inheritance in the life to come. As children of the Father who is in heaven, we inherit, by virtue of our joint heirship with Jesus, all the riches of the covenant of grace; and the portion which falls to us sets upon our table the bread of heaven and the new wine of the kingdom. Who would not be satisfied with such dainty diet? Our shallow cup of sorrow we may well drain with resignation, since the deep cup of love stands side by side with it, and will never be empty. *"Thou maintainest my lot."* Some tenants have a covenant in their leases that they themselves shall maintain and uphold, but in our case Jehovah himself maintains our lot. Our Lord Jesus delighted in this truth, that the Father was on his side, and would maintain his right against all the wrongs of men. He knew that his elect would be reserved for him, and that almighty power would preserve them as his lot and reward for ever. Let us also be glad, because the Judge of all the earth will vindicate our righteous cause.

Verse 6. Jesus found the way of obedience to lead into *"pleasant places."* Notwithstanding all the sorrows which marred his countenance, he exclaimed, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." It may seem strange, but while no other man was ever so thoroughly acquainted with grief, it is our belief that no other man ever experienced so much joy and delight in service, for no other served so faithfully and with such great results in view as his recompense of reward. The joy which was set before him must have sent some of its beams of splendour a-down the rugged places where he endured the cross, despising the shame, and must have made them in some respects pleasant places to the generous heart of the Redeemer. At any rate, we know that Jesus was well content with the blood-bought portion which the lines of electing love marked off as his spoil with the strong and his portion with the great. Therein he solaced himself on earth, and delights himself in heaven; and he asks no more "GOODLY HERITAGE" than that his own beloved may be with him where he is and behold his glory. All the saints can use the language of this verse, and the more thoroughly they can enter into its contented, grateful, joyful spirit the better for themselves, and the more glorious to their God. Our Lord was poorer than we are, for he had not where to lay his head, and yet when he mentioned his poverty he never used a word of murmuring; discontented spirits are as unlike Jesus as the croaking raven is unlike the cooing dove. Martyrs have been happy in dungeons. "From the delectable orchard of the Leonine prison the Italian martyr dated his letter, and the presence of God made the gridiron of Laurence pleasant to him." Mr. Greenham was bold enough to say, "They never felt God's love, or tasted forgiveness of sin, who are discontented." Some divines think that discontent was the first sin, the rock which wrecked our race in paradise; certainly there can be no paradise where this evil spirit has power, its slime will poison all the flowers of the garden.

Verse 7. *"I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel."* Praise as well as prayer was presented to the Father by our Lord Jesus, and we are not truly his followers unless our resolve be, "I will bless the Lord." Jesus is called Wonderful, Counsellor, but as man he spake not of himself, but as his

Father had taught him. Read in confirmation of this, John 7:16; 8:28; and 12:49, 50; and the prophecy concerning him in Isaiah 11:2, 3. It was our Redeemer's wont to repair to his Father for direction, and having received it, he blessed him for giving him counsel. It would be well for us if we would follow his example of lowliness, cease from trusting in our own understanding, and seek to be guided by the Spirit of God. *"My reins also instruct me in the night seasons."* By the reins understand the inner man, the affections and feelings. The communion of the soul with God brings to it an inner spiritual wisdom which in still seasons is revealed to itself. Our Redeemer spent many nights alone upon the mountain, and we may readily conceive that together with his fellowship with heaven, he carried on a profitable commerce with himself; reviewing his experience, forecasting his work, and considering his position. Great generals fight their battles in their own mind long before the trumpet sounds, and so did our Lord win our battle on his knees before he gained it on the cross. It is a gracious habit after taking counsel from above to take counsel within. Wise men see more with their eyes shut by night than fools can see by day with their eyes open. He who learns from God and so gets the seed, will soon find wisdom within himself growing in the garden of his soul; "Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." The night season which the sinner chooses for his sins is the hallowed hour of quiet when believers hear the soft still voices of heaven, and of the heavenly life within themselves.

Verse 8. The fear of death at one time cast its dark shadow over the soul of the Redeemer, and we read that, "he was heard in that he feared." There appeared unto him an angel, strengthening him; perhaps the heavenly messenger reassured him of his glorious resurrection as his people's surety, and of the eternal joy into which he should admit the flock redeemed by blood. Then hope shone full upon our Lord's soul, and, as recorded in these verses, he surveyed the future with holy confidence because he had a continued eye to Jehovah, and enjoyed his perpetual presence. He felt that, thus sustained, he could never be driven from his life's grand design; nor was he, for he stayed not his hand till he could say, "It is finished." What an infinite mercy was this for us! In this immovableness, caused by simple faith in the divine help, Jesus is to be viewed as our exemplar; to recognize the presence of the Lord is the duty of every believer; *"I have set the Lord always before me;"* and to trust the Lord as our champion and guard is the privilege of every saint; *"because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."* The apostle translates this passage, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face;" Acts 2:25; the eye of Jesus' faith could discern beforehand the continuance of divine support to his suffering Son, in such a degree that he should never be moved from the accomplishment of his purpose of redeeming his people. By the power of God at his right hand he foresaw that he should smite through all who rose up against him, and on that power he placed the firmest reliance.

Verse 9. He clearly foresaw that he must die, for he speaks of his flesh resting, and of his soul in the abode of separate spirits; death was full before his face, or he would not have mentioned corruption;

but such was his devout reliance upon his God, that he sang over the tomb, and rejoiced in vision of the sepulchre. He knew that the visit of his soul to Sheol, or the invisible world of disembodied spirits, would be a very short one, and that his body in a very brief space would leave the grave, uninjured by its sojourn there; all this made him say, *"my heart is glad,"* and moved his tongue, the *glory* of his frame, to *rejoice* in God, the strength of his salvation. Oh, for such holy faith in the prospect of trial and of death! It is the work of faith, not merely to create a peace which passeth all understanding, but to fill the heart full of gladness until the tongue, which, as the organ of an intelligent creature, is our glory, bursts forth in notes of harmonious praise. Faith gives us living joy, and bestows dying rest. *"My flesh also shall rest in hope."*

Verse 10. Our Lord Jesus was not disappointed in his hope. He declared his Father's faithfulness in the words, *"thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,"* and that faithfulness was proven on the resurrection morning. Among the departed and disembodied Jesus was not left; he had believed in the resurrection, and he received it on the third day, when his body rose in glorious life, according as he had said in joyous confidence, *"neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."* Into the outer prison of the grave his body might go, but into the inner prison of corruption he could not enter. He who in soul and body was pre-eminently God's "Holy One," was loosed from the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. This is noble encouragement to all the saints; die they must, but rise they shall, and though in their case they shall see corruption, yet they shall rise to everlasting life. Christ's resurrection is the cause, the earnest, the guarantee, and the emblem of the rising of all his people. Let them, therefore, go to their graves as to their beds, resting their flesh among the clods as they now do upon their couches.

"Since Jesus is mine, I'll not fear undressing,
But gladly put off these garments of clay;
To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing,
Since Jesus to glory through death led the way."

Wretched will that man be who, when the Philistines of death invade his soul, shall find that, like Saul, he is forsaken of God; but blessed is he who has the Lord at his right hand, for he shall fear no ill, but shall look forward to an eternity of bliss.

Verse 11. *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life."* To Jesus first this way was shown, for he is the first begotten from the dead, the first-born of every creature. He himself opened up the way through his own flesh, and then trod it as the forerunner of his own redeemed. The thought of being made the path of life to his people, gladdened the soul of Jesus. *"In thy presence is fulness of joy."* Christ being raised from the dead ascended into glory, to dwell in constant nearness to God, where joy is at its full for ever: the foresight of this urged him onward in his glorious but grievous toil. To bring his chosen to eternal happiness was the high ambition which inspired him, and made him wade through a sea of

blood. O God, when a worldling's mirth has all expired, for ever with Jesus may we dwell "*at thy right hand,*" where "*there are pleasures for evermore;*" and meanwhile, may we have an earnest by tasting thy love below. Trapp's note on the heavenly verse which closes the Psalm is a sweet morsel, which may serve for a contemplation, and yield a foretaste of our inheritance. He writes, "Here is as much said as can be, but words are too weak to utter it. For *quality* there is in heaven joy and pleasures; for *quantity*, a fulness, a torrent whereat they drink without let or loathing; for *constancy*, it is at God's right hand, who is stronger than all, neither can any take us out of his hand; it is a constant happiness without intermission: and for *perpetuity* it is for evermore. Heaven's joys are without measure, mixture, or end."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Title. There is a diversity of opinion as to the meaning of the title of this Psalm. It is called "*Michtam of David,*" but *Michtam* is the Hebrew word untranslated—the Hebrew word in English letters—and its signification is involved in obscurity. According to some, it is derived from a verb which means *to hide*, and denotes a mystery or secret. Those who adopt this view, regard the title as indicating a depth of doctrinal and spiritual import in the Psalm, which neither the writer nor any of his contemporaries had fathomed. According to others, it is derived from a verb which means *to cut, to grave, to write*, and denotes simply a writing of David. With this view agree the Chaldee and Septuagint versions, the former translating it, "a straight sculpture of David:" and the latter, "an inscription upon a pillar to David." Others again, look upon "*Michtam,*" as being derived from a noun which means gold, and they understand it as denoting a golden Psalm—a Psalm of surpassing excellence, and worthy of being written in letters of gold. This was the opinion of our translators, and hence they have rendered it on the margin—"A golden Psalm of David." The works of the most excellent Arabian poets were called golden, because they were written in letters of gold; and this golden song may have been written and hung up in some conspicuous part of the Temple. Many other interpretations have been given of this term, but at this distance of time, we can only regard it as representing some unassignable peculiarity of the composition.—*James Frame, 1858.*

Title. Such are the riches of this Psalm, that some have been led to think the obscure title, "*Michtam,*" has been prefixed to it on account of its *golden stores*. For (Heb.) is used of the "gold of Ophir" (e.g., Psalm 45:9), and (Heb.) might be a derivative from that root. But as there is a group of five other Psalms (namely, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60), that bear this title, whose subject matter is various, but which all end in a *tone of triumph*, it has been suggested that the Septuagint may be nearly right in their *Sphlografia*, as if "A Psalm to be hung up or inscribed on a pillar to commemorate victory." It is, however, more likely still that the term "*Michtam*" (like "*Maschil*"), is a musical term, whose real meaning and use we have lost, and may recover only when the ransomed house of Israel return

home with songs. Meanwhile, the subject matter of this Psalm itself is very clearly this—*the righteous one's satisfaction with his lot.*—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Whole Psalm. Allow that in verse ten it is clear that our Lord is in this Psalm, yet the application of every verse to Jesus in *Gethsemane* appears to be farfetched, and inaccurate. How verse nine could suit the agony and bloody sweat, it is hard to conceive, and equally so it is with regard to verse six. The "cup" of verse five is so direct a contrast to that cup concerning which Jesus prayed in anguish of spirit, that it cannot be a reference to it. Yet we think it right to add, that Mr. James Frame has written a very valuable work on this Psalm, entitled "Christ in Gethsemane," and he has supported his theory by the opinion of many of the ancients. He says, "All the distinguished interpreters of ancient days, such as Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine, explain the Psalm as referring to the Messiah, in his passion and his victory over death and the grave, including his subsequent exaltation to the right hand of God;" and, in a foot note he gives the following quotations: *Jerome.*—"The Psalm pertains to Christ, who speaks in it. . . . It is the voice of our King, which he utters in the human nature that he had assumed, but without detracting from his divine nature. . . . The Psalm pertains to his passion." *Augustine.*—"Our King speaks in this Psalm in the person of the human nature that he assumed, at the time of his passion, the royal title inscribed will show itself conspicuous."—*C. H. S.*

Whole Psalm. The present Psalm is connected in thought and language with the foregoing, and linked on to the following Psalm by catchwords. It is entitled in the Syriac and Arabic versions, a Psalm on the Election of the Church, and on the Resurrection of Christ."—*Christopher Wordsworth, D.D., 1868.*

Verse 1. "Preserve me, O God." Here David desireth not deliverance from any special trouble, but generally prayeth to be fenced and defended continually by the providence of God, wishing that the Lord would continue his mercy towards him unto the end; whereby he foresaw it was as needfull for him to be safeguarded by God, his protection in the end, as at the time present; as also how he made no less account of it in his prosperity than in adversity. So that the man of God still feared his infirmity, and therefore acknowledgeth himself ever to stand in need of God his help. And here is a sure and undoubted mark of the child of God, when a man shall have as great a care to continue and grow in well-doing, as to begin; and this praying for the gift of final perseverance is a special note of the child of God. This holy jealousy of the man of God made him so desire to be preserved at all times, in all estates, both in soul and body.—*Richard Greenham, 1531-1591.*

Verse 1. "For in thee do I put my trust." Here the prophet setteth down the cause why he prayeth to God; whereby he declareth, that none can truly call upon God unless they believe. Romans 10:14. "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" In regard whereof as he prayeth to God to be his Saviour, so he is fully assured that God will be his Saviour. If, then, without faith we cannot truly call upon God, the men of this world rather prate like parrots than pray like Christians, at what

time they utter these words; for that they trust not in God they declare both by neglecting the lawful means, and also in using unlawful means. Some we see trust in friends; some shoulder out, as they think, the cross with their goods; some fence themselves with authority; others bathe and baste themselves in pleasure to put the evil day far from them; others make flesh their arm; and others make the wedge of gold their confidence; and these men when they seek for help at the Lord, mean in their hearts to find it in their friends, good authority and pleasure, howsoever for fear, they dare not say this outwardly. Again, here we are to observe under what shelter we may harbour ourselves in the showers of adversity, even under the protection of the Almighty. And why? "Whoso dwelleth in the secret of the Most High, shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty." And here in effect is showed, that whosoever putteth his trust in God shall be preserved; otherwise the prophet's reason here had not been good. Besides, we see he pleadeth not by merit, but sueth by faith, teaching us that if we come with like faith, we may obtain the like deliverance.—*Richard Greenham*.

Verse 2. "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord." I wish I could have heard what you said to yourself when these words were first mentioned. I believe I could guess the language of some of you. When you heard me repeat these words, "*O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord,*" you thought, "I have never said anything to the Lord, unless when I cried out, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Has not something like this passed in your minds? I will try again. When I first mentioned the text, "Let me consider," you secretly said, "I believe that I did once say to the Lord, Thou art my Lord; but it was so long ago, that I had almost forgotten it; but I suppose that it must have been at such a time when I was in trouble. I had met with disappointments in the world; and then, perhaps, I cried, Thou art my portion, O Lord. Or, perhaps, when I was under serious impressions, in the hurry of my spirits, I might look up to God and say, Thou art my Lord. But, whatever I could or did formerly say, I am certain that I cannot say it at present." Have none of you thought in this manner? I will hazard one conjecture more; and I doubt not but in this case I shall guess rightly. When I repeated these words, "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord;" "So have I," thought one; "So have I," thought another; I have said it often, but I said it with peculiar solemnity and pleasure, when, in an act of humble devotion, I lately threw my ransomed, rescued, grateful soul at his feet and cried, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds." The very recollection of it is pleasant; and I shall now have an opportunity of renewing my vows, and hope to recover something of the divine serenity and joy which I at that time experienced."—*Samuel Lavington's Sermons*, 1810.

Verse 2. "Thou art my Lord." He acknowledgeth the Lord Jehovah; but he seeth him not as it were then afar off, but drawing near unto him, he sweetly embraceth him; which thing is proper unto faith, and to that particular applying which we say to be in faith.—*Robert Rollock*, 1600.

Verse 2. "My goodness extendeth not to thee." I think the words should be understood of what the

Messiah was doing for men. My goodness, (Heb.) *tobhathi*, "my bounty" is not to thee. What I am doing can add nothing to thy divinity; thou art not providing this astonishing sacrifice because thou canst derive any excellence from it; but this bounty extends *to the saints*—to all the spirits of just men made perfect, whose bodies are still in the earth; and to the excellent, (Heb.) *addirey*, "the noble or super-eminent ones," those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The saints and illustrious ones not only taste of my goodness, but enjoy my salvation. Perhaps *angels* themselves may be intended; they are not uninterested in the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. They *desire to look into these things*; and the victories of the cross in the conversion of sinners cause joy among the angels of God.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 2. "My goodness extendeth not to thee;" "My well-doing extendeth not to thee." Oh, what shall I render unto thee, my God, for all thy benefits towards me? what shall I repay? Alas! I can do thee no good, for mine imperfect goodness cannot pleasure thee who art most perfect and goodness itself; my well-doing can do thee no good, my wickedness can do thee no harm. I receive all good from thee, but no good can I return to thee; wherefore I acknowledge thee to be most rich, and myself to be most beggarly; so far off is it that thou standest in any need of me. Wherefore I will join myself to thy people, that whatsoever I have they may profit by it; and whatsoever they have I may profit by it, seeing the things that I have received must be put out to loan, to gain some comfort to others. Whatsoever others have, they have not for their own private use, but that by them, as by pipes and conduits, they liberally should be conveyed unto me also. Wherefore in this strain we are taught, that if we be the children of God, we must join ourselves in a holy league to his people, and by mutual participation of the gifts of God, we must testify each to other, that we be of the number and communion of saints; and this is an undoubted badge and cognizance of him that loveth God, if he also loveth them that are begotten of God. Wherefore, if we so profess ourselves to be of God and to worship him, then we must join ourselves to the church of God which with us doth worship God. And this must we do of necessity, for it is a branch of our belief that there is a communion of saints in the church; and if we believe that there is a God, we must also believe that there is a remnant of people, unto whom God revealeth himself, and communicateth his mercies, in whom we must have all our delight, to whom we must communicate according to the measure of grace given unto every one of us.—*Richard Greenham*.

Verse 2. "My goodness extendeth not to thee." Oh, how great is God's goodness to you! He calls upon others for the same things, and conscience stands as Pharaoh's taskmasters, requiring the tale of bricks but not allowing straw; it impels and presseth, but gives no enlargement of heart, and buffets and wounds them for neglect: as the hard creditor that, taking the poor debtor by the throat, saith, "Pay me that thou owest me," but yields him no power to do it; thus God might deal with you also, *for he oweth not assistance to us*; but *we owe obedience to him*. Remember, we had power, and it is just

to demand what we cannot do, because the weakness that is in us is of ourselves: we have impoverished ourselves. Therefore, when in much mercy he puts forth his hand into the work with thee, be very thankful. If the work be not done, he is no loser; if done, and well done, he is no gainer. Job 22:2; 35:6-8. But the gain is all to thee; all the good that comes by it is to thyself.—*Joseph Symonds*, 1639.

Verse 2 (last clause). It is a greater glory to us that we are allowed to serve God, than it is to him that we offer him that service. He is not rendered happy by us; but we are made happy by him. He can do without such earthly servants; but we cannot do without such a heavenly Master.—*William Secker*.

Verse 2 (last clause). There is nothing added to God; he is so perfect, that no sin can hurt him; and so righteous, that no righteousness can benefit him. *O Lord, my righteousness extendeth not to thee! thou hast no need of my righteousness.* Acts 17:24, 25. God hath no need of anything.—*Richard Stock*, 1641.

Verse 2. As Christ is the head of man, so is God the head of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3); and as man is subject unto Christ, so is Christ subject to God; not in regard of the divine nature, wherein there is an equality, and consequently no dominion or jurisdiction; nor only in his human nature, but in the economy of a Redeemer, considered as one designed, and consenting to be incarnate, and take our flesh; so that after this agreement, God had a sovereign right to dispose of him according to the articles consented to. In regard of his undertaking and the advantage he was to bring to the elect of God upon earth, he calls God by the solemn title of "his Lord." "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth." It seems to be the speech of Christ in heaven, mentioning the saints on earth as at a distance from him. I can add nothing to the glory of thy majesty, but the whole fruit of my mediation and suffering will redound to the saints on earth.—*Stephen Charnock*.

Verses 2, 3. "*My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints.*" God's goodness to us should make us merciful to others. It were strange indeed a soul should come out of his tender bosom with a hard uncharitable heart. Some children do not indeed take after their earthly parents, as Cicero's son, who had nothing of his father but his name; but God's children all partake of their heavenly Father's nature. Philosophy tells us, that there is no reaction from the earth to the heavens; they indeed shed their influences upon the lower world, which quicken and fructify it, but the earth returns none back to make the sun shine the better. David knew that *his goodness extended not unto God*, but this made him reach it forth to his brethren. Indeed, God hath left his poor saints to receive the rents we owe unto him for his mercies. An ingenuous guest, though his friend will take nothing for his entertainment, yet, to show his thankfulness, will give something to his servants.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 3. "*But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*" My brethren, look upon saintship as the greatest excellency to love it. So did Christ. His eye was "upon

the excellent ones in the earth;" that is, upon the saints, who were excellent to him; yea, also even when not saints, because God loved them. Isaiah 43:4. It is strange to hear how men by their speeches will undervalue a saint as such, if without some other outward excellency. For whilst they acknowledge a man a saint, yet in other respects, they will contemn him; "He is a holy man," they will say, "but he is weak," etc. But is he a saint? And can there be any such other imperfection or weakness found as shall lay him low in thy thoughts in comparison of other carnal men more excellent? Hath not Christ loved him, bought him, redeemed him?—*Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 3. "*But to the saints.*" I understand that a man then evinces affection towards God, and towards those who love God, when his soul yearns after them—when he obliges himself to love them by practically serving and benefiting them—acting towards them as he would act towards God himself were he to see him in need of his service, as David says he did.—*Juan de Valdes, 1550*.

Verse 3. "*The saints.*" The Papists could abide no saints but those which are in heaven; which argueth that they live in a kingdom of darkness, and err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God; for if they were but meanly conversant in the Scriptures, in the holy epistles, they should find almost in every epistle mention made of the saints who are thereunto called in Jesus Christ, through whom they are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And mark, he calleth them "*excellent.*" Some think rich men to be excellent, some think learned men to be excellent, some count men in authority so to be, but here we are taught that those men are *excellent* who are sanctified by God's graces.—*Richard Greenham*.

Verse 3. By David's language, there were many singular saints in his day: "*To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*" Was it so then, and should it not be so now? We know the New Testament outshines the Old as much as the sun outshines the moon. If we then live in a more glorious dispensation, should we not maintain a more glorious conversation? . . .

"*The excellent.*" Were the sun to give no more delight than a star, you could not believe he was the regent of the day; were he to transmit no more heat than a glow-worm, you would question his being the source of elementary heat. Were God to do no more than a creature, where would his Godhead be? Were a man to do no more than a brute, where would his manhood be? Were not a saint to exceed a sinner, where would his sanctity be?—*William Secker*.

Verse 3. Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves, who making a stately feast, appointed his nobles, at that time Pagans, to sit in the hall below, and commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, to eat and drink of his kingly cheer, at which many wondering, he said, he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament to his table, and more worthy of his company than the greatest peers unconverted to the Christian faith; for when these might be thrust down to hell, those might be his comforts and fellow princes in heaven. Although you see the stars sometimes by reflections in a puddle, in the bottom of a well, or in a

stinking ditch, yet the stars have their situation in heaven. So, although you see a godly man in a poor, miserable, low, despised condition, for the things of this world, yet he is fixed in heaven, in the region of heaven: "Who hath raised us up," saith the apostle, "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."—*Charles Bradbury's "Cabinet of Jewels,"* 1785.

Verse 3. To sum up all, we must know that we neither do nor can love the godly so well as we should do; but all is well if we would love them better, and do like ourselves the less because we do love them no more, and that this is common or usual with me, then I am right: so that we are to love the godly first because God commands it, because they are good; and in these cases our faith doth work by our love to good men. Next, when I am at the worst, like a sick sheep, I care not for the company of other sheep, but do mope in a corner by myself; but yet I do not delight in the society of goats or dogs, it proves that I have some good blood left in me; it is because for the present I take little or no delight in myself or in my God, that I delight no better in the godly: yet as I love myself for all that, so I may be said to love them for all this. Man indeed is a sociable creature, a company-keeper by nature when he is himself; and if we not associate ourselves with the ungodly, though for the present, and care not much to show ourselves amongst the godly, the matter is not much, it is a sin of infirmity, not a fruit of iniquity. The disciples went from Christ, but they turned not to the other side as Judas did, who did forsake his Master, and joined himself to his Master's enemies, but they got together. Some say that Demas did repent (which I think to be the truth), and then he did "embrace this present world," but for the present fit: put case he did forsake Paul; so did better men than he. Indeed as long as a man hath his delights about him, he will embrace the delights of this present world, or the delights which belong to the world to come; join with Paul, or cleave to the world. In this temptation our stay is, first, that we care not for the company of goats; next, that as we should, so we would, and desire that we may take delight in the company of sheep, to count them the only *excellent* men in the world, *in whom is all our delight*. The conclusion is, that to love the saints as saints, is a sound proof of faith; the reason is, for that we cannot master our affections by love, but first we must master our understandings by faith,—*Richard Capel, 1586-1656.*

Verse 4. "Drink offerings of blood." The Gentiles used to offer, and sometimes drink part of the blood of their sacrifices, whether of beasts or of men, as either of them were sacrificed.—*Matthew Poole.*

Verse 4. "Drink offerings of blood." It is uncertain whether this expression is to be understood literally to be blood, which the heathen actually mixed in their libations when they bound themselves to the commission of some dreadful deed, or whether their libations are figuratively called offerings of blood to denote the horror with which the writer regarded them.—*George R. Noyes, in loc. 1846.*

Verse 4 (last clause). A sin rolled under the tongue becomes soft and supple, and the throat is so short and slippery a passage, that insensibly it may slide down from the mouth into the stomach; and contemplative wantonness quickly turns into practical uncleanness.—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 5. "*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.*" If the Lord be thy portion, then thou mayest conclude, omnipotency is my portion, immensity, all-sufficiency, etc. Say not, If so, then I should be omnipotent, etc. There is a vast difference betwixt identity and interest, betwixt conveying of a title, and transmutation of nature. A friend gives thee an invaluable treasure, and all the securities of it that thou canst desire; wilt thou deny it is thine because thou art not changed into its nature? The attributes are thine, as thy inheritance, as thy lands are thine; not because thou art changed into their nature, but because the title is conveyed to thee, it is given thee, and improved for thy benefit. If another manage it, who can do it with greater advantage to thee than to thyself, it is no infringement of thy title. . . . The Lord is our *portion*, and this is incomparably more than if we had heaven and earth; for all the earth is but as a point compared with the vastness of the heavens, and the heavens themselves are but a point compared with God. What a large possession have we then! There is no confiscation of it, no banishment from it. Our portion fills heaven and earth, and is infinitely above heaven and below earth, and beyond both. Poor men boast and pride themselves of a kingdom, but we have more than all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof. Christ has given us more than the devil could offer him.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 5. "*Portion of mine inheritance and of my cup,*" may contain an allusion to the daily supply of food, and also to the inheritance of Levi. Deuteronomy 18:1, 2.—"*Critical and Explanatory Pocket Bible.*" By A. R. Fausset and B. M. Smith, 1867.

Verses 5, 6. "*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*" "Blessed are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord." No greater mercy can be bestowed upon any people, family, or person than this, for God to dwell among them. If we value this mercy according to the excellence and worth of that which is bestowed, it is the greatest; if we value it according to the good will of him that gives it, it will appear likewise to be the greatest favour. The greatness of the good will of God in giving himself to be our acquaintance, is evident in the nature of the gift. A man may give his estate to them to whom his love is not very large, but he never gives himself but upon strong affection. God gives abundantly to all the works of his hands; he causeth the sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and the rain to descend upon the just and the unjust; but it cannot be conceived that he should give himself to be a portion, a friend, father, husband, but in abundance of love. Whosoever therefore shall refuse acquaintance with God, slighteth the greatest favour that ever God did bestow upon man. Now, consider what a high charge this is; to abuse such a kindness from God is an act of the greatest vileness. David was never so provoked as when the king of Ammon abused his kindness, in his ambassadors, after his father's death. And God is highly provoked when his greatest mercies, bestowed in the greatest love, are rejected and cast away. What could God give more and better than himself? Ask David what he thinks of God; he was well acquainted with him, he

dwelt in his house, and by his good will would never be out of his more immediate presence and company; enquire, I pray, what he found amiss in him. That you may know his mind the better, he hath left it upon record in more than one or two places, what a friend he hath had of God. *"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."* Why, what is that you boast of so much, O David? Have not others had kingdoms as well as you? No, that's not the thing; a crown is one of the least jewels in my cabinet: *"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup."*—*James Janeway.*

Verses 5, 6. Take notice not only of the mercies of God, but of God in the mercies. Mercies are never so savoury as when they savour of a Saviour.—*Ralph Venning, 1620-1673.*

Verse 6. *"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."* Bitter herbs will go down very well, when a man has such delicious "meats which the world knows not of." The sense of our Father's love is like honey at the end of every rod; it turns stones into bread, and water into wine, and the valley of trouble into a door of hope; it makes the biggest evils seem as if they were none, or better than none; for it makes our deserts like the garden of the Lord, and when we are upon the cross for Christ, as if we were in paradise with Christ. Who would quit his duty for the sake of suffering, that hath such a relief under it? Who would not rather walk in truth, when he hath such a cordial to support him, than by the conduct of fleshly wisdom, to take any indirect or irregular method for his own deliverance?—*Timothy Cruso.*

Verse 6. *"The lines."* Probably alluding to the division of the land by lot, and the measuring of it off by ropes and lines. David believed in an overruling destiny which fixed the bounds of his abode, and his possessions; he did more, he was satisfied with all the appointment of the predestinating God.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 7. *"I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel."* The Holy Ghost is a spirit of counsel, powerfully instructing and convincingly teaching how to act and walk, for he directs us to set right steps, and to walk with a right foot, and thereby prevents us of many a sin, by seasonable instruction set on upon our hearts with a strong hand; as Isaiah 8:11. For, as the same prophet says (Isaiah 11:2), he is the spirit of counsel and of might. Of counsel to direct; of might, to strengthen the inner man. Such he was to Christ the Head, of whom it is there spoken. For instance, in the agony (on the determination of which our salvation depended), and conflict in the garden, when he prayed, "Let this cup pass," it was this good Spirit that counselled him to die; and he blessed God for it: "I bless the Lord that hath given me counsel." It was that counsel that in that case caused his heart to say, "Not my will, but thine."—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 7. *"My reins."* Common experience shows that the workings of the mind, particularly the passions of joy, grief, and fear, have a very remarkable effect of the reins or kidneys, and from their retired situation in the body, and their being hid in fat, they are often used in Scripture to denote the

most secret working of the soul and affections.—*John Parkhurst.*

Verse 7. "My reins also instruct me in the night seasons." This shows that God, who, he says, was always present to him, had given him some admonition in his dreams, or at least his waking thoughts by night, from whence he gathered a certain assurance of his recovery; possibly he might be directed to some remedy. Antonine thanks the gods for directing him in his sleep to remedies.—*Z. Mudge, in loc, 1744.*

Verse 7. "My reins also instruct me in the night seasons." We have a saying among ourselves, that "the pillow is the best counsellor;" and there is much truth in the saying, especially if we have first committed ourselves in prayer to God, and taken a prayerful spirit with us to our bed. In the quiet of its silent hours, undisturbed by the passions, and unharassed by the conflicts of the world, we can commune with our own heart, and be instructed and guarded as to our future course even "*in the night season.*" David especially seems to have made these seasons sources of great profit as well as delight. Sometimes he loved to meditate upon God, as he lay upon his bed; and it was no doubt as he meditated on the Lord's goodness, and on the way by which he had led him, that he was, as it were, constrained, even at midnight, to arise and pray. While, therefore, we acknowledge the pillow to be a good counsellor, let us with David here acknowledge also that it is the Lord who gives the counsel, and sends the instruction in the night season.—*Burton Bouchier.*

Verse 8. "I have set the Lord always before me." David did not by fits and starts set the Lord before him; but he "*always*" set the Lord before him in his course; he had his eye upon the Lord, and so much the Hebrew word imports: I have equally set the Lord before me; that is the force of the original word, that is, I have set the Lord before me, at one time as well as another, without any irregular affections or passions, etc. In every place, in every condition, in every company, in every employment, and in every enjoyment, I have set the Lord equally before me; and this raised him, and this will raise any Christian, by degrees, to a very great height of holiness.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 8. "I have set the Lord always before me." Hebrew, I have *equally set*, or proposed. The apostle translateth it, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face." Acts 2:25. I set the eye of my faith full upon him, and suffer it not to take to other things; I look him in the face, *oculo irretorto*, as the eagle looketh upon the sun; and *oculo adamantino*, with an eye of adamant, which turns only to one point: so here, *I have equally set the Lord before me*, without irregular affections and passions. And this was one of those lessons that his *reins had taught him*, that the Holy Spirit had dictated unto him.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 8. "I have set the Lord ALWAYS before me." Like as the gnomon doth ever behold the north star, whether it be closed and shut up in a coffer of gold, silver, or wood, never losing its nature; so a faithful Christian man, whether he abound in wealth or be pinched with poverty, whether he be of high or low degree in this world, ought continually to have his faith and hope surely built and grounded

upon Christ, and to have his heart and mind fast fixed and settled in him, and to follow him through thick and thin, through fire and water, through wars and peace, through hunger and cold, through friends and foes, through a thousand perils and dangers, through the surges and waves of envy, malice, hatred, evil speeches, railing sentences, contempt of the world, flesh, and devil, and even in death itself, be it never so bitter, cruel, and tyrannical, yet never to lose sight and view of Christ, never to give over faith, hope, and trust in him.—*Robert Cawdray*.

Verse 8. "I have set the Lord always before me." By often thinking of God, the heart will be enticed into desires after him. Isaiah 26:8. "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee;" and see what follows, verse 9: "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early." Love sets the soul on musing, and from musing to praying. Meditation is prayer in bullion, prayer in the ore—soon melted and run into holy desires. The laden cloud soon drops into rain; the piece charged soon goes off when fire is put to it. A meditating soul is in *proxima potentia* to prayer.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 8. "I have set the Lord always before me," etc. He that by faith eyes God continually as his protector in trouble "*shall not be moved*" with any evil that he suffers, and he that eyes God by faith as his pattern in holiness, shall not be moved from doing that which is good. This thought—*the Lord is at our right hand*—keeps us from turning either to the right hand or to the left. It is said of Enoch, that "he walked with God" (Genesis 5:22), and though the history of his life be very short, yet 'tis said of him a second time (verse 24), that "he walked with God." He walked so much with God that he walked as God: he did not "*walk*" (which kind of walking the apostle reproveth, 1 Corinthians 3:3), "*as men*." He walked so little like the world, that his stay was little in the world. "He was not," saith the text, "for God took him." He took him from the world to himself, or, as the author to the Hebrews reports it, "he was translated that he should not see death, for he had this testimony, that he pleased God."—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 8. "Because he is at my right hand," etc. Of ourselves we stand not at any time, by his power we may overcome at all times. And when we are sorest assaulted he is ever ready *at our right hand* to support and stay us that we shall not fall. He hath well begun, and shall happily go forward in his work, who hath in truth begun. For true grace well planted in the heart, how weak soever, shall hold out for ever. All total decays come from this—that the heart was never truly mollified, nor grace deeply and kindly rooted therein.—*John Ball*.

Verse 8. "He is at my right hand." This phrase of speech is borrowed from those who, when they take upon them the patronage, defence, or tuition of any, will set them on their right hand, as in place of most safeguard. Experience confirmeth this in children, who in any imminent danger shroud and shelter themselves under their father's arms or hands, as under a sufficient buckler. Such was the estate of the man of God, as here appeareth, who was hemmed and hedged in with the power of

God, both against present evils, and dangers to come.—*Richard Greenham*.

Verse 8. Even as a column or pillar is sometimes on thy right hand, and sometimes on thy left hand, because thou dost change thy standing, sitting or walking, for it is unmovable and keepeth one place; so God is sometimes favourable and bountiful unto thee, and sometimes seemeth to be wroth and angry with thee, because thou dost fall from virtue to vice, from obedience and humility to pride and presumption; for in the Lord there is no change, no, not so much as any shadow of change. He is immutable, always one and everlasting. If thou wilt bend thyself to obedience, and to a virtuous and godly life, thou shalt ever have him a strong rock, whereupon thou mayst boldly build a castle and tower of defence. He will be unto thee a mighty pillar, bearing up heaven and earth, whereto thou mayst lean and not be deceived, wherein thou mayst trust and not be disappointed. He will ever be at thy right hand, that thou shalt not fall. He will take thy part, and will mightily defend thee against all enemies of thy body and of thy soul; but if thou wilt shake hands with virtue, and bid it adieu and farewell, and, forsaking the ways of God, wilt live as thou list, and follow thy own corruption, and make no conscience of aught thou doest, defiling and blemishing thyself with all manner of sin and iniquity, then be sure the Lord will appear unto thee in his fury and indignation. From his justice and judgments none shall ever be able to deliver thee.—*Robert Cawdray*.

Verse 9. "*My heart is glad.*" Men may for a time be hearers of the gospel, men may for order's sake pray, sing, receive the sacraments; but if it be without joy, will not that hypocrisy in time break out? Will they not begin to be weary? Nay, will they not be as ready to hear any other doctrine? Good things cannot long find entertainment in our corruptions, unless the Holy Ghost hath changed us from our old delights to conceive pleasure in these things.—*Richard Greenham*.

Verse 9. "*My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.*" His inward joy was not able to contain itself. We testify our pleasure on lower occasions, even at the gratification of our senses; when our ear is filled with harmonious melody, when our eye is fixed upon admirable and beauteous objects, when our smell is recreated with agreeable odours, and our taste also by the delicacy and rareness of provisions; and much more will our soul show its delight, when its faculties, that are of a more exquisite constitution, meet with things that are in all respects agreeable and pleasant to them; and in God they meet with all those: with his light our understanding is refreshed, and so is our will with his goodness and his love.—*Timothy Rogers*.

Verse 9. "*Therefore my heart is glad,*" etc. That is, I am all over in very good plight, as well as heart can wish, or require; I do over-abound exceedingly with joy; "God forgive me mine unthankfulness and unworthiness of so great glory" (as that martyr said): "In all the days of my life I was never so merry as now I am in this dark dungeon," etc. Wicked men rejoice in appearance, and not in heart (2 Corinthians 5:12); their joy is but skin deep, their mirth frothy and flashy, such as wetteth the mouth, but warmeth not the heart. But David is *totus totus, quantus quantus exultabundus*; his *heart, glory,*

flesh, (answerable, as some think to that of the apostle, 1 Thessalonians 5:23; *spirit, soul, and body*) were all overjoyed.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 9. "My flesh shall rest in hope." If a Jew pawned his bed-clothes, God provided mercifully that it should be restored before night: "For," saith he, "that is his covering: wherein shall he sleep?" Exodus 22:27. Truly, hope is the saint's covering, wherein he wraps himself, when he lays his body down to sleep in the grave: "*My flesh,*" saith David, "*shall rest in hope.*" O Christian, bestir thyself to redeem thy hope before this sun of thy temporal life goes down upon thee, or else thou art sure to lie down in sorrow. A sad going to the bed of the grave he hath who hath no hope of a resurrection to life.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 9. "My flesh shall rest in hope." That hope which is grounded on the word, gives rest to the soul; 'tis an anchor to keep it steady. Hebrews 6:13. Which shows the unmovableness of that which our anchor is fastened to. The promise sustains our faith, and our faith is that which supports us. He that hopes in the Word as David did (Psalm 119:81), lays a mighty stress upon it; as Samson did when he leaned upon the pillars of the house, so as to pull it down upon the Philistines. A believer throws the whole weight of all his affairs and concernments, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, upon the promises of God, like a man resolved to stand or fall with them. He ventures himself, and all that belongs to him, entirely upon this bottom, which is in effect to say, if they will not bear me up, I am content to sink; I know that there shall be a performance of those things which have been told me from the Lord, and therefore I will incessantly look for it.—*Timothy Cruso*.

Verse 10. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," etc. The title of this golden text may be—*The embalming of the dead saints*: the force whereof is to free the souls from dereliction in the state of death, and to secure the bodies of God's saints from corruption in the grave. It is the art which I desire to learn, and at this time, teach upon this sad occasion [*A Funeral Sermon*], even the preparing of this confection against our burials.—*George Hughes, 1642*.

Verse 10. Many of the elder Reformers held that our Lord in soul actually descended into hell, according to some of them to suffer there as our surety, and according to others to make a public triumph over death and hell. This idea was almost universally, and as we believe, most properly repudiated by the Puritans. To prove this fact, it may be well to quote from Corbet's witty itinerary of, "Foure clerkes of Oxford, doctors two, and two

That would be doctors."

He laments the secularisation of church appurtenances at Banbury, by the Puritans, whom he described as,

—————"They which tell

That Christ hath nere descended into Hell,

But to the grave."

—C. H. S. *The quotation is from Richard Corbet's Poems, 1632.*

Verse 10. "*My soul in hell.*" Christ in soul descended into hell, when as our surety he submitted himself to bear those hellish sorrows (or equivalent to them), which we were bound by our sins to suffer for ever. His descension is his projection of himself into the sea of God's wrath conceived for our sins, and his ingression into most unspeakable straits and torments in his soul, which we should else have suffered for ever in hell. This way of Christ's descending into hell is expressly uttered in the person of David, as the type of Christ. Psalm 86:13; 116:3; 69:1-3. Thus the prophet Isaiah saith, "His soul was made an offering." Isaiah 53:10. And this I take it David means, when he said of Christ, "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.*" Psalm 16; Acts 2. And thus Christ descended into hell when he was alive, not when he was dead. Thus his soul was in hell when in the garden he did sweat blood, and on the cross when he cried so lamentably, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 26:38.—*Nicholas Byfield's "Exposition of the Creed," 1676.*

Verse 10. "*In hell.*" *Sheol* here, as *hades* in the New Testament, signifies the state of the dead, the separate state of souls after death, the invisible world of souls, where Christ's soul was, though it did not remain there, but on the third day returned to its body again. It seems best of all to interpret this word of the grave as it is rendered; Genesis 42:38; Isaiah 38:18.—*John Gill.*

Verse 10. "*Thine Holy One.*" *Holiness* preserves the soul from dereliction, in the state of death, and the body of the saint from corruption in the grave. If it be desired by any that doubt of it, to see the clear issue of this from the text, I shall guide them to read this text with a great accent upon that term, "*Thine Holy One,*" that they may take special notice of it, even the quality of that man exempted from these evils. In this the Spirit of God puts an emphasis on *holiness*, as counter-working and prevailing over death and the grave. It is this and nothing but this, that keeps the man, dead and buried, from desertion in death, and corruption in the grave.—*George Hughes.*

Verse 10. The great promise to Christ is, that though he took a corruptible body upon him, yet he should "*not see corruption,*" that is, *partake of corruption*: corruption should have no communion with, much less power over him.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10. Quoted by the apostle Peter (Acts 2:27); on which Hackett (*Com. in loc.*) observes:—"The sense then may be expressed thus: Thou wilt not give me up as prey to death; he shall not have power over me, to dissolve the body and cause it to return to dust."

Verse 11. In this verse are four things observable:

1. *A Guide, THOU.*
2. *A Traveller, ME.*
3. *A Way, THE PATH.*
4. *The End, LIFE,* described after. For that which follows is but the description of this life.

This verse is a proper subject for a *meditation*. For, all three are solitary. *The guide* is but one, the *traveller*, one; the *way* one; and the *life*, the only one. To meditate well on this is to bring all together; and at last make them all but *one*. Which that we may do, let us first seek our *Guide*.

The Guide. Him we find named in the first verse—Jehovah. Here we may begin, as we ought in all holy exercises, with *adoration*. For "unto him all knees shall bow;" nay, unto his *name*. For holy is his name. Glory be to thee, O God! He is *Deus*, therefore *holy*; he is *Deus fortis*, therefore *able*. "For the strength of the hills is his;" and if there be a *way* on earth, he can "*show*" it; for in his hands are all the corners of the earth. But is he *willing* to "*show*?" Yes, though he be *Deus, holy* (which is a word terrible to poor flesh and blood), yet he is *Deus meus*, my holiness. That takes away servile fear. He is *meus*, we have a property in him; and he is willing: "*Thou wilt show*," etc. And that you may know *he will guide*, David shows a little above, how diligently he will guide. First, he will *go before*, he will lead the way himself: if I can but follow, I shall be sure to go right. And he that hath a *guide* before him, and will not follow, is worthy to be left behind. But say, I am willing, I do desire to go, and I do follow: what if, through faintness in the long way, I fall often? or, for want of care step out of the way, shall I not then be left behind? Fear not; for "He is at my right hand, so that I shall not slip." Verse 8. This is some comfort indeed. But we are so soon weary in this way, and do fall and err so often, that it would weary the patience of a good *guide* to lead us but one day. Will he bear with us, and continue to the end? Yes, always; or this text deceives us; for all this is found in the eighth verse. We must have *him* or none; for he is one, and the only one. So confessed Asaph: "Whom have I on earth but thee? Seek this *good Guide*, he is easy to be found: "Seek, and ye shall find." You shall find that he is first *holy*; secondly, *able*; thirdly, *willing*; fourthly, *diligent*; and fifthly, *constant*. O my soul! to follow him, and he will make thee both *able* to follow to the end; and *holy* in the end.

The traveller. Having found the *Guide*, we shall not long seek for one that wants him; for, see, here is a *man out of his way*. And that will soon appear if we consider his condition. For, he is a *stranger* ("*Thou wilt show me*"); and what am I? "I am a stranger, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were," says he, in another place. But this was in the old time under the law; what, are we, their sons in the gospel, any other? Peter tells us no: that we are strangers and pilgrims too; that is, travellers. We travel, as being *out of our country*; and we are strangers to those we converse with. For neither the natives be our friends, nor anything we possess truly our own. It is time we had *animum revertendi*; and surely so we have if we could but pray on the way, *Converte nos Domine*. But it is so long since we came hither, we have forgot the way home: *obliti sunt montis mei*. Yet still we are travelling; and, we think, homewards. For all hope well: *oculi omnium sperant in te*. But *right*, like pilgrims, or rather wanderers. For we scarce know if we go right; and, what is worse, have little care to enquire.

"*Me*." David still keeps the singular number. As there is but *one* guide, so he speaks in the

person but of *one traveller*. There is somewhat, peradventure, in that. It is to show his *confidence*. The Lord's prayer is in the plural, but the creed is in the singular. We may pray that God would guide *all*; but we can be confident for none but ourselves. "*Thou wilt show,*" or thou dost, or hast, as some translate: all is but to show particular confidence. "*Thou wilt show me;*" *me*, not *us*, a number indefinite wherein I *may be* one; but *me* in particular that am out of the way; that am myself *alone*; that must walk in "*the path*" *alone*. Either I must follow, or go before others; I must work for myself alone; believe for myself alone; and be saved by one alone. *The way* in this text that I must walk is but one; nay, it is but a "*path*" where but one can go: this is no highway, but a *way* of sufferance by favour: it is none of ours. It is no *road*; you cannot hurry here, or gallop by troops: it is but *semita*, a small *footpath* for one to go alone in. Nay, as it is a *way* for *one alone*, so it is a *lonely way*: *preparate vias ejus in solitudine*, saith John, and he knew which way God went, who is our *Guide in solitudine*: there is the sweetness of solitariness, the comforts of meditation. For God is never more familiar with man than when man is *in solitudine*, *alone*, in his *path* by himself. Christ himself came thus, all *lonely*; without troop, or noise, and ever avoided the tumultuous multitude, though they would have made him a king. And he never spake to them but in parables; but to *his* that sought him, *in solitudine*, in private, he spake plain; and so doth he still love to do to the soul, in private and particular. Therefore well said David, "*Thou wilt show me,*" in particular, and in the singular number. But how shall I know that I, in particular, shall be taught and *showed* this *way*? This prophet, that had experience, will tell us: *mites docebit*, the *humble he will teach*. Psalm 25:9. If thou canst humble thyself, thou mayst be sure to see thy *guide*; Christ hath crowned this virtue with a blessing: "Blessed are the meek;" for them he will call to him and teach. But thou must be humble then. For heaven is built like our churches, high-roofed within, but with a strait low gate; they then that enter there must stoop, ere they can see God. Humility is the mark at every cross, whereby thou shalt know if thou be in the way: if any be otherwise minded, God also shall reveal it unto you, for, "*Thou wilt show.*"

"*The path.*" But let us now see *what* he will *show* us: "*The path.*" We must know, that as men have *many paths* out of their highway—the world—but they all end in destruction; so God hath *many paths* out of his highway, the word, but they all end in salvation. Let us oppose ours to his (as indeed they are opposite), and see how they agree. *Ours* are not worth *marking*, *his* marked with an *attendite*, to begin withal; *ours* bloody, *his* unpolluted; *ours* crooked, *his* straight; *ours* lead to hell, *his* to heaven. Have not we strayed then? We had need to turn and take another path, and that quickly: we may well say, *semitas nostras*,. . . *vis tus*. Well, here is *the Book*, and here are the *ways* before you; and he will *show* you. Here is *semita mandatorum*, in the one hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm, verse thirty-five: here is *semita pacifica* (Proverbs 3:17); here is *semita aequitatis* (Proverbs 4:11); here is *semita justitiae* (Psalm 23:3); here is *semita judicii* (Proverbs 17:23); and many others. These are, every one of them, *God's ways*; but these are somewhat too many and too far off: we must seek

the way where all these meet, and that will bring us into "*the path*;" these are many, but I will show you yet "a more excellent way," saith Paul. 1 Corinthians 12:31.

We must begin to enter at *via mandatorum*; for till then we are in the dark and can distinguish no ways, whether they be good or bad. But there we shall meet with a *lantern* and a *light* in it. Thy commandment is a lantern, and thy law a light. Proverbs 6:23. Carry this with thee (as a good man should, *lex Dei in corde ejus*); and it will bring thee into the way. And see how careful our *Guide* is; for lest the wind should blow out this light, he hath put it into a lantern to preserve it. For the fear, or sanction, of the "commandments," preserves the memory of the law in our hearts, as a lantern doth a light burning within it. The law is the light, and the commandment the lantern. So that neither flattering Zephyrus, nor blustering Boreas shall be able to blow it out, so long as the fear of the sanction keeps it in. This is *lucerna pedibus* (Psalm 119:105); and will not only *show* thee where thou shalt tread, but what pace thou shalt keep. When thou hast this light, take Jeremy's counsel; enquire for *semita antiqua*, before thou goest any further. "Stand (saith he) in the ways, and behold and ask for the old way; which is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." This will bring you some whither where you may *rest* awhile. And whither is that? Trace this *path*, and you shall find this "old way" to run quite through all the Old Testament till it end in the New, the gospel of peace, and there is *rest*. And that this is so Paul affirms. For the law, which is the "old way," is but the pedagogue to the gospel. This then is "a more excellent way" than the law, the ceremonies whereof in respect of this were called "beggarly rudiments." When we come there, we shall find the way pleasant and very *light*, so that we shall plainly see before us that *very path*, that *only path*, "the path of life" (*semita vitae*), in which the gospel ends, as the law ends in the gospel. Now what is *semita vitae* that we seek for? "All the ways of God are *truth*," saith David. Psalm 119:151. He doth not say they are *verae*, or *veritates*, but *veritas*; all one truth. So, all the ways of God end in one truth. *Semita vitae*, then, is *truth*. And so sure a way to life is *truth*, that John says, he had "no greater joy: than to hear that his sons "walked in truth." 3 John 1:3. "No greater joy:" for it brings them certainly to a joy, than which there is none greater. *Via veritatis* is "the gospel of truth," but *semita vitae* is the truth itself. Of these, Esay prophesied, "*et erit ibi semita et via*," etc. "There shall be a path, and a way;" and the way shall be called *holy*, the proper epithet of the gospel: "*the holy gospel*," that is *the way*. But the *path* is the epitome of this way (called in our text, by way of excellence, "*the path*," in the singular); than which there is no other. "The gospel of your salvation," saith Paul, is "the word of truth;" and "thy word is truth," saith our Saviour to his Father. *Truth*, then, is "*the path of life*," for it is the epitome of the gospel, which is the way. This is that truth which Pilate (unhappy man) asked after, but never stayed to be resolved of. He himself is the word; the word is the truth; and the truth is "*the path of life*," trodden by all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and confessors, that ever went to heaven before us. The abstract of the gospel, the gate of heaven, *semita vitae*, "*the path of life*," even Jesus

Christ the righteous, who hath beaten the way for us, gone himself before us, and left us the prints of his footsteps for us to follow, where he himself sits ready to receive us. So, the law is the light, the gospel is the way, and Christ is "*the path of life.*"—*William Austin, 1637.*

Verse 11. It is Christ's triumphing in the consideration of his exaltation, and taking pleasure in the fruits of his sufferings: "*Thou wilt show me the paths of life.*" God hath now opened the way to paradise, which was stopped up by a flaming sword, and made the path plain by admitting into heaven the head of the believing world. This is a part of the joy of the soul of Christ; he hath now a fulness of joy, a satisfying delight instead of an overwhelming sorrow; a "fulness of joy," not only some sparks and drops as he had now and then in his debased condition; and that in the presence of his Father. His soul is fed and nourished with a perpetual vision of God, in whose face he beholds no more frowns, no more designs of treating him as a servant but such smiles that shall give a perpetual succession of joy to him, and fill his soul with fresh and pure flames. Pleasures they are, pleasantness in comparison whereof the greatest joys in this life are anguish and horrors. His soul hath joys without mixture, pleasures without number, a fulness without want, a constancy without interruption, and a perpetuity without end.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 11. "*In thy presence,*" etc. To the blessed soul resting in Abraham's bosom, there shall be given an immortal, impassible, resplendent, perfect, and glorious body. Oh, what a happy meeting will this be, what a sweet greeting between the soul and the body, the nearest and dearest acquaintance that ever were! What a welcome will that soul give to her beloved body! Blessed be thou (will she say), for thou hast aided me to the glory I have enjoyed since I parted with thee; blessed art thou that sufferedst thyself to be mortified, giving "thy members as weapons of righteousness unto God." Romans 6:13. Cheer up thyself, for now the time of labour is past, and the time of rest is come. Thou wast sown and buried in the dust of earth with ignominy, but now raised in glory; sown in weakness, but raised in power; sown a natural body, but raised a spiritual body; sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption. 1 Corinthians 15:43. O my dear companion and familiar, we took sweet counsel together, we two have walked together as friends on God's house (Psalm 55:14). for when I prayed inwardly, thou didst attend my devotions with bowed knees and lifted-up hands outwardly. We two have been fellow labourers in the works of the Lord, we two have suffered together, and now we two shall ever reign together; I will enter again into thee, and so both of us together will enter into our Master's joy, where we shall have *pleasures at his right hand for evermore.*

The saints, entered as it were into the chambers of God's presence, shall have joy to their ears in hearing their own commendating and praise, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21); and in hearing the divine language of heavenly Canaan; for our bodies shall be *vera et viva*, perfect like Christ's glorious body, who did both hear other and speak himself after his resurrection, as it is

apparent in the gospel's history. Now, then, if the words of the wise spoken in due places be like "apples of gold with pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). if the mellifluous speech of Origen, the silver trumpet of Hillary, the golden mouth of Chrysostom, bewitched as it were their auditory with exceeding great delight; if the gracious eloquence of heathen orators, whose tongues were never touched with a coal from God's altar, could steal away the hearts of their hearers, and carry them up and down whither they would, what a "*fulness of joy*" will it be to hear not only the sanctified, but also the glorified tongues of saints and angels in the kingdom of glory? Bonaventure fondly reports at all adventure, that St. Francis hearing an angel a little while playing on a harp, was so moved with extraordinary delight, that he thought himself in another world. Oh! what a "*fulness of joy*" will it be to hear more than twelve legions of angels, accompanied with a number of happy saints which no man is able to number, all at once sing together, "Hallelujah, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all them that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Revelation 4:8; 5:13. If the voices of mortal men, and the sound of cornet, trumpet, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and other well-tuned instruments of music, passing through our dull ears in this world be so powerful, that all our affections are diversely transported according to the divers kinds of harmony, then how shall we be ravished in God's presence when we shall hear heavenly airs with heavenly ears!

Concerning "*fulness of joy*" to the rest of the senses, I find a very little or nothing in holy Scriptures, and therefore seeing God's Spirit will not have a pen to write, I may not have a tongue to speak. Divines in general affirm, that the smelling, and taste, and feeling, shall have joy proportionable to their blessed estate, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality; the body which is sown in weakness is to be raised in power; it is sown a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body; buried in dishonour, raised in glory; that is, capable of good, and, as being impassible, no way subject to suffer evil, insomuch that it cannot be hurt if it should be cast into hell fire, no more than Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, were hurt in the burning oven. In one word, God is not only to the souls, but also to the bodies of the saints, *all in all things*; a glass to their sight, honey to their taste, music to their hearing, balm to their smelling.—*John Boys*.

Verse 11. "*In thy presence is fulness of joy.*" The saints on earth are all but *viatores*, wayfaring men, wandering pilgrims far from home; but the saints in heaven are *comprehensores*, safely arrived at the end of their journey. All we here present for the present, are but mere strangers in the midst of danger, we are losing ourselves and losing our lives in the land of the dying. But ere long, we may find our lives and ourselves again in heaven with the Lord of life, being found of him in the land of the living. If when we die, we be in the Lord of life, our souls are sure to be bound up in the bundle of life,

that so when we live again we may be sure to find them in the life of the Lord. Now we have but a dram, but a scruple, but a grain of happiness, to an ounce, to a pound, to a thousand weight of heaviness; now we have but a drop of joy to an ocean of sorrow; but a moment of ease to an age of pain; but then (as St. Austin very sweetly in his *Soliloquies*), we shall have endless ease, without any pain, true happiness without any heaviness, the greatest measure of felicity without the least of misery, the fullest measure of joy that may be, without any mixture of grief. Here therefore (as St. Gregory the divine adviseth us), let us ease our heaviest loads of sufferings, and sweeten our bitterest cups of sorrows with the continual meditation and constant expectation of *the fulness of joy in the presence of God, and of the pleasure at his right hand for evermore.*

"In thy presence, IS," etc., *there it is*, not there it was, nor there it may be, nor there it will be, but *there it is*, there it *is* without cessation or intercision, there it always hath been, and is, and must be. It is an assertion *aeternae veritatis*, that is always true, it may at any time be said that there it *is*. "In thy presence *is* the fulness of joy;" and herein consists the consummation of felicity; for what does any man here present wish for more than joy? And what measure of joy can any man wish for more than fulness of joy? And what kind of fulness would any man wish for rather than this fulness, the fulness *kat exochn*? And where would any man wish to enjoy this fulness of joy rather than in the presence of God, which is the ever-flowing and the over-flowing fountain of joy? And when would any man wish for this enjoyment of the fulness of joy in the very fountain of joy rather than presently, constantly, and incessantly? Now all these desirables are encircled within the compass of the first remarkable, to make up the consummation of true felicity. *"In thy presence is fulness of joy."*—*The Consummation of Felicity,* by Edward Willan, 1654.

Verse 11. The human nature of Christ in heaven hath a double capacity of glory, happiness and delight; one on that mere fellowship and communion with his Father and the other persons, through his personal union with the Godhead. Which joy of his in this fellowship, Christ himself speaks of as to be enjoyed by him: *"In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."* And this is a constant and settled fulness of pleasure, such as admits not any addition or diminution, but is always one and the same, and absolute and entire in itself; and of itself alone sufficient for the Son of God, and heir of all things to live upon, though he should have had no other comings in of joy and delight from any creature. And this is his natural inheritance.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 11. *"In thy presence is FULNESS of joy."* In heaven they are free from want; they can want nothing there is unless it be want itself. They may find the want of evil, but never feel the evil of want. Evil is but the want of good, and the want of evil is but the absence of want. God is good, and no want of good can be in God. What want then can be endured in the presence of God, where no evil is, but all good that the fulness of joy may be enjoyed? Here some men eat their meat without any hunger,

whilst others hunger without any meat to eat, and some men drink extremely without any thirst, whilst others thirst extremely without any drink. But in the glorious presence of God, not any one can be pampered with too much, nor any one be pined with too little. They that gather much of the heavenly manna, "have nothing over;" and "they that gather little have no lack." They that are once possessed of that presence of God, are so possessed with it that they can never feel the misery of thirst or hunger.—*Edward Willan*.

Verse 11. "*Fulness*." Every soul shall there enjoy an infinite happiness, because it shall enjoy an infinite goodness. And it shall be for ever enjoyed, without disliking of it, or losing of it, or lacking any of it. Every soul shall enjoy as much good in that presence, by the presence of that good, as it shall be able to receive, or to desire to receive. As much as shall make it fully happy. Every one shall be filled so proportionably full; and every desire in any soul shall be filled so perfectly in that presence of glory, with the glory of that presence, that no one shall ever wish for any more, or ever be weary of that it has, or be willing to change it for any other.—*Edward Willan*.

Verse 11. "*Fulness of joy*." When a man comes to the sea, he doth not complain that he wants his cistern of water: though thou didst suck comfort from thy relations; yet when thou comest to the ocean, and art with Christ, thou shalt never complain that thou hast left thy cistern behind. There will be nothing to breed sorrow in heaven; there shall be *joy, and nothing but joy*: heaven is set out by that phrase, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Here joy enters into us, there we enter into joy; the joys we have here are from heaven; the joys that we shall have with Christ are without measure and without mixture. "*In thy presence is fulness of joy*."—*Thomas Watson*.

Verse 11. "*In thy presence is fulness of joy*." In this life our joy is mixed with sorrow like a prick under the rose. Jacob had joy when his sons returned home from Egypt with the sacks full of corn, but much sorrow when he perceived the silver in the sack's mouth. David had much joy in bringing up the ark of God, but at the same time great sorrow for the breach made upon Uzza. This is the Lord's great wisdom to temper and moderate our joy. As men of a weak constitution must have their wine qualified with water for fear of distemper, so must we in this life (such is our weakness), have our joy mixed with sorrow, lest we turn giddy and insolent. Here our joy is mixed with fear (Psalm 2), "Rejoice with trembling;" the women departed from the sepulchre of our Lord "with fear and great joy." Matthew 28:8. In our regenerate estate, though we have joy from Christ that is "formed in us," yet the impression of the terrors of God before the time of our new birth remains in us; as in a commotion of the sea by a great tempest after a stormy wind hath ceased, yet the impression of the storm remains and makes an agitation. The tender mother recovering her young child from danger of a fall hath joy from the recovery; but with much fear with the impression of the danger; so after we are recovered here from our dangerous falls by the rich and tender mercies of our God, sometime preventing us, sometime restoring us; though we rejoice in his mercy, and in our own recovery out of the snares of

Satan, yet in the midst of our joy the remembrance of former guiltiness and danger do humble our hearts with much sorrow, and some trepidation of heart. As our joy here is mixed with fears, so with sorrow also. Sound believers do look up to Christ crucified, and do rejoice in his incomparable love, that such a person should have died such a death for such as were enemies to God by sinful inclinations and wicked works; they look down also upon their own sins that have wounded and crucified the Lord of glory, and this breaketh the heart, as a widow should mourn, who by her froward and lewd behaviour hath burst the heart of a kind and loving husband.

The sound believers look to their small beginnings of grace, and they rejoice in the work of God's hands; but when they compare it with that original and primitive righteousness, they mourn bitterly, as the elders of Israel did at the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 3:12; "They who had seen the first house wept." But in heaven our joy will be full, without mixture of sorrow (John 16:20); "Your sorrow," saith our Lord, "shall be turned into joy." Then will there be no sorrow for a present trouble, nor present fear of future troubles. Then their eye will deeply affect their heart; the sight and knowledge of God the supreme and infinite good will ravish, and take up all their heart with joy and delight. Peter in the Mount (Matthew 17), was so affected with that glorious sight, that he forgot both the delights and troubles that were below; "It is good to be here," said he. How much more will all worldly troubles and delights be forgot at that soul-satisfying sight in heaven, which is as far above that of Peter in the Mount, as the third heaven is above that Mount, and as the uncreated is above the created glory!—*William Colvill's "Refreshing Streams,"* 1655.

Verse 11. "*In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*" Mark, for quality, there are *pleasures*; for quantity, *fulness*; for dignity, *at God's right hand*; for eternity, *for evermore*. And millions of years multiplied by millions, make not up one minute to this eternity of joy that the saints shall have in heaven. In heaven there shall be no sin to take away your joy, nor no devil to take away your joy; nor no man to take away your joy. "Your joy no man taketh from you." John 16:22. The joy of the saints in heaven is never ebbing, but always flowing to all contentment. The joys of heaven never fade, never wither, never die, nor never are lessened nor interrupted. The joy of the saints in heaven is a constant joy, an everlasting joy, in the root and in the cause, and in the matter of it and in the objects of it. "Their joy lasts for ever whose objects remain for ever."—*Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 11. "*Pleasures for evermore.*" The soul that is once landed at the heavenly shore is past all storms. The glorified soul shall be for ever bathing itself in the *rivers of pleasure*. This is that which makes heaven to be heaven, "We shall be ever with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Austin saith, "Lord, I am content to suffer any pains and torments in this world, if I might see thy face one day; but alas! were it only a day, then to be ejected heaven, it would rather be an aggravation of misery;" but this word, "*ever with the Lord,*" is very accumulative, and makes up the garland of glory: a state of

eternity is a state of security.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 11. This then may serve for a ground of comfort to every soul distressed with the tedious bitterness of this life; for short sorrow here, we shall have eternal joy; for a little hunger, an eternal banquet; for light sickness and affliction, everlasting health and salvation; for a little imprisonment, endless liberty; for disgrace, glory. Instead of the wicked who oppress and afflict them, they shall have the angels and saints to comfort and solace them, instead of Satan to torment and tempt them, they shall have Jesus to ravish and affect them. Joseph's prison shall be turned into a palace; Daniel's lions' den into the presence of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; the three children's hot fiery furnace, into the new Jerusalem of pure gold; David's Gath, into the tabernacle of the living God.—*John Cragge's "Cabinet of Spiritual Jewels," 1657.*

Verse 11. This heavenly feast will not have an end, as Ahasuerus's feast had, though it lasted many days; but "*At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.*"—*William Colvill.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Michtam of David. Under the title of "The Golden Psalm," Mr. Canon Dale has published a small volume, which is valuable as a series of good simple discourses, but ought hardly to have been styled "an exposition." We have thought it right to give the headings of the chapters into which his volume is divided, for there is much showiness, and may be some solidity in the suggestions.

Verse 1. *The seeking of the gold.* The believer conscious of danger, trusting in God only for deliverance.

Verses 2, 3. *The possessing of the gold.* The believer looking for justification to the righteousness of God alone, while maintaining personal holiness by companionship with the saints.

Verses 4, 5. *The testing of the gold.* The believer finding his present portion, and expecting his eternal inheritance in the Lord.

Verse 6. *The prizing or valuing of the gold.* The believer congratulating himself on the pleasantness of his dwelling and the goodness of his heritage.

Verses 7, 8. *The occupying of the gold.* The believer seeking instruction from the counsels of the Lord by night, and realising his promise by day.

Verses 9, 10. *The summing or reckoning of the gold.* The believer rejoicing and praising God for the promise of a rest in hope and resurrection into glory.

Verse 11. *The perfecting of the gold.* The believer realising at God's right hand the fulness of joy and the pleasures for evermore.

Upon this suggestive Psalm we offer the following few hints out of many—

Verse 1. The prayer and the plea. The preserver and the truster. The dangers of the saints and the place of their confidence.

Verse 2. "*Thou art my Lord.*" The soul's appropriation, allegiance, assurance, and avowal.

Verses 2, 3. The influence and sphere of goodness. No profit to God, or departed saints or sinners, but to living men. Need of promptness, etc.

Verse 2, 3. Evidences of true faith.

- I. Allegiance to divine authority.
- II. Rejection of self-righteousness.
- III. Doing good to the saints.
- IV. Appreciation of saintly excellence.
- V. Delight in their society.

Verse 3. *Excellent of the earth.* May be translated noble, wonderful, magnificent. They are so in their new birth, nature, clothing, attendance, heritage, etc., etc.

Verse 3. "*In whom is all my delight.*" Why Christians should be objects of our delight. Why we do not delight in them more. Why they do not delight in us. How to make our fellowship more delightful.

Verse 3. Collection sermon for poor believers.

- I. Saints.
- II. Saints on the earth.
- III. These are excellent.
- IV. We must delight in them.
- V. We must extend our goodness to them.

—*Matthew Henry.* Verse 4. Sorrows of idolatry illustrated in heathens and ourselves.

Verse 4 (*Second clause*). The duty of complete separation from sinners in life and lip.

Verse 5. Future inheritance and present cup found in God. (See exposition.)

Verse 6.

- I. "*Pleasant places.*" Bethlehem, Calvary, Olivet, Tabor, Zion, Paradise, etc.
- II. *Pleasant purposes*, which made these lines fall to me.
- III. *Pleasant praises.* By service, sacrifice, and song.

Verse 6 (*second clause*).

- I. A heritage.
- II. A goodly heritage.
- III. I have it.
- IV. Yea, or the Spirit's witness.

Verse 6. "*A goodly heritage.*" That which makes our portion good is—

- I. The favour of God with it.
- II. That it is from a Father's hand.

- III. That it comes through the covenant of grace.
- IV. That it is the purchase of Christ's blood.
- V. That it is an answer to prayer, and a blessing from above upon honest endeavours.

Verse 6. We may put this acknowledgment into the mouth of—

- I. *An indulged child of providence.*
- II. *An inhabitant of this favoured country.*
- III. *A Christian with regard to his spiritual condition.*

—*William Jay.*

Verse 7. Taking counsel's opinion. Of whom? Upon what? Why? When? How? What then?

Verse 7. Upward and inward, or two schools of instruction.

Verse 8. Set the Lord always before you as—

- I. Your *protector.*
- II. Your *leader.*
- III. Your *example.*
- IV. Your *observer.*

—*William Jay.*

Verses 8, 9. A sense of the divine presence our best support. It yields,

- I. Good confidence concerning things without. "*I shall not be moved.*"
- II. Good cheer within. "*My heart is glad.*"
- III. Good music for the living tongue. "*My glory rejoiceth.*"
- IV. Good hope for the dying body. "*My flesh also,*" etc.

Verse 9. (*last clause*).

- I. The saint's Sabbath (*rest*).
- II. His sarcophagus (*in hope*).
- III. His salvation (for which he *hopes*).

Verses 9, 10. Jesus cheered in prospect of death by the safety of his soul and body; our consolation in him as to the same.

Verse 10. Jesus dead, the place of his soul and his body. A difficult but interesting topic.

Verses 10, 11. Because he lives we shall live also. The believers, therefore, can also say, "Thou wilt show *me* the path of life." This life means the blessedness reserved in heaven for the people of God after the resurrection. It has three characters. The first regards its *source*—it flows from "*his presence.*" The second regards its plenitude—it is "*fulness*" of joy." The third regards its *permanency*—the pleasures are "*for evermore.*"—*William Jay.*

Verse 11. A sweet picture of heaven. (See EXPOSITION.)

WORKS UPON THE SIXTEENTH PSALM

An Exposition upon some select Psalms of David. By ROBERT ROLLOCK. 1600. 16mo.

A Godly Exposition of the Sixteenth Psalm: in R. Greenham's "Works:" pp. 316-331. Folio: 1612.

In the "Works" of John Boys, 1626, folio, pp. 898-908, there is an Exposition of Psalm Sixteen,

"Devotions Augustinianae Flamma; or, Certayne Devout, Godly, and Learned Meditations.

Written by the excellently accomplisht gentleman, WILLIAM AUSTIN, of Lincolnes Inne, Esquire. . . .

1637," contains "Notes on the Sixteenth Psalme; more particularly on the last verse." Small folio.

The Golden Psalm. Being an Exposition practical, experimental, and prophetical of Psalm Sixteenth. By the Rev. THOMAS DALE, M.A. Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, London, and Vicar of St. Pancras, Middlesex. London: 1847.

Christ in Gethsemane. An Exposition of Psalm Sixteen. By JAMES FRAME, Minister of Queen Street Chapel, Ratcliff, London: 1858.

Psalm 17

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE and SUBJECT. A prayer of David. *David would not have been a man after God's own heart, if he had not been a man of prayer. He was a master in the sacred art of supplication. He flies to prayer in all times of need, as a pilot speeds to the harbour in the stress of tempest. So frequent were David's prayers that they could not be all dated and entitled; and hence this simply bears the author's name, and nothing more. The smell of the furnace is upon the present psalm, but there is evidence in the last verse that he who wrote it came unharmed out of the flame. We have in the present plaintive song, AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN from the persecutions of earth. A spiritual eye may see Jesus here.*

DIVISIONS. *There are no very clear lines of demarcation between the parts; but we prefer the division adopted by that precious old commentator, David Dickson. In verses 1-4, David craves justice in the controversy between him and his oppressors. In verses 5 and 6, he requests of the Lord grace to act rightly while under the trial. From verse 7-12, he seeks protection from his foes, whom he graphically describes; and in verses 13 and 14, pleads that they may be disappointed; closing the whole in the most comfortable confidence that all would certainly be well with himself at the last.*

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "*Hear the right, O Lord.*" He that has the worst cause makes the most noise; hence the oppressed soul is apprehensive that its voice may be drowned, and therefore pleads in this one verse for a hearing no less than three times. The troubled heart craves for the ear of the great Judge, persuaded that with him to hear is to redress. If our God could not or would not hear us, our state would be deplorable indeed; and yet some professors set such small store by the mercy-seat, that God does not hear them for the simple reason that they neglect to plead. As well have no house if we persist like gipsies in living in the lanes and commons; as well have no mercy-seat as be always defending our own cause and never going to God. There is more fear that *we* will not hear the Lord than that the Lord will not hear us. "*Hear the right;*" it is well if our case is good in itself and can be urged as a right one, for right shall never be wronged by our righteous Judge; but if our suit be marred by our infirmities, it is a great privilege that we may make mention of the righteousness of our Lord Jesus, which is ever prevalent on high. *Right* has a voice which Jehovah always hears; and if my wrongs clamour against me with great force and fury, I will pray the Lord to hear that still louder and mightier voice of the right, and the rights of his dear Son. "Hear, O God, the Just One;" *i.e.*, "hear the Messiah," is a rendering adopted by Jerome, and admired by Bishop Horsley, whether correct or not as a translation, it is proper enough as a plea. Let the reader plead it at the throne of the righteous God, even when all other arguments are unavailing.

"*Attend unto my cry.*" This shows the vehemence and earnestness of the petitioner; he is no mere talker, he weeps and laments. Who can resist a cry? A real hearty, bitter, piteous cry, might almost melt a rock, there can be no fear of its prevalence with our heavenly Father. A cry is our earliest utterance, and in many ways the most natural of human sounds; if our prayer should like the infant's cry be more natural than intelligent, and more earnest than elegant, it will be none the less eloquent with God. There is a mighty power in a child's cry to prevail with a parent's heart. "*Give ear unto my prayer.*" Some repetitions are not vain. The reduplication here used is neither superstition nor tautology, but is like the repeated blow of a hammer hitting the same nail on the head to fix it the more effectually, or the continued knocking of a beggar at the gate who cannot be denied an alms. "*That goeth not out of feigned lips.*" Sincerity is a *sine qua non* in prayer. Lips of deceit are detestable to man and much more to God. In intercourse so hallowed as that of prayer, hypocrisy even in the remotest degree is as fatal as it is foolish. Hypocritical piety is double iniquity. He who would feign and flatter had better try his craft with a fool like himself, for to deceive the all-seeing One is as impossible as to take the moon in a net, or to lead the sun into a snare. He who would deceive God is himself already most grossly deceived. Our sincerity in prayer has no merit in it, any more than the earnestness of a mendicant in the street; but at the same time the Lord has regard to it, through Jesus, and will not long refuse his ear to an honest and fervent petitioner.

Verse 2. "*Let my sentence come forth from thy presence.*" The psalmist has now grown bold by the

strengthening influence of prayer, and he now entreats the Judge of all the earth to give sentence upon his case. He has been libelled, basely and maliciously libelled; and having brought his action before the highest court, he, like an innocent man, has no desire to escape the enquiry, but even invites and sues for judgment. He does not ask for secrecy, but would have the result come forth to the world. He would have sentence pronounced and executed forthwith. In some matters we may venture to be as bold as this; but except we can plead something better than our own supposed innocence, it were terrible presumption thus to challenge the judgment of a sin-hating God. With Jesus as our complete and all-glorious righteousness we need not fear, though the day of judgment should commence at once, and hell open her mouth at our feet, but might joyfully prove the truth of our hymn writer's holy boast—

"Bold shall I stand in that great day;
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
While, through thy blood, absolved I am,
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

"Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal." Believers do not desire any other judge than God, or to be excused from judgment, or even to be judged on principles of partiality. No; our hope does not lie in the prospect of favouritism from God, and the consequent suspension of his law; we expect to be judged on the same principals as other men, and through the blood and righteousness of our Redeemer we shall pass the ordeal unscathed. The Lord will weigh us in the scales of justice fairly and justly; he will not use false weights to permit us to escape, but with the sternest equity those balances will be used upon us as well as upon others; and with our blessed Lord Jesus as our all in all we tremble not, for we shall not be found wanting. In David's case, he felt his cause to be so right that he simply desired the Divine eyes to rest upon the matter, and he was confident that equity would give him all that he needed.

Verse 3, *"Thou hast proved mine heart."* Like Peter, David uses the argument, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." It is a most assuring thing to be able to appeal at once to the Lord, and call upon our Judge to be a witness for our defence. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." *"Thou hast visited me in the night."* As if he had said, "Lord, thou hast entered my house at all hours; and thou hast seen me when no one else was nigh; thou hast come upon me unawares and marked my unrestrained actions, and thou knowest whether or no I am guilty of the crimes laid at my door." Happy man who can thus remember the omniscient eye, and the omnipresent visitor, and find comfort in the remembrance. We hope we have had our midnight visits from our Lord, and truly they are sweet; so sweet that the recollection of them sets us longing for more of such condescending communings. Lord, if indeed, we had been hypocrites,

should we have had such fellowship, or feel such hungerings after a renewal of it? *"Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing."* Surely the Psalmist means nothing hypocritical or wicked in the sense in which his slanderers accused him; for if the Lord should put the best of his people into the crucible, the dross would be a fearful sight, and would make penitence open her sluices wide. Assayers very soon detect the presence of alloy, and when the chief of all assayers shall, at the last, say of us he has found nothing, it will be a glorious hour indeed—"They are without fault before the throne of God." Even here, as viewed in our covenant Head, the Lord sees no sin in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel; even the all-detecting glance of Omniscience can see no flaw where the great Substitute covers all with beauty and perfection. *"I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress."* Oh those sad lips of ours! we had need purpose to purpose if we would keep them from exceeding their bounds. The number of diseases of the tongue is as many as the diseases of all the rest of the man put together, and they are more inveterate. Hands and feet one may bind, but who can fetter the lips? iron bands may hold a madman, but what chains can restrain the tongue? It needs more than a purpose to keep this nimble offender within its proper range. Lion-taming and serpent-charming are not to be mentioned in the same day as tongue-taming, for the tongue can no man tame. Those who have to smart from the falsehoods of others should be the more jealous over themselves; perhaps this led the Psalmist to register this holy resolution; and, moreover, he intended thereby to aver that if he had said too much in his own defence, it was not intentional, for he desired in all-respects to tune his lips to the sweet and simple music of truth. Notwithstanding all this David was slandered, as if to show us that the purest innocence will be bemired by malice. There is no sunshine without a shadow, no ripe fruit unpecked by the birds.

Verse 4. *"Concerning the works of men."* While we are in the midst of men we shall have their works thrust under our notice, and we shall be compelled to keep a corner of our diary headed "concerning the works of men." To be quite clear from the dead works of carnal humanity is the devout desire of souls who are quickened by the Holy Spirit. *"By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer."* He had kept the highway of Scripture, and not chosen the bye-paths of malice. We should soon imitate the example of the worst of men if the grace of God did not use the Word of God as the great preservative from evil. The paths of the destroyer have often tempted us; we have been prompted to become destroyers too, when we have been sorely provoked, and resentment has grown warm; but we have remembered the example of our Lord, who would not call fire from heaven upon his enemies, but meekly prayed, "Father, forgive them." All the ways of sin are the paths of Satan,—the Apollyon or Abaddon, both of which words signify the destroyer. Foolish indeed are those who give their hearts to the old murderer, because for the time he panders to their evil desires. That heavenly Book which lies neglected on many a shelf is the only guide for those who would avoid the enticing and entangling mazes of sin; and it is the best means of preserving the youthful pilgrim

from ever treading those dangerous ways. We must follow the one or the other; the Book of Life, or the way of death; the word of the Holy Spirit, or the suggestion of the Evil Spirit. David could urge as the proof of his sincerity that he had no part or lot with the ungodly in their ruinous ways. How can we venture to plead our cause with God, unless we also can wash our hands clean of all connection with the enemies of the Great King?

Verse 5. Under trial it is not easy to behave ourselves aright; a candle is not easily kept alight when many envious mouths are puffing at it. In evil times prayer is peculiarly needful, and wise men resort to it at once. Plato said to one of his disciples, "When men speak ill of thee, live so that no one will believe them;" good enough advice, but he did not tell us how to carry it out. We have a precept here incorporated in an example; if we would be preserved, we must cry to the Preserver, and enlist divine support upon our side. "*Hold up my goings*"—as a careful driver holds up his horse when going down hill. We have all sorts of paces, both fast and slow, and the road is never long of one sort, but with God to hold up our goings, nothing in the pace or in the road can cast down. He who has been down once and cut his knees sadly, even to the bone, had need redouble his zeal when using this prayer; and all of us, since we are so weak on our legs through Adam's fall, had need use it every hour of the day. If a perfect father fell, how shall an imperfect son dare to boast? "*In thy paths.*" Forsaking Satan's paths, he prayed to be upheld in God's paths. We cannot keep *from* evil without keeping *to* good. If the bushel be not full of wheat, it may soon be once more full of chaff. In all the appointed ordinances and duties of our most holy faith, may the Lord enable us to run through his upholding grace! "*That my footsteps slip not.*" What! slip in God's ways? Yes, the road is good, but our feet are evil, and therefore slip, even on the King's highway. Who wonders if carnal men slide and fall in ways of their own choosing, which like the vale of Siddim, are full of deadly slime-pits? One may trip over an ordinance as well as over a temptation. Jesus Christ himself is a stumbling-block to some, and the doctrines of grace have been the occasion of offence to many. Grace alone can hold up our goings in the paths of truth.

Verse 6. "*I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God.*" Thou hast always heard me, O my Lord, and therefore I have the utmost confidence in again approaching thine altar. Experience is a blessed teacher. He who has tried the faithfulness of God in hours of need, has great boldness in laying his case before the throne. The well of Bethlehem, from which we drew such cooling draughts in years gone by, our souls long for still; nor will we leave it for the broken cisterns of earth. "*Incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.*" Stoop out of heaven and put thine ear to my mouth; give me thine ear all to myself, as men do when they lean over to catch every word from their friend. The Psalmist here comes back to his first prayer, and thus sets us an example of pressing our suit again and again, until we have a full assurance that we have succeeded.

Verse 7. "*Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness.*" Marvellous in its antiquity, its distinguishing

character, its faithfulness, its immutability, and above all, marvellous in the wonders which it works. That marvellous grace which has redeemed us with the precious blood of God's only begotten, is here invoked to come to the rescue. That grace is sometimes hidden; the text says, "Shew it." Present enjoyments of divine love are matchless cordials to support fainting hearts. Believer, what a prayer is this! Consider it well. O Lord, shew thy marvellous lovingkindness; shew it to my intellect, and remove my ignorance; shew it to my heart, and revive my gratitude; shew it to my faith, and renew my confidence; shew it to my experience, and deliver me from all my fears. The original word here used is the same which in Psalm 4:3 is rendered *set apart*, and it has the force of, Distinguish thy mercies, set them out, and set apart the choicest to be bestowed upon me in this hour of my severest affliction. "*O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.*" The title here given to our gracious God is eminently consolatory. He is the God of salvation; it is his present and perpetual habit to save believers; he puts forth his best and most glorious strength, using his right hand of wisdom and might, to save all those, of whatsoever rank or class, who trust themselves with him. Happy faith thus to secure the omnipotent protection of heaven! Blessed God, to be thus gracious to unworthy mortals, when they have but grace to rely upon thee! The right hand of God is interposed between the saints and all harm; God is never at a loss for means; his own bare hand is enough. He works without tools as well as with them.

Verse 8. "*Keep me as the apple of the eye.*" No part of the body more precious, more tender, and more carefully guarded than the eye; and of the eye, no portion more peculiarly to be protected than the central apple, the pupil, or as the Hebrew calls it, "the daughter of the eye." The all-wise Creator has placed the eye in a well-protected position; it stands surrounded by projecting bones like Jerusalem encircled by mountains. Moreover, its great Author has surrounded it with many tunics of inward covering, besides the hedge of the eyebrows, the curtain of the eyelids, and the fence of the eyelashes; and, in addition to this, he has given to every man so high a value for his eyes, and so quick an apprehension of danger, that no member of the body is more faithfully cared for than the organ of sight. Thus, Lord, keep thou me, for I trust I am one with Jesus, and so a member of his mystical body. "*Hide me under the shadow of thy wings.*" Even as the parent bird completely shields her brood from evil, and meanwhile cherishes them with the warmth of her own heart, by covering them with her wings, so do thou with me, most condescending God, for I am thine offspring, and thou hast a parent's love in perfection. This last clause is in the Hebrew in the future tense, as if to show that what the writer had asked for but a moment before he was now sure would be granted to him. Confident expectations should keep pace with earnest supplication.

Verse 9. "*From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*" The foes from whom David sought to be rescued were *wicked* men. It is hopeful for us when our enemies are God's enemies. They were *deadly enemies*, whom nothing but his death would satisfy. The foes

of a believer's soul are mortal foes most emphatically, for they who war against our faith aim at the very life of our life. Deadly sins are deadly enemies, and what sin is there which hath not death in its bowels? These foes *oppressed* David, they laid his spirit waste, as invading armies ravage a country, or as wild beasts desolate a land. He likens himself to a besieged city, and complains that his foes *compass him about*. It may well quicken our business upward, when all around us, every road, is blockaded by deadly foes. This is our daily position, for all around us dangers and sins are lurking. O God, do thou protect us from them all.

Verse 10. "*They are inclosed in their own fat.*" Luxury and gluttony beget vainglorious fatness of heart, which shuts up its gates against all compassionate emotions and reasonable judgments. The old proverb says that full bellies make empty skulls, and it is yet more true that they frequently make empty hearts. The rankest weeds grow out of the fattest soil. Riches and self-indulgence are the fuel upon which some sins feed their flames. Pride and fulness of bread were Sodom's twin sins. (Ezekiel 16:49.) Fed hawks forget their masters; and the moon at its fullest is furthest from the sun. Eglon was a notable instance that a well-fed corporation is no security to life, when a sharp message comes from God, addressed to the inward vitals of the body. "*With their mouth they speak proudly.*" He who adores himself, will have no heart to adore the Lord. Full of selfish pleasure within his heart, the wicked man fills his mouth with boastful and arrogant expressions. Prosperity and vanity often lodge together. Woe to the fed ox when it bellows at its owner, the poleax is not far off.

Verse 11. "*They have now compassed us in our steps.*" The fury of the ungodly is aimed not at one believer alone, but at all the band; they have compassed *us*. All the race of the Jews were but a morsel for Haman's hungry revenge, and all because of one Mordecai. The prince of darkness hates all the saints for their Master's sake. The Lord Jesus is one of the *us*, and herein is our hope. He is the Breaker, and will clear a way for us through the hosts which environ us. The hatred of the powers of evil is continuous and energetic, for they watch every *step*, hoping that the time may come when they shall catch us by surprise. If our spiritual adversaries thus compass every step, how anxiously should we guard all our movements, lest by any means we should be betrayed into evil! "*They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*" Trapp wilyly explains this metaphor by an allusion to a bull when about to run at his victim; he lowers his head, looks downward, and then concentrates all his force in the dash which he makes. It most probably denotes the malicious jealousy with which the enemy watches the steps of the righteous; as if they studied the ground on which they trod, and searched after some wrong foot-mark to accuse them for the past, or some stumbling-stone to cast in their future path to trip them in days to come.

Verse 12. Lions are not more greedy, nor their ways more cunning than are Satan and his helpers when engaged against the children of God. The blood of souls the adversary thirsts after, and all his strength and craft are exerted to the utmost to satisfy his detestable appetite. We are weak and

foolish like sheep; but we have a shepherd wise and strong, who knows the old lion's wiles, and is more than a match for his force; therefore will we not fear, but rest in safety in the fold. Let us beware, however, of our lurking foe; and in those parts of the road where we feel most secure, let us look about us lest, peradventure, our foe should leap upon us.

Verse 13. *"Arise, O Lord."* The more furious the attack, the more fervent the Psalmist's prayer. His eye rests singly upon the Almighty, and he feels that God has but to rise from the seat of his patience, and the work will be performed at once. Let the lion spring upon us, if Jehovah steps between we need no better defence. When God meets our foe face to face in battle, the conflict will soon be over. *"Disappoint him."* Be beforehand with him, outwit and outrun him. Appoint it otherwise than he has appointed, and so disappoint him. *"Cast him down."* Prostrate him. Make him sink upon his knees. Make him bow as the conquered bows before the conqueror. What a glorious sight will it be to behold Satan prostrate beneath the foot of our glorious Lord! Haste, glorious day! *"Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword."* He recognizes the most profane and oppressive as being under the providential rule of the King of kings, and used as a sword in the divine hand. What can a sword do unless it be wielded by a hand? No more could the wicked annoy us, unless the Lord permitted them so to do. Most translators are, however, agreed that this is not the correct reading, but that it should be as Calvin puts it, "Deliver my soul from the ungodly man by thy sword." Thus David contrasts the sword of the Lord with human aids and reliefs, and rests assured that he is safe enough under the patronage of heaven.

Verse 14. Almost every word of this verse has furnished matter for discussion to scholars, for it is very obscure. We will, therefore, rest content with the common version, rather than distract the reader with divers translations. *"From men which are thy hand."* Having styled the ungodly a sword in his Father's hand, he now likens them to that hand itself, to set forth his conviction that God could as easily remove their violence as a man moves his own hand. He will never slay his child with his own hand. *"From men of the world,"* mere earthworms; not men of the world to come, but mere dwellers in this narrow sphere of mortality; having no hopes or wishes beyond the ground on which they tread. *"Which have their portion in this life."* Like the prodigal, they have their portion, and are not content to wait their Father's time. Like Passion in the "Pilgrim's Progress," they have their best things first, and revel during their little hour. Luther was always afraid lest he should have his portion here, and therefore frequently gave away sums of money which had been presented to him. We cannot have earth and heaven too for our choice and portion; wise men choose that which will last the longest. *"Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure."* Their sensual appetite gets the gain which it craved for. God gives to these swine the husks which they hunger for. A generous man does not deny dogs their bones; and our generous God gives even his enemies enough to fill them, if they were not so unreasonable as never to be content. Gold and silver which are locked up in the dark treasuries of

the earth are given to the wicked liberally, and they therefore roll in all manner of carnal delights. Every dog has his day, and they have theirs, and a bright summer's day it seems; but ah! how soon it ends in night! "*They are full of children.*" This was their fondest hope, that a race from their loins would prolong their names far down the page of history, and God has granted them this also; so that they have all that heart can wish. What enviable creatures they seem, but it is only seeming! "*They are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.*" They were fat housekeepers, and yet leave no lean wills. Living and dying they lacked for nothing but grace and alas! that lack spoils everything. They had a fair portion within the little circle of time, but eternity entered not into their calculations. They were penny wise, but pound foolish; they remembered the present, and forgot the future; they fought for the shell, and lost the kernel. How fine a description have we here of many a successful merchant, or popular statesman; and it is, at first sight, very showy and tempting, but in contrast with the glories of the world to come, what are these paltry molehill joys. Self, self, self, all these joys begin and end in basest selfishness; but oh, our God, how rich are those who begin and end in thee! From all the contamination and injury which association with worldly men is sure to bring us, deliver thou us, O God!

Verse 15. "*As for me.*" "I neither envy nor covet these men's happiness, but partly have and partly hope for a far better." To behold God's face and to be changed by that vision into his image, so as to partake in his righteousness, this is my noble ambition; and in the prospect of this I cheerfully waive all my present enjoyments. My satisfaction is to come; I do not look for it as yet. I shall sleep awhile, but I shall wake at the sound of the trumpet; wake to everlasting joy, because I arise in thy likeness, O my God and King! Glimpses of glory good men have here below to stay their sacred hunger, but the full feast awaits them in the upper skies. Compared with this deep, ineffable, eternal fulness of delight, the joys of the worldlings are as a glowworm to the sun, or the drop of a bucket to the ocean.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Title. "*A prayer of David.*" Since many of the Psalms consist of *prayers*, the question may be asked why such an inscription more especially belongs to this. But though the others contain divers prayers mixed with other matters, this is a supplication through its whole course.—*The Venerable Bede*, 672-735.

Verse 1. "*Hear . . . attend . . . give ear.*" This petition repeated thrice, indicates a great power of feeling and many tears; because the craft of the ungodly, in truth, grieves and afflicts the spiritual man more than their power and violence, for we can get a knowledge of open force and violence, and, when we see the danger, can in some way guard against it.—*Martin Luther*.

Verse 1. "*That goeth not out of feigned lips.*" There are such things as "*feigned lips*;" a contraction between the heart and the tongue, a clamour in the voice and scoffing in the soul, a crying to God,

"Thou art my father, the guide of my youth;" and yet speaking and doing evil to the utmost of our power (Jeremiah 3:4, 5), as if God could be imposed upon by fawning pretences, and, like old Isaac, take Jacob for Esau, and be cozened by the smell of his garments; as if he could not discern the negro heart under an angel's garb. . . This is an unworthy conceit of God, to fancy that we can satisfy for inward sins, and avert approaching judgments by external offerings, by a loud voice, with a false heart, as if God (like children), would be pleased with the glittering of an empty shell, or the rattling of stones, the chinking of money, a mere voice, and crying without inward frames and intentions of service.—*Stephen Charnock*.

Verse 1. "Not out of feigned lips." It is observable that the eagle soareth on high, little intending to fly to heaven, but to gain her prey; and so it is that many do carry a great deal of seeming devotion in lifting up their eyes towards heaven; but they do it only to accomplish with more ease, safety, and applause their wicked and damnable designs here on earth; such as without are Catos, within Neros; hear them, no man better; search and try them, no man worse; they have Jacob's voice, but Esau's hands; they profess like saints, but practise like Satans; they have their long prayers, but short prayings; they are like apothecaries' gallipots—having without the title of some excellent preservative, but within are full of deadly poison; counterfeit holiness is their cloak for all manner of villainies, and the midwife to bring forth all their devilish designs.

Peter Bales, in Spencer's "Things New and Old."

Verse 1. "Not out of feigned lips." Not only a righteous cause, but a righteous prayer are urged as motives why God should hear. Calvin remarks on the importance of joining prayer to the testimony of a good conscience, lest we defraud God of his honour by not committing all judgments to him.

J. J. Stewart Perowne.

Verse 1. Though thy prayers be never so well framed in regard of words, and reverently performed as to thy external gestures; yet all is nothing, *if thy heart be not in the duty*. For prayer is not a work of the head, or hand, or eyes only, but chiefly a work of the heart, and therefore called in Scripture, the "pouring out of the soul" (1 Samuel 1:15); and the "pouring out of the heart." Psalm 62:8. And, indeed, the very soul of prayer lieth in the pouring out of the soul before the Lord. Whensoever, therefore, thou drawest near unto God in prayer, let it be with thine heart and soul, otherwise thou canst have no assurance of audience, and acceptance; for as Cyprian speaketh, *Quomodo te audiri a Deo postulas*, etc. How canst thou expect the Lord should hear thee, when thou hearest not thyself? or that he should regard thy prayers, when thou regardest not what thou prayest? Certainly that prayer reacheth not the heart of God, which reacheth not our own.—*Thomas Gouge, 1605-1681.*

Verse 2. David appeals unto God to judge the righteousness of his heart towards Saul—"Let my sentence come forth from thy presence." From Saul and his courtiers there comes a hard sentence; they call me traitor, they call me rebel; but, Lord, leave me not unto their sentence, *"Let my sentence*

come from thy presence;" that I know will be another sentence than what cometh from them, for thou hast proved me, and tried me, and findest nothing in me.—Jeremiah Burroughs.

Verse 3. "Thou hast proved mine heart:"—

What! take it at adventure, and not try
What metal it is made of? No, not I.
Should I now lightly let it pass,
Take sullen lead for silver, sounding brass,
Instead of solid gold, alas!
What would become of it in the great day
Of making jewels, 'twould be cast away.
The heart thou giv'st me must be such a one,
As is the same throughout. I will have none
But that which will abide the fire.
'Tis not a glitt'ring outside I desire,
Whose seeming shows do soon expire;
But real worth within, which neither dross,
Nor base alloys, make subject unto loss.
If, in the composition of thine heart,
A stubborn, steely willfulness have part,
That will not bow and bend to me,
Save only in a mere formality
Of tinsel-trimm'd hypocrisy,
I care not for it, though it show as fair
As the first blush of the sun-gilded air.
The heart that in my furnace will not melt,
When it the glowing heat thereof hath felt,
Turn liquid, and dissolve in tears
Of true repentance for its faults, that hears
My threat'ning voice, and never fears,
Is not an heart worth having. If it be
An heart of stone, 'tis not an heart for me.
The heart, that, cast into my furnace, spits,
And sparkles in my face, fall into fits
Of discontented grudging, whines
When it is broken of its will, repines

At the least suffering, declines
My fatherly correction, is an heart
On which I care not to bestow mine art.

* * * * *

The heart that vapours out itself in smoke,
And with these cloudy shadows thinks to cloak
Its empty nakedness, how much
Soever thou esteemest, it is such
As never will endure my touch.
I'll bring it to my furnace, and there see
What it will prove, what it is like to be.
If it be gold, it will be sure
The hottest fire that can be to endure,
And I shall draw it out more pure.
Affliction may refine, but cannot waste
That heart wherein my love is fixed fast.

—Francis Quarles.

Verse 3. "*Thou hast visited me in the night,*" etc. In the night the soul is free from business with the world, and therefore freest for business with God; and then did God prove and visit David, that is, examine and sift him, by calling to his mind all his ways and works in former passages; and the issue of this trial was, *he found nothing*; not that his soul was empty of good things, or that there was nothing evil in him; but God, upon examination, found nothing of that evil in him which some men suspected him of; namely either any ill will or evil design against Saul, in reference to whom he called his cause a righteous cause, or "*the right*" (verse 1); "Hear the right, O Lord."—Joseph Caryl.

Verse 3 (*third clause, New Translation.*) "*Thou hast smelted me, and found in me no dross.*" A metaphor taken from the smelting of metals to purify them from extraneous matter.—Geddes.

Verse 3. "*Proved . . . visited in the night . . . tried.*" Tribulation whereby, when examined, I was found righteous, is called not only night, in that it is wont to disturb with fear, but fire in that it actually burns.—Augustine.

Verse 3. "*I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*" Wherefore, if thou be upon a mountain, look not backward again unto Sodom as Lot's wife did; if thou be within the ark, fly not out again into the world as Noah's crow did; if thou be well washed, return not again to the mire as the hog doth; if thou be clean, run not again to thy filth, as the dog doth; if thou be going towards the land of Canaan, think not on the flesh-pots of Egypt; if thou be marching against the host of Midian, drink not of the waters of Harod; if thou be upon the housetop, come not down; if thou have set thy hand to the

plough, look not behind thee; remember not those vices which are behind thee.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verses 3, 4, 5. Where there is true grace, there is hatred of all sin, for hatred is (Greek). Can a man be resolved to commit what he hates? No, for his inward aversion would secure him more against it than all outward obstacles. As this inward purpose of a good man is against all sin, so more particularly against that which doth so easily beset him. David seems in several places to be naturally inclined to lying, but he takes up a particular resolution against it: (verse 3), "*I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress;*" (Heb.)—I have contrived to waylay and intercept the sin of lying when it hath an occasion to approach me. A good man hath not only purposes, but he endeavours to fasten and strengthen those purposes by prayer; so David (verse 5), "*Hold up my goings in the paths, that my footsteps slip not.*" He strengthens himself by stirring up a liveliness in duty, and by avoiding occasions of sin; (verse 4), "*I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;*" whereas, a wicked man neither steps out of the way of temptation, nor steps up to God for strength against it.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 4. "*Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips have I kept me from the paths of the destroyer:*" as if he had said, Would you know how it comes to pass that I escape those ungodly works and practices which men ordinarily take liberty to do? I must ascribe it to the good word of God; it is this I consult with, and by it I am kept from those foul ways whereunto others, that make no use of the word for their defence, are carried by Satan the destroyer. Can we go against sin and Satan with a better weapon than Christ used to vanquish the tempter with? And, certainly, Christ did it to set us an example how we should come armed into the field against them; for Christ could with one beam shot from his Deity (if he had pleased to exert it), have as easily laid the bold fiend at his foot, as afterward he did them that came to attack him; but he chose rather to conceal the majesty of his Divinity, and let Satan come up closer to him, that so he might confound him with the word, and thereby give him a proof of that sword of his saints, which he was to leave them for their defence against the same enemy. The devil is set out by the leviathan (Isaiah 27:1), him God threatens to punish with his strong sword; alluding to that great fish, the whale, which fears no fish like the sword-fish, by whom this great devourer of all other fish is so often killed; for, receiving one prick from his sword, he hasteneth to the shore, and beats himself against it till he dies. Thus the devil, the great devourer of souls, who sports himself in the sea of this world, as the leviathan in the waters, and swallows the greatest part of mankind without any power to make resistance against him, is himself vanquished by the word. When he has to do with a saint armed with this sword, and instructed how to use this weapon, he then, and not till then, meets his match.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 4. "*By the word of thy lips,*" etc. It is a great relief against temptations to have the word ready. The word is called, "The sword of the Spirit." Ephesians 6:17. In spiritual conflicts there is none like to that. Those that ride abroad in time of danger, will not be without a sword. We are in danger, and had

need handle the sword of the Spirit. The more ready the Scripture is with us, the greater advantage in our conflicts and temptations. When the devil came to assault Christ, he had Scripture ready for him, whereby he overcame the tempter. The door is barred upon Satan, and he cannot find such easy entrance when the word is hid in our hearts, and made use of pertinently. "I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong." Where lies their strength? "And the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." 1 John 2:14. Oh, it is a great advantage when we have the word, not only by us, but in us, engrafted in the heart; when it is present with us, we are more able to resist the assaults of Satan. Either a man forgets the word, or hath lost his affection to it, before he can be drawn to sin.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 5. "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." Lord, whatsoever the wrath of Saul be against me, yet let neither that, nor any other thing put me out of thy way, but keep my heart close unto thee, and keep my paths in thy way; let not my footsteps so much as slide from thee, for, Lord, they watch for my halting; if they can find but the least slip from me, they take advantage of it to the utmost; and I am a poor and a weak creature, therefore Lord help me, that my footsteps may not slide.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 5. "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." As a stone cast into the air cannot go any higher, neither yet there abide when the power of the hurler ceaseth to drive it; even so, seeing our corrupt nature can go downward only, and the devil, the world, and the flesh, driveth to the same way; how can we proceed further in virtue, or stand therein, when we are tempted, if our merciful and good God do not by his Holy Spirit, from time to time, guide and govern us?—*Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 5. "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." Lord, hold me up, that I may hold out. Thou hast set the crown at the end of the race; let me run the race, that I may wear the crown. It was Beza's prayer, and let it be ours, "Lord, perfect what thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven."—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 5. In fierce assaults and strong temptations, when Satan layeth siege to the soul, shooting his fiery darts, and using stratagems of policy, joining his endeavours with our corruptions, as wind with tide, then we have cause to pray as David, "*Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*" The apostle also found he had need of help from heaven when he was assaulted, and therefore he prayed "*thrice,*" that the thing that he feared might depart from him. 2 Corinthians 12. Christ hath taught us to pray daily, "Lead us not into temptation," for it is dangerous; and then temptations are most dangerous, when, 1. *Most suitable*—when Satan joins with our disposition or constitution; 2. *Continual*; 3. When *opportunity* and power is greatest.—*Joseph Symonds.*

Verse 6. "I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me." I have cried, says the Psalmist, because thou hast heard me. One would think he should have said contrariwise; thou hast heard me because

I have cried; yet, he says, I have cried because thou hast heard me; to show that crying doth not always go before hearing with God, as it doth with us; but that God will not only hear our cry, but also hear us before we cry, and will help us.—*T. Playfere*.

Verse 6. "I have called upon thee," etc. Prayer is the best remedy in a calamity. This is indeed a true *catholicon*, a general remedy for every malady. Not like the empiric's *catholicon*, which sometimes may work, but for the most part fails, but that which upon assured evidence and constant experience hath its *probatum est*; being that which the most wise, learned, honest, and skilful Physician that ever was, or can be, hath prescribed, even he that teacheth us how to bear what is to be borne, or how to heal and help what hath been borne.—*William Gough, 1575-1653*.

Verse 6. I have called upon thee formerly, therefore, Lord, hear me now. It will be a great comfort to us if trouble, when it comes, finds the wheels of prayer a-going, for then may we come with the more boldness to the throne of grace. Tradesmen are willing to oblige those that have been long their customers.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 8. "Keep me as the apple of the eye." He prays for deliverance (*verse 7*), "*Show thy marvellous lovingkindness*" to me; Lord, my straits they are marvellous, I know not what to do, whither to turn me, but my eyes are toward thee; as straits are marvellous, so let the lovingkindness of God be marvellous towards me, and "*Keep me as the apple of thy eye.*" O Lord, unto them I am but a dog, a vile creature in the eyes of Saul and those about him; but blessed be thy name, I can look up to thee, and know that I am dear unto thee *as the apple of thy eye*. All the saints of God are dear to God at all times, but the persecuted saints, they are the apple of God's eye; if at any time they are dear to God, then especially when they are most persecuted; now they are *the apple of his eye*, and *the apple of an eye is weak*, and little able to resist any hurt, but so much the more is the man tender of the apple of his eye. The saints are weak and shiftless for themselves, but the Lord is so much the more tender over them.—*Jeremiah Burroughs*.

Verse 8. Does it not appear to thee to be a work of providence, that considering the weakness of the eye, he has protected it with eyelids, as with doors, which whenever there is occasion to use it are opened, and are again closed in sleep? And that it may not receive injury from the winds, he has planted on it eyelashes like a strainer; and over the eyes has disposed the eyebrows like a penthouse, so that the sweat from the head may do no mischief.—*Socrates, in Xenophon*.

Verse 9. "From the wicked:" as though he had said, "They are equally enemies to thee and me; not more opposite to me by their cruelty, than by their wickedness they are to thee. Vindicate then, at once, thyself, and deliver me."—*John Howe*.

Verse 10. "They are inclosed in their own fat," or *their fat has inclosed them*; either their eyes, that they can hardly see out of them, or their hearts, so that they are stupid and senseless, and devoid of the fear of God; the phrase is expressive of the multitude of their wealth, and increase of power, by

which they were swelled with pride and vanity, and neither feared God nor regarded man; so the Targum paraphrases it, "their riches are multiplied, their fat covers them."—*John Gill*.

Verse 10. "*They are inclosed in their own fat.*" Their worldly prosperity puffeth them up, and makes them insensible and obdurate against all reason and just fear; and the Scripture doth use this term of a fattened heart in this sense, because that the fat of man hath no feeling in it, and those that are very fat are less subject to the passion of fear.—*John Diodati*.

Verse 10. "*They are inclosed in their own fat.*" To say a man is fat, often means he is very proud. Of one who speaks pompously it is said, "What can we do? *tassi kullap inal*," that is, "from the fat of his flesh he declares himself." "Oh, the fat of his mouth! how largely he talks!" "Take care, fellow! or I will restrain the fat of thy mouth."—*J. Roberts, in "Oriental Illustrations," 1844.*

Verse 11. "*They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*" A man who has people watching him to find out a cause for accusation against him to the king, or to great men, says, "Yes, they are around my legs and my feet; their eyes are always open; they are ever watching my '*suvad*,' 'steps;'" that is, they are looking for the impress or footsteps in the earth. For this purpose the eyes of the enemies of David were "*bowing down to the earth.*"—*Joseph Roberts*.

Verse 11. "*They have now compassed us in our steps.*" Like those who destroy game by battue, and so make a ring around their prey from which their victims cannot escape.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 11. "*They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*" The allusion probably is to the huntsman tracing the footmarks of the animal he pursues.—*Religious Tract Society's Commentary.*

Verse 11. "*They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*" It is an allusion, as I conceive, to hunters, who go poring upon the ground to prick the hare, or to find the print of the hare's claw, when the hounds are at a loss, and can make nothing of it by the scent.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 12. "*Like a lion,*" etc. In "*Paradise Lost,*" we have a fine poetical conception of the arch enemy prowling around our first parents when he first beheld their happiness, and resolved to ruin them.

—About them round

A lion now, he stalks with fiery glare;
Then, as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu, two gentle fawns at play,
Straight crouches close, then rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,
Grip'd in each paw.

John Milton.

Verse 12. We were consulting as to the best means of getting at a rhinoceros cow which we saw

standing at some distance under a tree, when a troop of impalas came charging down, with a fine old lioness after them. We went and saw her lying down, but so flat to the ground, head and all, that no man could shoot with any certainty; and she never for a moment took her eyes from us. When we got up to her, she was lying down flat as a plate to the ground; but her head might have been on a pivot, as her watchful eye glared on us all round, without appearing to move her body, as we decreased the circle, in the hopes she would stand up and give us a fair chance of a shot behind the shoulder. . . I looked for a tree to climb up, near enough to make tolerably sure of my shot, and was just getting up one, when the lioness made off.—*William Charles Baldwin, F.R.G.S., in "African Hunting," 1863.*

Verse 13. "The wicked, which is thy sword." The devil and his instruments both are God's instruments, therefore "*the wicked*" are called his "*sword*," his "*axe*" (Psalm 17:13; Isaiah 10:15); now let God alone to wield the one, and handle the other. He is but a bungler that hurts and hackles his own legs with his own axe; which God should do if his children should be the worse for Satan's temptations. Let the devil choose his way, God is a match for him at every weapon. If he will try it by force of arms, and assaults the saints by persecution, as the "Lord of hosts" he will oppose him. If by policy and subtlety, he is ready there also. The devil and his whole council are but fools to God; nay, their wisdom foolishness.—*William Gurnall.*

Verses 13, 14. "Thy sword . . . thy hand." Thou canst as easily command and manage them, as a man may wield his sword, or move his hand. Wilt thou suffer thine own sword, thine own hand, to destroy thine own servant?—*J. Howe*

Verse 14 (first clause). How wonderful are the dispensations of the providence of God, who can use even the wicked to promote the present happiness and the final salvation of his saints!—*J. Edwards, M.A., 1856.*

Verse 14. "Men of the world, which have their portion in this life." Time and this lower world, bound all their hopes and fears. They have no serious believing apprehensions of anything beyond this present life; therefore, have nothing to withhold them from the most injurious violence, if thou withhold them not; men that believe not another world, are the ready actors of any imaginable mischiefs and tragedies in this.—*John Howe.*

Verse 14. "Men which are thy hand," etc. What shall we say then? Because God maketh use of thy sins, art thou excused? Is not thine evil evil, because he picketh good out of it? Deceive not thyself therein. When thou hast done such service to thy Master and Maker, though seven and seven years, as Jacob did service to Laban, thou shalt lose thy wages and thy thanks too. Oh, well were thou if thou didst but lose, for thou shalt also gain a sorrowful advantage. It is unprofitable, nay, miserable service which thou hast thus bestowed. Babylon shall be the hammer of the Lord a long time to bruise the nations, himself afterwards bruised; Asshur his rod to scourge his people, but Asshur shall be more scourged. These hammers, rods, axes, saws, other instruments, when they have done their

offices, which they never meant, shall be thrown themselves into the fire, and burnt to ashes. Satan did service to God, it cannot be denied, in the afflicting of Job, winnowing of Peter, buffeting of Paul, executing of Judas, and God did a work in all these either to prove patience, or to confirm faith, or to try strength, or to commend justice; yet is Satan "reserved in chains under darkness, to the retribution of the great day." Judas did service to God, in getting honour to his blessed name for the redemption of mankind, whilst the worlds endureth, yet was his wages an alder-tree to hang himself upon, and, what is worse, he hangeth in hell for eternal generations. He had his wages, and lost his wages. That which the priest gave him, he lost, and lost his apostleship, but gained the recompense of everlasting unhappiness, and lies in the lowest lake, for the worm and death to gnaw upon without ceasing.—*John King.*

Verse 14. "*Thy hand.*" The hand of God, his correcting or cherishing hand, sometimes is an immediate, and sometimes a mediate hand. Sometimes it is immediate, when God by himself doth chasten, or punish, or afflict, when no second cause doth appear or intervene. So it may seem Satan means, when he saith (Job 1:11), "*Put forth thy hand,*" that is, do it thine own self, let no other have the handling of Job but thyself. God doth send such immediate afflictions; a man is afflicted in his body, in his estate, and many other ways, and he cannot find anything in the creature whence it should come; it is an immediate stroke of God, he cannot see how, or which way, or at what door this evil came in upon him; therefore it is called a creating of evil. Isaiah 45:7. "I make peace, and create evil." Now creation is out of nothing, there is nothing out of which it is wrought. So many times God bringeth evil upon a people or person when there is no appearance of second cause, no matter out of which it is made, but it comes as a creature, formed by the only hand of God. Sometimes likewise it is called God's hand, when it is the hand of a creature; it is God's hand in a creature's hand; God's hand when it is the hand of wicked men, God's hand when it is Satan's hand. So that place is translated (Psalm 17:13,14), "*Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword: from men which are thy hand:*" so that "*thy hand*" may be understood of an instrument; Satan himself is God's hand to punish in that sense, as wicked men here are said to be God's hand: "*from men which are thy hand,*" though there be other readings of that place; some read it, *deliver me from men by thy hand;* and others, *deliver me from men of thy hand;* but our translation may very well carry the sense of the original in it, "*from men which are thy hand;*" as Nebuchadrezzar, that wicked king, is called *God's servant* (Jeremiah 43:10), "I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar my servant:" God speaks of him as his servant, or as his *hand* in the thing.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 14. "*Men of the world, which have their portion in this life.*" The large portion of the wicked in the things of this world, may tell the righteous of how little value this is, in the account of God; in that these things are often given to his enemies plentifully, when denied in such a measure to his children. Now this cannot be because he loves or favours his enemies most; but because these lower things,

given them in what degree soever, are so mean in his account, as that his chosen may learn by his distribution of them, to regard them as he does; namely, as no part of their felicity, but as common favours to all his creatures, good or bad, enemies or friends.—*Daniel Wilcox.*

Verse 14. "Men which have their portion in this life." God gives wicked men a portion here to show unto them what little good there is in all these things, and to show the world what little good there is in all the things that are here below in the world. Certainly if they were much good they should never have them; it is an argument there is no great excellency in the strength of body, for an ox hath it more than you; an argument there is no great excellency in agility of body, for a dog hath it more than you; an argument of no great excellency in gay clothes, for a peacock hath them more than you; an argument there is not great excellency in gold and silver, for the Indians that know not God have them more than you; and if these things had any great worth in them, certainly God would never give them to wicked men—a certain argument. As it is an argument that there is no great evil in affliction in this world, because that the saints are so much afflicted; so no great argument there is any great good in this world, for the wicked they enjoy so much of it. Luther hath such an expression as this in his comment upon Genesis, saith he, "The Turkish empire, as great as it is, is but a crumb, that the Master of the family, that God, casts to dogs:" the whole Turkish empire, such an esteem had Luther of it; and indeed, it is no more. All the things of the world, God in giving of them to Turks and wicked ones, his enemies, shows there is not much excellency and good in them: God therefore will cast them promiscuously up and down in the world, because he looks upon them as worthless things; God doth not so much regard whether men be prepared to give him the glory of them, yea or no, they shall have them; however he is content to venture them. Indeed, when God comes into his choice mercies in Christ, there he looks to have glory from them, and he doth never give them to any, but first he prepares them, that they may give him the glory of those mercies. But it is otherwise with others; as, suppose you see a man gathering of crabs, although swine be under the tree, he cares not much to drive them away; they are but crabs, let them have them; but if he were gathering any choice and precious fruit, if any swine should come under, he drives them away. As for outward things, crabs, the Lord suffers the swine of the world to come grunting and take them up; but when he comes to his choice mercies in his Christ, there he makes a distinction. Oh, this is precious fruit! A blacksmith that is working upon iron, though a great many cinders and little bits of iron fly up and down, he regards them not; but a goldsmith that is working upon gold, he preserves every rag, and every dust of gold; and a lapidary that is working upon precious stones, every little bit he will be sure to preserve; a carpenter that is only hewing of timber, he regards it not much if chips fly up and down; but it is not so with a lapidary. So these outward things are but as the chips and cinders, and such kind of things as those are, and therefore God ever gives a portion to wicked men out of them.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 14. "*Men which have their portion in this life.*" I have read of Gregory, that being advanced to preferment, professed that there was no Scripture that went so to his heart, that struck such a trembling into his spirit, that daunted him so much, as this Scripture did:—"Here you have your reward, son; in your lifetime you have had your pleasure." Oh, this was a dreadful Scripture that sounded in his ears continually, as Hierom speaks of that Scripture, "Arise ye dead, and come to judgment;" night and day he thought that Scripture sounded in his ears: so Gregory:—"Here you have your reward; in this life you have had your pleasure." This was the Scripture that night and day sounded in his ears. O that it might please God to assist so far, to speak out of this Scripture to you, that I might make this Scripture ring in your ears even when you lie upon your beds, after the sermon is done; that yet you may think this Scripture rings in your ears: "*Men of this world, who have their portion in this life.*"—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 14. "*Which have their portion in this life.*" The earth and the commodities thereof God distributeth without respect of persons, even to them that are his children by creation only, and not by adoption. But yet there is a difference between the prosperity of the one and the other; for the one is but with anxiety of heart (even in laughter their heart is heavy); the others' is with cheerfulness and joy in the Spirit; the one's is a pledge of the greater preferment in the world to come, the others' is their *whole* portion, and as if God should say, "Let them take *that* and look for no more." The one's is with the blessing of the people, who wish they had more; the others' with their curse and hatred, who are grieved that they have so much.—*Miles Smith.*

Verse 14. "*Their portion in this life.*" The good man's *best*, and the bad man's worst, lie in *shall be's* (Isaiah 3:10, 11), in reversion. Here Dives had nothing but his "good things," but hereafter he had no good thing. Here Lazarus had all his "evil things," but afterwards no evil thing. The good man when he dies, takes his leave of, and departs from, all evil; and the evil man when he dies, takes his leave of, and departs from, all his goods, which was all the good he had. "Now he is comforted, but thou art tormented." Luke 16:25. Oh! 'tis a sad thing to have one's *portion of good* only in this life.—*Ralph Venning's "Helps to Piety," 1620-1673.*

Verse 14. "*This life.*" There is yet another thing to be seen far more monstrous in this creature; that whereas he is endued with reason and counsel, and knoweth that this life is like unto a shadow, to a dream, to a tale that is told, to a watch in the night, to smoke, to chaff which the wind scattereth, to a water-bubble, and such-like fading things; and that life to come shall never have end; he yet nevertheless setteth his whole mind most carefully upon this present life, which is to-day, and to-morrow is not; but of the life which is everlasting he doth not so much as think. If this be not a monster, I know not what may be called monstrous.—*Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 14. What wicked men possess of this world is all that ever they can hope for: why should we grudge them filled bags, or swelling titles! it is their whole portion; they now receive their good things.

Hast thou food and clothing? that is children's fare; envy not ungodly men, who flaunt it in the gallantry of the world: they have more than you; but it is all they are like to have: the psalmist gives us an account of their estate. They are *the men of this world, which have their portion in this life, and whose bellies God filleth with his hid treasure*. Whereas thou, O Christian, who possessest nothing, art heir-apparent of heaven, co-heir with Jesus Christ, who is the heir of all things, and hast an infinite mass of riches laid up for thee; so great and infinite, that all the stars of heaven are too few to account it by: you have no reason to complain of being kept short; for all that God hath is yours, whether prosperity or adversity, life or death, all is yours. What God gives is for your comfort; what he denies or takes away is for your trial: it is for the increase of those graces which are far more gracious than any temporal enjoyment. If, by seeing wicked and ungodly men flow in wealth and ease, when thou art forced to struggle against the inconveniences and difficulties of a poor estate, thou hast learnt a holy contempt and disdain of the world, believe it, God hath herein given thee more than if he had given thee the world itself.—*Ezekiel Hopkins*.

Verse 14. To show that wicked men have often the greatest *portion in this world*, I need not speak much: the experience of all ages since the beginning of the world confirms it, your own observation, I believe, can seal to it; however, Scripture abundantly evinces it. The first *murderer* that ever was, carries possessions in his very name: Cain signifies so much. Genesis 4:8. Go on in the whole series of Scripture, and you shall find Joseph persecuted by his brethren; Esau (as Rivet observes on Genesis 32), advanced in the world for a time far above Jacob; go on, and you find the Israelites, God's peculiar, in captivity, and Pharaoh on the throne; Saul ruling, and David in a cave, or in a wilderness; Job upon the dunghill; Jeremy in the dungeon; Daniel in the den, and the children in the furnace, and Nebuchadnezzar on the throne. In the New Testament you have Felix on the bench, Paul at the bar; Dives in the palace, Lazarus at his gate (Luke 16:19); he clothed in purple, Lazarus in rags and overspread with sores; he banqueted and fared deliciously every day, the other desired but the crumbs from the table, and could not have them; Dives beset with his rich and stately attendance, Lazarus hath no other society but the dogs which came to lick his sores; all which Austin and Tertullian against Marcion (lib. 4), conceive to be a true history of what was really acted, though others think it parabolical. Job tells us that "the tabernacle of robbers" sometimes "prosper" (Job 12:6), which prosperity he at large describes (chapter 21 from verse 7 to 14); exalted in "*power*," verse 7; multiplied in their *posterity*, verses 8, 11; *safe at home*, verse 9; *increased abroad*, verse 10; have their fill of *pleasure*, verse 12, and *wealth* at will, verse 13. David speaks his own experience of this. Psalm 37:35; 73:7. So in the text, they enjoy not only common favours, as air to breathe in, earth to walk on; their bellies are filled with his "*hid treasure*," and that not for themselves only, but for their posterity too; they "*leave the rest of their substance to their babes*;" in a word, "they have their portion in this life."—*John Frost, 1657*.

Verse 14. A master or lord pays his *servant* his present wages, while he cuts his *son* short in his allowance during his nonage, that he may learn to depend upon his father for the inheritance. Thus doth God, the great Lord of all, deal with his *slaves*, who serve him for the hire of some temporal advantage; he gives them their present reward and wages; but though his goodness hath determined a better *portion* to be a reward to the piety and obedience of his *children*, yet he gives it them in reversion, little in hand, that they may learn to live upon the promise, and by faith to depend upon the goodness and faithfulness of their Father for their heavenly inheritance; that they, walking not by sight but faith (which is a Christian's work and condition here), may "not look at the things which are seen," etc. 2 Corinthians 4:18. . . . This discovers that rotten foundation upon which many men build their hopes of heaven. Surely (are many ready to argue) if God did not love me he would not give me such a portion in the world. Deceive not thyself in a matter of so great concernment. Thou mayest as well say God loved Judas, because he had the bags, or Dives, because he fared deliciously, who are now roaring in hell.—*John Frost*.

Verse 14. The word which denotes the "*belly*" may have been fixed, by the divine Spirit, to indicate the fact, that a very great proportion of the sin of worldly and depraved characters is connected with the indulgence of base and degrading lusts; and that they abuse the very bounty of heaven, in riveting the chain of sense upon their unhappy souls. But let them remember, that their sensual idolatries will, at last, be followed up by the most fearful visitations of divine wrath.—*John Morrison*.

Verse 14. "*Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure.*" Wicked men may abound in earthly things. They may have the earth and the fulness of it, the earth, and all that is earthly; their bellies are filled by God himself with hidden treasure. Precious things are usually hidden, and all that's named treasure, though it be but earthly, hath a preciousness in it. Hidden treasures of earth fill their bellies who slight the treasures of heaven, and whose souls shall never have so much as a taste of heavenly treasures: riches and honour are the lots of their inheritance who have no inheritance among those whose lot is glory. They have the earth in their hands (Job 9:24), who have nothing of heaven in their hearts; they bear sway in the world who are slaves to the world; they govern and order others at their will who are led captive by Satan at his will. Be not offended and troubled to see the reins of government in their hands who know not how to govern themselves, or to see them rule the world who are unworthy to live in the world.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 14. "*Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure.*" The hearts of saints only are filled with the "*hidden manna*," but the bellies of the wicked are often filled with *hidden treasure*; that is, with those dainties and good things which are virtually hidden in, and formally spring out of, the belly and bowels of the earth. The Lord easily grants them their wish in such things, and gives them "*their portion*," which is all their portion, "*in this life.*" For as they are but common professors, so these are but common mercies, such as many of his enemies receive, who are but fatted as oxen for the slaughter,

and fitted for destruction. True happiness is not to be judged by lands or houses, by gold or silver. The world is a narrow bound: unless we get beyond the creature, and set our hopes above this world, we cannot be happy. As hypocrites desire, so they obtain much of the world, but they shall attain no more, how much soever they seem to desire it.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 14. "*Whose belly thou fillest.*" That is, their sensual appetite, as oftentimes that term is used (Romans 16:18; Philippians 3:19), "*with thy hid treasures;*" namely, the riches which either God is wont to hide in the bowels of the earth, or lock up in the repository of providence, dispensing them at his own pleasure.—*John Howe*.

Verse 14. "*Whose belly thou fillest,*" etc.:—

Thou from thy hidden store,
Their bellies, Lord, hast fill'd;
Their sons are gorg'd, and what is o'er,
To their sons' sons they yield.

Richard Mant.

Verse 14. "*They are full of children.*" So it appears by that which follows, it ought to be read, and not according to that gross, but easy (Greek) for (Greek) mistake of some transcribers of the seventy. As if in all this he pleaded thus: "Lord, thou hast abundantly indulged those men already, what need they more? They have themselves, from thy unregarded bounty, their own vast swollen desires sufficiently filled, enough for their own time; and when they can live no longer in their persons, they may in their posterity, and leave not strangers, but their numerous offspring, their heirs. Is it not enough that their avarice be gratified, except their malice be also? that they have whatsoever they can conceive desirable for themselves, unless they may also infer whatever they can think mischievous on me?" To this description of his enemies, he *ex opposito*, subjoins some account of himself in this his closure of the Psalm. "*As for me,*" here he is at his statique point; and, after some appearing discomposure, his spirit returns to a consistency, in consideration of his own more happy state, which he opposes and prefers to their, in the following respects. That *they* were wicked, *he* righteous. "I will behold thy face in righteousness." That *their* happiness was worldly, terrene, such only as did spring from the earth; *his* heavenly and divine, such as should result from the face and image of God. *Theirs* present, temporary, compassed within this life; *his* future, everlasting, to be enjoyed when he should awake. *Theirs* partial, defective, such as would but gratify their bestial part, fill their bellies; *his* adequate, complete (the eudaimonia tou ounetou a happiness of proportion), such as should satisfy the man. "I shall be *satisfied,*" etc.—*John Howe*.

Verse 14. "*They are full of children.*" Margin, *their children are full*. The margin probably expresses the sense of the Hebrew better than the text. The literal rendering would be, "satisfied are their sons;" that is, they have enough to satisfy the wants of their children. The expression, "they are full of

children," is harsh and unnatural, and is not demanded by the original, or by the main thought in this passage. The obvious signification is, that they have enough for themselves and for their children.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 15. "I will behold thy face." I look upon the face of a stranger and it moves me not; but upon a friend and his face presently transforms mine into a lively, cheerful aspect. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of a man his friend" (Proverbs 27:17), puts a sharpness and a quickness into his looks. The soul that loves God, opens itself to him, admits his influence and impressions, is easily molded and wrought to his will, yields to the transforming power of his appearing glory. There is no resistant principle remaining when the love of God is perfected in it; and so overcoming is the first sight of his glory upon the awaking soul, that it perfects it, and so his likeness, both at once.—*John Howe.*

Verse 15. "I will behold," etc.—In the words we have, 1. The time of his complete and consummate happiness—"When I awake." 2. The matter of his happiness, and the manner of enjoying it; the matter and object—"God's face, or likeness;" the manner of enjoying—"I will behold thy face." 3. His perfect disposition and condition in the state of happiness—"I shall behold in righteousness," having my heart perfectly conformed to the will of God, the perfect and adequate rule of righteousness. 4. The measure of his happiness—"I shall be satisfied;" my happiness will be full in the measure, without want of anything that can make me happy; all my desires shall be satisfied, and my happiness in respect of duration shall be eternal, without a shadow or fear of a change.—*William Colvill.*

Verse 15. He doth profess his resolution, yet notwithstanding all the danger he was in, to go on in the ways of God, and expect a gracious issue; *but I,* saith he, "*will behold thy face in righteousness;*" indeed, I cannot behold the face of the king without danger to me; there are a great many that run to kill me, and they desire his face; but though I cannot see his face, yet, Lord, I shall behold *thy face;* "*I will behold thy face,*" and it shall be "*in righteousness;*" I will still keep on in the ways of righteousness, and "*when I awake*"—for I believe that these troubles will not hold long—I shall not sleep in perpetual sleep, but *I shall awake* and be delivered, and then "*I shall be satisfied with thy likeness:*" there shall be the manifestation of thy glory to me, that shall satisfy me for all the trouble that I have endured for thy name's sake, that my soul shall say, I have enough.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied," etc. The fulness of the felicity of heaven may appear if we *compare it with the joys and comforts of the Holy Spirit.* Such they are, as that the Scripture styles them *strong consolations* (Hebrews 6:17); *full joys* (John 15:11); *joy unspeakable and full of glory* (1 Peter 1:8); *abounding consolations.* 2 Corinthians 1:5. And yet all the joy and peace that believers are partakers of in this life is but as a drop to the ocean, as a single cluster to the whole vintage, as the thyme or

honey upon the thigh of a bee to the whole hive fully fraught with it, or as the break and peep of day to the bright noontide. But yet these tastes of the water, wine, and honey of this celestial Canaan, with which the Holy Spirit makes glad the hearts of believers, are both far more desirable and satisfactory than the overflowing streams of all earthly felicities. And there are none who have once tasted of them, but say as the Samaritan woman did, "Lord, give me that water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." John 4:15. So also the first and early dawns of the heavenly light fill the soul with more serenity, and ravish it with more pure joy, than the brightest sunshine of all worldly splendour can ever do. I have read of a devout person who but dreaming of heaven, the signatures and impressions it made upon his fancy were so strong, as that when he awaked he knew not his cell, could not distinguish the night from the day, nor difference by his taste, oil from wine; still he was calling for his vision and saying, *Redde mihi campos floridos, columnam auream, comitem Hieronymum, assistentes angelos*: give me my fresh and fragrant fields again, my golden pillar of light, Jerome my companion, angels my assistants. If heaven in a dream produce such ecstasies as drown and overwhelm the exercises of the senses to inferior objects, what trances and complacencies must the fruition of it work in those who have their whole rational appetite filled, and their body beautified with its endless glory?—*William Spurstow, 1656.*

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied." Have you never seen how when they were finishing the interior of buildings they kept the scaffolding up? The old Pope, when he had Michael Angelo employed in decorating the interior of that magnificent structure, the Sistine Chapel, demanded that the scaffolding should be taken down so that he could see the glowing colours that with matchless skill were being laid on. Patiently and assiduously did that noble artist labour, toiling by day, and almost by night, bringing out his prophets and sibyls and pictures wondrous for their beauty and significance, until the work was done. The day before it was done, if you had gone into that chapel and looked up, what would you have seen? Posts, planks, ropes. lime, mortar, slop, dirt. But when all was finished, the workmen came, and the scaffolding was removed. And then, although the floor was yet covered with rubbish and litter, when you looked up, it was as if heaven itself had been opened, and you looked into the courts of God and angels. Now, the scaffolding is kept around men long after the fresco is commenced to be painted; and wondrous disclosures will be made when God shall take down this scaffolding body, and reveal what you have been doing. By sorrow and by joy; by joys which are but bright colours, and by sorrows which are but shadows of bright colours; by prayer; by the influences of the sanctuary; by your pleasures; by your business; by reverses; by successes and by failures; by what strengthened your confidence, and by what broke it down; by the things that you rejoiced in, and by the things that you mourned over—by all that God is working in you. And you are to be perfected, not according to the things that you plan, but according to the divine pattern. Your portrait and mine are being painted, and God by wondrous strokes and influences is working us up to

his own ideal. Over and above what you are doing for yourself, God is working to make you like him. And the wondrous declaration is, that when you stand before God, and see what has been done for you, you shall be "*satisfied*." Oh, word that has been wandering solitary and without a habitation ever since the world began, and the morning stars sang together for joy! Has there ever been a human creature that could stand on earth while clothed in the flesh, and say, "I am satisfied?" What is the meaning of the word? Sufficiently filled; filled full; filled up in every part. And when God's work is complete, we shall stand before him, and, with the bright ideal and glorified conception of heavenly aspiration upon us, looking up to God, and back on ourselves, we shall say, "I am satisfied:" for we shall be like him. Amen. Why should we not be satisfied?—*Henry Ward Beecher, in "Royal Truths," 1862.*

Verse 15. "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." He speaks here of the resurrection; he calls it an awaking, for you know death is called a sleep. "Those that are asleep in the Lord shall rise first." He had spoken before of those that had put their happiness in the comforts of this life, suitable to their bodies, to the animal state of their bodies; that is clear by the fourteenth verse, "Deliver me from the men that are thine hand, O Lord, who have their portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with thy treasure: they are full of children, and leave to them outward things," bodily things. "But as for me," saith he, "I will behold thy face in thy righteousness" (there is the vision of God which is his happiness in his soul): "and I shall be satisfied when I awake" (when I rise again), "with thine image." It is not the image of God only upon himself that he means here. Why? Because that doth not satisfy a holy heart, but it is that image of the invisible God which the human nature of Jesus Christ is, who, in opposition to all these outward pleasures, will be all in all to us; he is a spiritual creature, his human nature is spiritualised, made glorious, and our bodies shall be made spiritual likewise. "The body is made for the Lord, and the Lord for the body," and this when they are both raised up; Christ is raised up already, and because he hath ordained the one to be serviceable to the other, he will also raise up our bodies; and when he doth raise me up, saith David, though other men have their bellies full here, and have animal pleasures they delight in; yet when I shall awake at latter day, and shall see this image of thine, shall see thy Son, I shall be satisfied: "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thine image."—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." In this Psalm holy David's afflictions are neither few nor small; his *innocency* that is wounded by malicious slanderers, his *life* that is in jeopardy by deadly enemies that compass him about; his *present condition* that is embittered unto him by the pressing wants of a barren wilderness, while his foes live deliciously in Saul's court. And yet under the weight and combination of so many sore evils, David carries himself as one that is neither hopeless nor forsaken, yea, lays his estate in the balance against theirs, and in this low ebb of his, vies with them for happiness; and at last shutting up the Psalm with a triumphant *epiphonema*,

concludes himself to be by far the better man. *"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness."* They, 'tis true, enjoy the face of their king, whose favour is as a cloud of latter rain promising a fruitful harvest of many blessings, *"but I,"* saith he, *"shall behold the face of God in righteousness,"* whose lovingkindness is better than life, clothed with all its royalties. They have their bellies filled with hidden treasure, having more than a common hand of bounty opened unto them; but I have more gladness put into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased. They have their portion in hand, and as being men of this world; but I have mine laid up in the other: *"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."* In these words we have his and every believer's eternal happiness in the other life, set forth in three particulars as a most effectual antidote against present troubles and temptations that arise from the malice of wicked men against them.—*William Spurstow.*

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." The saints in heaven have not yet awaked in God's likeness. The bodies of the righteous still sleep, but they are to be satisfied on the resurrection morn, when they awake. When a Roman conqueror had been at war, and won great victories, he would return to Rome with his soldiers, enter privately into his house, and enjoy himself till the next day, when he would go out of the city to re-enter it publicly in triumph. Now, the saints, as it were, enter privately into heaven without their bodies; but on the last day, when their bodies wake up, they will enter into their triumphal chariots. Methinks I see that grand procession, when Jesus Christ first of all, with many crowns on his head, with his bright, glorious, immortal body, shall lead the way. Behind him come the saints, each of them clapping their hands, or pouring sweet melody from their golden harps; all entering in triumph. And when they come to heaven's gates, and the doors are opened wide to let the King of glory in, how will the angels crowd at the windows and on the housetops, like the inhabitants in the Roman triumphs, to watch the pompous procession, and scatter heaven's roses and lilies upon them, crying, "Hallelujah! hallelujah! hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." "I shall be satisfied" in that glorious day when all the angels of God shall come to see the triumphs of Jesus, and when his people shall be victorious with him.—*Spurgeon's Sermons.*

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." Let a man who is thirsty be brought to an ocean of pure water, and he has enough. If there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, then sure there is enough to satisfy us. The soul is but finite, but God is infinite. Though God be a good that satisfies, yet he does not surfeit. Fresh joys spring continually from his face; and he is as much to be desired after millions of years by glorified souls as at the first moment. There is a fulness in God that satisfies, and yet so much sweetness that the soul still desires. God is a *delicious* good. That which is the chief good must ravish the soul with pleasure; there must be in it rapturous delight and quintessence of joy. *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima immo rapitur:* the love of God drops

such infinite suavity into the soul as is unspeakable and full of glory. If there be so much delight in God, when we see him only by faith (1 Peter 1:8), what will the joy of vision be, when we shall see him face to face! If the saints have found so much delight in God while they were suffering, oh, what joy and delight will they have when they are being crowned! If flames are beds of roses, what will it be to lean on the bosom of Jesus! What a bed of roses that will be! God is a *superlative* good. He is better than anything you can put in competition with him; he is better than health, riches, honour. Other things maintain life, he gives life. Who would put anything in balance with the Deity? Who would weigh a feather against a mountain of gold? God excels all other things more infinitely than the sun the light of a taper. God is an *eternal* good. He is the Ancient of days, yet never decays, nor waxes old. Daniel 7:9. The joy he gives is eternal, the crown fadeth not away. 1 Peter 5:4. The glorified soul shall be ever solacing itself in God, feasting on his love, and sunning itself in the light of his countenance. We read of the river of pleasure at God's right hand; but will not this in time be dried up? No. There is a fountain at the bottom which feeds it. Psalm 36:9. "With the Lord is a fountain of life." Thus God is the chief good, and the enjoyment of God for ever is the highest felicity of which the soul is capable.—*Thomas Watson*.

Verse 15. "When I awake," etc. The sincere Christian is progressive, never at his journey's end till he gets to heaven; this keeps him always in motion, advancing in his desires and endeavours forward: he is thankful for little grace, but not content with great measures of grace. "*When I awake,*" saith David, "*I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.*" He had many a sweet entertainment at the house of God in his ordinances. The Spirit of God was the messenger that brought him many a covered dish from God's table, inward consolations which the world knew not of. Yet David has not enough, it is heaven alone that can give him his full draught. They say the Gauls, when they first tasted of the wines of Italy, were so taken with their lusciousness and sweetness, that they could not be content to trade thither for this wine, but resolved they would conquer the land where they grew. Thus the sincere soul thinks it not enough to receive a little now and then of grace and comfort from heaven, by trading and holding commerce at a distance with God in his ordinances here below, but projects and meditates of that holy land and blessed place from which such rich commodities come, that he may drink the wine of that kingdom in that kingdom.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 15. "When I awake." How apt and obvious is the analogy between our awakening out of natural sleep, and the holy soul's rising up out of the darkness and torpor of its present state into the enlivening light of God's presence? It is truly said so to *awake* at its first quitting these darksome regions, when it lays aside its cumbersome night-veil. It doth so more perfectly in the joyful morning of the resurrection-day when mortality is swallowed up in life, and all the yet hovering shadows of it are vanished and fled away. And how known and usual an application this is of the metamorphical terms of sleeping and awaking in Holy Writ, I need not tell them who have read the Bible. Nor doth

this interpretation less fitly accord to the other contents of this verse; for to what state do the sight of God's face, and satisfaction with his likeness, so fully agree, as to that of future blessedness in the other world? But then the contexture of discourse in this and the foregoing verse together, seems plainly to determine us to this sense: for what can be more conspicuous in them, than a purposed comparison, an opposition of two states of felicity mutually to each other? That if the wicked whom he calls *men of time* (as the words *Hebrew* are rendered by Pagninus—*Homines de tempore*—and do literally signify) and whose portion, he tells us, is in this life: and the righteous man's, his own; which he expected not to be till he should awake, that is, not till after this life.—*John Howe*.

Verse 15. There is a sleep of deadness of spirit, out of which the shining of God's loving countenance doth awake a believer and revive the spirit of the contrite ones; and there is a sleep of death bodily, out of which the lovingkindness of the Lord shall awake all his own in the day of the resurrection, when he shall so change them into the similitude of his own holiness and glorious felicity that they shall be fully contented for ever: and this first and second delivery out of all trouble may every believer expect and premise to himself. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."—*David Dickson*.

Verse 15. There is a threefold meaning in this verse, inasmuch as it is in Christ alone, the firstborn from the dead, the express image of Jehovah's glory, that the saints will rise immortal, incorruptible, and be like the angels in heaven. 1. They will greatly delight in the glorious state in which they will rise. 2. They will greatly delight in Jesus, in whom, and by whom, resurrection and immortality are brought to light; and 3. They will delight greatly in beholding the blessed and reconciled countenance of Jehovah, the Father, whom no eye of flesh can see. This is the difference between the appearance of God to Israel on Mount Sinai, and the happy state in which the saints will behold him in the resurrection. Glorious as the scene on Sinai was, yet the Lord said to Israel, "You have seen no (Heb.) (*Temunah*), no manner of similitude," or likeness, or countenance; but David speaks of the spiritual glory of the triumphant saints in the resurrection, when they shall see Jehovah as he is, and rejoice in his beatific presence for ever and ever.—*Benjamin Weiss, in loc, 1858*.

Verse 15. Everlasting life and salvation in heaven, is not a truth revealed only by the gospel, but was well known, clearly revealed, and firmly believed, by the saints of old. They had assurance of this, that they should live with God for ever in glory. "*When I awake, with thy likeness.*" Psalm 17:15. "Thou wilt receive me to glory." Psalm 73:24. "*In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*" Psalm 16:11. They looked for another country, whereof Canaan was but a type and shadow, as the apostle shows in the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11:16. They knew there was an eternal state of happiness for the saints, as well as an eternal state of misery for the wicked; they did believe this in those days.—*Samuel Mather on the "Types," 1705*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The voice of Jesus—our Righteousness, and our own voice. Work out the thought of both coming up to the ear of heaven, noting the qualities of our prayer as indicated by the psalmist's language, such as earnestness, perseverance, sincerity, etc.

Verse 2. "*Let my sentence come forth from thy presence.*"

- I. When it will come.
- II. Who dare meet it *now*.
- III. How to be among them.

Verse 3. "*Thou hast proved mine heart.*" The metal, the furnace, the refiner, etc.

Verse 3. "*Thou hast visited me in the night.*"

- I. Glorious visitor.
- II. Favoured individual.
- III. Peculiar season.
- IV. Refreshing remembrance.
- V. Practical result.

Verse 3 (*last sentence*). Transgressions of the lip, and how to avoid them.

Verse 4. The highway and the by-paths. *The world and sin*. "*The paths of the destroyer*"—a significant name for transgression.

Verse 5. "*Hold up.*"

- I. Who? God.
- II. What? "*My goings.*"
- III. When? Present tense.
- IV. Where? "*In thy paths.*"
- V. Why? "*That my footsteps slip not.*"

Verse 5. Let me observe David and learn to pray as he prayed, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not."

I. See his *course*. He speaks of his "goings." Religion does not allow a man to sit still. He speaks of his goings "in God's paths." These are threefold.

- (1). The path of his *commands*.
- (2). The path of his *ordinances*.
- (3). The path of his *dispensations*.

II. His *concern* respecting this course. It is the language of—

- (1). *Conviction*;
- (2). of *apprehension*;

- (3). of *weakness*;
- (4). of *confidence*.

—*William Jay*.

Verse 6. *Two words*, both great, though little, "call" and "hear." *Two persons*, one little and the other great, "I," "Thee, O God." *Two tenses*: past, "I have;" future, "Thou wilt." *Two wonders*, that we do not call more, and that God hears such unworthy prayers.

Verse 7. (*first sentence*). See Exposition. A view of divine lovingkindness desired.

Verse 7. "O thou," etc. God, the Saviour of believers.

Verse 8. Two most suggestive emblems of tenderness and care. Involving in the one case *living unity*, as the eye with the body, and in the other, *loving relationship*, as the bird and its young.

Verse 14. "*Men of the world, which have their portion in this life.*" Who they are? What they have? Where they have it? What next?

Verse 14. "*Men which are thy hand.*" Providential control and use of wicked men.

Verse 15. This is the language

(1). of a man whose mind is made up; who has decided for himself; who does not suspend his conduct upon the resolution of others.

(2). Of a man rising in life, and with great prospects before him.

(3). It is the language of a Jew.

Verse 15. *The beholding of God's face* signifies two things.

I. The enjoyment of his favour.

II. Intimate communions with him.—*William Jay*.

Verse 15. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 25. Title, "The Hope of Future Bliss." Divisions.

I. The Spirit of this utterance.

II. The matter of it.

III. The contrast implied in it.

Verse 15. To see God and to be like him, the believer's desire.—*J. Fawcett*.

Psalm 18

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. To the Chief Musician a *Psalm* of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day *that* the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from

the hand of Saul." *We have another form of this Psalm, with significant variations (2 Samuel 22), and this suggests the idea that it was sung by David at different times when he reviewed his own remarkable history, and observed the gracious hand of God in it all. Like Addison's hymn beginning, "When all thy mercies, O my God," this Psalm is the song of a grateful heart overwhelmed with a retrospect of the manifold and marvellous mercies of God. We will call it THE GRATEFUL RETROSPECT. The title deserves attention. David, although at this time a king, calls himself, "the servant of Jehovah," but makes no mention of his royalty; hence we gather that he counted it a higher honour to be the Lord's servant than to be Judah's king. Right wisely did he judge. Being possessed of poetic genius, he served the Lord by composing this Psalm for the use of the Lord's house; and it is no mean work to conduct or to improve that delightful part of divine worship, the singing of the Lord's praises. Would that more musical and poetical ability were consecrated, and that our chief musicians were fit to be trusted with devout and spiritual psalmody. It should be observed that the words of this song were not composed with the view of gratifying the taste of men, but were spoken unto Jehovah. It were well if we had a more single eye to the honour of the Lord in our singing, and in all other hallowed exercises. That praise is little worth which is not directed solely and heartily to the Lord. David might well be thus direct in his gratitude, for he owed all to his God, and in the day of his deliverance he had none to thank but the Lord, whose right hand had preserved him. We too should feel that to God and God alone we owe the greatest debt of honour and thanksgiving.*

If it be remembered that the second and the forty-ninth verses are both quoted in the New Testament (Hebrews 2:13; Romans 15:9) as the words of the Lord Jesus, it will be clear that a greater than David is here. Reader, you will not need our aid in this respect; if you know Jesus you will readily find him in his sorrows, deliverance, and triumphs all through this wonderful psalm.

DIVISION. The first three verses are the proem or preface in which the resolve to bless God is declared. Delivering mercy is most poetically extolled from verse 4 to verse 19; and then the happy songster from verse 20 to 28, protests that God had acted righteously in thus favouring him. Filled with grateful joy he again pictures his deliverance, and anticipates future victories from verse 29-45; and in closing speaks with evident prophetic foresight of the glorious triumphs of the Messiah, David's seed and the Lord's anointed.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *"I will love thee, O Lord."* With strong, hearty affection will I cling to thee; as a child to its parent, or a spouse to her husband. The word is intensely forcible, the love is of the deepest kind. "I will love heartily, with my inmost bowels." Here is a fixed resolution to abide in the nearest and most intimate union with the Most High. Our triune God deserves the warmest love of all our hearts. Father, Son and Spirit have each a claim upon our love. The solemn purpose never to cease loving

naturally springs from present fervour of affection. It is wrong to make rash resolutions, but this when made in the strength of God is most wise and fitting. *"My strength."* Our God is the strength of our life, our graces, our works, our hopes, our conflicts, our victories. This verse is not found in 2 Samuel 22, and is a most precious addition, placed above all and after all to form the pinnacle of the temple, the apex of the pyramid. Love is still the crowning grace.

Verse 2. *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress."* Dwelling among the crags and mountain fastnesses of Judea David had escaped the malice of Saul, and here he compares his God to such a place of concealment and security. Believers are often hidden in their God from the strife of tongues and the fury of the storm of trouble. The clefts of the Rock of Ages are safe abodes. *"My deliverer,"* interposing in my hour of peril. When almost captured the Lord's people are rescued from the hand of the mighty by him who is mightier still. This title of *"deliverer"* has many sermons in it, and is well worthy of the study of all experienced saints. *"My God;"* this is all good things in one. There is a boundless wealth in this expression; it means, my perpetual, unchanging, infinite, eternal good. He who can say truly "my God," may well add, "my heaven, my all." *"My strength;"* this word is really *"my rock,"* in the sense of strength and immobility. My sure, unchanging, eternal confidence and support. Thus the word rock occurs twice, but it is no tautology, for the first time it is a rock for concealment, but here a rock for firmness and immutability. *"In whom I will trust."* Faith must be exercised, or the preciousness of God is not truly known; and God must be the object of faith, or faith is mere presumption. *"My buckler,"* warding off the blows of my enemy, shielding me from arrow or sword. The Lord furnishes his warriors with weapons both offensive and defensive. Our armoury is completely stored so that none need go to battle unarmed. *"The horn of my salvation,"* enabling me to push down my foes, and to triumph over them with holy exultation. *"My high tower,"* a citadel high planted on a rocky eminence beyond the reach of my enemies, from the heights of which I look down upon their fury without alarm, and survey a wide landscape of mercy reaching even unto the goodly land beyond Jordan. Here are many words, but none too many; we might profitably examine each one of them had we leisure, but summing up the whole, we may conclude with Calvin, that David here equips the faithful from head to foot.

Verse 3. In this verse the happy poet resolves to invoke the Lord in joyful song, believing that in all future conflicts his God would deal as well with him as in the past. It is well to pray to God as to one who deserves to be praised, for then we plead in a happy and confident manner. If I feel that I can and do bless the Lord for all his past goodness, I am bold to ask great things of him. That word *So* has much in it. To be saved singing is to be saved indeed. Many are saved mourning and doubting; but David had such faith that he could fight singing, and win the battle with a song still upon his lips. How happy a thing to receive fresh mercy with a heart already sensible of mercy enjoyed, and to anticipate new trials with a confidence based upon past experiences of divine love!

"No fearing or doubting with Christ on our side,
We hope to die shouting, 'The Lord will provide.'"

Verses 4-19. In most poetical language the Psalmist now describes his experience of Jehovah's delivering power. Poesy has in all her treasures no gem more lustrous than the sonnet of the following verses; the sorrow, the cry, the descent of the Divine One, and the rescue of the afflicted, are here set to a music worthy of the golden harps. The Messiah our Saviour is evidently, over and beyond David or any other believer, the main and chief subject of this song; and while studying it we have grown more and more sure that every line here has its deepest and profoundest fulfilment in Him; but as we are desirous not to extend our comment beyond moderate bounds, we must leave it with the devout reader to make the very easy application of the passage to our once distressed but now triumphant Lord.

Verse 4. *"The sorrows of death compassed me."* Death like a cruel conqueror seemed to twist round about him the cords of pain. He was environed and hemmed in with threatening deaths of the most appalling sort. He was like a mariner broken by the storm and driven upon the rocks by dreadful breakers, white as the teeth of death. Sad plight for the man after God's own heart, but thus it is that Jehovah dealeth with his sons. *"The floods of ungodly men made me afraid."* Torrents of ungodliness threatened to swamp all religion, and to hurry away the godly man's hope as a thing to be scorned and despised; so far was this threat fulfilled, that even the hero who slew Goliath began to be afraid. The most seaworthy bark is sometimes hard put to it when the storm fiend is abroad. The most courageous man, who as a rule hopes for the best, may sometimes fear the worst. Beloved reader, he who pens these lines has known better than most men what this verse means, and feels inclined to weep, and yet to sing, while he writes upon a text so descriptive of his own experience. On the night of the lamentable accident at the Surrey Music Hall, the floods of Belial were let loose, and the subsequent remarks of a large portion of the press were exceedingly malicious and wicked; our soul was afraid as we stood encompassed with the sorrows of death and the blasphemies of the cruel. But oh, what mercy was there in it all, and what honey of goodness was extracted by our Lord out of this lion of affliction! Surely God hath heard me! Art thou in an ill plight? Dear friend, learn thou from our experience to trust in the Lord Jehovah, who forsaketh not his chosen.

Verse 5. *"The sorrows of hell compassed me about."* From all sides the hell-hounds barked furiously. A cordon of devils hemmed in the hunted man of God; every way of escape was closed up. Satan knows how to blockade our coasts with the iron war-ships of sorrow, but, blessed be God, the port of all prayer is still open, and grace can run the blockade bearing messages from earth to heaven, and blessings in return from heaven to earth. *"The snares of death prevented me."* The old enemy hunts for his prey, not only with the dogs of the infernal kennel, but also with the snares of deadly craft. The nets were drawn closer and closer until the contracted circle completely prevented the escape of the

captive:

"About me the cords of hell were wound,
And snares of death my footsteps bound."

Thus hopeless was the case of this good man, as hopeless as a case could be, so utterly desperate that none but an almighty arm could be of any service. According to the four metaphors which he employs, he was bound like a malefactor for execution; overwhelmed like a shipwrecked mariner; surrounded and standing at bay like a hunted stag; and captured in a net like a trembling bird. What more of terror and distress could meet upon one poor defenseless head?

Verse 6. *"In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God."* Prayer is that postern gate which is left open even when the city is straitly besieged by the enemy; it is that way upward from the pit of despair to which the spiritual miner flies at once when the floods from beneath break forth upon him. Observe that he *calls*, and then *cries*; prayer grows in vehemence as it proceeds. Note also that he first invokes his God under the name of Jehovah, and then advances to a more familiar name, *"my God;"* thus faith increases by exercise, and he whom we at first viewed as Lord is soon seen to be our God in covenant. It is never an ill time to pray; no distress should prevent us from using the divine remedy of supplication. Above the noise of the raging billows of death, or the barking dogs of hell, the feeblest cry of a true believer will be heard in heaven. *"He heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears."* Far up within the bejewelled walls, and through the gates of pearl, the cry of the suffering suppliant was heard. Music of angels and harmony of seraphs availed not to drown or even to impair the voice of that humble call. The king heard it in his palace of light unsufferable, and lent a willing ear to the cry of his own beloved child. O honoured prayer, to be able thus through Jesus' blood to penetrate the very ears and heart of Deity. The voice and the cry are themselves heard directly by the Lord, and not made to pass through the medium of saints and intercessors; *"My cry came before Him;"* the operation of prayer with God is immediate and personal. We may cry with confident and familiar importunity, while our Father himself listens.

Verse 7. There was no great space between the cry and its answer. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is swift to rescue his afflicted. David has in his mind's eye the glorious manifestations of God in Egypt, at Sinai, and on different occasions to Joshua and the judges; and he considers that his own case exhibits the same glory of power and goodness, and that, therefore, he may accommodate the descriptions of former displays of the divine majesty into his hymn of praise. *"Then the earth shook and trembled."* Observe how the most solid and immovable things feel the force of supplication. Prayer has shaken houses, opened prison doors, and made stout hearts to quail. Prayer rings the alarm bell, and the Master of the house arises to the rescue, shaking all things beneath his tread. *"The foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because of his wrath."* He who fixed the world's pillars can make them rock in their sockets, and can upheave the

corner-stones of creation. The huge roots of the towering mountains are torn up when the Lord bestirs himself in anger to smite the enemies of his people. How shall puny man be able to face it out with God when the very mountains quake with fear? Let not the boaster dream that his present false confidence will support him in the dread day of wrath.

Verse 8. "*There went up a smoke out of his nostrils.*" A violent oriental method of expressing fierce wrath. Since the breath from the nostrils is heated by strong emotion, the figure portrays the Almighty Deliverer as pouring forth smoke in the heat of his wrath and the impetuosity of his zeal. Nothing makes God so angry as an injury done to his children. He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye. God is not subject to the passions which govern his creatures, but acting as he does with all the energy and speed of one who is angry, he is here aptly set forth in poetic imagery suitable to human understandings. The opening of his lips is sufficient to destroy his enemies; "*and fire out of his mouth devoured.*" This fire was no temporary one but steady and lasting; "*Coals were kindled by it.*" The whole passage is intended to depict God's descent to the help of his child, attended by earthquake and tempest: at the majesty of his appearing the earth rocks, the clouds gather like smoke, and the lightning as flaming fire devours, setting the world on a blaze. What grandeur of description is here! Bishop Mant very admirably rhymes the verse thus:—

"Smoke from his heated nostrils came,
And from his mouth devouring flame;
Hot burning coals announced his ire,
And flashes of careering fire."

Verse 9. Amid the terror of the storm Jehovah the Avenger descended, bending beneath his foot the arch of heaven. "*He bowed the heavens also, and came down.*" He came in haste, and spurned everything which impeded his rapidity. The thickest gloom concealed his splendour, "*and darkness was under his feet;*" he fought within the dense vapours, as a warrior in clouds of smoke and dust, and found out the hearts of his enemies with the sharp falchion of his vengeance. Darkness is no impediment to God; its densest gloom he makes his tent and secret pavilion. See how prayer moves earth and heaven, and raises storms to overthrow in a moment the foes of God's Israel. Things were bad for David before he prayed, but they were much worse for his foes so soon as the petition had gone up to heaven. A trustful heart, by enlisting the divine aid, turns the tables on its enemies. If I must have an enemy let him not be a man of prayer, or he will soon get the better of me by calling in his God into the quarrel.

Verse 10. There is inimitable grandeur in this verse. Under the Mosaic system the cherubim are frequently represented as the chariot of God; hence Milton, in "Paradise Lost," writes of the Great Father,—

"He on the wings of cherubim

Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into chaos."

Without speculating upon the mysterious and much-disputed subject of the cherubim, it may be enough to remark that angels are doubtless our guards and ministering friends, and all their powers are enlisted to expedite the rescue of the afflicted. *"He rode upon a cherub, and did fly."* Nature also yields all her agents to be our helpers, and even the powers of the air are subservient: *"yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind."* The Lord comes flying when mercy is his errand, but he lingers long when sinners are being wooed to repent. The flight here pictured is as majestic as it is swift; "flying all abroad" is Sternhold's word, and he is not far from correct. As the eagle soars in easy grandeur with wings outspread, without violent flapping and exertion, so comes the Lord with majesty of omnipotence to aid his own.

Verse 11. The storm thickened, and the clouds pouring forth torrents of rain combined to form the secret chamber of the invisible but wonder-working God. "Pavilioned in impervious shade" faith saw him, but no other eye could gaze through the *"thick clouds of the skies."* Blessed is the darkness which encurtains my God; if I may not see him, it is sweet to know that he is working in secret for my eternal good. Even fools can believe that God is abroad in the sunshine and the calm, but faith is wise, and discerns him in the terrible darkness and threatening storm.

Verse 12. Suddenly the terrible artillery of heaven was discharged; the *brightness* of lightning lit up the clouds as with a glory proceeding from him who was concealed within the cloudy pavilion; and volleys of hailstones and coals of fire were hurled forth upon the enemy. The lightnings seemed to cleave the clouds and kindle them into a blaze, and then hailstones and flakes of fire with flashes of terrific grandeur terrified the sons of men.

Verse 13. Over all this splendour of tempest pealed the dread thunder. *"The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice."* Fit accompaniment for the flames of vengeance. How will men bear to hear it at the last when addressed to them in proclamation of their doom, for even now their hearts are in their mouths if they do but hear it muttering from afar? In all this terror David found a theme for song, and thus every believer finds even in the terrors of God a subject for holy praise. *"Hailstones and coals of fire"* are twice mentioned to show how certainly they are in the divine hand, and are the weapons of Heaven's vengeance. Horne remarks that "every thunderstorm should remind us of that exhibition of power and vengeance, which is hereafter to accompany the general resurrection;" may it not also assure us of the real power of him who is our Father and our friend, and tend to assure us of our safety while he fights our battles for us. The prince of the power of the air is soon dislodged when the cherubic chariot is driven through his dominions; therefore let not the legions of hell cause us dismay. He who is with us is greater than all they that be against us.

Verse 14. The lightnings were darted forth as forked arrows upon the hosts of the foe, and speedily

"scattered them." Boastful sinners prove to be great cowards when Jehovah enters the lists with them. They despise his words, and are very tongue-valiant, but when it comes to blows they fly apace. The glittering flames, and the fierce bolts of fire "*discomfited them.*" God is never at a loss for weapons. Woe be unto him that contendeth with his Maker! God's arrows never miss their aim; they are feathered with lightning, and barbed with everlasting death. Fly, O sinner, to the rock of refuge before these arrows stick fast in thy soul.

Verse 15. So tremendous was the shock of God's assault in arms that the order of nature was changed, and the bottoms of rivers and seas were laid bare. "*The channels of waters was seen;*" and the deep cavernous bowels of the earth were upheaved till "*the foundations of the world were discovered.*" What will not Jehovah's "*rebuke*" do? If "*the blast of the breath of thy nostrils,*" O Lord, be so terrible, what must thine arm be? Vain are the attempts of men to conceal anything from him whose word unbars the deep, and lifts the doors of earth from their hinges! Vain are all hopes of resistance, for a whisper of his voice makes the whole earth quail in abject terror.

Verse 16. Now comes the rescue. The Author is divine, "*He sent;*" the work is heavenly, "*from above;*" the deliverance is marvellous, "*He drew me out of many waters.*" Here David was like another Moses, drawn from the water; and thus are all believers like their Lord, whose baptism in many waters of agony and in his own blood has redeemed us from the wrath to come. Torrents of evil shall not drown the man whose God sitteth upon the floods to restrain their fury.

Verse 17. When we have been rescued, we must take care to ascribe all the glory to God by confessing our own weakness, and remembering the power of the conquered enemy. God's power derives honour from all the incidents of the conflict. Our great spiritual adversary is a "*strong enemy*" indeed, much too strong for poor, weak creatures like ourselves, but we have been delivered hitherto and shall be even to the end. Our weakness is a reason for divine help; mark the force of the "*for*" in the text.

Verse 18. It was an ill day, a day of *calamity*, of which evil foes took cruel advantage, while they used crafty means utterly to ruin him, yet David could say, "*but the Lord is my stay.*" What a blessed *but* which cuts the Gordian knot, and slays the hundred-headed hydra! There is no fear of deliverance when our stay is in Jehovah.

Verse 19. "*He brought me forth also into a large place.*" After pining awhile in the prison-house Joseph reached the palace, and from the cave of Adullam David mounted to the throne. Sweet is pleasure after pain. Enlargement is the more delightful after a season of pinching poverty and sorrowful confinement. Besieged souls delight in the broad fields of the promise when God drives off the enemy and sets open the gates of the environed city. The Lord does not leave his work half done, for having routed the foe he leads out the captive into liberty. Large indeed is the possession and place of the believer in Jesus, there need be no limit to his peace, for there is no bound to his

privilege. *"He delivered me, because he delighted in me."* Free grace lies at the foundation. Rest assured, if we go deep enough, sovereign grace is the truth which lies at the bottom of every well of mercy. Deep sea fisheries in the ocean of divine bounty always bring the pearls of electing, discriminating love to light. Why Jehovah should delight in us is an answerless question, and a mystery which angels cannot solve; but that he does delight in his beloved is certain, and is the fruitful root of favours as numerous as they are precious. Believer, sit down, and inwardly digest the instructive sentence now before us, and learn to view the uncaused love of God as the cause of all the lovingkindness of which we are the partakers.

Verse 20. *"The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness."* Viewing this psalm as prophetic of the Messiah, these strongly-expressed claims to righteousness are readily understood, for his garments were as white as snow; but considered as the language of David they have perplexed many. Yet the case is clear, and if the words be not strained beyond their original intention, no difficulty need occur. Albeit that the dispensations of divine grace are to the fullest degree sovereign and irrespective of human merit, yet in the dealings of Providence there is often discernible a rule of justice by which the injured are at length avenged, and the righteous ultimately delivered. David's early troubles arose from the wicked malice of envious Saul, who no doubt prosecuted his persecutions under cover of charges brought against the character of "the man after God's own heart." These charges David declares to have been utterly false, and asserts that he possessed a grace-given righteousness which the Lord had graciously rewarded in defiance of all his calumniators. Before God the man after God's own heart was a humble sinner, but before his slanderers he could with unblushing face speak of the *"cleanness of his hands"* and the righteousness of his life. He knows little of the sanctifying power of divine grace who is not at the bar of human equity able to plead innocence. There is no self-righteousness in an honest man knowing that he is honest, nor even in his believing that God rewards him in providence because of his honesty, for such is often a most evident matter of fact; but it would be self-righteousness indeed if we transferred such thoughts from the region of providential government into the spiritual kingdom, for there grace reigns not only supreme but sole in the distribution of divine favours. It is not at all an opposition to the doctrine of salvation by grace, and no sort of evidence of a Pharisaic spirit, when a gracious man, having been slandered, stoutly maintains his integrity, and vigorously defends his character. A godly man has a clear conscience, and knows himself to be upright; is he to deny his own consciousness, and to despise the work of the Holy Ghost, by hypocritically making himself out to be worse than he is? A godly man prizes his integrity very highly, or else he would not be a godly man at all; is he to be called proud because he will not readily lose the jewel of a reputable character? A godly man can see that in divine providence uprightness and truth are in the long run sure to bring their own reward; may he not, when he sees that reward bestowed in his own case,

praise the Lord for it? Yea rather, must he not show forth the faithfulness and goodness of his God? Read the cluster of expressions in this and the following verses as the song of a good conscience, after having safely outridden a storm of obloquy, persecution, and abuse, and there will be no fear of our upbraiding the writer as one who sets too high a price upon his own moral character.

Verse 21. Here the assertion of purity is repeated, both in a positive and a negative form. There is "*I have*" and "*I have not,*" both of which must be blended in a truly sanctified life; constraining and restraining grace must each take its share. The words of this verse refer to the saint as a traveler carefully keeping to "*the ways of the Lord,*" and "*not wickedly,*" that is, designedly, wilfully, persistently, defiantly forsaking the ordained pathway in which God favours the pilgrim with his presence. Observe how it is implied in the expression, "*and have not wickedly departed from my God,*" that David lived habitually in communion with God, and knew him to be his own God, whom he might speak of as "*my God.*" God never departs from his people, let them take heed of departing from him.

Verse 22. "*For all his judgments were before me.*" The word, the character, and the actions of God should be evermore before our eyes; we should learn, consider, and reverence them. Men forget what they do not wish to remember, but the excellent attributes of the Most High are objects of the believer's affectionate and delighted admiration. We should keep the image of God so constantly before us that we become in our measure conformed unto it. This inner love to the right must be the main spring of Christian integrity in our public walk. The fountain must be filled with love to holiness, and then the streams which issue from it will be pure and gracious. "*I did not put away his statutes from me.*" To put away the Scriptures from the mind's study is the certain way to prevent their influencing the outward conversation. Backsliders begin with dusty Bibles, and go on to filthy garments.

Verse 23. "*I was also upright before him.*" Sincerity is here claimed; sincerity, such as would be accounted genuine before the bar of God. Whatever evil men might think of him, David felt that he had the good opinion of his God. Moreover, freedom from his one great besetting sin he ventures also to plead, "*I kept myself from mine iniquity.*" It is a very gracious sign when the most violent parts of our nature have been well guarded. If the weakest link in the chain is not broken, the stronger links will be safe enough. David's impetuous temper might have led him to slay Saul when he had him within his power, but grace enabled him to keep his hands clean of the blood of his enemy; but what a wonder it was, and how well worthy of such a grateful record as these verses afford! It will be a sweet cordial to us one of these days to remember our self-denials, and to bless God that we were able to exhibit them.

Verse 24. God first gives us holiness, and then rewards us for it. We are his workmanship; vessels made unto honour; and when made, the honour is not withheld from the vessel; though, in fact, it all

belongs to the Potter upon whose wheel the vessel was fashioned. The prize is awarded to the flower at the show, but the gardener reared it; the child wins the prize from the schoolmaster, but the real honour of his schooling lies with the master, although instead of receiving he gives the reward.

Verse 25. The dealings of the Lord in his own case, cause the grateful singer to remember the usual rule of God's moral government; he is just in his dealings with the sons of men, and metes out to each man according to his measure. *"With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright."* Every man shall have his meat weighed in his own scales, his corn meted in his own bushel, and his land measured with his own rod. No rule can be more fair, to ungodly men more terrible, or to the generous man more honourable. How would men throw away their light weights, and break their short yards, if they could but believe that they themselves are sure to be in the end the losers by their knavish tricks! Note that even the merciful need mercy; no amount of generosity to the poor, or forgiveness to enemies, can set us beyond the need of mercy. Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner.

Verse 26. *"With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward."* The sinner's frowardness is sinful and rebellious, and the only sense in which the term can be applied to the Most Holy God is that of judicial opposition and sternness, in which the Judge of all the earth will act at cross-purposes with the offender, and let him see that all things are not to be made subservient to wicked whims and wilful fancies. Calvin very forcibly says, "This brutish and monstrous stupidity in men compels God to invent new modes of expression, and as it were to clothe himself with a different character." There is a similar sentence in Leviticus 26:21-24, where God says, "and if ye walk contrary unto (or perversely with) me, then I will also walk contrary unto (or perversely, or roughly, or at random with) you." As if he had said that their obstinacy and stubbornness would make him on his part forget his accustomed forbearance and gentleness, and cast himself recklessly or at random against them. We see then what the stubborn at length gain by their obduracy; it is this, that God hardens himself still more to break them in pieces, and if they are of stone, he causes them to feel that he has the hardness of iron." The Jewish tradition was that the manna tasted according to each man's mouth; certainly God shows himself to each individual according to his character.

Verse 27. *"For thou wilt save the afflicted people."* This is a comforting assurance for the poor in spirit whose spiritual griefs admit of no sufficient solace from any other than a divine hand. They cannot save themselves nor can others do it, but God will save them. *"But will bring down high looks."* Those who look down on others with scorn shall be looked down upon with contempt ere long. The Lord abhors a proud look. What a reason for repentance and humiliation! How much better to be humble than to provoke God to humble us in his wrath! A considerable number of clauses occur in this passage in the future tense; how forcibly are we thus brought to remember that our present joy or sorrow is not to have so much weight with us as the great and eternal future!

Verse 28. *"For thou wilt light my candle."* Even the children of the day sometimes need candle-light. In the darkest hour light will arise; a candle shall be lit, it will be comfort such as we may fittingly use without dishonesty—it will be our own candle; yet God himself will find the holy fire with which the candle shall burn; our evidences are our own, but their comfortable light is from above. Candles which are lit by God the devil cannot blow out. All candles are not shining, and so there are some graces which yield no present comfort; but it is well to have candles which may by and by be lit, and it is well to possess graces which may yet afford us cheering evidences. The metaphor of the whole verse is founded upon the dolorous nature of darkness and the delightfulness of light; "truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun;" and even so the presence of the Lord removes all the gloom of sorrow, and enables the believer to rejoice with exceeding great joy. The lighting of the lamp is a cheerful moment in the winter's evening, but the lifting up of the light of God's countenance is happier far. It is said that the poor in Egypt will stint themselves of bread to buy oil for the lamp, so that they may not sit in darkness; we could well afford to part with all earthly comforts if the light of God's love could but constantly gladden our souls.

Verses 29-45. Some repetitions are not vain repetitions. Second thoughts upon God's mercy should be and often are the best. Like wines on the lees our gratitude grows stronger and sweeter as we meditate upon divine goodness. The verses which we have now to consider are the ripe fruit of a thankful spirit; they are apples of gold as to matter, and they are placed in baskets of silver as to their language. They describe the believer's victorious career and his enemies' confusion.

Verse 29. *"For by thee have I run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall."* Whether we meet the foe in the open field or leap upon them while they lurk behind the battlements of a city, we shall by God's grace defeat them in either case; if they hem us in with living legions, or environ us with stone walls, we shall with equal certainty obtain our liberty. Such feats we have already performed, hewing our way at a run through hosts of difficulties, and scaling impossibilities at a leap. God's warriors may expect to have a taste of every form of fighting, and must by the power of faith determine to quit themselves like men; but it behoves them to be very careful to lay all their laurels at Jehovah's feet, each one of them saying, *"by my God"* have I wrought this valiant deed. Our *spolia optima*, the trophies of our conflicts, we hereby dedicate to the God of Battles, and ascribe to him all glory and strength.

Verse 30. *"As for God, his way is perfect."* Far past all fault and error are God's dealings with his people; all his actions are resplendent with justice, truth, tenderness, mercy, and holiness. Every way of God is complete in itself, and all his ways put together are matchless in harmony and goodness. Is it not very consolatory to believe that he who has begun to bless us will perfect his work, for all his ways are *"perfect."* Nor must the divine *"word"* be without its song of praise. *"The word of the Lord is tried,"* like silver refined in the furnace. The doctrines are glorious, the precepts are pure, the

promises are faithful, and the whole revelation is superlatively full of grace and truth. David had tried it, thousands have tried it, we have tried it, and it has never failed. It was meet that when way and word had been extolled, the Lord himself should be magnified; hence it is added, "*He is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*" No armour of proof or shield of brass so well secures the warrior as the covenant God of Israel protects his warring people. He himself is the buckler of trustful ones; what a thought is this! What peace may every trusting soul enjoy!

Verse 31. Having mentioned his God, the psalmist's heart burns, and his words sparkle; he challenges heaven and earth to find another being worthy of adoration or trust in comparison with Jehovah. His God, as Matthew Henry says, is a None-such. The idols of the heathen he scorns to mention, snuffing them all out as mere nothings when Deity is spoken of. "*Who is God save the Lord?*" Who else creates, sustains, foresees, and overrules? Who but he is perfect in every attribute, and glorious in every act? To whom but Jehovah should creatures bow? Who else can claim their service and their love? "*Who is a rock save our God?*" Where can lasting hopes be fixed? Where can the soul find rest? Where is stability to be found? Where is strength to be discovered? Surely in the Lord Jehovah alone can we find rest and refuge.

Verse 32. Surveying all the armour in which he fought and conquered, the joyful victor praises the Lord for every part of the panoply. The girdle of his loins earns the first stanza: "*It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*" Girt about the loins with power from heaven, the warrior was filled with vigour, far above all created might; and, whereas, without this wondrous belt he would have been feeble and effeminate, with relaxed energies and scattered forces, he felt himself, when braced with the girdle of truth, to be compact in purpose, courageous in daring, and concentrated in power; so that his course was a complete success, so undisturbed by disastrous defeat as to be called "perfect." Have we been made more than conquerors over sin, and has our life hitherto been such as becometh the gospel? Then let us ascribe all the glory to him who girt us with his own inexhaustible strength, that we might be unconquered in battle and unwearied in pilgrimage.

Verse 33. The conqueror's feet had been shod by a divine hand, and the next note must, therefore, refer to them. "*He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.*" Pursuing his foes the warrior had been swift of foot as a young roe, but, instead of taking pleasure in the legs of a man, he ascribes the boon of swiftness to the Lord alone. When our thoughts are nimble, and our spirits rapid, like the chariots of Amminadib, let us not forget that our best Beloved's hand has given us the choice favour. Climbing into impregnable fortresses, David had been preserved from slipping, and made to stand where scarce the wild goat can find a footing; herein was preserving mercy manifested. We, too, have had our *high places* of honour, service, temptation, and danger, but hitherto we have been kept from falling. Bring hither the harp, and let us emulate the psalmist's joyful thanksgiving; had we fallen, our wailings must have been terrible; since we have stood, let our

gratitude be fervent.

Verse 34. *"He teacheth my hands to war."* Martial prowess and skill in the use of weapons are gratefully acknowledged to be the result of divine teaching; no sacrifice is offered at the shrine of self in praise of natural dexterity, or acquired skilfulness; but, regarding all warlike prowess as a gift of heavenly favour, thankfulness is presented to the Giver. The Holy Spirit is the great Drillmaster of heavenly soldiers. *"So that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms."* A bow of brass is probably meant, and these bows could scarcely be bent by the arms alone, the archer had to gain the assistance of his foot; it was, therefore, a great feat of strength to bend the bow, so far as even to snap it in halves. This was meant of the enemies' bow, which he not only snatched from his grasp, but rendered useless by breaking it in pieces. Jesus not only destroyed the fiery suggestions of Satan, but he broke his arguments with which he shot them, by using Holy Scripture against him; by the same means we may win a like triumph, breaking the bow and cutting the spear in sunder by the sharp edge of revealed truth. Probably David had by nature a vigorous bodily frame; but it is even more likely that, like Samson, he was at times clothed with more than common strength; at any rate, he ascribes the honour of his feats entirely to his God. Let us never wickedly rob the Lord of his due, but faithfully give unto him the glory which is due unto his name.

Verse 35. *"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation."* Above all we must take the shield of faith, for nothing else can quench Satan's fiery darts; this shield is of celestial workmanship, and is in all cases a direct gift from God himself; it is the channel, the sign, the guarantee, and the earnest of perfect salvation. *"Thy right hand hath holden me up."* Secret support is administered to us by the preserving grace of God, and at the same time Providence kindly yields us manifest aid. We are such babes that we cannot stand alone; but when the Lord's right hand upholds us, we are like brazen pillars which cannot be moved. *"Thy gentleness hath made me great."* There are several readings of this sentence. The word is capable of being translated, "thy *goodness* hath made me great." David saw much of benevolence in God's action towards him, and he gratefully ascribed all his greatness not to his own goodness, but to the goodness of God. "Thy *providence*" is another reading, which is indeed nothing more than goodness in action. Goodness is the bud of which providence is the flower; or goodness is the seed of which providence is the harvest. Some render it, "thy *help*," which is but another word for providence; providence being the firm ally of the saints, aiding them in the service of their Lord. Certain learned annotators tell us that the text means, "thy *humility* hath made me great." "Thy *condescension*" may, perhaps, serve as a comprehensive reading, combining the ideas which we have already mentioned, as well as that of humility. It is God's making himself little which is the cause of our being made great. We are so little that if God should manifest his greatness without condescension, we should be trampled under his feet; but God, who must stoop to view the skies and bow to see what angels do, looks to the lowly and contrite, and makes them great. While these are

the translations which have been given to the adopted text of the original, we find that there are other readings altogether; as for instance, the Septuagint, which reads, "thy discipline"—thy fatherly correction— "hath made me great;" while the Chaldee paraphrase reads, "thy word hath increased me." Still the idea is the same. David ascribes all his own greatness to the condescending goodness and graciousness of his Father in heaven. Let us all feel this sentiment in our own hearts, and confess that whatever of goodness or greatness God may have put upon us, we must cast our crowns at his feet and cry, *"thy gentleness hath made me great."*

Verse 36. *"Thou hast enlarged my steps."* A smooth pathway leading to spacious possessions and camping-grounds had been opened up for him. Instead of threading the narrow mountain paths, and hiding in the cracks and corners of caverns, he was able to traverse the plains and dwell under his own vine and fig tree. It is no small mercy to be brought into full Christian liberty and enlargement, but it is a greater favour still to be enabled to walk worthily in such liberty, not being permitted to slip with our feet. To stand upon the rocks of affliction is the result of gracious upholding, but that aid is quite as much needed in the luxurious plains of prosperity.

Verse 37. The preservation of the saints bodes ill for their adversaries. The Amelekites thought themselves clear away with their booty, but when David's God guided him in the pursuit, they were soon overtaken and cut in pieces. When God is with us sins and sorrows flee, and all forms of evil are *"consumed"* before the power of grace. What a noble picture this and the following verses present to us of the victories of our glorious Lord Jesus!

Verse 38. The destruction of our spiritual enemies is complete. We may exult over sin, death, and hell, as disarmed and disabled *for us* by our conquering Lord; may he graciously give them a like defeat *within us*.

Verses 39 and 40. It is impossible to be too frequent in the duty of ascribing all our victories to the God of our salvation. It is true that we have to wrestle with our spiritual antagonists, but the triumph is far more the Lord's than ours. We must not boast like the ambitious votaries of vainglory, but we may exult as the willing and believing instruments in the Lord's hand of accomplishing his great designs.

Verse 41. *"They cried, but there was none to save them; even unto the Lord, but he answered them not."* Prayer is so notable a weapon that even the wicked will take to it to in their fits of desperation. Bad men have appealed to God against God's own servants, but all in vain; the kingdom of heaven is not divided, and God never succours his foes at the expense of his friends. There are prayers to God which are no better than blasphemy, which bring no comfortable reply, but rather provoke the Lord to greater wrath. Shall I ask a man to wound or slay his own child to gratify my malice? Would he not resent the insult against his humanity? How much less will Jehovah regard the cruel desires of the enemies of the church, who dare to offer their prayers for its destruction, calling its existence schism, and its doctrine heresy!

Verse 42. The defeat of the nations who fought with King David was so utter and complete that they were like powders pounded in a mortar; their power was broken into fragments and they became as weak as dust before the wind, and as mean as the mire of the roads. Thus powerless and base are the enemies of God now become through the victory of the Son of David upon the cross. Arise, O my soul, and meet thine enemies, for they have sustained a deadly blow, and will fall before thy bold advance.

"Hell and my sins resist my course,
But hell and sin are vanquish'd foes
My Jesus nail'd them to his cross,
And sung the triumph when he rose."

Verse 43. *"Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people."* Internal strife is very hard to deal with. A civil war is war in its most miserable form; it is a subject for warmest gratitude when concord rules within. Our poet praises Jehovah for the union and peace which smiled in his dominions, and if we have peace in the three kingdoms of our spirit, soul, and body, we are in duty bound to give Jehovah a song. Unity in a church should assuredly excite like gratitude. *"Thou hast made me the head of the heathen; a people whom I have not known shall serve me."* The neighbouring nations yielded to the sway of Judah's prince. Oh, when shall all lands adore King Jesus, and serve him with holy joy? Surely there is far more of Jesus than of David here. Missionaries may derive rich encouragement from the positive declaration that heathen lands shall own the Headship of the Crucified.

Verse 44. *"As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me."* Thus readily did the once struggling captain become a far-renowned victor, and thus easy shall be our triumphs. We prefer, however, to speak of Jesus. In many cases the gospel is speedily received by hearts apparently unprepared for it. Those who have never heard the gospel before, have been charmed by its first message, and yielded obedience to it; while others, alas! who are accustomed to its joyful sound, are rather hardened than softened by its teachings. The grace of God sometimes runs like fire among the stubble, and a nation is born in a day. "Love at first sight" is no uncommon thing when Jesus is the wooer. He can write Caesar's message without boasting, *Veni, vidi, vici*; his gospel is in some cases no sooner heard than believed. What inducements to spread abroad the doctrine of the cross!

Verse 45. *"The strangers shall fade away."* Like sear leaves or blasted trees our foes and Christ's foes shall find no sap and stamina remaining in them. Those who are strangers to Jesus are strangers to all lasting happiness; those must soon fade who refuse to be watered from the river of life. *"And be afraid out of their close places."* Out of their mountain fastnesses the heathen crept in fear to own allegiance to Israel's king, and even so, from the castles of self-confidence and the dens of carnal security, poor sinners come bending before the Saviour, Christ the Lord. Our sins which

have entrenched themselves in our flesh and blood as in impregnable forts, shall yet be driven forth by the sanctifying energy of the Holy Spirit, and we shall serve the Lord in singleness of heart.

Thus with remembrance of conquests in the past, and with glad anticipations of victories yet to come, the sweet singer closes the description, and returns to exercise of more direct adoration of his gracious God.

Verse 46. *"The Lord liveth."* Possessing underived, essential, independent and eternal life. We serve no inanimate, imaginary, or dying God. He only hath immortality. Like loyal subjects let us cry, Live on, O God. Long live the King of kings. By thine immortality do we dedicate ourselves afresh to thee. As the Lord our God liveth so would we live to him. *"And blessed be my rock."* He is the ground of our hope, and let him be the subject of our praise. Our hearts bless the Lord, with holy love extolling him. Jehovah lives, my rock be blessed!

Praised be the God who gives me rest!

"Let the God of my salvation be exalted." As our Saviour, the Lord should more than ever be glorified. We should publish abroad the story of the covenant and the cross, the Father's election, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's regeneration. He who rescues us from deserved ruin should be very dear to us. In heaven they sing "Unto him that loved us and washed us in his blood;" the like music should be common in the assemblies of the saints below.

Verse 47. *"It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me."* To rejoice in personal revenge is unhallowed and evil, but David viewed himself as the instrument of vengeance upon the enemies of God and his people, and had he not rejoiced in the success accorded to him he would have been worthy of censure. That sinners perish is in itself a painful consideration, but that the Lord's law is avenged upon those who break it is to the devout mind a theme for thankfulness. We must, however, always remember that vengeance is never ours, vengeance belongeth unto the Lord, and he is so just and withal so longsuffering in the exercise of it, that we may safely leave its administration in his hands.

Verse 48. From all enemies, and especially from one who was pre-eminent in violence, the Lord's anointed was preserved, and at the last over the head of Saul and all other adversaries he reigned in honour. The like end awaits every saint, because Jesus who stooped to be lightly esteemed among men is now made to sit far above all principalities and powers.

Verse 49. Paul cites this verse (Romans 15:9): "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." This is clear evidence that David's Lord is here, but David is here too, and is to be viewed as an example of a holy soul making its boast in God even in the presence of ungodly men. Who are the despisers of God that we should stop our mouths for them? We will sing to our God whether they like it or no, and force upon them the knowledge of his goodness. Too much politeness to traitors may be treason

to our King.

Verse 50. This is the winding up verse into which the writer throws a fulness of expression, indicating the most rapturous delight of gratitude. "*Great deliverance.*" The word "*deliverance*" is plural, to show the variety and completeness of the salvation; the adjective "*great*" is well placed if we consider from what, to what, and how we are saved. All this mercy is given to us in our King, the Lord's Anointed, and those are blessed indeed who as his seed may expect mercy to be built up for evermore. The Lord was faithful to the literal David, and he will not break his covenant with the spiritual David, for that would far more involve the honour of his crown and character.

The Psalm concludes in the same loving spirit which shone upon its commencement; happy are they who can sing on from love to love, even as the pilgrims marched from strength to strength.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The general argument of the Psalm may be thus stated: it is a magnificent eucharistic ode. It begins with a celebration of the glorious perfections of the Divinity, whose assistance the speaker has so often experienced. He describes, or rather, he delineates, his perils, the power of his enemies, his sudden deliverance from them, and the indignation and power of his divine deliverer manifested in their overthrow. He paints these in so lively colours, that while we read we seem to see the lightning, to hear the thunders, to feel the earthquake. He afterwards describes his victories, so that we seem to be eye-witnesses of them, and take part in them. He predicts a wide-extended empire, and concludes with a lofty expression of grateful adoration of Jehovah, the Author of all his deliverances and triumphs. The style is highly oratorical and poetical, sublime, and full of uncommon figures of speech. It is the natural language of a person of the highest mental endowments, under a divine inspiration, deeply affected by remarkable divine benefits, and filled with the most lofty conceptions of the divine character and dispensations.—*John Brown, D.D., 1853.*

Whole Psalm. Kitto, in "The Pictorial Bible," has the following note upon 2 Samuel 22:—"This is the same as the eighteenth Psalm. . . . The Rabbins reckon up seventy-four differences between the two copies, most of them very minute. They probably arose from the fact that the poem was, as they conjecture, composed by David in his youth, and revised in his later days, when he sent it to the chief musician. The present is, of course, to be the earlier copy."

Whole Psalm. The eighteenth Psalm is called by Michaelis more artificial, and less truly terrible, than the Mosaic odes. In structure it may be so, but surely not in spirit. It appears to many besides us, one of the most magnificent lyrical raptures in the Scriptures. As if the poet had dipped his pen in "the brightness of that light which was before his eye," so he describes the descending God. Perhaps it may be objected that the *nodus* is hardly worthy of the *vindex*—to deliver David from his enemies, could Deity ever be imagined to come down? But the objector knows not the character of the ancient

Hebrew mind. God in its view had not to descend from heaven; he was nigh—a cloud like a man's hand might conceal—a cry, a look might bring him down. And why should not David's fancy clothe him, as he came, in a panoply befitting his dignity, in clouds spangled with coals of fire? If he was to descend, why not in state? The proof of the grandeur of this Psalm is in the fact that it has borne the test of almost every translation, and made doggerel erect itself, and become divine. Even Sternhold and Hopkins its fiery whirlwind lifts up, purifies, touches into true power, and then throws down, helpless and panting, upon their ancient common. Perhaps the great charm of the eighteenth, apart from the poetry of the descent, is the exquisite and subtle alternation of the *I* and the *Thou*. We have spoken of parallelism, as the key to the mechanism of Hebrew song. We find this as existing between David and God—the delivered and the deliverer—beautifully pursued throughout the whole of this Psalm. "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised." "He sent from above; he took me; he drew me out of many waters." "Thou wilt light my candle." "Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation." "Thou hast girded me with strength unto battle." "Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies." "Thou hast made me the head of the heathen." It has been ingeniously argued, that the existence of the *I* suggests, inevitably as a polar opposite, the thought of the *Thou*, that the personality of man proves thus the personality of God; but, be this as it may, David's perception of that personality is nowhere so intense as here. He seems not only to see, but to feel and touch, the object of his gratitude and worship.—George Gilfillan, in "*The Bards of the Bible*," 1852.

Whole Psalm. He that would be wise, let him read the Proverbs; he that would be holy, let him read the Psalms. Every line in this book breathes peculiar sanctity. This Psalm, though placed among the first, was penned among the last, as the preface assures us, and is left as the epitome of the general history of David's life. It is twice recorded in the Scripture (2 Samuel 22, and in this book of Psalms), for the excellency and sweetness thereof; surely that we should take double notice of it. Holy David, being near the shore, here looks on his former dangers and deliverances with a thankful heart, and writes this Psalm to bless the Lord: as if each of you that are grown into years should review your lives and observe the wonderful goodness and providence of God towards you; and then sit down and write a modest memorial of his most remarkable mercies, for the comfort of yourselves and posterity; an excellent practice. What a comfort would it be for you to read how good your God was to you father or grandfather, that are dead and gone! So would your children rejoice in the Lord upon the reading of his goodness to you; and you cannot have a better pattern for this than holy David, who wrote this Psalm when he was threescore and seven years old; when he had outlived most of his troubles, and almost ready for his journey to his Father in heaven, he resolves to leave this good report of him upon earth. And I pray mark how he begins: he sets not up trophies to himself, but triumphs in his God—"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." As the *love of God* is the beginning of all

our mercies, so *love to God* should be the end and effect of them all. As the stream leads us to the spring, so all the gifts of God must lead us to the giver of them. Lord, thou hast saved me from sickness, "*I will love thee;*" from death and hell, "*I will love thee;*" on me thou hast bestowed grace and comfort, "*I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.*" And after he had heaped on God all the sweet names he could devise (verse 2), as the true saint thinks he can never speak too well of God, or too ill of himself, then he begins his narrative. 1. Of his *dangers* (verse 4); "*Snares of death,*" "*Floods of ungodly men,*" "*Sorrows of hell.*" Hell and earth are combined against each holy man, and will trouble sufficiently in this world, if they cannot keep him out of a better. 2. Of his *retreat*, and that was, earnest prayer to God (verse 6), "*I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God.*" When our prayers are cries ardent and importunate, then they speed: "*My cry came before him, even into his ears.*" The mother trifles while the child whimpers, but when he raises his note—strains every nerve and cries every vein—then she throws all aside, and gives him his desire. While our prayers are only whispers, our God can take his rest; but when we fall to crying, "Now will I arise, saith the Lord." 3. Of his *rescue* (verses 7 to 20), by the powerful and terrible arm of the Lord, who is in a lofty strain brought in to his servant's help, as if he would mingle heaven and earth together, rather than leave his child in the lion's paws. 4. Of the *reason* of this gracious dealing of God with him (verse 20, etc.). He was a righteous person, and he had a righteous cause. And thereupon he turns to God, saying, Thou hast dealt with me just as thou art wont to do, "*with the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright.*"—Richard Steele's "*Plain Discourse upon Uprightness,*" 1670.

Whole Psalm. Sometimes the Lord cheers and comforts the heart of his people with smiling and reviving providences, both public and personal. There are times of lifting up, as well as casting down by the hand of providence. The scene changes, the aspects of providence are very cheerful and encouraging; their winter seems to be over; they put off their garments of mourning; and then, ah, what sweet returns are made to heavenly gracious souls! Doth God lift them up by prosperity? they also will lift up their God by praises. See title, and verses 1-3 of Psalm 18. So Moses, and the people with him (Exodus 15), when God had delivered them from Pharaoh, how do they exalt him in a song of thanksgiving, which for the elegancy and spirituality of it, is made an emblem of the doxologies given to God in glory by the saints. Revelation 15:1.—*John Flavel.*

Title. "*The servant of the Lord;*" the name given to Moses (Joshua 1:1, 13, 15, and in nine other places of that book) and to Joshua (Joshua 24:29; Judges 2:8); but to none other except David (here, and in the title to Psalm 36). Compare Acts 13:36, *uphreteos*. This is significant; reminding us of the place occupied by David in the history of Israel. He was the appointed successor of Moses and Joshua, who extended the power of Israel over the whole region allotted to them by Divine promise.—*W. Kay, 1871.*

Title. This Psalm, which is entitled a *shirah* (or song), is David's hymn of praise to God for his deliverance from all his enemies (see the title, and above, 2 Samuel 22), and has an appropriate place in the present group of Psalms, which speak of resurrection after suffering. It is entitled a Psalm of David, "*the servant of the Lord*," and thus is coupled with another psalm of deliverance, Psalm 36.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1. "I will love thee, O Lord." The word whereby the psalmist expresseth his entire affection, in the noun signifieth a womb, and imparteth such an affection as cometh from the innermost part of man (Heb. matrix), from his bowels, from the bottom of his heart, as we speak. It is, therefore, oft put for such pity and compassion as moveth the bowels. Some, therefore, thus translate that phrase, "From my innermost bowels will I love thee, O Lord." To give evidence of his entire and ardent love of God, he oft professeth his wonderful great love to God's commandments, whereof he saith with admiration, "Oh, how I love thy law! I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. I love them exceedingly" (Psalm 119:97, 127, 167); therefore, he saith to God, "Consider how I love thy precepts" (verse 159).—*William Gouge, 1575-1653.*

Verse 1. "I will love thee." Intimately as a mother loves the child that comes out of her womb.—*Westminster Assembly's Annotations, 1651.*

Verses 1, 2. God hath, as it were, made himself over to believers. David doth not say, God will give me or bestow salvation upon me; but he saith, "He is the horn of my salvation." It is God himself who is the salvation and the portion of his people. They would not care much for salvation if God were not their salvation. It more pleaseth the saints that they enjoy God, than that they enjoy salvation. False and carnal spirits will express a great deal of desire after salvation, for they like salvation, heaven, and glory well; but they never express any longing desire after God and Jesus Christ. They love salvation, but they care not for a Saviour. Now that which faith pitcheth most upon is God himself; he shall be my salvation, let me have him, and that is salvation enough; he is my life, he is my comfort, he is my riches, he is my honour, and he is my all. Thus David's heart acted immediately upon God, "*I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. 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.*" It pleased holy David more that God was his strength, than that God gave him strength; that God was his deliverer, than that he was delivered; that God was his fortress, his buckler, his horn, his high tower, than that he gave him the effect of all these. It pleased David, and it pleases all the saints more that God is their salvation, whether temporal or eternal, than that he saves them: the saints look more at God than at all that is God's.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 1, 2. David speaks like one in love with God, for he doth adorn him with confession of praise, and his mouth is filled with the praise of the Lord, which he expresseth in this exuberancy and redundancy of holy oratory.—*Edward Marbury.*

Verse 2. "*The Lord is my rock.*" As the rocks that are hard to be clambered unto are good refuges to fly unto from the face of pursuers, so God is the safety of all such as in distress do fly to him for succor.—*Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 2. "*My deliverer.*" He who betook himself to one of these inaccessible retreats, was sometimes obliged by famine to surrender to his enemy, who lay in wait for him beneath; but Jehovah gives him not only security but liberty; not only preserves him, as it were, in an inaccessible retreat, but at the same time enables him to go forth in safety.—*Jarchi.*

Verse 2. "*The horn of my salvation.*" The allusion here is doubtful. Some have supposed the reference to be to the horns of animals, by which they defend themselves and attack their enemies. "God is to me, does for me, what their horns do for them." Others consider it as referring to the well-established fact, that warriors were accustomed to place horns, or ornaments like horns, on their helmets. The horn stands for the helmet; and "the helmet of salvation" is an expression equivalent to "a saving, a protecting helmet." Others consider the reference as to the corners or handles of the altar in the court of the tabernacle or temple, which are called its horns. Others suppose the reference to be to the highest point of a lofty and precipitous mountain, which we are accustomed to call its peak. No doubt, in the Hebrew language, horn is used for mountain as in Isaiah 5:1. A very fertile mountain is called a horn of oil. The sense is substantially the same, whichever of these views we take; though, from the connection with "shield" or "buckler," I am induced to consider the second of these views as the most probable. It seems the same idea as that expressed, Psalm 140:7, "Thou hast covered," and thou wilt cover "my head in the day of battle."—*John Brown.*

Verse 2. "*The horn of my salvation.*" Horns are the well-known emblems of strength and power, both in the sacred and profane writers; by a metaphor taken from horned animals, which are frequently made subjects of comparison by poetical writers, and the strength of which, whether for offence or defence, consists principally in their horns. Bruce speaks of a remarkable head-dress worn by the governors of provinces in Abyssinia, consisting of a large broad fillet, bound upon their foreheads and tied behind their heads, and having in the middle of it a horn, or a conical piece of silver, gilt, about four inches long, much in the shape of our common candle extinguishers. It is called *kirn* or horn, and is only worn on reviews or parades after victory. He supposes this, like other Abyssinian usages, to be taken from the Hebrews, and is of opinion that there are many allusions to the practice in Scripture, in the expression, "lifting up the horn," "exalting the horn," and the like.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 2. "*The Lord is my high tower.*" If a man do run to a tower, yet if that be a weak and an insufficient tower, without men and munition, and a ruinous shaken tower; or if a man do make choice of a tower, a strong sufficient tower, yet if in his danger he betakes not himself to that tower, but he sit still; or if he sit not still, yet he but only go and walk on easily towards it, he may well be met withal, and a danger may arrest him, surprise him, and cut him off before he get the tower over his head. But

the man that will be safe, as he must choose a strong tower, so he must go to, nay, *run* into that tower. Running will not secure a man unless the tower be strong. . . . David was got unto his *tower*, and in that *tower* there was thundering ordnance, and David put fire to them by prayer, verse 6, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even unto his ears." Here David prays and gives fire to the cannon, and what followed? See verses 7, 8, 13, 14. "Then the earth shook and trembled," etc. "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils," etc. "The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them." There were no guns nor ordnance invented and in use in David's time, and yet David's prayers being in this tower, did him as good service against his enemies as all the ordnance and cannons in the world have done. David had thundering ordnance, and with them discomfited his enemies long before powder and guns were invented. It is a memorable and well known story of that Christian legion that was in Marcus Aurelius's army: the enemy being in great straits, those Christian soldiers did by their prayers not only procure rain, by which his languishing army was refreshed, but also obtained hail mixed with thunderbolts against his enemies, upon which he honoured them with the name *Legio fulminatrix*, the Thundering Legion. They used David's cannon against the enemy, and discharged that thundering ordnance by their prayers, and that to the confusion of their enemies.—*Jeremiah Dyke's "Righteous Man's Tower,"* 1639.

Verse 2. "My high tower." Even as the fowls of the air, that they may escape the nets and snares of the fowlers, are wont to fly up on high; so we, to avoid the infinite snares of innumerable temptations, must fly to God; and lift up ourselves from the corruptions, lying vanities, and deceitful sleights of the world.—*Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 3. "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised." Prayer and invocation of God should always be joined with praises and thanksgivings, and used as a means whereby faith shall extract the good which it knoweth is in God, and of which he hath made promise.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 3. "So shall I be saved from mine enemies." Whoso comes to God as he should will not call in vain. The right kind of prayer is the most potent instrumentality known on earth.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 4. "Sorrows of death." It is heaven's peculiar to be the land of the living; all this life is at most but the *shadow* of death, the *gate* of death, the *sorrows* of death, the *snares* of death, the *terrors* of death, the *chambers* of death, the *sentence* of death, the *savour* of death, the *ministration* of death, the *way* of death.—*Matthew Griffith, 1634.*

Verse 4. "The bands or cords of death encompassed me." It is not very easy to fix the precise meaning of the phrase, "bands" or "cords" of death. It may either be considered as equivalent to "the bands by which the dead are bound," in which case, to be encircled with the bands of death is just a figurative expression for being dead; or it may be considered as equivalent to the bands in which a

person is bound in the prospect of a violent death, and by which his violent death is secured, he being prevented from escaping. It has been supposed by some, that the allusion is to the ancient mode of hunting wild animals. A considerable tract of country was surrounded with strong ropes. The circle was gradually contracted till the object of pursuit was so confined as to become an easy prey to the hunter. These cords were the cords of death, securing the death of the animal. The phrase is applicable to our Lord in both senses; but as "the floods" of wickedness, or the wicked, are represented as making him afraid subsequently to his being encircled with the cords of death, I am disposed to understand it in the latter of these two senses.—*John Brown*.

Verse 4. "The floods." There is no metaphor of more frequent occurrence with the sacred poets, than that which represents dreadful and unexpected calamities under the image of overwhelming waters. This image seems to have been especially familiar with the Hebrews, inasmuch as it was derived from the peculiar habit and nature of their own country. They had continually before their eyes the river Jordan, annually overflowing its banks, when at the approach of summer the snows of Libanus and the neighbouring mountains melted, and, suddenly pouring down in torrents, swelled the current of the river. Besides, the whole country of Palestine, although it was not watered by many perennial streams, was, from the mountainous character of the greater part of it, liable to numerous torrents, which precipitated themselves through the narrow valleys after the periodical rainy seasons. This image, therefore, however known and adopted by other poets, may be considered as particularly familiar, and as it were, domestic with the Hebrews; who accordingly introduced it with greater frequency and freedom.—*Robert Lowth (Bishop), 1710-1787*.

Verse 5. "The snares of death prevented me." The word "snares," signifies such traps or gins as are laid for birds and wild beasts. The English word "prevent" has changed its meaning in some measure since our authorised translation of the Bible was made. Its original meaning is to "come before."—*John Brown*.

Verse 6. "In my distress." If you listen even to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Spirit hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see, in needleworks and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground; judge, therefore, of the pleasures of the heart by the pleasures of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours—most fragrant when they are crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.—*Francis Bacon, Baron of Verulam, etc., 1561-1626*.

Verse 6. "I called upon the Lord and cried." Prayer is not eloquence, but earnestness; not in the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; it is the cry of faith to the ear of mercy.—*Hannah*

Moore, 1745-1833.

Verse 6. "He heard my voice out of his temple," etc. The ædiles or chamberlains among the Romans, had ever their doors standing open for all who had occasion of request or complaint to have free access to them. "God's mercy-doors are wide open to the prayers of his faithful people." The Persian kings held it a piece of their silly glory to deny an easy access to their greatest subjects. It was death to solicit them uncalled. Esther herself was afraid. But the king of heaven manifesteth himself to his people, he calls to his spouse, with, "Let me see thy face, let me hear thy voice," etc., and assigneth her negligence herein as the cause of her soul-sickness. The door of the tabernacle was not of any hard or debarring matter, but a veil, which is easily penetrable. And whereas in the temple none came near to worship, but only the high priest, others stood without in the outer court. God's people are now a kingdom of priests, and are said to worship in the temple, and at the altar. Revelation 11:1. "Let us therefore draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith:" "let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 10:22; 4:16.—*Charles Bradbury's "Cabinet of Jewels," 1785.*

Verse 6. Oh! how true is that saying, that "Faith is safe when in danger, and in danger when secure; and prayer is fervent in straits, but in joyful and prosperous circumstances, if not quite cold and dead, at least lukewarm." Oh, happy straits, if they hinder the mind from flowing forth upon earthly objects, and mingling itself with the mire; if they favour our correspondence with heaven, and quicken our love to celestial objects, without which, what we call life, may more properly deserve the name of death!—*Robert Leighton, D.D.*

Verses 6, 7. The prayer of a single saint is sometimes followed with wonderful effects; "*In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth:*" what then can a thundering legion of such praying souls do? It was said of Luther, *iste vir potuit cum Deo quicquid voluit*, That man could have of God what he would; his enemies felt the weight of his prayers; and the church of God reaped the benefits thereof. The Queen of Scots professed she was more afraid of the prayers of Mr. Knox, than of an army of ten thousand men. These were mighty wrestlers with God, howsoever contemned and vilified among their enemies. There will a time come when God will hear the prayers of his people who are continually crying in his ears, "How long, Lord, how long?"—*John Flavel.*

Verse 7. "*Then the earth shook and trembled.*" The word (Heb.) signifies, to move or shake violently: it is employed, also, to denote the reeling and staggering of a drunken man. Jeremiah 25:16.—*John Morison, in loc.*

Verse 7. Let no appearing impossibilities make you question God's accomplishment of any of his gracious words. Though you cannot see how the thing can be done, 'tis enough if God hath said that

he will do it. There can be no obstructions to promised salvation which we need to fear. He who is the God of this salvation and the Author of the promise will prepare his own way for the doing of his own work, so that "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low." Luke 3:5. Though the valleys be so deep that we cannot see the bottom, and the mountains so high that we cannot see the tops of them, yet God knows how to raise the one and level the other. Isaiah 63:1. "I that speak in righteousness (or faithfulness) am mighty to save." If anything would keep back the kingdom of Christ, it would be our infidelity; but he will come though he should find no faith on the earth. See Romans 3:3. Cast not away your confidence because he defers his performances. Though providences run cross, though they move backwards and forwards, you have a sure and faithful word to rely upon. Promises, though they be for a time seemingly delayed, cannot be finally frustrated. Dare not to harbour such a thought within yourselves as Psalm 77:8; "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" The being of God may as well fail as the promise of God. That which does not come in your time, will be hastened in his time, which is always the more convenient season. Accuse him not of slowness who hath said, "I come quickly," that is, he comes as soon as all things are ready and ripe for his appearance. 'Tis as true that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (2 Peter 3:9), as that he is never guilty of breaking his promise. Wait, therefore, how long soever he tarry; do not give over expecting: the heart of God is not turned though his face be hid; and prayers are not flung back, though they be not instantly answered.—*Timothy Cruso*.

Verses 7, 8. The volcanic phenomena of Palestine open a question of which the data are, in a scientific point of view, too imperfect to be discussed; but there is enough in the history and literature of the people to show that there was an agency of this kind at work. The valley of the Jordan, both in its desolation and vegetation, was one continued portent; and from its crevices ramified even into the interior of Judea the startling appearances, if not of the volcano, at least of the earthquake. Their historical effect in the special theatres of their operation will appear as we proceed; but their traces on the permanent feeling of the nation must be noticed here. The writings of the psalmists and prophets abound with indications which escape the eye of a superficial reader. Like the soil of their country, they actually heave and labour with the fiery convulsions which glow beneath their surface.—*Arthur Penrhyn Stanley*.

Verses 7-9. While Jesus hung on the cross, a preternatural "darkness covered all the land;" and no sooner had he yielded up his spirit, than "the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top even to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that slept arose, and came out of the graves, after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."—*John Brown*.

Verses 7-9. In the night in which the Idumaeans lay before Jerusalem, there arose a prodigious tempest and fierce winds, with most vehement rains, frequent lightnings, and terrible thunderings,

and great roarings of the shaken earth; and it was manifest that the state of the universe was disordered at the slaughter of men; so one might guess that these were signs of no small calamity. . . . At the day of Pentecost, when the priests, by night, went into the inner temple, according to their custom, to execute their office, they said they perceived, first of all, a shake and a noise, and after that a sudden voice, "Let us go hence." . . . A few days after the feast of unleavened bread, a strange and almost incredible sight was seen which would, I suppose, be taken for a mere fable, were it not related by such as saw it, and did not the miseries which followed appear answerable to the signs; for, before the sun set, were seen on high, in the air, all over the country, chariots and armed regiments moving swiftly in the clouds, and encompassing the city.—*Flavius Josephus*, 37-103.

Verse 8. "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils," (Heb. words). Or there *ascended into his nose*, as the words literally rendered, signify. The ancients placed the seat of anger in the nose, or nostrils; because when it grows warm and violent, it discovers itself, as it were, by a heated vehement breath, that proceeds from them.—*Samuel Chandler, D.D., F.R. and A.S.S., 1766.*

Verses 8-19. David calls the full force of poetical imagery to aid, to describe in a becoming manner the marvels of his deliverances. He means to say that they were as manifest as the signs of heaven and earth, as sudden and powerful as the phenomena in the kingdom of nature surprise terrified mortals. *Deliverance* being his theme, he might have taken the figure from the *peaceable* phenomena of the heavens. But since man heeds heaven more in *anger* than in *blessing*, and regards God more when he descends on earth in the *storm* than in the *rainbow*, David describes the blessed condescension of God by the figure of a tempest. In order to thoroughly appreciate the beauty and truthfulness of this figure, we should endeavour to realise the full power of an Oriental storm, as it is described in Psalm 29. Solitary lightning precedes the discharge—this is meant by the *coals* in verse 8: the clouds approach the mountain summits—the *heavens bow*, as verse 9 has it; the storm shakes its pinions; enwrapped in thick clouds as in a tent, God descends to the earth; hail (not unfrequently attending Eastern storms) and lightning issue from the black clouds, through the dissolving layers of which is seen the fiery splendour which hides the Lord of nature. He speaks, and thunder is his voice; he shoots, and flashes of lightning are his arrows. At his rebuke, and at the blast of his breath the earth recedes—the sea foams up, and its beds are seen—the land bursts, and the foundations of the world are discovered. And lo! an arm of deliverance issues forth from the black clouds, and the destructive fire grasps the wretched one who had cried out from the depths, pulls him forth, and delivers him from all his enemies! Yes, the hand of the Lord has done marvellous things in the life of David. But the *eye of faith* alone could perceive in them all the hand of God. Thousands whose experiences of the delivering hand of God are not less signal than those of David, stop short at the powers of nature, and instead of bending the knee before the All-merciful God, content

themselves to express with cold hearts their admiration of the changes of the destiny of man.—*Augustus F. Tholuck, D.D., Ph.D.—1856.*

Verse 9. "He bowed the heavens also, and came down." As in a tempest the clouds come nearer to the earth, and from the mountains to the valleys, so the psalmist adopts this figure peculiar to such occasions as described God's near approach to judgment (Psalm 144:5, etc.; Hebrews 3:6); "*and darkness was under his feet.*" We have here the increase of the horrors of the tempest, and its still nearer approach, but God is not yet revealed, it is darkness under his feet. Thick darkness was the accompaniment of God's descent on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:21; Deuteronomy 4:11): and it invests his throne, to veil from us the overwhelming majesty of deity. Psalm 97:2. But this darkness, while it hides his coming judgment, bespeaks sorrow and anguish to the objects of his wrath. Luke 21:25, 26.—*W. Wilson, in loc.*

Verses 9-11:—

"He also bowed the heavens,
And thence he did descend;
And thickest clouds of darkness did
Under his feet attend.
And he upon a cherub rode,
And thereon he did fly;
Yea, on the swift wings of the wind,
His flight was from on high.
He darkness made his secret place;
About him for his tent
Dark waters were, and thickest clouds
Of the airy firmament."

Scotch Version, 1649.

Verses 9-12:—

"In his descent, bow'd heaven with earth did meet,
And gloomy darkness roll'd beneath his feet;
A golden winged cherub he bestrid,
And on the swiftly flying tempest rid.
He darkness made his secret cabinet;
Thick fogs and dropping clouds about him set;
The beams of his bright presence these expel,
Whence showers of burning coals and hailstones fell."

George Sandys, 1577-1643.

Verse 10. "*Cherub.*" The Hebrew name hath affinity with *Rechub*, a chariot, used in Psalm 104:3, almost in like sense as "*cherub*" is here; and the *cherubims* are called a chariot, 1 Chronicles 28:18; and God's angels are his chariots, Psalm 68:18, and they seem to be meant in this place; for as angels are said to fly, Daniel 9:21; so the *cherubims* had wings, Exodus 25:20, and are by the apostle called "cherubims of glory," Hebrews 9:5. In Psalm 80:2, God is said "to sit on the cherubims," as here, to ride; and "*a cherub*" may be put for many, or all the *cherubims*, as chariot for chariots, Psalm 68:18.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 10. "*Cherubs.*" The "*cherub*" with the countenances of man, the lion, the bull, and the eagle (combining in itself, as it were, the intelligence, majesty, strength, and life of nature), was a symbol of the powers of nature. When powerful elements, as in a storm, are serving God, he is said to "*ride on a cherub.*"—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 10. "*Cherub.*"—

"He on the wings of *cherub* rode sublime
On the crystalline sky."

John Milton.

Verse 10. When God comes to punish his foes and rescue his people, nothing has ever surprised his friends or foes more than the admirable swiftness with which he moves and acts: *He flies "upon the wings of the wind."*—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 10. Every circumstance that can add to the splendour of Jehovah's descent upon his enemies is thrown into the narrative by the inspired poet. It is not enough that the heavens should bend beneath him, and that clouds of darkness should be seen rolling, in terrible majesty, under his feet; cherubic legions also are the willing supporters of his throne, and swift as air, he flies "*upon the wings of the wind.*" Into this amazing scene the awful appendages of the mercy-seat are introduced; on the bending heavens, the cloudy chariot rides sublime, and the winds of heaven bear it majestically along.—*J. Morison.*

Verse 12. "*Coals of fire.*" The word signifies, living *burning coals*. Where the lightning fell, it devoured all before it, and burned whatever it touched into burning embers.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 14. "*Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them,*" etc. O that you who are now strangers to God would but consider these things! O that you would but think what this battle may be, where the combatants are so unequal! Stand still, O sun, in the valley of Ajalon, till the Lord have avenged him of his enemies! Muster yourselves, O ye stars, and fight in your courses against those miserable sinners that have waged war against their Maker; plant your mighty cannons, shoot down huge hailstones, arrows of fire, and hot thunderbolts! Oh, how do the wounded fall! How many are the slain of the Lord, multitudes in the Valley of Decision, for the day of the Lord is terrible. Behold God's enemies falling by thousands, behold the garments rolling in blood, hear the prancing of his terrible

ones, the mountains are covered with horses and chariots of fire. God's soldiers run from one place to another with their flaming swords in their hands, armed with the justice of God, jealousy, power, and indignation! Oh, the dreadful slaughter that is made! Millions, millions fall; they are not able to stand; not one of them can lift up his hand; their hearts fail them; paleness and trembling hath seized upon the stoutest of them all. The bow of the Lord is strong; from the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of the Lord turneth not back, the sword of the Almighty returns not empty. How do the mighty ones fall in this battle! A hot battle indeed, in which none escape! Who is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? He that is glorious in his apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me. For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and I will bring down their strength to the earth: the hand of the Lord shall be known, the power of the mighty Jehovah shall be felt, and his indignation toward his enemies. For behold he will come with fire and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire; for by fire and by his sword will he plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many, and the saints shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me. For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest. This shall be the portion of their cup! This it is to fight against God! This it is to defy the Lord of Hosts!—*James Janeway*.

Verse 14. "He shot out his lightnings." (Heb.) LXX *astrapus eplhyune. Falgura multiplicavit*: Vulgate, and so all the versions. He multiplied his thunderbolts; or, shot them out thick one after another; as the word properly signifies.

(Heb.) *And discomfited them*, as we render the word; or rather, as I think it should be translated, *and melted them*; namely, the heavens.—*Samuel Chandler*.

Verse 14 (last clause). It is written, "*destroyed them*," because the Holy Ghost would not so much as name, by the mouth of his prophet, the evil spirits to whom he refers.—*Euthymius Zigabenus* (1125) *quoted by J. M. Neale*.

Verse 15. "The foundations of the world were discovered;" i.e., such large and deep chasms, or apertures, were made by the violence of the earthquake, as one might almost see the very foundations, or as Jonah calls them, *the bottoms*, or rather, *the extremities of the mountains*, in the bottom of the sea. Jonah 2:6.—*Samuel Chandler*.

Verse 15. The Lord interposed with the same notoriety of his presence, as when the waters of the sea were driven back by a strong east wind, and the deep turned into dry ground (Exodus 14:21, 22), to give the Israelites a safe passage out of their thralldom, and to drown the Egyptians.—*Henry Hammond*.

Verse 16. "*He sent from above,*" etc. He "*sent*" angels, or assistance otherwise.—*Matthew Poole.*

Verse 16. *He took.*" God's grasp cannot be broken. None can pluck his chosen out of his hand.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 16. "*Drew me out of many waters.*" This hath reference to Moses' case, who was "drawn out of the water," and thereupon called *Mosheh* (Exodus 2:10); that word *Mashah* is used here by David, and nowhere else in Scripture. "*Waters,*" signify *troubles,* and sometimes multitudes of *people.*—*H. Ainsworth.*

Verse 18. "*They prevented me in the day of my calamity;*" *i.e.,* came on me suddenly, unawares, when I was unprovided and helpless, and must have destroyed me had not God upheld and supported me when I was in danger of perishing. God was to the psalmist (Heb.), *for a staff* to support him. What the staff is to one that is ready to fall, the means of recovering and preserving him; that was God to David in the time of his extremity. For he several times preserved him from Saul, when he, David, thought his destruction by him almost unavoidable. See 1 Samuel 23:26, 27.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 18. "*They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay.*" When Henry the Eighth had spoken and written bitterly against Luther; said Luther, Tell the Henries, the bishops, the Turks, and the devil himself, do what they can, we are the children of the kingdom, worshipping of the true God, whom they, and such as they, spit upon and crucified. And of the same spirit were many martyrs. Basil affirms of the primitive saints, that they had so much courage and confidence in their sufferings, that many of the heathen seeing their heroic zeal and constancy, turned Christians.—*Charles Bradbury.*

Verse 20 "*The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the clearness of my hands hath he recompensed me.*" We must stand our ground, and be stiff for ourselves against all misjudgings. It is good to be zealously affected always in a good matter, whether it respects the glory of God immediately and alone, or whether it respects the credit of our brethren or our own. To desire to be famous in the world, and as those giants in the old world (Genesis 6:4), men of renown, or, as the original text hath it, men of name, is a very great vanity; but to protect and preserve our good name is a great and necessary duty.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 21 "*I have not wickedly departed from my God;*" that is, with a purpose and resolution of heart to continue in a way of sinning; and that is the property of sincerity. A man may indeed be overtaken and surprised by a temptation, but it is not with a resolution to forsake God and to cleave unto the sin, or rest in it. He will not sleep in it, spare it, or favour it; that is, to do wickedly against God, to have a double heart and a double eye; to look upon two objects, partly at God and partly at sin; so to keep God, as to keep some sin also, as it is with all false-hearted men in the world. They look not upon God alone, let them pretend to religion never so much, yet they look not unto God alone, but upon

something else together with God; as Herod regarded John, but regarded his Herodias more; and the young man in the gospel, comes to Christ, yet he looks after his estate; and Judas followed Christ, yet looks after the bag; this is *to depart wickedly from God*.—*William Strong*, 1650.

Verse 21 (last clause). Although a godly man may break a particular commandment again and again against knowledge, yet his knowledge never suffers him to go so far as to venture knowingly to break the covenant of grace with God, and to depart from him; when he hath gone on so far in a sin as he comes to apprehend he must break with God, and lose him if he goes any further, this apprehension stays him, stops and brings him back again; he may presumptuously venture (though seldom; and always to his cost) to commit an act of sin against knowledge, because he may withal think, that by one act the covenant is not broken, nor all friendship and love hazarded between God and him, nor his interest in the state of grace, nor God, quite lost by it, though he may well think he would be displeased with him; but if he should begin to allow himself in it, and to continue to go on again and again in it, then he knows the covenant would be broken, it cannot stand with grace; and when this apprehension comes, and comes in strongly, he cannot sin against it, for this were to cast away the Lord, and to depart wickedly from him, now so he doth not. So David, though he sinned highly and presumptuously, yet says he, "*I have not departed wickedly from my God*;" that is, I have not so far departed from him as though I apprehended I should utterly lose my interest in him, yet I would go on. No; for he is my God, there lies the consideration that kept him from departing from him. So Psalm 44:17, "We have not dealt falsely in thy covenant," says the church there. Many acts of displeasing him may pass and be ventured, but if the holy soul thinks that the covenant lay at stake, that he and God must utterly part and break off, thus far he will never go.—*Thomas Goodwin*.

Verses 22, 23. An unsound soul will not take notice of such a precept as opposeth his special sin; such a precept must go for a blank, which the soul throws by, and will not think of, but as conscience now and then puts him in mind of it, whether he will or no. But it is not so with a man in whom sincerity is; that precept which doth most oppose that sin to which he is most inclined, he labours to obey as well as any other. An unsound soul sets so many of God's statutes before him, as rules to walk by, as suits with himself and the times, and no more. Such precepts as oppose his special corruptions, or displease the times, and so expose him to suffering, these he baulks and puts away, as David here saith, and calls them as the rotten Scribes and Pharisees were wont to do, "least commandments," small things not to be regarded; which rottenness Christ took up roundly in those ironical words, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, shall be called the least in the kingdom of God." Godly sincerity makes no difference of greatest and least between the precepts of God, but sets all before a man as a rule to walk by, and makes the soul laborious to observe all. "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Psalm 119:6.—*Nicholas Lockyer*, 1649.

Verse 23. "I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity." He who says, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart;" and who by the apostle in the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, is identified with Jesus Christ, says also (verse 12), "innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore mine heart faileth me;" and in the forty-first psalm, "He whose familiar friend, to whom he had committed a trust, who ate of his bread, lifted up his heel against him," whom our Lord in the thirteenth chapter of the gospel of John identifies with himself, says (verse 4), "Lord, be merciful to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned;" I am guilty "before thee." The difficulty is removed by the undoubtedly true principle—the principle which, above all others, gives Christianity its peculiar character—"He who knew no sin, was made sin;" "On his righteous servant, Jehovah made to fall the iniquities of us all." In this sense, "innumerable iniquities compassed him," the iniquities made to fall on him—made "his" as to their liabilities—by divine appointment laid hold of him. In the sense of *culpa*—blame-worthiness—he had no sin. In the sense of *reatus*—liability to the penal effects of sin—never had any one so much sin to bear as he—"He bore the sins of many."—*John Brown*.

Verse 23. "I was upright before him." Hence observe:—first, that a godly man may have his heart upright and perfect even in the imperfection of his ways. Secondly, a man that is sincere is in God's account a perfect man: sincerity is the truth of all grace, the highest pitch that is to be attained here. Thirdly, sincerity of heart gives a man boldness even in the presence of God, notwithstanding many failings. The Lord doth "charge his angels with folly," how much more man that "dwells in a house of clay"? Job 4. David, whose faith failed, and who had said, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul," and whose tongue had faltered also to Abimelech, the priest; three or four several lies he had told; yet David can say to God, that he was *perfect* with him for all that. It is a strange boldness that the saints have in the presence of God by virtue of the new covenant. All their sins shall be laid open at the last day as a cancelled bond, that they wonder how they shall look upon them and not blush; but the same spirit of sonship that shall give them perfect boldness then, doth give them boldness in a great measure even now in this life; that they shall be able to say, "Neither height nor depth," etc., nothing "shall separate us from the love of Christ."—*William Strong*.

Verse 23. "I was upright." etc. An upright Christian will not allow himself in any known sin; he dares not touch the forbidden fruit. Genesis 39:9. "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Though it be a complexion-sin, he disinherits it. There is no man but doth propend and incline more to one sin than another; as in the body there is one humour predominant, or as in the hive there is one master-bee; so in the heart there is one master-sin; there is one sin which is not only near to a man as the garment, but dear to him as the right eye. This sin is Satan's fort-royal, all his strength lies here; and though we beat down his out-works, gross sin, yet if we let him hold this fort of

complexion-sin, it is as much as he desires. The devil can hold a man as fast by this one link, as by a whole chain of vices. The fowler hath the bird fast enough by one wing. Now, an upright Christian will not indulge himself in this complexion-sin: "*I was upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity.*" An upright Christian takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through his dearest sin. Herod did many things, but there was one sin so dear to him, that he would sooner behead the prophet, than behead that sin. Herod would have a gap for his incest. An upright heart is not only angry with sin (which may admit of reconciliation), but hates sin; and if he sees this serpent creeping into his bosom, the nearer it is the more he hates it.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 23. "I kept myself." Keep himself! Who made man his own keeper! It's the Lord that is his keeper: he is the keeper of Israel, and the preserver of man. If a man cannot keep himself from sorrow, how is he able to keep himself from sin? God indeed in our first conversion works upon us as he did upon the earth, or Adam's body in paradise, before he breathed a soul into it, and made it a living creature; such a power as Christ put forth on Lazarus in his grave, for we are "dead in trespasses and sins;" but yet being living he must walk and act of himself, the Lord will have us to co-operate together with him, for we are built upon Christ, not as dead, but as "living stones." 1 Peter 2:5. The grace whereby we are made alive is his, and the power is his; and yet by his grace we do it also; *ille facit ut nos faciamus, quae praecepit* (Augustine).—*William Strong.*

Verse 23. "I kept myself from mine iniquity." It is possible to keep ourselves from such sins as David did; who professes here of himself great sincerity, that he had *kept* himself from that *iniquity* to which he was strongly tempted, and which he was prone to fall into. The method which holy David made use of gives us the first and the best direction; and that is, by constant and fervent prayer to implore the divine aid and the continual assistance of his Holy Spirit, that God would not only keep us from falling into them, but even turn our hearts from inclining to them, and help us to see our folly and our danger. For alas! we are not able of ourselves to help ourselves, not so much as to think a good thought, much less to resist an evil inclination, or a strong temptation; but "our sufficiency is of God:" "It is God (says the psalmist here), that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect:" verse 32. . . . Next, that we take care to avoid such things and decline such occasions as are most likely to snare us and gain upon us, lest one thing hook in another, and we be caught in the gin before we suspect the danger.—*Henry Dove, 1690.*

Verse 23. "Mine iniquity." A man's darling sin may change with the change of a man's condition, and some occasion that may present itself. What was Saul's and Jehu's sin before they came into the crown we know not; but surely it was wherein their lust did afterwards run out—the establishing a kingdom upon their posterity. Wantonness may be the darling of a man's youth, and worldliness the darling of his age; and a man's being raised unto honour, and having the opportunities that he had not in times past, the lust may run in another channel, he having now such an opportunity as before

he never expected.—*William Strong.*

Verse 23. "Mine iniquity." There is some particular sin to which one is more prone than to another, of which he may say by way of emphasis, 'tis "*mine iniquity,*" at which he may point with his finger, and say, "That's it." . . . There are more temptations to some sins than others, from the different professions or courses of life men take upon themselves. If they follow the court I need not tell you what temptations and snares there are to divers sins, and what danger there is of falling into them, unless your vows for virtue, and a tender regard to the honour which cometh of God only, keep you upright. If they be listed in the camp, that tempts them to rapine and violence, neglect of God's worship, and profaneness. If they exercise trading and merchandise, they meet with greater enticements to lying and cozening, over-reaching, and unjust dealing; and the mystery of some trades, as bad men manage them, is a downright "mystery of iniquity." If husbandry, to anxiety about the things of the world, a distrust of God's providence, or murmuring against it. Nay, I could wish in the most sacred profession of all there might be an exception made in this particular; but Paul tells us that even in his days "some preached Christ even of envy and strife," some for filthy lucre only, as well as "some of good will." *Philippians 1:15.—Henry Dove.*

Verse 23. "Mine iniquity." The actual reign of sin is commonly of some particular master-lust, which is as the viceroy over all the rest of the sins in the soul, and commands them all as lord paramount, and makes them all subservient and subordinate unto it; and this is according to custom, calling, constitution, abilities, relations, and according to the different administrations of the Spirit of God; for though God be not the author of sin, yet he is the orderer of sin. So that it is that way of sin and death that a man chooseth to himself, he having looked abroad upon all the contentments of the world, his own corrupt inclination doth choose unto himself to follow with greatest sweetness and contentment and delight, as that wherein the happiness of his life consists; that as in the body there is in every one some predominant humour, so there is in the body of sin also; that as the natural man, though there be all the faculties, yet some faculties are in some more lively and vigorous than in others, some are more witty, some are more strong, some quick of sight, some have a ready ear, and others a nimble tongue, etc. So it is in the old man also; there is all the power of sin in an unregenerate man, but in some more dexterous one way than another; as men in the choice of calling, some have a greater inclination to one thing than to another, so it is in the choice of contentments also: as in the appetite for food, so it is in lust, being nothing else but the appetite of the creature corrupted to some sinful object.—*William Strong.*

Verse 23. Growth in mortification. . . . Men may deceive themselves when they estimate their progress herein by having overcome such lusts as their natures are not so prone unto. The surest way is to take a judgment of it from the decay of a man's bosom-sin, even as David did estimate his uprightness by his "*keeping himself from his iniquity;*" so a man of his growth in uprightness. When

physicians would judge of a consumption of the whole, they do it not by the falling away of any part whatever, as of the flesh in the face alone, or any the like; such a particular abatement of flesh in some one part may come from some other cause; but they use to judge by the falling away of the brawn of the hands, or arms and thighs, etc., for these are the more solid parts. The like judgments do physicians make upon other diseases, and of the abatement of them from the decrease in such symptoms as are pathognomical, and proper, and peculiar to them. In like manner also the estimate of the progress of the victories of a conqueror in an enemy's kingdom is not taken from the taking or burning of a few villages or dorps, but by taking the forts and strongest holds, and by what ground he hath won upon the chief strength, and by what forces he hath cut off of the main army. Do the like in the decrease of, and victory over, your lusts.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 23. We must remember always that though the grace of God prevents us, that we may have a good will, and works in us when we have it, that so we may find success; yet in vain do we expect the continuance of his help without diligent endeavours. Whilst he assists our weakness, he does not intend to encourage our laziness, and therefore we are also "to labour, and strive according to his working, which worketh in us mightily," as the apostle expresses it, Colossians 1:29.—*Henry Dove.*

Verses 24-26. As you may see a proportion between sins and punishments which are the rewards of them, that you can say, Such a sin brought forth this affliction, it is so like the father; so you might see the like proportion between your prayers and your walking with God, and God's answers to you, and his dealings with you. So did David; "*According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me,*" etc. His speech notes some similitude or likeness; as, for example, the more by-ends or carnal desires you had in praying, and the more you mingled of these with your holy desires, and the more want of zeal, fervency, etc., were found in your prayers, the more you shall, it may be, find of bitterness mingled with the mercy, when it is granted, and so much imperfection, and want of comfort in it. So says David in this same Psalm (verses 25, 26), "*With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure.*" Pure prayers have pure "blessings; *et à contra,* "*With the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.*" And again, as you in praying sometimes slackened and grew cold, so you might see the business in like manner to cool, and cast backward; as, When Moses's hands were down, Amalek prevailed; but when they were lifted up, Israel had the better. Exodus 17:12. God let him see a proportion, which argued his prayer was the means of prevailing. A man finds in praying that his suit sometimes sticks, and goes not on as he expected; this is because he gives not so good a fee as he was wont, and doth not ply God and solicit him; but on the contrary, when he was stirred up to pray, then still he found things to go well. By this a man may clearly see that it was the prayer which God did hear and regarded. Thus, likewise, when a man sees hills and dales in a business, fair hopes often, and then all dashed again, and the thing in the end brought to pass, let him look back upon his prayers. Didst not thou in like manner just thus deal with God? when thou hadst prayed earnestly, and thought thou

hadst even carried it, then dash all again by interposing some sin, and thus again and again? Herein God would have you observe a proportion, and it may help you to discern how and when they are answered and obtained by prayer, because God deals thus with you therein in such proportion to your prayers.—*Thomas Goodwin*.

Verses 24-27. Even as the sun, which, unto eyes being sound and without disease, is very pleasant and wholesome, but unto the same eyes, when they are feeble, sore, and weak, is very troublesome and hurtful, yet the sun is ever all one and the selfsame that was before; so God, who hath ever shown himself benign and bountiful to those who are kind and tender-hearted towards his saints, and are merciful to those who show mercy. But unto the same men, when they fall into wickedness and grow to be full of beastly cruelty, the Lord showeth himself to be very wrathful and angry, and yet is one and the same immutable God from everlasting to everlasting.—*Robert Cawdray*.

Verse 25. "*With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.*" "*An upright*"—the same word is oft translated "perfect," he is good throughout, though not thoroughly; not one that personates religion, but that is a religious person. He is perfect, because he would be so. So Noah is termed (Genesis 6:9); "Noah was a just man and perfect (*i.e.*, upright) in his generation:" he was a good man in a bad age. He was like a glowing spark of fire in a sea of water, which is perfect goodness; and therefore the Holy Ghost doth so hang upon his name, as if he could not give over—it is an excellent preacher's observation—verse 8, "But Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah: Noah begat three sons." Noah, Noah, Noah, I love the sound of thy name; and so are all your names precious to God, though hated by men, if the name of God be dear and sweet to you. 'Tis also sometimes translated "plain." Genesis 25:27. Jacob was (Hebrew), "a plain," that is, an upright man, "dwelling in tents." Esau was "a *cunning* hunter," but Jacob was a plain man without welt or gard; you might well know his heart by his tongue, save once when Rebekah put a cunning trick into his head, otherwise he was a most "*upright*," downright man. And the plain meaning of it is, a simple, cordial, unfeigned, and exact man: this is the man we are looking for.

"*Man*." This substantivise the Hebrews use to drown in the adjective, but here the Holy Ghost exhibits a word, and a choice one too, signifying a *strong, valiant man*; the same word (Psalm 45:3), "O mighty man!" that's meant of our Lord Christ, who was a most strong and valiant man, that could meet the wrath of God, the malice of the devil, and the sin of man, in the face, and come off with triumph. And so the Dutch translate this clause in 2 Samuel 22.: "With the right valiant person, thou behavest thyself upright." In short, if the words were literally translated, they run thus:—*a man of uprightness*: that is, every way you behold him, an upright man: like an even die, cast him which way you will he will be found square and right; a stiff and strong man to tread down both lusts within and

temptations without; an *Athanasius contra mundum*, a *Luther contra Roman*; this is a man of an excellent spirit, and such is our upright man. "*Thou wilt shew thyself upright*," or, "wilt be upright with him;" for one word in the Hebrew makes all these six, "Thou wilt *upright* it with him." If men will deal plainly with God, he will deal plainly with them. He that is upright in performing his duty shall find God upright in performing his promises. It is God's way to carry to men as they carry to him. If thou hast a design to please him, he will have a design to please thee; if thou wilt echo to him when he calls, he'll echo to thee when thou callest. On the other side; if a man will wrestle with God, he will wrestle with him; if thou wilt be fast and loose with him, and walk *frowardly* towards him, thou shalt have as good as thou bringest; if thou wilt provoke him with never-ending sins, he will pursue thee with never-ending torments; if thou wilt sin in *tuo eterno*, thou must suffer in *suo eterno*, and every man shall find like for like. . . . An *upright* heart is *single without division*. Unto an hypocrite there be "gods many and lords many," and he must have an heart for each; but to the *upright* there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, and one heart will serve them both. He that fixes his heart upon the creatures, for every creature he must have an heart, and the dividing of his heart destroys him. Hosea 10:2. Worldly profits knock at the door, he must have an heart for them; carnal pleasures present themselves, he must have an heart for them also; sinful preferments appear, they must have an heart too—*Necessariorum numerus parvus, opinionum nullus*; of necessary objects the number is few, of needless vanities the number is endless. The *upright* man hath made choice of God and hath enough.—*Richard Steele*.

Verse 25. "With the merciful," etc. In Jupiter's hall-floor there are set two barrels of gifts, the one of good gifts or blessings, the other of evil gifts or plagues. Thus spake Homer falsely of Jupiter; it may truly be spoken of the true God, Jehovah; that he hath in his hand two cups, the one of comforts, the other of crosses, which he poureth out indifferently for the good and for the bad; "*with the kind (or merciful) he will shew himself kind, and with the froward, froward.*" Now this is not to make God the author of evil, but of justice, which is good; *qrorum deus non est author eorum est justus ultor*, saith Augustine; "God is not the author of sin, but he punisheth the sinner justly."—*Miles Smith (Bishop)*, 1632.

Verse 26. "With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure," etc. But doth the Lord take colour from every one he meets, or change his temper as the company changes? That's the weakness of sinful man: he cannot do so with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of changing. God is pure and upright with the unclean and hypocritical, as well as with the pure and upright, and his actions show him to be so. God shows himself froward with the froward when he deals with him as he hath said he will deal with the froward—deny them and reject them. God shows himself pure with the pure, when he deals with them as he hath said he will—hear them and accept them. Though there be nothing in purity and sincerity which deserveth mercy, yet we cannot expect mercy without them. Our comforts are not

grounded upon our graces, but our comforts are the fruits or consequences of our graces.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 26. "The froward one." Here, as in the first promise, the two combatants stand contrasted—the seed of the woman and the serpent—the benignantly bountiful, perfect, pure One, and the froward one, whose works he came to destroy, and who made it his great business to circumvent him whom he feared. The literal meaning of the word is "tortuous," or "crooked," and both the ideas of perversity and cunning which the figure naturally suggests, are very applicable to "that old serpent the devil." From the concluding part of the sentence, I think there is no doubt that it is the latter idea that is intended to be conveyed. God cannot deal perversely with any one; but he outwits the wise, and takes the cunning in their own craftiness.—*John Brown*.

Verse 26. "With the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward." The Hebrew word in the root signifieth to wrest or writhe a thing, or to wrest or turn a thing, as wrestlers do their bodies. Hence by a trope, it is translated often to wrestle, because a cunning man in wrestling, turneth and windeth his body, and works himself in and out every way, to get an advantage of his adversary any way; therefore your cunning-headed men, your crafty men, are fitly presented under this word; they are like wrestlers who turn and wind themselves in and out, and lie for all advantages; or as we speak, they "lie at catch." A man knows not where to have them, or what they mean when they speak plainest, or swear solemnest; when we think we see their faces, we see but their vizards; all their promises and performances too are under a disguise. . . . And this word is applied to the Lord himself, "*With the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward;*" that is, if men will be winding and turning, and thinking to catch others, or over-reach the Lord himself with tricks and turnings of wit, the Lord will meet and answer them in their own kind; he can turn as fast as they, he can put himself into such intricate labyrinths of infinite wisdom and sacred craft, as shall entangle and ensnare the most cunning wrestler or tumbler of them all. He will Cretize the Cretians, supplant the supplanters of his people.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 26. "Wilt shew thyself froward." It is a similitude taken from wrestlers, and noteth a writhing of one's self against an adversary. Compare herewith Deuteronomy 32:5. "They are a perverse and a crooked generation," the same two words that are here in this text; the latter importeth that they wriggled and writhed after the manner of wrestlers that wave up and down, and wind the other way, when one thinks to have him here or there. But all will not serve their turn to save them from punishment. God will be sure to meet with them, his Word will lay hold on them, and their sins shall find them out.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 27. "The afflicted people." The word rendered "*afflicted*," properly signifies "poor," or "needy." The persons spoken of are obviously afflicted ones, for they need to be saved or delivered; but it is not their affliction, so much as their poverty, that is indicated by the epithet here given them; and,

from the poor being contrasted, not with the wealthy, but with the proud—for that is the meaning of the figurative expression, "the man of high looks"—it seems plain that, though the great body of the class referred to have always been found among the comparatively "poor in this world," the reference is to those poor ones whom our Lord represents as "poor in spirit."—*John Brown*.

Verse 27. "High looks:" namely, the *proud*; the raising up of the eyebrows being a natural sign of that vice. Psalm 101:5; Proverbs 6:17.—*John Diodati*.

Verse 28. "For thou wilt light my candle," etc. The psalmist speaks in this place of artificial light; "a candle," or "lamp;" which has been supposed to be illustrated by the custom prevailing in Egypt of never suffering their houses to be without lights, but burning lamps even throughout the night, so that the poorest people would rather retrench part of their food than neglect it. Supposing this to have been the ancient custom, not only in Egypt, but in the neighbouring countries of Arabia and Judaea, "the lighting of the lamp" in this passage may have had a special allusion. In the parallel passage, 2 Samuel 22:29, Jehovah is figuratively styled the "lamp" of the psalmist, as above.—*Richard Mant*.

Verse 28 (first clause). "Thou also shalt"—when none else can. And notice, too, how here, and often elsewhere, the psalmist begins with speaking *of* God, and ends with speaking *to* him. So the bride in the Canticles, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of *his* mouth, for *thy* love is better than wine."—*Dionysius the Carthusian* (1471), *quoted by J. M. Neale*.

Verse 29. "By thee have I run through a troop," etc. David ascribes his victories to God, declaring that, under his conduct, he *had broken through the wedges or phalanxes* of his enemies, and had taken by storm their fortified cities. Thus we see that, although he was a valiant warrior, and skilled in arms, he arrogates nothing to himself.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 29. "By my God have I leaped over a wall;" or, "taken a fort."—*Henry Hammond*.

Verse 29. "Leaped over a wall." This probably refers to his having taken some remarkable town by scaling the ramparts.—*John Kitto, in "The Pictorial Bible."*

Verse 31. "For who is God save the Lord?" Here first in the Psalms, occurs the name *Eloah*, rendered *God*. It occurs more than *fifty* times in the Scriptures, but only *four* times in the Psalms. It is the singular of *Elohim*. Many have supposed that this name specially refers to God as an object of religious worship. That idea may well be prominent in this place.—*William S. Plumer*

Verse 32. "It is God that girdeth me with strength." One of the few articles of Eastern dress which I wore in the East, was the *girdle*, which was of great use as a support to the body in the long and weary camel-rides through the Desert. The support and *strengthening* I received in this way, gave me a clearer idea than I had before of the meaning of the psalmist.—*John Anderson, in "Bible Light from Bible Lands,"* 1856.

Verse 33. "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places:" that is, he doth give swiftness and speed to his church; as Augustine interpreteth it, *transcendendo spinosa, et*

umbrosa implacamenta hujus saeculi, passing lightly through the thorny and shady incumbrances of this world. "He will make me walk upon my high places." David saith, "He setteth me upon high places." For, consider David, as he then was, when he composed this Psalm, it was at the time when God had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. For then God set his feet on high places, setting his kingdom, and establishing him in the place of Saul.—*Edward Marbury*.

Verse 33. "*He maketh my feet like hinds' feet:*" (Heb. words). Celerity of motion was considered as one of the qualities of an ancient hero. Achilles is celebrated for being *podas wkus*. Virgil's Nisus is hyperbolically described, "*Et ventis et fulminis ocior alis;*" and the men of God, who came to David, "Men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler," are said to have had "faces like the faces of lions," and to have been "as swift as the roes upon the mountains." 1 Chronicles 12:8. Asahel is described as "light of foot as a wild roe" (2 Samuel 2:18); and Saul seems called the *roe* (in the English translation, "the beauty) of Israel." 2 Samuel 1:19. It has been said that the legs of the hind are straighter than those of the buck, and that *she* is swifter than *he* is; but there is no sufficient proof of this. Gataker gives the true account of it when he says, "The female formula is often used for the species." This is not uncommon in Hebrew. The female ass obviously stands for the ass species. Genesis 12:16; Job 1:3; 42:12. Some (at the head of whom is Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, P. i. L. ii. c. 17), have supposed the reference to be to the peculiar hardness of the hoof of the roe, which enables it to walk firmly, without danger of falling, on the roughest and rockiest places. Virgil calls the hind "*aeri-pedem,*" brass-footed. Others suppose the reference to be to its agility and celerity. There is nothing to prevent our supposing that there is reference to both these distinguishing qualities of the hind's feet.—*John Brown*.

Verse 33. *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,*" etc. *He maketh me able to stand on the sides of mountains and rocks*, which were anciently used as fastnesses in time of war. The feet of the sheep, the goat, and the hart are particularly adapted to standing in such places. Mr. Merrick has here very appositely cited the following passage from Xenophon; *Lib. de Venatione: Epiokupein dei econta tus kunas tas men en oredi edtwdas 'lafouz)* See also Psalm 104:18, where the same property of standing on the rocks and steep cliffs, is attributed to the wild goat.—*Stephen Street, M.A., in loc., 1790.*

Verse 34. "*He teacheth my hands to war,*" etc. To him I owe all that military skill, or strength, or courage, which I have. My strength is sufficient, not only to bend "*a bow of steel,*" but to *break* it.—*Matthew Poole*.

Verse 34. "*Steel.*" The word so rendered in the authorised version, properly means "copper" (Heb.) It is doubtful if the Hebrews were acquainted with the process of hardening iron into steel, for though the "northern iron" of Jeremiah 15:12, has been supposed by some to be steel, this is by no means

certain; it may have only been a superior sort of iron.—*William Lindsay Alexander, in "Kitto's Cyclopaedia."*

Verse 34. The drawing of a mighty bow was a mark of great slaughter and skill.

"So the great master drew the mighty bow,
And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
The bending horns, and one the string essay'd."

Alexander Pope, 1688-1744 Translation of Homer.

Verses 37, 38:—

Oh, I have seen the day,
When with a single word,
God helping me to say,
"My trust is in the Lord;"
My soul has quelled a thousand foes,
Fearless of all that could oppose.

William Cowper, 1731-1800.

Verse 38. "*I have wounded them,*" etc. Greater is he that is in us than he that is against us, and God shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. Romans 15:20.—*W. Wilson*

Verses 38-40. Though passion possess our bodies, let "patience possess our souls." The law of our profession binds us to a warfare; *patiendo vincimus*, our troubles shall end, our victory is eternal. Hear David's triumph, "*I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies,*" etc. They have wounds for their wounds; and the treaders down of the poor are trodden down by the poor. The Lord will subdue those to us that would have subdued us to themselves; and though for a short time they rode over our heads, yet now at last we shall everlastingly tread upon their necks. Lo, then, the reward of humble patience and confident hope!—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 39. To be well girt was to be well armed in the Greek and Latin idioms, as well as in the Hebrew.—*Alexander Geddes, LL.D., 1737-1802.*

Verse 41. "*They shall cry, but there shall be none to help them,*" etc. Sad examples enough there are of the truth of this prophecy. Of Esau it is written that he "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Hebrews 12:17. Of Antiochus, though he vowed in his last illness, "that also he would become a Jew himself, and go through all the world that was inhabited, and declare the power of God, yet," continues the historian, "for all this his pains would not cease, for the just judgment of God was come upon him." 2 Maccabees 9:17, 18. But most appropriately to this passage, it is written of Saul, "When he enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by

dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." 1 Samuel 28:6. And therefore, the prophet warns us: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains (Jeremiah 13:16): as Saul's feet, indeed stumbled on the dark mountains of Gilboa. *"Even unto the Lord shall they cry:"* but not, as it has been well remarked, by a Mediator: and so, crying to him in their own name, and by their own merits, they cry in vain.—*John Lorinus* (1569-1634), and *Remigus* (900), *quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 41. "Even unto the Lord." As nature prompteth men in an extremity to look up for help; but because it is but the prayer of the flesh for ease, and not of the Spirit for grace, and a good use of calamities, and not but in extreme despair of help elsewhere, therefore God hears them not. In Samuel it is, "They looked, but there was none to save them," *q.d.*, If they could have made any other shift, God should never have heard of them.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 42. "I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets," or rather "of the streets." In the East, all household refuse and filth is cast forth into the streets, where all of it that is at all edible is soon cleared away by birds and dogs, and all that is not is speedily dried up by the sun. To cast forth any one, therefore, as the dirt of the streets, is a strong image of contempt and rejection.—*John Kitto.*

Verses 43, 44. If these words can be explained literally of David, they apply much more naturally to Jesus Christ, who has been delivered from the strivings of the Jewish people; when, after the terrible opposition he met with on their part, to the establishment of the gospel, he was made the head of the Gentiles who were a strange people, and whom he had not formerly acknowledged as his, but who nevertheless obeyed him with astonishing readiness as soon as they heard his voice.—*Louis Isaac le Maistre de Sacy*, 1613-1684.

Verse 45. The first clause is comparatively easy. *"The strangers shall fade away"*—"shall gradually wither and disappear;" but the second clause is very difficult, *"They shall be afraid out of their close places."* One Jewish scholar interprets it, "They shall fear for the prisons in which I will throw them and keep them confined." (Jarchi). Another, "They shall tremble in their castles to which they have betaken themselves for fear of me." Another (Abenezra), "They shall surrender themselves from their fortresses." The general meaning is plain enough. The class referred to are represented as reduced to a state of complete helpless subjugation. As to the event referred to, if we keep to the rendering of our translators the meaning may be, "The Pagans, retired now generally to villages and remote places, shall gradually dwindle away, and fearfully anticipate the complete extinction of their religion." This exactly accords with history. If with some interpreters we read, "The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid because of their prisons," then the meaning may be, "that they who only feigned submission, when persecution for the word should arise should openly apostatise." This, too, would be found consonant with fact. The first of these interpretations seems the more probable.—*John Brown.*

Verse 46. *"The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."* Let us unite our hearts in this song for a close of our praises. Honours *die*, pleasures *die*, the world *dies*; but *"The Lord liveth."* My flesh is as *sand*; my fleshly life, strength, glory, is as *a word written on sand*; but *"blessed be my ROCK."* Those are for a moment; this stands for ever. The curse shall devour those; everlasting blessings on the head of this. Let outward salvations vanish; let the saved be crucified; let the *"God"* of our salvations *"be exalted."* This Lord is *my rock*; this God is *my salvation*.—Peter Sterry, 1649.

Verse 46. *"The Lord liveth."* Why do you not oppose one God to all the armies of evils that beset you round? why do you not take the more content in God when you have the less of the creature to take content in? why do you not boast in your God? and bear up yourselves big with your hopes in God and expectations from him? Do you not see young heirs to great estates act and spend accordingly? And, why shall you, being the King of heaven's son, be lean and ragged from day to day, as though you were not worth a groat? O sirs, live upon your portion, chide yourselves for living besides what you have. There are great and precious promises, rich, enriching mercies; you may make use of God's all-sufficiency; you can blame none but yourselves if you be defective or discouraged. A woman, truly godly for the main, having buried a child, and sitting alone in sadness, did yet bear up her heart with the expression, "God lives;" and having parted with another, still she redoubled, "Comforts die, but God lives." At last her dear husband dies, and she sat oppressed and most overwhelmed with sorrow. A little child she had yet surviving, having observed what before she spoke to comfort herself, comes to her and saith, "Is God dead, mother? is God dead?" This reached her heart, and by God's blessing recovered her former confidence in her God, who is a *living* God. Thus do you chide yourselves; ask your fainting spirits under pressing outward sorrows, is not God alive? and why then doth not thy soul revive? why doth thy heart die within thee when comforts die! Cannot a living God support thy dying hopes? Thus, Christians, argue down your discouraged and disquieted spirits as David did.—Oliver Heywood's *"Sure Mercies of David,"* 1672.

Verse 47. *"It is God."* Sir, this is none other than the hand of God; and to him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him. The General served you with all faithfulness and honour; and the best commendation I can give him is that I dare say he attributes all to God, and would rather perish than assume to himself.—Written to the Speaker of the House of Commons, after the battle of Naseby, June 14, 1645, by OLIVER CROMWELL.

Verse 49. I admire King David a great deal more when I see him in the quire than when I see him in the camp; when I see him singing as the sweet singer of Israel, than when I see him fighting as the worthy warrior of Israel. For fighting with others he did overcome all others; but singing, and delighting himself, he did overcome himself.—Thomas Playfere.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Love's resolve, love's logic, love's trials, love's victories.

James Hervey has two sermons upon "Love to God" from this text.

Verse 2. The many excellences of Jehovah to his people.

Verse 2. God the all-sufficient portion of his people.—*C. Simeon's Works*, Vol. 5, Page 85.

Verse 3. Prayer resolved upon; praise rendered; result anticipated.

Verses 4-6. Graphic picture of a distressed soul, and its resorts in the hour of extremity.

Verse 5 (*first clause*). The condition of a soul convinced of sin.

Verse 5 (*second clause*). The way in which snares and temptations are, by Satanic craft, arranged so as to forestall or prevent us.

Verse 6. The time, the manner, the hearing, and the answering of prayer.

Verse 7. The quaking of all things in the presence of an angry God.

Verse 10. Celestial and terrestrial agencies subservient to the divine purposes.

Verse 11. The darkness in which Jehovah hides, Why? When? What then? etc.

Verse 13. "*Hailstones and coals of fire.*" The terrific in its relation to Jehovah.

Verse 16. The Christian, like Moses, "one taken out of the water." The whole verse a noble subject; may be illustrated by life of Moses.

Verse 17. The saint's paean of victory over Satan, and all other foes.

Verse 17 (*last clause*). Singular but sound reason for expecting divine help.

Verse 18. The enemy's "craft," "*They prevented me in the day of my calamity.*" The enemy chained. "*But the Lord was my stay.*"

Verse 19. The reason of grace, and the position in which it places its chosen ones.

Verse 21. Integrity of life, its measure, source, benefit, and dangers.

Verse 22. The need of considering sacred things, and the wickedness of carelessly neglecting them.

Verse 23. The upright heart and its darling sin. *W. Strong's Sermons*.

Verse 23. *Peccata in deliciis*; a discourse of bosom sins. *P. Newcome*.

Verse 23. The sure trial of uprightness. *Dr. Bates*.

Verse 25. Equity of the divine procedure.—*C. Simeon*.

Verse 26. Echoes, in providence, grace, and judgment.

Verse 27. Consolation for the humble, and desolation for the proud.

Verse 27 (*second clause*). The bringing down of high looks. In a way of grace and justice. Among saints and sinner, etc. A wide theme.

Verse 28. A comfortable hope for an uncomfortable state.

Verse 29. Believing exploits recounted. Variety, difficulty in themselves, ease in performance, completeness, impunity, and dependance upon divine working.

Verse 30. God's way, word, and warfare.

Verse 31. A challenge.

I. To the *gods*. World, pleasure, etc. Which among these deserve the name?

II. To the *rocks*, self-confidence, superstition, etc. On which can we trust?

Verses 32-34. Trying positions, gracious adaptations, graceful accomplishments, secure abidings, grateful acknowledgment.

Verse 35. "*The shield of thy salvation.*" What is it? Faith. Whence it comes? "Thou hast given." What it secures? "Salvation." Who have received it?

Verse 35. See Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 683. "Divine Gentleness Acknowledged."

Verse 36. Divine benevolence in the arranging of our lot.

Verse 39. The Red Cross Knight armed for the fray.

Verse 41. Unavailing prayers—on earth and in hell.

Verse 42. The sure overthrow, final shame, and ruin of evil.

Verse 43 (*last clause*). Our natural and sinful distance from Christ, no bar to grace.

Verse 44. Rapid advances of the gospel in some places, slow progress in others. Solemn considerations.

Verse 46. The living God, and how to bless and exalt him.

Verse 50. The greatness of salvation, "*great deliverances;*" its channel, "*the King;*" and its perpetuity, "*for evermore.*"

WORKS UPON THE EIGHTEENTH PSALM

There is "An Exposition" of this Psalm in "*A Critical History of the Life of David.* By SAMUEL CHANDLER, D.D., F.R., and A.S.S.," 1766. 2 vol., 8vo.

The Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah: an Exposition of Psalm XVIII., and Isaiah 52:13; 53:12. By JOHN BROWN, D.D., 1853.

Psalm 19

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

SUBJECT. *It would be idle to enquire into the particular period when this delightful poem was composed, for there is nothing in its title or subject to assist us in the enquiry. The heading, "To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David," informs us that David wrote it, and that it was committed to the*

Master of the service of song in the sanctuary for the use of the assembled worshippers. In his earliest days the psalmist, while keeping his father's flock, had devoted himself to the study of God's two great books—nature and Scripture; and he had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of these two only volumes in his library that he was able with a devout criticism to compare and contrast them, magnifying the excellency of the Author as seen in both. How foolish and wicked are those who instead of accepting the two sacred tomes, and delighting to behold the same divine hand in each, spend all their wits in endeavouring to find discrepancies and contradictions. We may rest assured that the true "Vestiges of Creation" will never contradict Genesis, nor will a correct "Cosmos" be found at variance with the narrative of Moses. He is wisest who reads both the world-book, and the Word-book as two volumes of the same work, and feels concerning them, "My Father wrote them both."

DIVISION. This song very distinctly divides itself into three parts, very well described by the translators in the ordinary heading of our version. The creatures show God's glory, 1-6. The word showeth his grace, 7-11. David prayeth for grace, 12-14. Thus praise and prayer are mingled, and he who here sings the work of God in the world without, pleads for a work of grace in himself within.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *"The heavens declare the glory of God."* The book of nature has three leaves, heaven, earth, and sea, of which heaven is the first and the most glorious, and by its aid we are able to see the beauties of the other two. Any book without its first page would be sadly imperfect, and especially the great Natural Bible, since its first pages, the sun, moon, and stars, supply light to the rest of the volume, and are thus the keys, without which the writing which follows would be dark and undiscerned. Man walking erect was evidently made to scan the skies, and he who begins to read creation by studying the stars begins the book at the right place.

The *heavens* are plural for their variety, comprising the watery heavens with their clouds of countless forms, the aerial heavens with their calms and tempests, the solar heavens with all the glories of the day, and the starry heavens with all the marvels of the night; what the Heaven of heavens must be hath not entered into the heart of man, but there in chief all things are telling the glory of God. Any part of creation has more instruction in it than human mind will ever exhaust, but the celestial realm is peculiarly rich in spiritual lore. The heavens *declare*, or are *declaring*, for the continuance of their testimony is intended by the participles employed; every moment God's existence, power, wisdom and goodness, are being sounded abroad by the heavenly heralds which shine upon us from above. He who would guess at divine sublimity should gaze upward into the starry vault; he who would imagine infinity must peer into the boundless expanse; he who desires to see divine wisdom should consider the balancing of the orbs; he who would know divine fidelity must

mark the regularity of the planetary motions; and he who would attain some conceptions of divine power, greatness, and majesty, must estimate the forces of attraction, the magnitude of the fixed stars, and the brightness of the whole celestial train. It is not merely glory that the heavens declare, but the "*glory of God*," for they deliver to us such unanswerable arguments for a conscious, intelligent, planning, controlling, and presiding Creator, that no unprejudiced person can remain unconvinced by them. The testimony given by the heavens is no mere hint, but a plain, unmistakable declaration; and it is a declaration of the most constant and abiding kind. Yet for all this, to what avail is the loudest declaration to a deaf man, or the clearest showing to one spiritually blind? God the Holy Ghost must illuminate us, or all the suns in the milky way never will.

"*The firmament sheweth his handy-work*;" not *handy* in the vulgar use of that term, but hand-work. The expanse is full of the works of the Lord's skilful, creating hands; hands being attributed to the great creating Spirit to set forth his care and workmanlike action, and to meet the poor comprehension of mortals. It is humbling to find that even when the most devout and elevated minds are desirous to express their loftiest thoughts of God, they must use words and metaphors drawn from the earth. We are children, and must each confess, "I think as a child, I speak as a child." In the expanse above us God flies, as it were, his starry flag to show that the King is at home, and hangs out his escutcheon that atheists may see how he despises their denunciations of him. He who looks up to the firmament and then writes himself down an atheist, brands himself at the same moment as an idiot or a liar. Strange is it that some who love God are yet afraid to study the God-declaring book of nature; the mock-spirituality of some believers, who are too heavenly to consider the heavens, has given colour to the vaunts of infidels that nature contradicts revelation. The wisest of men are those who with pious eagerness trace the goings forth of Jehovah as well in creation as in grace; only the foolish have any fears lest the honest study of the one should injure our faith in the other. Dr. M'Cosh has well said, "We have often mourned over the attempts made to set the works of God against the Word of God, and thereby excite, propagate, and perpetuate jealousies fitted to separate parties that ought to live in closest union. In particular, we have always regretted that endeavours should have been made to depreciate nature with a view of exalting revelation; it has always appeared to us to be nothing else than the degrading of one part of God's work in the hope thereby of exalting and recommending another. Let not science and religion be reckoned as opposing citadels, frowning defiance upon each other, and their troops brandishing their armour in hostile attitude. They have too many common foes, if they would but think of it, in ignorance and prejudice, in passion and vice, under all their forms, to admit of their lawfully wasting their strength in a useless warfare with each other. Science has a foundation, and so has religion; let them unite their foundations, and the basis will be broader, and they will be two compartments of one great fabric reared to the glory of God. Let one be the outer and the other the inner court. In the one, let all look,

and admire and adore; and in the other, let those who have faith kneel, and pray, and praise. Let the one be the sanctuary where human learning may present its richest incense as an offering to God, and the other the holiest of all, separated from it by a veil now rent in twain, and in which, on a blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, we pour out the love of a reconciled heart, and hear the oracles of the living God."

Verse 2. *"Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."* As if one day took up the story where the other left it, and each night passed over the wondrous tale to the next. The original has in it the thought of pouring out or welling over, with speech; as though days and nights were but as a fountain flowing evermore with Jehovah's praise. Oh to drink often at the celestial well, and learn to utter the glory of God! The witnesses above cannot be slain or silenced; from their elevated seats they constantly preach the knowledge of God, unawed and unbiased by the judgment of men. Even the changes of alternating night and day are mutely eloquent, and light and shade equally reveal the Invisible One; let the vicissitudes of our circumstances do the same, and while we bless the God of our days of joy, let us also extol him who giveth "songs in the night."

The lesson of day and night is one which it were well if all men learned. It should be among our day-thoughts and night-thoughts, to remember the flight of time, the changeful character of earthly things, the brevity both of joy and sorrow, the preciousness of life, our utter powerlessness to recall the hours once flown, and the irresistible approach of eternity. Day bids us labour, night reminds us to prepare for our last hime; day bids us work for God, and night invites us to rest in him; day bids us look for endless day, and night warns us to escape from everlasting night.

Verse 3. *"There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard."* Every man may hear the voices of the stars. Many are the languages of terrestrials, to celestials there is but one, and that one may be understood by every willing mind. The lowest heathen are without excuse, if they do not discover the invisible things of God in the works which he has made. Sun, moon, and stars are God's traveling preachers; they are apostles upon their journey confirming those who regard the Lord, and judges on circuit condemning those who worship idols.

The margin gives us another rendering, which is more literal, and involves less repetition; *"no speech, no words, their voice is not heard;"* that is to say, their teaching is not addressed to the ear, and is not uttered in articulate sounds; it is pictorial, and directed to the eye and heart; it touches not the sense by which faith comes, for faith cometh by hearing. Jesus Christ is called the Word, for he is a far more distinct display of Godhead than all the heavens can afford; they are, after all, but dumb instructors; neither star nor sun can arrive at a word, but Jesus is the express image of Jehovah's person, and his name is the Word of God.

Verse 4. *"Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."* Although the heavenly bodies move in solemn silence, yet in reason's ear they utter precious

teachings. They give forth no literal *words*, but yet their instruction is clear enough to be so described. Horne says that the phrase employed indicates a language of signs, and thus we are told that the heavens speak by their significant actions and operations. Nature's words are like those of the deaf and dumb, but grace tells us plainly of the Father. By their line is probably meant the *measure* of their domain which, together with their testimony, has gone out to the utmost end of the habitable earth. No man living beneath the copes of heaven dwells beyond the bounds of the diocese of God's Court-preachers; it is easy to escape from the light of ministers, who are as stars in the right hand of the Son of Man; but even then men, with a conscience yet unseared, will find a Nathan to accuse them, a Jonah to warn them, and an Elijah to threaten them in the silent stars of night. To gracious souls the voices of the heavens are more influential far, they feel the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and are drawn towards their Father God by the bright bands of Orion.

"In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun." In the heavens the sun encamps, and marches like a mighty monarch on his glorious way. He has no fixed abode, but as a traveler pitches and removes his tent, a tent which will soon be taken down and rolled together as a scroll. As the royal pavilion stood in the centre of the host, so the sun in his place appears like a king in the midst of attendant stars.

Verse 5. *"Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber."* A bridegroom comes forth sumptuously apparelled, his face beaming with a joy which he imparts to all around; such, but with a mighty emphasis, is the rising Sun. *"And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."* As a champion girt for running cheerfully addresses himself to the race, so does the sun speed onward with matchless regularity and unwearying swiftness in his appointed orbit. It is but mere play to him; there are no signs of effort, flagging, or exhaustion. No other creature yields such joy to the earth as her bridegroom the sun; and none, whether they be horse or eagle, can for an instant compare in swiftness with that heavenly champion. But all his glory is but the glory of God; even the sun shines in light borrowed from the Great Father of Lights.

"Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge Him thy greater; sound his praise
Both when thou climb'st, and when high noon hast gained,
And when thou fall'st."

Verse 6. *"His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it."* He bears his light to the boundaries of the solar heavens, traversing the zodiac with steady motion, denying his light to none who dwell within his range. *"And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."* Above, beneath, around, the heat of the sun exercises an influence. The bowels of the earth are stored with the ancient produce of the solar rays, and even yet earth's inmost caverns feel their power. Where light is shut out, yet heat and other more subtle influences find their way.

There is no doubt a parallel intended to be drawn between the heaven of grace and the heaven of nature. God's way of grace is sublime and broad, and full of his glory; in all its displays it is to be admired and studied with diligence; both its lights and its shades are instructive; it has been proclaimed, in a measure, to every people, and in due time shall be yet more completely published to the ends of the earth. Jesus, like a sun, dwells in the midst of revelation, tabernacling among men in all his brightness; rejoicing, as the Bridegroom of his church, to reveal himself to men; and, like a champion, to win unto himself renown. *He* makes a circuit of mercy, blessing the remotest corners of the earth; and there are no seeking souls, however degraded and depraved, who shall be denied the comfortable warmth and benediction of his love—even death shall feel the power of his presence, and resign the bodies of the saints, and this fallen earth shall be restored to its pristine glory.

In the three following verses (7, 8, 9) we have a brief but instructive hexapla containing six descriptive titles of the word, six characteristic qualities mentioned and six divine effects declared. Names, nature, and effect are well set forth.

Verse 7. "*The law of the Lord is perfect;*" by which he means not merely the law of Moses but the doctrine of God, the whole run and rule of sacred Writ. The doctrine revealed by God he declares to be perfect, and yet David had but a very small part of the Scriptures, and if a fragment, and that the darkest and most historical portion, be perfect, what must the entire volume be? How more than perfect is the book which contains the clearest possible display of divine love, and gives us an open vision of redeeming grace. The gospel is a complete scheme or law of gracious salvation, presenting to the needy sinner everything that his terrible necessities can possibly demand. There are no redundancies and no omissions in the Word of God, and in the plan of grace; why then do men try to paint this lily and gild this refined gold? The gospel is perfect in all its parts, and perfect as a whole: it is a crime to add to it, treason to alter it, and felony to take from it.

"*Converting the soul.*" Making the man to be returned or restored to the place from which sin had cast him. The practical effect of the Word of God is to turn the man to himself, to his God, and to holiness; and the turn or conversion is not outward alone, "*the soul*" is moved and renewed. The great means of the conversion of sinners is the Word of God, and the more closely we keep to it in our ministry the more likely we are to be successful. It is God's Word rather than man's comment on God's Word which is made mighty with souls. When the law drives and the gospel draws, the action is different but the end is one, for by God's Spirit the soul is made to yield, and cries, "Turn me, and I shall be turned." Try men's depraved nature with philosophy and reasoning, and it laughs your efforts to scorn, but the Word of God soon works a transformation.

"*The testimony of the Lord is sure.*" God bears his testimony against sin, and on behalf of righteousness; he testifies of our fall and of our restoration; this testimony is plain, decided, and infallible, and is to be accepted as sure. God's witness in his Word is so sure that we may draw solid

comfort from it both for time and eternity, and so sure that no attacks made upon it however fierce or subtle can ever weaken its force. What a blessing that in a world of uncertainties we have something sure to rest upon! We hasten from the quicksands of human speculations to the *terra firma* of Divine Revelation.

"Making wise the simple." Humble, candid, teachable minds receive the word, and are made wise unto salvation. Things hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. The persuadable grow wise, but the cavillers continue fools. As a law or plan the Word of God converts, and then as a testimony it instructs; it is not enough for us to be converts, we must continue to be disciples; and if we have felt the power of truth, we must go on to prove its certainty by experience. The perfection of the gospel converts, but its sureness edifies; if we would be edified it becomes us not to stagger at the promise through unbelief, for a doubted gospel cannot make us wise, but truth of which we are assured will be our establishment.

Verse 8. *"The statutes of the Lord are right."* His precepts and decrees are founded in righteousness, and are such as are right or fitted to the right reason of man. As a physician gives the right medicine, and a counsellor the right advice, so does the Book of God. *"Rejoicing the heart."* Mark the progress; he who was converted was next made wise and is now made happy; that truth which makes the heart right then gives joy to the right heart. Free-grace brings heart-joy. Earthborn mirth dwells on the lip, and flushes the bodily powers; but heavenly delights satisfy the inner nature, and fill the mental faculties to the brim. There is no cordial of comfort like that which is poured from the bottle of Scripture.

"Retire and read thy Bible to be gay."

"The commandment of the Lord is pure." No mixture of error defiles it, no stain of sin pollutes it; it is the unadulterated milk, the undiluted wine. *"Enlightening the eyes,"* purging away by its own purity the earthly grossness which mars the intellectual discernment: whether the eye be dim with sorrow or with sin, the Scripture is a skilful oculist, and makes the eye clear and bright. Look at the sun and it puts out your eyes, look at the more than sunlight of Revelation and it enlightens them; the purity of snow causes snow-blindness to the Alpine traveller, but the purity of God's truth has the contrary effect, and cures the natural blindness of the soul. It is well again to observe the gradation; the convert becomes a disciple and next a rejoicing soul, he now obtains a discerning eye and as a spiritual man discerneth all things, though he himself is discerned of no man.

Verse 9. *"The fear of the Lord is clean."* The doctrine of truth is here described by its spiritual effect, viz., inward piety, or the fear of the Lord; this is clean in itself, and cleanses out the love of sin, sanctifying the heart in which it reigns. Mr. Godly-fear is never satisfied till every street, lane, and alley, yea, and every house and every corner of the town of Mansoul is clean rid of the Diablolonians who lurk therein. *"Enduring for ever."* Filth brings decay, but cleanness is the great foe of corruption.

The grace of God in the heart being a pure principle, is also an abiding and incorruptible principle, which may be crushed for a time, but cannot be utterly destroyed. Both in the Word and in the heart, when the Lord writes, he says with Pilate, "What I have written, I have written;" he will make no erasures himself, much less suffer others to do so. The revealed will of God is never changed; even Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfil, and even the ceremonial law was only changed as to its shadow, the substance intended by it is eternal. When the governments of nations are shaken with revolution, and ancient constitutions are being repealed, it is comforting to know that the throne of God is unshaken, and his law unaltered.

"The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether;"—jointly and severally the words of the Lord are true; that which is good in detail is excellent in the mass; no exception may be taken to a single clause separately, or to the book as a whole. God's judgments, all of them together, or each of them apart, are manifestly just, and need no laborious excuses to justify them. The judicial decisions of Jehovah, as revealed in the law, or illustrated in the history of his providence, are truth itself, and commend themselves to every truthful mind; not only is their power invincible, but their justice is unimpeachable.

Verse 10. *"More to be desired are they than fine gold, yea, than much fine gold."* Bible truth is enriching to the soul in the highest degree; the metaphor is one which gathers force as it is brought out;—gold—fine gold—much fine gold; it is good, better, best, and therefore it is not only to be desired with a miser's avidity, but with more than that. As spiritual treasure is more noble than mere material wealth, so should it be desired and sought after with greater eagerness. Men speak of solid gold, but what is so solid as solid truth? For love of gold pleasure is forsworn, ease renounced, and life endangered; shall we not be ready to do as much for love of truth? *"Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."* Trapp says, "Old people are all for profit, the young for pleasure; here's gold for the one, yea, the finest gold in great quantity; here's honey for the other, yea, live honey dropping from the comb." The pleasures arising from a right understanding of the divine testimonies are of the most delightful order; earthly enjoyments are utterly contemptible, if compared with them. The sweetest joys, yea, the sweetest of the sweetest falls to his portion who has God's truth to be his heritage.

Verse 11. *"Moreover by them is thy servant warned."* We are warned by the Word both of our duty, our danger, and our remedy. On the sea of life there would be many more wrecks, if it were not for the divine storm-signals, which give to the watchful a timely warning. The Bible should be our Mentor, our Monitor, our Memento Mori, our Remembrancer, and the Keeper of our Conscience. Alas, that so few men will take the warning so graciously given; none but servants of God will do so, for they alone regard their Master's will. Servants of God not only find his service delightful in itself, but they receive good recompense; *"In keeping of them there is great reward."* There is a wage, and a great one; though we earn no wages of debt, we win great wages of grace. Saints may be losers for a time, but

they shall be glorious gainers in the long run, and even now a quiet conscience is in itself no slender reward for obedience. He who wears the herb called heart's-ease in his bosom is truly blessed. However, the main reward is yet to come, and the word here used hints as much, for it signifies *the heel*, as if the reward would come to us at the end of life when the work was done;—not while the labour was in hand, but when it was gone and we could see the heel of it. Oh the glory yet to be revealed! It is enough to make a man faint for joy at the prospect of it. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Then shall we know the value of the Scriptures when we swim in that sea of unutterable delight to which their streams will bear us, if we commit ourselves to them.

Verse 12. *"Who can understand his errors?"* A question which is its own answer. It rather requires a note of exclamation than of interrogation. By the law is the knowledge of sin, and in the presence of divine truth, the psalmist marvels at the number and heinousness of his sins. He best knows himself who best knows the Word, but even such an one will be in a maze of wonder as to what he does not know, rather than on the mount of congratulation as to what he does know. We have heard of a comedy of errors, but to a good man this is more like a tragedy. Many books have a few lines of errata at the end, but our errata might well be as large as the volume if we could but have sense enough to see them. Augustine wrote in his older days a series of Retractations; ours might make a library if we had enough grace to be convinced of our mistakes and to confess them. *"Cleanse thou me from secret faults."* Thou canst mark in me faults entirely hidden from myself. It were hopeless to expect to see all my spots; therefore, O Lord, wash away in the atoning blood even those sins which my conscience has been unable to detect. Secret sins, like private conspirators, must be hunted out, or they may do deadly mischief; it is well to be much in prayer concerning them. In the Lateran Council of the Church of Rome, a decree was passed that every true believer must confess his sins, all of them, once a year to the priest, and they affixed to it this declaration, that there is no hope of pardon but in complying with that decree. What can equal the absurdity of such a decree as that? Do they suppose that they can tell their sins as easily as they can count their fingers? Why, if we could receive pardon for all our sins by telling every sin we have committed in one hour, there is not one of us who would be able to enter heaven, since, besides the sins that are known to us and that we may be able to confess, there are a vast mass of sins, which are as truly sins as those which we lament, but which are secret, and come not beneath our eye. If we had eyes like those of God, we should think very differently of ourselves. The transgressions which we see and confess are but like the farmer's small samples which he brings to market, when he has left his granary full at home. We have but a very few sins which we can observe and detect, compared with those which are hidden from ourselves and unseen by our fellow-creatures.

Verse 13. *"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over*

me." This earnest and humble prayer teaches us that saints may fall into the worst of sins unless restrained by grace, and that therefore they must watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. There is a natural proneness to sin in the best of men, and they must be held back as a horse is held back by the bit or they will run into it. Presumptuous sins are peculiarly dangerous. All sins are great sins, but yet some sins are greater than others. Every sin has in it the very venom of rebellion, and is full of the essential marrow of traitorous rejection of God; but there be some sins which have in them a greater development of the essential mischief of rebellion, and which wear upon their faces more of the brazen pride which defies the Most High. It is wrong to suppose that because all sins will condemn us, that therefore one sin is not greater than another. The fact is, that while all transgression is a greatly grievous and sinful thing, yet there are some transgressions which have a deeper shade of blackness, and a more double scarlet-dyed hue of criminality than others. The presumptuous sins of our text are the chief and worst of all sins; they rank head and foremost in the list of iniquities. It is remarkable that though an atonement was provided under the Jewish law for every kind of sin, there was this one exception: "But the soul that sinneth presumptuously shall have no atonement; it shall be cut off from the midst of the people." And now under the Christian dispensation, although in the sacrifice of our blessed Lord there is a great and precious atonement for presumptuous sins, whereby sinners who have erred in this manner are made clean, yet without doubt, presumptuous sinners, dying without pardon, must expect to receive a double portion of the wrath of God, and a more terrible portion of eternal punishment in the pit that is digged for the wicked. For this reason is David so anxious that he may never come under the reigning power of these giant evils. "*Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*" He shudders at the thought of the unpardonable sin. Secret sin is a stepping-stone to presumptuous sin, and that is the vestibule of "the sin which is unto death." He who is not wilful in his sin, will be in a fair way to be innocent so far as poor sinful man can be; but he who tempts the devil to tempt him is in a path which will lead him from bad to worse, and from the worse to the worst.

Verse 14. "*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.*" A sweet prayer, and so spiritual that it is almost as commonly used in Christian worship as the apostolic benediction. *Words of the mouth* are mockery if the heart does not *meditate*; the shell is nothing without the kernel; but both together are useless unless *accepted*; and even if accepted by man, it is all vanity if not acceptable in *the sight of God*. We must in prayer view Jehovah as our *strength* enabling, and our *Redeemer* saving, or we shall not pray aright, and it is well to feel our personal interest so as to use the word *my*, or our prayers will be hindered. Our near Kinsman's name, our Goel or Redeemer, makes a blessed ending to the Psalm; it began with the heavens, but it ends with him whose glory fills heaven and earth. Blessed Kinsman, give us now to meditate acceptably upon thy most sweet love and tenderness.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The magnificent scenery to which the poem alludes is derived entirely from a contemplation of nature, in a state of pastoral seclusion; and a contemplation indulged in, at noontide or in the morning, when the sun was travelling over the horizon, and eclipsing all the other heavenly bodies by his glory. On which account it forms a perfect contrast with the eighth Psalm, evidently composed in the evening, and should be read in connection with it, as it was probably written nearly at the same time; and as both are songs of praise derived from natural phenomena, and therefore peculiarly appropriate to rural or pastoral life.—*John Mason Good.*

Whole Psalm. The world resembleth a divinity-school, saith Plutarch, and Christ, as the Scripture telleth, is our doctor, instructing us by his works, and by his words. For as Aristotle had two sorts of writings, one called *exoterical*, for his common auditors, another acromatical, for his private scholars and familiar acquaintance: so God hath two sorts of books, as David intimates in this Psalm; namely, the book of his creatures, as a common-place book for all men in the world: "*The heavens declare the glory of God,*" verses 1-6; the book of his Scriptures as a statute-book for his domestic auditory, the church: "*The law of the Lord is an undefiled law,*" verses 7, 8. The great book of the creatures in folio, may be termed aptly *the shepherd's kalendar*, and the *ploughman's alphabet*, in which even the most ignorant may run (as the prophet speaks) and read. It is a letter patent, or open epistle for all, as David, in our text, *Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world; there is neither speech nor language but have heard of their preaching.* For albeit, heaven, and the sun in heaven, and the light in the sun are mute, yet *their voices* are well understood, catechising plainly the first elements of religion, as, namely, that there is a God, and that this God is but one God, and that this one God excelleth all other things infinitely both in might and majesty. *Universus mundus* (as one pithily) *nihil aliud est quam Deus explicatus*: the whole world is nothing else but God expressed. So St. Paul, Romans 1:20: God's *invisible things*, as his eternal power and Godhead, "are clearly seen" by the creation of the world, "being understood by the things that are made." The heavens declare this, and the firmament showeth this, and the day telleth this, and the night certifieth this, the sound of the thunder proclaimeth, as it were, this in all lands, and the words of the whistling wind unto the ends of the world. More principally *the sun, which as a bridegroom cometh out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course.* The body thereof (as mathematicians have confidently delivered) is one hundred and sixty-six times bigger than the whole earth, and yet it is every day carried by the finger of God so great a journey, so long a course, that if it were to be taken on the land, it should run every several hour of the day two hundred and twenty-five German miles. It is true that God is incapable to sense, yet he makes himself, as it were, visible in his works; as the divine poet (Du Bartas) sweetly:—

"Therein our fingers feel, our nostrils smell,
Our palates taste his virtues that excel,
He shows him to our eyes, talks to our ears,
In the ordered motions of the spangled spheres."

So *"the heavens declare,"* that is, they make men declare the glory of God, by their admirable structure, motions, and influence. Now the preaching of *the heavens* is wonderful in three respects.

1. As preaching all the night and all the day without intermission: verse 2. *One day telleth another, and one night certifieth another.* 2. As preaching in every kind of language: verse 3. *There is neither speech, nor language, but their voices are heard among them.* 3. As preaching in every part of the world, and in every parish of every part, and in every place of every parish: verse 4, *Their sound is gone into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.* They be diligent pastors, as preaching at all times; and learned pastors, as preaching in all tongues; and catholic pastors, as preaching in all towns. Let us not then in this University (where the voices of so many great doctors are heard), be like to truants in other schools, who gaze so much upon the babies, (the pictures or illustrations of a book), and gilded cover, and painted margent of their book, that they neglect the text and lesson itself. This is *God's primer*, as it were, for all sorts of people; but he hath another book proper only for his domestic auditory the church: "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws." Psalm 147:19, 20. Heathen men read in his primer, but Christian men are well acquainted with his Bible. The primer is a good book, but it is imperfect; for after a man hath learned it he must learn more; but *"the law of the Lord,"* that is, the body of the Holy Scriptures, is a most absolute canon of all doctrines appertaining either to faith or good manners; it is a *perfect law, converting the soul, giving wisdom to the simple, sure, pure, righteous, and rejoicing the heart,*" etc.—*John Boys.*

Whole Psalm. Saint Chrysostom conjectures that the main intention of the greatest part of this Psalm consists in the discovery of divine providence, which manifests itself in the motions and courses of the heavenly bodies, concerning which the psalmist speaketh much, from verse 1 to verse 7. Saint Austin upon the place, is of a quite different opinion, who conjectures that Christ is the whole subject of this Psalm; whose person is compared to the sun for excellency and beauty, and the course of whose doctrine was dispersed round about the world by his apostles to which Saint Paul alludes (Romans 10:18); "Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth," etc., and the efficacy of whose gospel is like the heat of the sun, which pierceth into the very heart of the earth, so that into the secrets of the soul. I confess this allegorical exposition is not altogether impertinent, neither is that literal exposition of Saint Chrysostom to be blamed, for it hath its weight. But to omit all variety of conjecture, this Psalm contains in it:

1. A double kind of *the knowledge of God*, of which one is *by the book of the creature*; and this

divines call a natural knowledge: there is not any one creature but it is a leaf written all over with the description of God; his eternal power and Godhead may be understood by the things that are seen, saith the apostle. Romans 1:20. And, as every creature, so especially "*the heavens*" do lead us to the knowledge of a God; so verse 1 of this Psalm: "*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork;*" they are the theatres, as it were, of his wisdom, and power, and glory. Another is *by the book of Scripture*; and this knowledge is far more distinct and explicit: with the other even the heathen do grope after a deity, but with this Christians do behold God, as it were, with open face. The characters here are now fresh, spiritual, complete, and lively. The word of God is the singular means to know God aright. Look, as the light which comes from the sun, so that word of God, which is light, is the clearest way to know God who is light itself. Hence it is that the psalmist stands much upon this from verse 7 to verse 12, where he sets open the word in its several encomiums and operations; namely, in its perfection, its certainties, and firmness; its righteousness, and purity, and truth; and then in its efficacy—that it is a converting word, an enlightening word, an instructing word, a rejoicing word, a desirable word, a warning word, and a rewarding word.

2. *A singular and experimental knowledge of himself.*—So it seemeth, that that word which David did so much commend, he did commend it from an experimental efficacy; he had found it to be a righteous, and holy, and pure, and discovering word, laying open, not only visible and gross transgressions, but also, like the light of the sun, those otherwise unobserved and secret atoms of senses flying within the house; I mean in the secret chambers of the soul.—*Obadiah Sedgwick*, 1660,

Verse 1. "The heavens declare the glory of God," etc.—The eminent saints of ancient times were watchful observers of the objects and operations of nature. In every event they saw the agency of God; and, therefore, they took delight in its examination. For they could not but receive pleasure from witnessing the manifestations of his wisdom and beneficence, whom they adored and loved. They had not learned, as we have in modern times, to interpose unbending laws between the Creator and his works; and then, by giving inherent power to these laws, virtually to remove God away from his creation into an ethereal extramundane sphere of repose and happiness. I do not say that this is the universal feeling of the present day. But it prevails extensively in the church, and still more in the world. The ablest philosophers of modern times do, indeed, maintain that a natural law is nothing more than the uniform mode in which God acts; and that, after all, it is not the efficiency of the law, but God's own energy, that keeps all nature in motion; that he operates immediately and directly, not remotely and indirectly, in bringing about every event, and that every natural change is as really the work of God as if the eye of sense could see his hand turning round the wheels of nature. But, although the ablest philosophy of modern times has reached this conclusion, the great mass of the community, and even of Christians, are still groping in the darkness of that mechanical system which

ascribes the operation of this natural world to nature's laws instead of nature's God. By a sort of figure, indeed, it is proper, as the advocates of this system admit, to speak of God as the author of its natural events, because he originally ordained the laws of nature. But they have no idea that he exerts any direct and immediate agency in bringing them about; and, therefore, when they look upon these events they feel no impression of the presence and active agency of Jehovah.

But how different, as already remarked, were the feeling of ancient saints. The psalmist could not look up to heaven without exclaiming, "*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.*" When he cast his eyes abroad upon the earth, his full heart cried out, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches." In his eye everything was full of God. It was God who "sent springs into the valleys, which run among the hills." When the thunder-storm passed before him, it was "God's voice in the heavens, and his lightnings that lighted the world." When he heard the bellowings, and saw the smoke of the volcano, it was "God who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke."—*Edward Hitchcock, D.D., LL.D., 1867.*

Verse 1. "*The heavens declare,*" etc. Man has been endued by his Creator with mental powers capable of cultivation. He has employed them in the study of the wonderful works of God which the universe displays. His own habitation has provided a base which has served him to measure the heavens. He compares his own stature with the magnitude of the earth on which he dwells; the earth, with the system in which it is placed; the extent of the system, with the distance of the nearest fixed stars; and that distance again serves as a unit of measurement for other distances which observation points out. Still no approach is made to any limit. How extended these wonderful works of the Almighty may be no man can presume to say. The sphere of creation appears to extend around us indefinitely on all sides; "to have its centre everywhere, its circumference nowhere." These are considerations which from their extent almost bewilder our minds. But how should they raise our ideas toward their great Creator, when we consider that all these were created from nothing, by a word, by a mere volition of the Deity. "Let them be," said God, and they were. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." "For he spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:6, 9. What must be that power, which so formed worlds on worlds; worlds in comparison of which this earth which we inhabit sinks into utter nothingness! Surely when we thus lift up our thoughts to the heavens, the moon and the stars which he hath ordained, we must feel, if we can ever feel, how stupendous and incomprehensible is that Being who formed them all; that "*the heavens*" do indeed "*declare the glory of God;*" and "*the firmament sheweth his handywork.*"—*Temple Chevallier, in "The Hulsean Lectures for 1827."*

Verse 1. I have often been charmed and awed at the sight of the nocturnal heavens, even before I

knew how to consider them in their proper circumstances of majesty and beauty. Something like magic has struck my mind, on transient and unthinking survey of the aethreal vault, tinged throughout with the purest azure, and decorated with innumerable starry lamps. I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandising impulse, which seemed to snatch me from the low entanglements of vanity, and prompted an ardent sigh for sublimer objects. Methought I heard, even from the silent spheres, a commanding call to spurn the abject earth, and pant after unseen delights. Henceforth I hope to imbibe more copiously this moral emanation of the skies, when, in some such manner as the preceeding, they are rationally seen, and the sight is duly improved. The stars, I trust, will teach as well as shine, and help to dispel both nature's gloom and my intellectual darkness. To some people they discharge no better a service than that of holding a flambeau to their feet, and softening the horrors of their night. To me and my friends may they act as ministers of a superior order, as counsellors of wisdom, and guides to happiness! Nor will they fail to execute this nobler office, if they gently light our way into the knowledge of their adored Maker—if they point out with their silver rays our path to his beatific presence.—*James Hervey, A.M., 1713-1758.*

Verse 1. Should a man live underground, and there converse with the works of art and mechanism, and should afterwards be brought up into the open day, and see the several glories of the heaven and earth, he would immediately pronounce them the work of such a Being as we define God to be.—*Aristotle.*

Verse 1. When we behold "*the heavens,*" when we contemplate the celestial bodies, can we fail of conviction? Must we not acknowledge that there is a Divinity, a perfect Being, a ruling intelligence, which governs; a God who is everywhere and directs all by his power? Anybody who doubts this may as well deny there is a sun that lights us. Time destroys all false opinions, but it confirms those which are formed by nature. For this reason, with us as well as with other nations, the worship of the gods, and the holy exercises of religion, increase in purity and extent every day.—*Cicero.*

Verse 1. "*The heavens declare the glory of God,*" etc. They discover his *wisdom,* his *power,* his *goodness;* and so there is not any one creature, though never so little, but we are to admire the Creator in it. As a chamber hung round about with looking-glasses represents the face upon every turn, thus all the world doth the mercy and the bounty of God; though that be visible, yet it discovers an invisible God and his invisible properties.—*Anthony Burgess, 1656.*

Verse 1. None of the elect are in that respect so unwise as to refuse to hear and consider the works and words of God as not appertaining unto him. God forbid. No man in the world doth with more fervency consider the works of God, none more readily lift up their ears to hear God speak than even they who have the inward revelation of the Holy Spirit.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 1. During the French revolution Jean Bon St. Andrè, the Vendean revolutionist, said to a peasant, "I will have all your steeples pulled down, that you may no longer have any object by which

you may be reminded of your old superstitions." "But," replied the peasant, "*you cannot help leaving us the stars.*"—*John Bate's "Cyclopaedia of Moral and Religious Truths,"* 1865.

Verse 1. "*The heavens declare the glory of God*"—

How beautiful this dome of sky,
And the vast hills in fluctuation fixed
At thy command, how awful! Shall the soul,
Human and rational, report of Thee
Even less than these? Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice.
My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget thee here, where thou hast built
For thine own glory, in the wilderness!

William Wordsworth, 1770-1850.

Verse 1. "*The firmament sheweth his handiwork*"—

The glitt'ring stars
By the deep ear of meditation heard,
Still in their midnight watches sing of him.
He nods a calm. The tempest blows his wrath:
The thunder is his voice; and the red flash
His speedy sword of justice. At his touch
The mountains flame. He shakes the solid earth,
And rocks the nations. Nor in these alone—
In ev'ry common instance God is seen.

James Thompson.

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universe frame,
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

John Milton.

Verses 1, 2. In order more fully to illustrate the expressive richness of the Hebrew, I would direct the attention of my reader to the beautiful phraseology of the XIX. Psalm. The literal reading of the first and second verses may be thus given:—

"The heavens are *telling* the glory of God,
The firmament *displaying* the work of his hands;
Day unto day *welleth forth* speech,
Night unto night *breatheth out* knowledge."

Thus the four distinct terms in the original are preserved in the translation; and the overflowing fulness with which day unto day pours forth divine instruction, and the gentle whisperings of the silent night, are contrasted as in the Hebrew.—*Henry Craik*, 1860.

Verses 1-4. Though all preachers on earth should grow silent, and every human mouth cease from publishing the glory of God, the heavens above will never cease to declare and proclaim his majesty and glory. They are for ever preaching; for, like an unbroken chain, their message is delivered from day to day and from night to night. At the silence of one herald another takes up his speech. One day, like the other, discloses the same spectacles of his glory, and one night, like the other, the same wonders of his majesty. Though nature be *hushed* and *quiet* when the sun in his glory has reached the zenith on the azure sky—though the world keep her *silent* festival, when the stars shine brightest at night—yet, says the psalmist, *they speak*; ay, holy silence itself is a speech, provided there be the ear to hear it.—*Augustus T. Tholuck*.

Verses 1-4. "*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.*" If the heavens declare the glory of God, we should observe what that glory is which they declare. The heavens preach to us every day. . . . "*Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*" Sun, moon, and stars are preachers; they are universal, they are natural apostles. The world is their charge; "*their words,*" saith the Psalm, "*go to the end of the world.*" We may have good doctrine from them, especially this doctrine in the text, of the wisdom and power of God. And it is very observable that the apostle alludes to this text in the Psalm for a proof of gospel preaching to the whole world. Romans 10:18. The gospel, like the sun, casts his beams over, and sheds his light into all the world. David in the Psalm saith, "*Their line is gone out,*" etc. By which word he shows that the heavens, being so curious a fabric, made, as it were, by a line and level, do clearly, though silently, preach the skill and perfection of God. Or, that we may read divine truths in them as a line formed by a pen into words and sentences (the original signifies both a measuring line and a written line), letters and words in writing being nothing but lines drawn into several forms or figures. But the Septuagint, whose translation the apostle citeth, for *Kavam*, *their line*, read *Kolam*, *their sound*; either misreading the word or studiously mollifying the sense into a nearer compliance with the latter clause of the verse, "And their words to the end of the world."—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verses 1-4. Like as the sun with his light beneficially comforteth all the world, so Christ, the Son of God, reacheth his benefits unto all men, so that they will receive them thankfully, and not refuse them disobediently.—*Robert Cawdray*.

Verse 2. "Day unto day," etc. But what is the meaning of the next word—*One day telleth another, and one night certifieth another*? Literally, *dies diem dicit*, is nothing else but *dies diem docet*. One day telleth another, is one day teacheth another. The day past is instructed by the day present: every new day doth afford new doctrine. The day is a most apt time to learn by reading and conference; the night a most fit time for invention and meditation. Now that which thou canst not understand this day thou mayest haply learn the next, and that which is not found out in one night may be gotten in another. Mystically (saith Hierem), Christ is this "day," who saith of himself, "I am the light of the world," and his twelve apostles are the twelve hours of the day; for Christ's Spirit revealed by the mouths of his apostles the mysteries of our salvation, in other ages not so fully known unto the sons of men. *One day telleth another*, that is, the spiritual utter this unto the spiritual; and *one night certifieth another*, that is, Judas insinuates as much unto the Jews in the night of ignorance, saying, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, lay hold on him." Matthew 26:28. Or, the Old Testament only shadowing Christ is *the night*, and the New Testament plainly showing Christ is *the day*.—*John Boys.*

Verse 2. "Day unto day," or day after day; the vicissitude or continual succession of day and night speaketh much divine knowledge. The assiduity and constancy without any intermission by the heavens preaching is hereby expressed.—*John Richardson.*

Verse 2. "Uttereth," poureth forth abundantly; "sheweth" demonstrates clearly and effectively, without ambiguity. Job 36:2. Many in the full light of gospel day, hear not that speech, who yet in the night of affliction and trouble, or in the conviction of their natural darkness, have that knowledge communicated to them which enables them to realise the joy that cometh in the morning.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 2. "Sheweth knowledge." We may illustrate the differing measures in which natural objects convey knowledge to men of differing mental and spiritual capacity by the story of our great English artist. He is said to have been engaged upon one of his immortal works, and a lady of rank looking on remarked, "But Mr. Turner, I do not see in nature all that you describe there." "Ah, Madam," answered the painter, "do you not wish you could?"—*C. H. S.*

Verse 3. "There is no speech," etc. The sunset was one of the most glorious I ever beheld, and the whole earth seemed so still that *the voice of neither God nor man was heard*. There was not a ripple upon the waters, not the leaf of a tree, nor even of a blade of grass moving, and the rocks upon the opposite shore reflected the sun's "after-glow," and were again themselves reflected from or in the river during the brief twilight, in a way I do not remember ever to have beheld before. No! I will not say *the voice of God* was not heard; it spoke in the very stillness as loud as in roaring thunder, in the placid scene as in rocks and cliffs impassable, and louder still in *the heavens and in the firmament*, and in the magnificent prospect around me. His wondrous works declared him to be near, and I felt as if the very ground upon which I was treading was holy.—*John Gadsby.*

Verse 4. "*Their line is gone out,*" etc. "*Their sound went,*" etc. Romans 10:18. The relations which the gospel of Christ Jesus hath to the Psalms of David I find to be more than to all the Bible besides, that seldom anything is written in the New Testament, but we are sent to fetch our proofs from these. The margin here sends me to the Psalm, and the Psalm sends me back to this again; showing that they both speak one thing. How comes it then that it is not one, for "*line*" and "*sound*" are not one thing? Is there not some mistake here? Answer—To fetch a proof from a place is one thing, an allusion is another. Sometimes the evangelists are enforced to bring their proofs for what they write out of the Old Testament, else we should never believe them, and then they must be very sure of the terms, when they say, "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken," etc. But the apostle was not now upon that account; only showing to the Romans the marvellous spreading of the gospel, alluding to this passage of David discoursing of "*the heavens,*" to which the prophet compared the publication of the word; the sun and moon and stars not only shining through, but round all the earth. The same subject Paul was now upon, and for his purpose makes use of a term fitter to express the preaching of the gospel, by the word "*sound,*" than that other word expressing the limitations of the law, by the word "*line:*" both of these agreeing that there is no fitter comparison to be fetched from anything in nature than from "*the heavens,*" their motions, revolutions, influences upon sublunary bodies; also in their eclipses, when one text seems to darken another, as if it were put out altogether by crossing and opposing, which is but seemingly so to the ignorant, they agree sweetly enough in themselves; no bridegroom can agree better with his bride, nor rejoice more to run his course. So they both conclude in this, that the sun never saw that nation yet where the word of truth, in one degree or other (all the world, you must think, cannot be right under the meridian) hath not shined.—*William Streat, in "The Dividing of the Hoof," 1654.*

Verse 4 "*Unto the end of the world.*" Venantius Fortunatus eleven hundred years ago witnesses to the peregrinations of Paul the apostle.

He passed the ocean's curled wave,
As far as islands harbours have;
As far as Brittain yields a bay,
Or Iceland's frozen shore a stay.

John Cragge, 1557.

Verse 4. "*Their line is gone out through all the earth,*" etc. The molten sea did stand upon twelve oxen, that is, as Paul doth interpret it, upon twelve apostles (1 Corinthians 9:10); which in that they looked four ways, east, west, north, and south, they did teach all nations. And in that they looked three and three together, they did represent the blessed Trinity. Not only teaching all nations, but also in that sea of water, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, though the two kine which carried the ark wherein were the tables of the law, went

straight and kept one path, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; yet these twelve oxen which carried the molten sea, signifying the doctrine of the gospel, went not straight, neither kept one path, but turned into the way of the Gentiles; yea, they looked all manner of ways, east, west, north, and south. And these two kine stood still and lowed no more when they came to the field of Joshua, dwelling in Bethshemesh, that is, the house of the sun. To note, that all the kine, and calves, and sacrifices, and ceremonies of the old law were to cease and stand still when they came to Jesus, who is the true Joshua, dwelling in heaven, which is the true Bethshemesh. But these twelve oxen were so far from leaving off, either to go, or to low, when they came to Christ, that even then they went much faster and lowed much louder; so that now *"their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words to the end of the world;"* and *"in them hath God set"* Bethshemesh, that is, a house or *"tabernacle for the sun."* Therefore, as the material sun, through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, goeth forth from the uttermost parts of the heaven, and runneth about to the end of it again: in like sort, the spiritual *Sun of Righteousness*, by the twelve apostles, as by twelve signs, hath been borne round about the world, that he might be not only "the glory of his people Israel," but also "a light to lighten the Gentiles;" and that all, "all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of our God."—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verses 4-6. It appears to me very likely that the Holy Ghost in these expressions which he most immediately uses about the rising of the sun, has an eye to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness from the grave, and that the expressions that the Holy Ghost here uses are conformed to such a view. The times of the Old Testament are times of night in comparison of the gospel day, and are so represented in Scripture, and therefore the approach of the day of the New Testament dispensation in the birth of Christ, is called the day-spring from on high visiting the earth (Luke 1:78), "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us;" and the commencing of the gospel dispensation as it was introduced by Christ, is called the Sun of Righteousness rising. Malachi 4:2. But this gospel dispensation commences with the resurrection of Christ. Therein the Sun of Righteousness rises from under the earth, as the sun appears to do in the morning, and comes forth as a bridegroom. He rose as the joyful, glorious bridegroom of his church; for Christ, especially as risen again, is the proper bridegroom, or husband, of his church, as the apostle teaches (Romans 7:4), "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." He that was covered with contempt, and overwhelmed in a deluge of sorrow, has purchased and won his spouse, for he loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself; now he comes forth as a bridegroom to bring home his purchased spouse to him in spiritual marriage, as he soon after did in the conversion of such multitudes, making his people willing in the day of his power, and hath also done many times since, and will do in a yet more glorious

degree. And as the sun when it rises comes forth like a bridegroom gloriously adorned, so Christ in his resurrection entered on his state of glory. After his state of sufferings, he rose to shine forth in ineffable glory as the King of heaven and earth, that he might be a glorious bridegroom, in whom his church might be unspeakably happy. Here the psalmist says that God *has placed a tabernacle for the sun in the heavens*: so God the Father had prepared an abode in heaven for Jesus Christ; he had set a throne for him there, to which he ascended after he rose. The sun after it is risen ascends up to the midst of heaven, and then at that end of its race descends again to the earth; so Christ when he rose from the grave ascended up to the height of heaven, and far above all heavens, but at the end of the gospel day will descend again to the earth. It is here said that the risen sun "rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." So Christ, when he rose, rose as a man of war, as the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle; he rose to conquer his enemies, and to show forth his glorious power in subduing all things to himself, during that race which he had to run, which is from his resurrection to the end of the world, when he will return to the earth again. . . . That the Holy Ghost here has a mystical meaning, and has respect to the light of the Sun of Righteousness, and not merely the light of the natural sun, is confirmed by the verses that follow, in which the psalmist himself seems to apply them to the word of God, which is the light of that Sun, even of Jesus Christ, who himself revealed the word of God: see the very next words, "The law of the Lord is perfect," etc.—*Jonathan Edwards*, 1703-1758.

Verse 5. "Which is as a bridegroom," etc. The sun is described like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, dressed and prepared, and as a giant rejoicing to run his race; but though the sun be thus prepared, and dressed, and ready, yet if the Lord send a writ and a prohibition to the sun to keep within his chamber, he cannot come forth, his journey is stopped. Thus also he stops man in his nearest preparation for any action. If the Lord will work, who shall let it? Isaiah 43:13. That is, there is no power in heaven or earth which can hinder him. But if the Lord will let, who shall work? Neither sun, nor stars, nor men, nor devils, can work, if he forbids them. The point is full of comfort.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 5. "Which is as a bridegroom," etc. The Sun of Righteousness appeared in three signs especially; *Leo, Virgo, Libra*. 1. In *Leo*, roaring as a lion, in the law; so that the people could not endure his voice. 2. In *Virgo*, born of a pure virgin in the gospel. 3. In *Libra*, weighing our works in his balance at the day of judgment. Or as Bernard distinguisheth his threefold coming aptly—*venit ad homines, venit in homines, venit contra homines*: in the time past he came *unto* men as upon this day (The Nineteenth Psalm is one "appointed to be read" on *Christmas Day*); in the time present, he comes by his spirit *into* men every day; in the time future, he shall come *against* men at the last day. The coming here mentioned is his coming in the flesh—for so the fathers usually gloss the text—he came forth of the virgin's womb, "*as a bridegroom out of his chamber.*" As a *bridegroom*, for the King

of heaven at this holy time made a great wedding for his Son. Matthew 22:1. Christ is the *bridegroom*, man's nature the bride, the conjunction and blessed union of both in one person is his marriage. The best way to reconcile two disagreeing families is to make some marriage between them: even so, the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us in the world that he might hereby make our peace, reconciling God to man and man to God. By this happy match the Son of God is become the Son of Man, even flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones; and the sons of men are made the sons of God, "of his flesh and of his bones," as Paul saith, Ephesians 5:30. So that now the church being Christ's own spouse, saith, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." Canticles 6:3. My sin is his sin, and his righteousness is my righteousness. He who knew no sin, for my sake was made sin; and I, contrariwise, having no good thing, am made the righteousness of God in him: I which am *brown* by persecution, and *black* by nature (Canticles 1:5), so foul as the sow that walloweth in the mire, through his favour am comely, without spot or wrinkle, so white as the snow, like a lily among thorns, even the fairest among women. Canticles 2:2. This happy *marriage* is not a *mar age*, but it make's a *merry age*, being "the consolation of Israel," and comfort of Jerusalem's heart. Indeed, Christ our husband doth absent himself from us in his body for a time; but when he did ascend into heaven he took with him our pawn, namely his flesh; and he gave us his pawn, namely, his Spirit, assuring us that we shall one day, when the world is ended, enter with him into the wedding chamber, and there feast with him, and enjoy his blessed company for evermore.—*John Boys*.

Verse 6. "*There is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*" This is literally the case. The earth receives its heat from the sun, and by conduction, a part of it enters the crust of our globe. By convection, another portion is carried to the atmosphere, which it warms. Another portion is radiated into space, according to laws yet imperfectly understood, but which are evidently connected with the colour, chemical composition, and mechanical structure of parts of the earth's surface. At the same time the ordinary state of the air, consisting of gases and vapour, modifies the heat-rays and prevents scorching. Thus, the solar heat is equalised by the air. Nothing on earth or in air is hid from the heat of the sun. . . . Even the colour of some bodies is changed by heat. . . Heat also is in bodies in a state which is not sensible, and is therefore called latent heat, or heat of fluidity, because it is regarded as the cause of fluidity in ponderable substances. It can fuse every substance it does not decompose below the melting point, as in the case of wood. Every gas may be regarded as consisting of heat, and some basis of ponderable matter, whose cohesion it overcomes, imparting a tendency to great expansion, when no external obstacle prevents, and this expansive tendency is their elasticity or tension. Certain gases have been liquified under great pressure, and extreme cold. Heat, also, at certain temperatures, causes the elasticity of vapours to overcome the atmospheric pressure which can no longer restrain them. An example of this is the boiling point of water; and, indeed, in every case the true instance is the boiling point. Philosophers are agreed that the affinity of heat for any

ponderable substance is superior to all other forces acting upon it. No ponderable matters can combine without disengagement of heat. . . . And the same occurs from every mechanical pressure and condensation of a body. In all these cases, and many more, there are like evidences of the presence and influence of heat; but the facts now advanced are sufficient to show us the force of the expression, that in terrestrial things nothing is hid from, or can by any possibility escape the agency of heat.—*Edwin Sidney, A.M., in "Conversations on the Bible and Science," 1866.*

Verse 6 (last clause). "There is nothing hid from the heat," nothing from the light of Christ. It is not solely on the mountain top that he shines, as in the day before he was fully risen, when his rays, although unseen by the rest of the world, formed a glory round the heads of his prophets, who saw him while to the chief part of mankind he was still lying below the horizon. Now, however, that he is risen, he pours his light through the valley, as well as over the mountain; nor is there any one, at least in these countries, who does not catch some gleams of that light, except those who burrow and hide themselves in the dark caverns of sin. But it is not light alone that Christ sheds from his heavenly tabernacle. As nothing is hid from his light, neither is anything hid from his heat. He not only enlightens the understanding, so that it shall see and know the truth; he also softens and melts, and warms the heart, so that it shall love the truth, and calls forth fruit from it, and ripens the fruit he has called forth; and that too on the lowliest plant which creeps along the ground, as well as the loftiest tree. . . .

Though while he was on earth, he had fullest power of bestowing every earthly gift, yet, in order that he should be able to bestow heavenly gifts with the same all-healing power, it was necessary that he should go up into heaven. When he had done so, when he had ascended into *his tabernacle in the heavens*, then, he promises his disciples, he would send down the Holy Spirit of God, who should bring them heavenly gifts, yea, who should enter into their hearts, and make them bring forth all the fruits of the Spirit in abundance; should make them abound in love, in peace, in longsuffering, in gentleness, in goodness, in faith, in meekness, in temperance. These are the bright heavenly rays, which, as it were, make up the pure light of Christ; *and from this heat nothing is hid*. Even the hardest heart may be melted by it; even the foulest may be purified.—*Julias Charles Hare, M.A., 1841.*

Verse 7. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." To man fallen, the law only convinceth of sin, and bindeth over to death, it is nothing but a killing letter; but the gospel, accompanied by the power of the Spirit, bringeth life. Again, it is said, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;" therefore it seems the law may also be a word of salvation to the creature. I answer; by the law there, is not meant only that part of the word which we call the covenant of works, but there it is put for the whole word, for the whole doctrine of the covenant of life and salvation; as Psalm 1:2: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." And if you take it in that stricter sense, then it converteth the soul but by accident, as it is joined with the gospel, which is the misery

of life and righteousness, but in itself it is the law of sin and death. Look, as a thing taken simply, would be poison and deadly in itself, yet mixed with other wholesome medicines, it is of great use, is an excellent physical ingredient; so the law is of great use as joined with the gospel, to awaken and startle the sinner, to show him his duty, to convince him of sin and judgment; but it is the gospel properly that pulls in the heart.—*Thomas Manton*.

Verse 7. The law, or doctrine, an orderly manner of instruction, an institution or disposition, called in Hebrew *torah*, which implies both doctrine and an orderly disposition of the same. Therefore where one prophet, relating David's words, saith *the law* of man (2 Samuel 7:19), another saith, *the orderly estate*, or *course* of man. 1 Corinthians 17:17. The Holy Ghost, in Greek, calls it *Nomos*, a law (Hebrews 8:10), from Jeremiah 31:33. This name is most commonly ascribed to the precepts given by Moses at Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 32:4; Malachi 4:4; John 1:17, and 7:19); it is also largely used for all his writings. For the history of Genesis is called *law* (Galatians 4:21), from Genesis 16. And though sometimes the law be distinguished from the Psalms and Prophets (Luke 16:16, and 24:24), yet the other prophets' books are called *law* (1 Corinthians 14:21), from Isaiah 28:11; the Psalms are also thus named (John 10:24 and 15:25), from Psalm 82:6 and 35:19. Yea, one Psalm is called a *law* (Psalm 78:1); and the many branches of Moses' doctrine as the *law* of the sin-offering, etc. Leviticus 6:25. And generally it is used for any *doctrine*, as the *law* of works, the *law* of faith, etc. Romans 3:27.—*Henry Ainsworth*.

Verse 7. "Converting the soul." This version conveys a sense good and true in itself, but is not in accordance with the design of the psalmist, which is, to express the divine law on the feelings and affections of good men. The Hebrew terms properly mean, "bringing back the spirit," when it is depressed by adversity, by refreshing and consoling it; like food, it restores the faint, and communicates vigour to the disconsolate.—*William Walford*, 1837.

Verse 7. "Converting the soul." The heart of man is the most free and hard of anything to work upon, and to make an impression and stamp upon this hard heart, this heart that is so stony, adamant, "harder than the nether millstones," as the Scripture teacheth. To compel this free-will, this *Domina sui actus*, the queen in the soul, the empress, it cannot be without a divine power, without a hand that is omnipotent; but the ministers do this by the Word—they mollify, and wound, and break this heart, they incline, and bow, and draw this free-will whither the spirit listeth. And Clemens Alexandrinus is not afraid to say, that if the fables of Orpheus and Amphion were true—that they drew birds, beasts, and stones, with their ravishing melody—yet the harmony of the Word is greater, which translates men from Hellicon to Zion, which softens the hard heart of man obdurate against the truth, that "raises up children to Abraham of stones," that is (as he interprets), of unbelievers, which he calls stocks and stones, that put their trust in stones and stocks; which metamorphoses men that are beastlike, wild birds for their lightness and vanity, serpents for their craft and subtlety, lions for their

wrath and cruelty, swine for voluptuousness and luxury, etc.; and charms them so that of wild beasts they become tame men; that makes living *stones* (as he did others) come of their own accord to the building of the walls of Jerusalem (as he of Thebes), to the building of a living temple to the everlasting God. This must needs be a truly persuasive charm, as he speaks.—*John Stoughton's "Choice Sermons,"* 1640.

Verse 7. "Making wise the simple." The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 1:8, expresseth conversion, and the whole work inherently wrought in us, by the making of a man wise. It is usual in the Scriptures, and you may oftentimes meet with it; "*converting the soul,*" "*making wise the simple.*" The beginning of conversion, and so all along, the increase of all grace to the end, is expressed by wisdom entering into a man's heart, "If wisdom enter into thy heart," and so goes on to do more and more; not unto thy head only—a man may have all that, and be a fool in the end, but when it entereth into the heart, and draws all the affections after it, and along with it, "when knowledge is pleasant to thy soul," then a man is converted; when God breaks open a man's heart, and makes wisdom fall in, enter in, and make a man wise.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 7. This verse, and the two next following, which treat of God's law, are in Hebrew, written each of them with ten words, according to the number of the ten commandments, which are called the ten words. Exodus 34:28.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verses 7, 8. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, enlightening the eyes," revealing the object, ennobling the organ.—*Richard Stock.*

Verse 7-11. All of us are by nature the children of wrath; our souls are like the *porches* of Bethesda (John 5), in which are lodged a great many "sick folk, blind, halt, withered;" and the Scriptures are like the *pool* of Bethesda, into which whoever entereth, after God's Holy Spirit hath a little stirred the water, is "made whole of whatsoever disease he hath." He that hath anger's frenzy, being as furious as a lion, by stepping into this pool shall in good time become as gentle as a lamb; he that hath the blindness of intemperance, by washing in this pool shall easily see his folly; he that hath envy's rust, avarice's leprosy, luxury's palsy, shall have means and medicines here for the curing of his maladies.

The word of God is like the drug *catholicon*, that is instead of all purges; and like the herb *panaces*, that is good for all diseases. Is any man heavy? *the statutes of the Lord rejoice the heart:* is any man in want? *the judgments of the Lord are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, and by keeping of them there is great reward:* is any man ignorant? *the testimonies of the Lord give wisdom to the simple*, that is, to little ones, both in standing and understanding. In standing, as unto little Daniel, little John the evangelist, little Timothy: to little ones in understanding; for the great philosophers who were the wizards of the world, because they were not acquainted with God's law became fools while they professed themselves wise. Romans 1:22. But our prophet saith, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, because thy testimonies are my meditation," and my study.

Psalm 119:99. To conclude, whatsoever we are by corruption of nature, God's law *converteth* us, and maketh us to speak with new tongues, and to sing new songs unto the Lord, and to become new men and new creatures in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17.—*J. Boys.*

Verse 8. "The statutes." Many divines and critics, and Castalio in particular, have endeavoured to attach a distinct shade of meaning to the words, *law, testimony, the statutes, commandments, fear, judgments*, occurring in this context. (Heb.), *the law*, has been considered to denote the perceptive part of revelation. (Heb.), *the testimony*, has been restricted to the doctrinal part. (Heb.), *the statutes*, has been regarded as relating to such things as have been given in charge. (Heb.), *the commandment*, has been taken to express the general body of the divine law and doctrine. (Heb.), *religious fear*. (Heb.), *the judgments*, the civil statutes of the Mosaic law, more particularly the penal sanctions.—*John Morison.*

Verse 8. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." How odious is the profaneness of those Christians who neglect the Holy Scriptures, and give themselves to reading other books! How many precious hours do many spend, and that not only on work days, but holy days, in foolish romances, fabulous histories, lascivious poems! And why this, but that they may be cheered and delighted, when as full joy is only to be had in these holy books. Alas! the joy you find in those writings is perhaps pernicious, such as tickleth your lust, and promoteth contemplative wickedness. At the best it is but vain, such as only pleaseth the fancy and affecteth the wit; whereas those holy writings (to use David's expression), are "*right, rejoicing the heart.*" Again, are there not many who more set by Plutarch's morals, Seneca's epistles, and such like books, than they do by the Holy Scriptures? It is true, beloved, there are excellent truths in those moral writings of the heathen, but yet they are far short of these sacred books. Those may comfort against outward trouble, but not against inward fears; they may rejoice the mind, but cannot quiet the conscience; they may kindle some flashy sparkles of joy, but they cannot warm the soul with a lasting fire of solid consolations. And truly, brethren, if ever God give you a spiritual ear to judge of things aright, you will then acknowledge there are no bells like to those of Aaron's, no harp like to that of David's, no trumpet like to that of Isaiah's, no pipes like to those of the apostle's; and, you will confess with Petrus Damianus, that those writings of heathen orators, philosophers, poets, which formerly were so pleasing, are now dull and harsh in comparison of the comfort of the Scriptures.—*Nathanael Hardy, D.D., 1618-1670.*

Verse 10. "Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." Love the word written. Psalm 119:97. "Oh, how love I thy law!" "Lord," said Augustine, "let the holy Scriptures be my chaste delight." Chrysostom compares the Scripture to a garden, every truth is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not on our bosom, but in our heart. David counted the word "*sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.*" There is that in Scripture which may breed delight. It shows us the way to riches: Deuteronomy 28:5, Proverbs 3:10; to long life: Psalm 34:12; to a kingdom: Hebrews 12:28. Well, then, may we count those the

sweetest hours which are spent in reading the holy Scriptures; well may we say with the prophet (Jeremiah 15:16), "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart."—*Thomas Watson*.

Verse 10. "*Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.*" There is no difference made amongst us between the delicacy of honey in the comb and that which is separated from it. From the information of Dr. Halle, concerning the diet of the Moors of Barbary, we learn that they esteem honey a very wholesome breakfast, "and the most delicious that which is in the comb with the young bees in it, before they come out of their cases, whilst they still look milk-white." (*Miscellanea Curiosa* vol. iii. p. 382.) The distinction made by the psalmist is then perfectly just and conformable to custom and practice, at least of more modern, and probably, equally so of ancient times.—*Samuel Burder, A.M., in "Oriental Customs," 1812.*

Verse 11. "*Moreover by them is thy servant warned.*" A certain Jew had formed a design to poison Luther, but was disappointed by a faithful friend, who sent Luther a portrait of the man, with a warning against him. By this, Luther knew the murderer and escaped his hands. Thus the word of God, O Christian, shows thee the face of those lusts which Satan employs to destroy thy comforts and poison thy soul.—*G. S. Bowes, B.A., in "Illustrative Gatherings for Preachers and Teachers."*

Verse 11. "*In keeping of them there is great reward.*" This "*keeping of them*" implies great carefulness to know, to remember, and to observe; and the "*reward*" (literally "the end"), *i.e.*, the recompense, is far beyond anticipation.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 11. "*In keeping of them there is great reward.*" Not only for keeping, but in keeping of them, there is great reward. The joy, the rest, the refreshing, the comforts, the contents, the smiles, the incomes that saints now enjoy, in the ways of God, are so precious and glorious in their eyes, that they would not exchange them for ten thousand worlds. Oh! if the vails, (Gratuities, presents), be thus sweet and glorious before pay-day comes, what will be that glory that Christ will crown his saints with for cleaving to his service in the face of all difficulties, when he shall say to his Father, "Lo, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me." Isaiah 8:18. If there be so much to be had in the wilderness, what then shall be had in paradise!—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 11. "*In keeping of them there is great reward.*" Not only *for keeping* but *in keeping* of them. As every flower hath its sweet smell, so every good action hath its sweet reflection upon the soul: and as Cardan saith, that every precious stone hath some egregious virtue; so here, righteousness is its own reward, though few men think so, and act accordingly. Howbeit, the chief reward is not till the last cast, till we come home to heaven. The word here rendered "*reward*," signifieth *the heel*, and by a metaphor, the *end* of a work, and the *reward* of it, which is not till the end.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 11. "*Reward.*" Though we should not serve God for a reward, yet we shall have a reward for our service. The time is coming when ungodliness shall be as much prosecuted by justice, as in

times past godliness had been persecuted by injustice. Though our reward be not for our good works, yet we shall have our good works rewarded, and have a good reward for our works. Though the best of men (they being at the best but unprofitable servants) deserve nothing at the hands of God, yet they may deserve much at the hands of men; and if they have not the recompense they deserve, yet it is a kind of recompense to have deserved. As he said, and nobly, "I had rather it should be said, Why doth not Cato's image stand here? than it should be said, Why doth it stand here?"—*Ralph Venning*. 1620-1673.

Verse 12. "*Who can understand his errors?*" After this survey of the works and word of God, he comes at last to peruse the third book, his *conscience*; a book which though wicked men may keep shut up, and naturally do not love to look into it, yet will one day be laid open before the great tribunal in the view of the whole world, to the justifying of God when he judges, and to impenitent sinners' eternal confusion. And what finds he here? A foul, blurred copy that he is puzzled how to read; "*who*," says he, "*can understand his errors?*" Those notions which God had with his own hand imprinted upon conscience in legible characters, are partly defaced and slurred with scribble, and interlinings of "*secret faults*;" partly obliterated and quite razed out with capital crimes, "*presumptuous sins*." And yet this *manuscript* cannot be so abused, but it will still give in evidence for God; there being no argument in the world that can with more force extort an acknowledgment of God from any man's conscience than the conviction of guilt itself labours under. For the sinner cannot but know he has transgressed a law, and he finds within him, if he is not past all sense, such apprehensions that though at present he "walk in the ways of his heart and in the sight of his eyes" (as the wise man ironically advises the young man to do, Ecclesiastes 11:9), yet he knows (as the same wise man there from his own experience tells him) that "for all these things God will bring him into judgment." The *conscience* being thus convicted of sin, where there is any sense of true piety the soul will, with David, here address itself to God for pardon, that it may be "*cleansed from secret faults*;" and for grace, that by its restraints, and preventions, and assistances, it may be "*kept back from presumptuous sins*," and if unhappily engaged, that it may be freed at least from the "*dominion*" of them—"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me," etc.—*Adam Littleton*.

Verse 12. The prophet saith, "*Who can understand his own faults?*" No man can, but God can; therefore reason after this manner, as Saint Bernard saith: I know and am known; I know but in part, but God knows me and knows me wholly; but what I know I know but in part. So the apostle reasons; "I know nothing of myself, yet am I not hereby justified."

Admit that thou keepest thyself so free, and renewest thy repentance so daily that thou knowest nothing by thyself, yet mark what the apostle adds further; "Notwithstanding, I do not judge myself; I am not hereby justified, but he that judges me is the Lord." This is the condition of all men; he that is

infinite knows them; therefore they should not dare to judge themselves, but with the prophet David, in Psalm 19, entreat the Lord that he would cleanse them from their secret sins.—*Richard Stock*.

Verse 12. "Who can understand his own errors?" None can to the depth and bottom. In this question there are two considerables: 1. A concession; 2. A confession. He makes a grant that *our life is full of errors*; and the Scriptures say the same, while they affirm that "All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6); "I have gone astray like a lost sheep" Psalm 119:176; that the "house of Israel" hath "lost sheep," Matthew 10:6. I need not reckon up the particulars, as the errors of our senses, understandings, consciences, judgments, wills, affections, desires, actions, and occurrences. The whole man *in nature* is like a tree nipped at root, which brings forth worm-eaten fruits. The whole man *in life* is like an instrument out of tune, which jars at every stroke. If we cannot understand them, certainly they are very many.—*Robert Abbot*, 1646.

Verse 12. "Who can understand his errors?" If a man repent not until he have made confession of all his sins in the ear of his ghostly father, if a man cannot have absolution of his sins until his sins be told by tale and number in the priest's ear; in that, as David saith, *none* can understand, much less, then, utter all his sins: *Delicta quis intelligat? "Who can understand his sins?"* In that David of himself complaineth elsewhere how that his "sins are overflowed his head, and as a heavy burden do depress him" (Psalm 38:4); alas! shall not a man by this doctrine be utterly driven from repentance? Though they have gone about something to make plasters for their sores, of confession or attrition to assuage their pain, bidding a man to hope well of his contrition, though it be not so full as required, and of his confession, though he have not numbered all his sins, if so be that he do so much as in him lieth: dearly beloved, in that there is none but that herein he is guilty (for who doth as much as he may?) trow ye that this plaster is not like salt for sore eyes? Yes, undoubtedly, when they have done all they can for the appeasing of consciences in these points, this is the sum, that we yet should hope well, but yet so hope that we must stand in a mammering (Hesitating) and doubting whether our sins be forgiven. For to believe *remissionem peccatorum*, that is to be certain of "forgiveness of sins," as our creed teacheth us, they count it a presumption. Oh, abomination! and that not only herein, but in all their pennance as they paint it.—*John Bradford (Martyr)*, 1510-1555.

Verse 12. "Who can understand his errors?" By "errors" he means his unwitting and inconsiderate mistakes. There are sins, some of which are committed when the sun shines—*i.e.*, with light and knowledge; and then, as it is with colours when the sun shines, you may see them; so these, a man can see, and know, and confess them particularly to be transgressions. There are other sins which are committed either in the times of ignorance, or else (if there be knowledge), yet with unobservance. Either of these may be so heaped up in the particular number of them, that as a man did when he did commit them, take no notice of them; so now, after the commission, if he should take the brightest candle to search all the records of his soul, yet many of them would escape his notice.

And, indeed, this is a great part of our misery, that we cannot understand all our debts. We can easily see too many, yet many more lie, as it were, dead and out of sight. To sin is one great misery, and then to forget our sins is a misery too. If in repentance we could set the battle in array, point to every individual sin in the true and particular times of acting and re-acting, oh, how would our hearts be more broken with shame and sorrow, and how would we adore the richness of the treasure of mercy which must have a multitude in it to pardon the multitude of our infinite errors and sins. But this is the comfort; though we cannot understand every particular sin, or time of sinning, yet if we be not idle to search and cast over the books, and if we be heartily grieved for these sins which we have found out, and can by true repentance turn from them unto God, and by faith unto the blood of Jesus Christ, I say that God, who knows our sins better than we can know them, and who understands the true intentions and dispositions of the heart—that if it did see the unknown sins it would be answerably carried against them—he will for his own mercy sake forgive them, and he, too, will not remember them. Nevertheless, though David saith, "*Who can understand his errors?*" as the prophet Jeremiah spake also, "The heart of man is desperately wicked, who can know it?" yet must we bestir ourselves at heaven to get more and more heavenly light, to find out more and more of our sinnings. So the Lord can search the heart; and, though we shall never be able to find out all our sins which we have committed, yet it is proper and beneficial for us to find out yet more sins than yet we do know. And you shall find these in your own experience; that as soon as ever grace entered your hearts, you saw sin in another way than you ever saw it before; yea, and the more grace hath traversed and increased in the soul, the more full discoveries hath it made of sins. It hath shown new sins as it were; new sins, not for their being, not as if they were not in the heart and life before, but for their evidence and our apprehension. We do now see such wages and such inclinations to be sinful which we did not think to be so before. As physic brings those humours which had their residence before now more to the sense of the patient, or as the sun makes open the motes of dust which were in the room before, so doth the light of the word discover more corruption.—*Obadiah Sedgwick*.

Verse 12. "Who can understand his errors?" Who can tell how oft he offendeth? No man. The hairs of a man's head may be told, the stars appear in multitudes, yet some have undertaken to reckon them; but no arithmetic can number our sins. Before we can recount a thousand we shall commit ten thousand more; and so rather multiply by addition than divide by subtraction; there is no possibility of numeration. Like Hydra's head, while we are cutting off twenty by repentance, we find a hundred more grown up. It is just, then, that infinite sorrows shall follow infinite sins.—*Thomas Adams*.

Verse 12. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." It is the desire of a holy person to be cleansed, not only from public, but also from *private and secret sins*. Romans 7:24. "O wretched man (saith Paul), who shall deliver me?" Why, O blessed apostle! what is it that holds thee? What is it that molests thee? Thy life, thou sayest, was unblamable before thy conversion, and since thy conversion.

Philippians 3. Thou hast exercised thyself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Acts 24:16. And yet thou criest out, "O wretched man," and yet thou complainest, "Who shall deliver me?" Verily, brethren, it was not sin abroad, but at home: it was not sin without, but at this time sin within; it was not Paul's sinning with man, but Paul's sinning within Paul: oh! that "law of his members warring (secretly within him) against the law of his mind;" this, this made that holy man so to cry out, so to complain. As Rebekah was weary of her life, not as we read for any foreign disquietments, but because of domestic troubles: "The daughters of Heth" within the house made her "weary of her life;" so the private and secret birth of corruption within Paul— the workings of that—that was the cause of his trouble, that was the ground of his exclamation and desires, "Who shall deliver me?" I remember that the same Paul adviseth the Ephesians as "to put off the former conversation" so "to put on the renewed spirit of the mind" (Ephesians 4:22, 23); intimating that there are sins lurking within as well as sins walking without; and that true Christians must not only sweep the door, but wash the chamber; my meaning is, not only come off from the sins which lie open in the conversation, but also labour to be cleansed from sin and sinning which remain secret and hidden in the spirit and inward disposition.—*Obadiah Sedgwick.*

Verse 12. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." Learn to see thy spots. Many have unknown sins, as a man may have a mole on his back and himself never know it. Lord, cleanse me from my secret faults. But have we not spots whereof we are not ignorant? In diseases sometimes nature is strong enough to put forth spots, and there she cries to us by these outward declarations that we are sick. Sometimes she cannot do it but by the force of cordials. Sometimes conscience of herself shows us our sins; sometimes she cannot but by medicines, arguments that convince us out of the holy word. Some can see, and will not, as Balaam; some would see, and cannot, as the eunuch; some neither will nor can, as Pharaoh; some both can and will, as David. . . . We have many spots which God does not hear from us, because we see them not in ourselves. Who will acknowledge that error, whereof he does not know himself guilty? The sight of sins is a great happiness, for it causeth an ingenuous confession.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." The law of the Lord is so holy that forgiveness must be prayed for, even for hidden sins. (*Note*—This was a principal text of the Reformers against the auricular confession of the Roman Catholics.)—*T. C. Barth's "Bible Manual."* 1865.

Verse 12. "Secret faults." Sins may be termed "secret" either, 1. *When they are coloured and disguised*—though they do fly abroad, yet not under that name, but apparelled with some semblance of virtues. Cyprian complains of such tricks in his second epistle, which is to Donatus. 2. *When they are kept off from the stage of the world;* they are like fire in the chimney; though you do not see it, yet it burns. So many a person, like those in Ezekiel, "commit abominations in secret"—that is, so as the public eye is not upon them. He is sinful, and acts it with the greatest vileness; all the difference

betwixt another sinner and him is this—that he is, and the other saith he is, a sinner. Just as 'twixt a book shut and a book opened; that which is shut hath the same lines and words, but the other being opened every man may see and read them. 3. *When they are kept, not only from the public eye, but from any mortal eye;* that is, the carnal eye of him who commits the sins sees them not; he doth, indeed, see them with the eye of conscience, but not with the eye of natural sense. Even those persons with whom he doth have converse, and who highly commend the frame of his ways, cannot yet see the secret discourings and actings of sin in his mind and heart. For, brethren, all the actings of sin are not without, they are not visible; but there are some, yes, the most dangerous actings within the soul, where corruption lies as a fountain and root. The heart of man is a scheme of wickedness; nay, a man saith that in his heart which he dares not speak with his tongue, and his thought will do that which his hands dare not to execute. Well, then, sin may be called "*secret*" when it is sin, and acted as sin, even there, where none but God and conscience can see. Methinks sin is like a candle in a lantern, where the shining is first within and then bursting out at the windows; or like evils and ulcerous humours, which are scabs and scurvy stuff, first within the skin, and afterwards they break out to the view on the outside. So it is with sin; it is a malignant humour and a fretting leprosy, diffusing itself into several secret acts and workings within the mind, and then it breaks abroad and dares adventure the practice of itself to the eye of the world; and be it that it may never see the light, that it may be like a child born and buried in the womb, yet as that child is a man, a true man there closeted in that hidden frame of nature, so sin is truly sin, though it never gets out beyond the womb which did conceive and enliven it.—*Obadiah Sedgwick*.

Verse 12. "Secret faults." "Secret sins" are more dangerous to the person in some respects than open sins. For a man doth, by his art of sinning, deprive himself of the help of his sinfulness. Like him who will carry his wound covered, or who bleeds inwardly, help comes not in because the danger is not descried or known. If a man's sin breaks out there is a minister at hand, a friend near, and others to reprove, to warn, to direct; but when he is the artificer of his lusts, he bars himself of all public remedy, and takes great order and care to damn his soul, by covering his "*secret sins*" with some plausible varnish which may beget a good opinion in others of his ways. A man does by his secrecy give the reins unto corruption: the mind is fed all the day long either with sinful contemplations or projectings, so that the very strength of the soul is wasted and corrupted. Nay, *secret actings do but heat and inflame natural corruption*. As in shouldering in a crowd, when one hath got out of the door, two or three are ready to fall out after; so when a man hath given his heart leave to act a secret sin, this begets a present, and quick, and strong flame in corruption to repeat and multiply and throng out the acts. Sinful acts are not only fruits of sin, but helps and strengths, all sinning being more sinful by more sinning, not only in the effects but in the cause: the spring and cause of sin will grow mad and insolent hereby, and more corrupt; this being a truth, that if the heart gives way for one sin, it will be

ready for the next; if it will yield to bring forth once at the devil's pleasure, it will bring forth twice by its own motion. A man by "*secret sins*" doth but polish and square the hypocrisy of his heart: he doth strive to be an exact hypocrite; and the more cunning he is in the palliating of his sinnings, the more perfect he is in his hypocrisy.—*Obadiah Sedgwick*.

Verse 12. "*Secret faults*." Beware of committing acts which it will be necessary to conceal. There is a singular poem by Hood, called "The Dream of Eugene Aram"—a most remarkable piece it is indeed, illustrating the point on which we are now dwelling. Aram had murdered a man, and cast his body into the river—"a sluggish water, black as ink, the depth was so extreme." The next morning he visited the scene of his guilt—

"And sought the black accursed pool,
With a wild misgiving eye;
And he saw the dead in the river bed,
For the faithless stream was dry."

Next he covered the corpse with heaps of leaves, but a mighty wind swept through the wood and left the secret bare before the sun—

"Then down I cast me on my face,
And first began to weep,
For I knew my secret then was one
That earth refused to keep:
On land or sea though it should be
Ten thousand fathoms deep."

In plaintive notes he prophesies his own discovery. He buried his victim in a cave, and trod him down with stones, but when years had run their weary round, the foul deed was discovered and the murderer put to death.

Guilt is a "grim chamberlain," even when his fingers are not bloody red. Secret sins bring fevered eyes and sleepless nights, until men burn out their consciences, and become in very deed ripe for the pit. Hypocrisy is a hard game to play at, for it is one deceiver against many observers; and for certain it is a miserable trade, which will earn at last, as its certain climax, a tremendous bankruptcy. Ah! ye who have sinned without discovery, "Be sure your sin will find you out;" and bethink you, it may find you out ere long. Sin, like murder, will come out; men will even tell tales about themselves in their dreams. God has made men to be so wretched in their consciences that they have been obliged to stand forth and confess the truth. Secret sinner! if thou wantest the foretaste of damnation upon earth, continue in thy secret sins; for no man is more miserable than he who sinneth secretly, and yet trieth to preserve a character. Yon stag, followed by the hungry hounds, with open mouths, is far more happy than the man who is pursued by his sins. Yon bird, taken in the fowler's net, and

labouring to escape, is far more happy than he who hath weaved around himself a web of deception, and labours to escape from it, day by day making the toils more thick and the web more strong. Oh the misery of secret sins! One may well pray, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."—*Spurgeon's Sermons* (No. 116), on "*Secret Sins*."

Verse 12. The sin through ignorance (Heb.) is the same that David prays against in Psalm 19:12, "Who can understand his *errors* (Heb.)? cleanse thou me from secret things!" These are not sins of omission, but acts committed by a person, when at the time, he did not suppose that what he did was sin. Although he did the thing deliberately, yet he did not perceive the sin of it. So deceitful is sin, we may be committing that abominable thing which casts angels into an immediate and an eternal hell, and yet at the moment be totally unaware! Want of knowledge of the truth, and too little tenderness of conscience hide it from us. Hardness of heart and a corrupt nature cause us to sin unperceived. But here again the form of the Son of Man appears! Jehovah, God of Israel, institutes sacrifice for *sins of ignorance*, and thereby discovers the same compassionate and considerate heart that appears in our High Priest, "who can have compassion on *the ignorant!*" Hebrews 5:2. Amidst the types of this tabernacle, we recognize the presence of Jesus—it is his voice that shakes the curtains, and speaks in the ear of Moses, "If a soul shall sin through ignorance!" The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!—*Andrew A. Bonar, in "Commentary on Leviticus,"* ch. iv. v. 2.

Verse 12 (*last clause*). This is a singular difference between pharisaical and real sanctity: that is curious to look abroad, but seeth nothing at home: so that Pharisee condemned the Publican, and saw nothing in himself worthy of blame; but this careful to look at home, and searcheth into the secret corners, the very spirit of the mind. So did good David when he prayed, "*Cleanse thou me from secret faults.*"—*Nathanael Hardy*.

Verse 12. Our corruptions have made us such combustible matter, that there is scarce a dart thrown at us in vain: when Satan tempts us, it is but like the casting of fire into tinder, that presently catcheth: our hearts kindle upon the least spark that falls; as a vessel that is brimful of water, upon the least jog, runs over. Were we but true to ourselves, though the devil might knock by his temptations, yet he could never burst open the everlasting doors of our hearts by force or violence; but alas! we ourselves are not all of one heart and one mind: Satan hath got a strong party within us, that, as soon as he knocks, opens to him, and entertains him. And hence it is, that many times, small temptations and very petty occasions draw forth great corruptions: as a vessel, that is full of new liquor, upon the least vent given, works over into foam and froth; so truly, our hearts, almost upon every slight and trivial temptation, make that inbred corruption that lodgeth there, swell and boil, and run over into abundance of scum and filth in our lives and conversations.—*Ezekiel Hopkins*.

Verse 12. Sins are many times hid from the godly man's eye, though he commits them, because he is not diligent and accurate in making a search of himself, and in an impartial studying of his own ways.

If any sin be hid, as Saul was behind the stuff, or as Rahab had hid the spies, unless a man be very careful to search, he shall think no sin is there where it is. Hence it is that the Scripture doth so often command that duty of *searching* and *trying*, of examining and communing with our hearts. Now what need were there of this duty, but that it is supposed many secret and subtle lusts lie lurking in our hearts, which we take no notice of? If then the godly would find out their hidden lusts, know the sins they not yet know, they must more impartially judge themselves; they must take time to survey and examine themselves; they must not in an overly and slight manner, but really and industriously look up and down as they would search for thieves; and they must again and again look into this dark corner, and that dark corner of their hearts, as the woman sought for the lost groat. This self-scrutiny, and self-judging, this winnowing and sifting of ourselves, is the only way to see what is chaff and what is wheat, what is mere refuse and what is enduring.—*Anthony Burgess*.

Verse 12. Sin is of a growing and advancing nature. From weakness to willfulness, from ignorance to presumption, is its ordinary course and progress. The cloud that Elijah's man saw, was at first no bigger than a hand's-breadth, and it threatened no such thing as a general tempest; but yet, at last, it overspread the face of the whole heavens; so truly, a sin that at first ariseth in the soul but as a small mist, and is scarcely discernable; yet, if it be not scattered by the breath of prayer, it will at length overspread the whole life, and become most tempestuous and raging. And therefore, David, as one experienced in the deceitfulness of sin, doth thus digest and methodise his prayer: first against secret and lesser sins; and then against the more gross and notorious; as knowing the one proceeds and issues from the other: Lord, *cleanse me from my secret faults*; and this will be a most effectual means to preserve and *keep thy servant from presumptuous sins*.—*Ezekiel Hopkins*.

Verse 12, 13. That there is a difference betwixt *infirmities* and *presumptuous sins* is not to be denied; it is expressly in the holy Scripture. Papists say that the man who doth a mortal sin is not in the state of grace; but for venials, a man may commit (in their divinity) who can tell how many of them, and yet be in Christ for all that! I hope there is no such meaning in any of our divines as to tie up men's consciences, to hang on such a distinction of sins; since it is beyond the wit of man to set down a distinct point between mortal and venial sins. Now when it is an impossible matter punctually to set down to the understanding of man which is, and which is not a venial sin, they must pardon me for giving the least way to such divinity as must needs leave the conscience of a man in a maze and labyrinth. I find that the nature of infirmities doth so depend upon circumstances, that that is an infirmity in one man which is a gross sin in another; and some men plead for themselves that the things they do are but infirmities. He that *will* sin, and when he hath done will say—not to comfort his soul against Satan, but—to flatter himself in his sin, that it is but an infirmity; for aught I know, he may go to hell for his infirmities. Besides, if that be good divinity, that a man who is in the state of grace may do infirmities, but not commit gross sins, then I would I could see a man that would undertake to

find us out some rule out of the word, by which a sinner may find by his sin, when he is in Christ and when out of Christ; at what degree of sinning—where lies the mathematical point and stop—that a man may say, "Thus far may I go and yet be in grace; but if I step a step farther, then I am none of Christ's." We all know that sins have their latitude; and for a man to hang his conscience on such a distinction as hath no rule to define where the difference lies, is not safe divinity. The conscience on the rack will not be laid and said with forms and quiddities. The best and nearest way to quiet the heart of man is to say, that be the sin a sin of *infirmity* when we strive and strive but yield at last; or, of *precipitancy*, when we be taken in haste, as he was who said in his haste, "All men are liars;" or, a mere *gross* sin in the matter: ay, say it be a *presumptuous* sin, yet if we allow it not, it hinders not but we are in Christ, though we do with reluctancy act and commit it. And I say that we do resist it if we do not allow it. For let us not go about to deny that a godly man during his being a godly man may possibly commit *gross* and *presumptuous sins*; and for infirmities, if we allow them and like them that we know to be sins, then we do not resist them; and such a man who allows himself in one is guilty of all, and is none of Christ's as yet. Be the sin what it will, James makes no distinction; and, where the law distinguisheth not, we must not distinguish. I speak not of *doing* a sin, but *allowing*; for a man may do it, and yet allow it not; as in Paul (Romans 7:15, 16), "That which I would not, that I do;" and he that allows not sin doth resist it. Therefore, a man may resist it, hate it, and yet do it. All the difference that I know is this: 1. That a man may live after his conversion all his days, and yet never fall into a gross sin. By gross here I mean *presumptuous* sins also. So David saith not "*cleanse*," but "*KEEP BACK thy servant from presumptuous sins.*" We may, then, be *kept* from them. I speak not that all are, but some be; and, therefore, in itself all might be. 2. For lesser sins, "*secret faults*," we cannot live without them—they are of daily and almost hourly incursion; but yet we must be *cleansed* from them, as David speaks. Daily get your pardon; there is a pardon, of course, for them; they do not usually distract and plague the conscience, but yet we must not see them and allow them; if we do our case is to be pitied, we are none of Christ's as yet. 3. Great staring sins a man cannot usually and commonly practise them, but he shall allow them. So Psalm 19:13, "*Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me,*" implying that except we be kept back from them they will *have dominion over us*. It follows, "*then shall I be upright;*" so that the man in whom *gross or presumptuous sins or sins* have no *dominion*, he is an *upright man*.—Richard Capel.

Verses 12, 13. The psalmist was sensible of sin's force and power; he was weary of sin's dominion; he cries unto God to deliver him from the reign of all the sins he knew; and those sins which were secret and concealed from his view, he begs that he might be convinced of them, and thoroughly cleansed from them. The Lord can turn the heart perfectly to hate the sin that was most of all beloved; and the strength of sin is gone when once 'tis hated; and as the hatred grows stronger and stronger, sin becomes weaker and weaker daily.—Nathaniel Vincent, 1695.

Verse 13. "*Keep back thy servant also from all presumptuous sins.*" He doth desire absolutely to be kept from "*presumptuous sins;*" but then, he adds by way of supposition and reserve, that if he could not by reason of his naughty heart be kept from them, yet that they might not have full power and dominion over him.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 13. "*Keep back thy servant.*" It is an evil man's cross to be restrained, and a good man's joy to be *kept back* from sin. When sin puts forth itself, the evil man is putting forth his hand to the sin; but when sin puts forth itself, the good man is putting forth his hand to heaven; if he finds his heart yielding, out he cries, *O keep back thy servant.* An evil man is *kept back* from sin, as a friend from a friend, as a lover from his lover, with knit affections and projects of meeting; but a good man is *kept back* from sin, as a man from his deadly enemy, whose presence he hates, and with desires of his ruin and destruction. It is the good man's misery that he hath yet a heart to be more tamed and mastered; it is an evil man's vexation and discontent, that still, or at any time, he is held in by cord or bridle. And thus you see what David aims at in desiring to be *kept back from presumptuous sins,* namely, not a mere suspension, but a mortification, not a not acting only, but a subduing of the inclination; not for a time, but for ever.—*Obadiah Sedgwick.*

Verse 13. "*Keep back thy servant,*" etc. Even all the people of God, were they not kept by God's grace and power, they would every moment be undone both in soul and body. It is not our grace, our prayer, our watchfulness keeps us, but it is in the power of God, his right arm, supports us; we may see David praying to God that he would "*keep*" him in both these respects from temporal dangers (Psalm 18:8, 9; "*keep me*,") etc.; where he doth not only pray to be kept, but he doth insinuate how carefully God keeps his people, and in what precious account their safety is, even as "the apple of the eye," and for spiritual preservation he often begs it. Though David be God's "*servant*" yet he will, like a wild horse, run violently, and that into "*presumptuous sins,*" if God "*keep*" him not "*back,*" yea, he prayeth that God would "*keep*" the particular parts of his body that they sin not: "keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3); he entreateth God to "*keep*" his lips and to set a watch about his mouth, as if he were not able to set guard sure enough: thus much more are we to pray that God would "*keep*" our hearts, our minds, our wills, our affections, for they are more masterful.—*Anthony Burgess.*

Verse 13. "*Keep back thy servant.*" God *keeps back* his servants from sin, 1. *By preventing grace,* which is, by infusing such a nature as is like a bias into a bowl, drawing it aside another way; 2. *By assisting grace,* which is a further strength superadded to that first-implanted nature of holiness; like a hand upon a child holding him in; 3. *By quickening grace,* which is, when God doth enliven our graces to manifest themselves in actual opposition; so that the soul shall not yield, but keep off from entertaining the sin; 4. *By directing grace,* which is, when God confers that effectual wisdom to the mind, tenderness to the conscience, watchfulness to the heart, that his servants become greatly solicitous of his honour, scrupulously jealous of their own strength, and justly regardful of the honour

of their holy profession; 5. *By doing grace*, which is, when God effectually inclines the hearts of his servants to the places and ways of their refuge, safeties, and preservations from sin, by enlarging the spirit of supplication, and framing the heart to the reverent and affectionate use of his ordinances.—*Condensed from Obadiah Sedgwick.*

Verse 13. "*Thy servant:*" as if he had said, "O God, thou art my Lord, I have chosen thee, to whom I will give obedience; thou art he whom I will follow; I bestow all that I am on thee. Now a lord will help his servant against an enemy, who for the lord's service is the servant's enemy. O my Lord, help me! I am not able by my own strength to uphold myself, but thou art All-sufficiency"—"*Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.*" . . . Beloved, it is a great thing to stand in near relations to God; and then it is a good thing to plead by them with God, forso much as nearer relations have strongest force with all. The servant can do more than a stranger, and the child than a servant, and the wife than a child. . . . There be many reasons against sinning . . . Now this also may come in, namely, the specialty of our relation to God, that we are his children, and he is our Father; we are his servants, and he is our Lord: though the common obligations are many and sufficient, yet the special relations are also a further tie: the more near a person comes to God, the more careful he should be not to sin against God.—*Obadiah Sedgwick.*

Verse 13. "*Presumptuous sins.*" The Rabbins distinguish all sins unto those committed (Heb.) *ignorantly*, and (Heb.) *presumptuously*.—*Benjamin Kennicott, D.D., 1718-1783.*

Verse 13. "*Presumptuous sins.*" When sin grows up from act to delight, from delight to new acts, from repetition of sinful acts to vicious indulgence, to habit and custom and a second nature, so that anything that toucheth upon it is grievous, and strikes to the man's heart; when it is got into God's place, and requires to be loved with the whole strength, makes grace strike sail, and other vices do it homage, demands all his concerns to be sacrificed to it and to be served with his reputation, his fortunes, his parts, his body, and soul, to the irreparable loss of his time and eternity both—this is the height of its *dominion*—then sin becomes "exceedingly sinful," and must needs make strange and sad alterations in the state of saints themselves, and be great hindrances to them in their way to Heaven, having brought them so near to Hell.—*Adam Littleton.*

Verse 13. "*Presumptuous sins.*" The distribution of sins into sins of *ignorance*, of *infirmity*, and of *presumption*, is very usual and very useful, and complete enough without the addition (which some make) of a fourth sort, to wit, sins of *negligence* or *inadvertency*, all such sins being easily reducible to some of the former three. The ground of the distinction is laid in the soul of man, where there are three distinct prime faculties, from which all our actions flow—the understanding, the will, and the sensual appetite or affections. . . . The enquiry must be, when a sin is done, where the fault lay most; and thence it must have the right denomination. 1. If the *understanding* be most in fault, not apprehending that good it should, or not aright, the sin so done, though possibly it may have in it

somewhat both of infirmity and presumption withal, is yet properly a sin of *ignorance*. 2. If the main fault be in the *affections*, through some sudden passion or perturbation of mind, blinding, or corrupting, or but outrunning the judgment—as of fear, anger, desire, joy, or any of the rest—the sin thence arising, though perhaps joined with some ignorance or presumption withal, is yet properly a sin of *infirmity*. But if the understanding be completely informed with knowledge, and not much blinded or transported with the incursion of any sudden, or violence of any vehement perturbation, so as the greatest blame must remain upon the untowardness of the *will*, resolutely bent upon the evil, the sin arising from such *willfulness*, though probably not free from all mixture of ignorance and infirmity withal, is yet properly a *wilful presumption*, such a *presumptuous sin* as we are now in treaty of. Rules are soonest learned and best remembered when illustrated with fit examples; and of such the rich storehouse of the Scripture affordeth us in each kind variety and choice enough, whence it shall suffice us to propose but one eminent of each sort. *The men*, all of them for their holiness, of singular and worthy renown: David, St. Peter, and St. Paul. *The sins*, all of them for their matter, of the greatest magnitude: murdering of the innocent, abnegation of Christ, persecution of the church: Paul's persecution a grievous sin, yet a sin of *ignorance*; Peter's denial a grievous sin, yet a sin of *infirmity*; David's murder, a far more grievous sin than either of both, because a sin of *presumption*. St. Paul, before his conversion, whilst he was Saul, persecuted and wasted the church of God to the utmost of his power, making havoc of the professors of Christ, entering into their very houses, and haling thence to prison, both men and women; and posting abroad with letters into remote quarters, to do all the mischief he could, everywhere with great fury, as if he had been mad, breathing out, wherever he came, nothing but threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. His *affections* were not set against them through any personal provocations, but merely out of zeal to the law; and surely his zeal had been good had it not been blind. Nor did his *will* run cross to his judgment, but was led by it, for he "verily thought in himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus;" and verily his will had been good had it not been misled. But the error was in his *understanding*, his judgment being not yet actually convinced of the truth of the Christian religion. He was yet fully persuaded that Jesus was an impostor, and Christianity a pestilent sect, raised by Satan, to the disgrace and prejudice of Moses and the law. If these things had indeed been so, as he apprehended them, his *affections* and *will*, in seeking to root out such a sect, had been not only blameless but commendable. It was his erroneous judgment that poisoned all, and made that which otherwise had been zeal, to become persecution. But, however, the first discernable obliquity therein being in the *understanding*, that persecution of his was therefore a *sin of ignorance*, so called, and under that name condemned by himself. 1 Timothy 1:13. But such was not Peter's denial of his Master. He *knew* well enough who he was having conversed so long with him, and having, long before, so amply confessed him. And he *knew* also that he ought not, for anything in the world, to

have denied him. That made him so confident before that he *would not* do it, because he was abundantly satisfied that he *should not* do it. Evident it is, then, that Peter wanted no *knowledge*, either of the Master's person, or of his own duty; and so no plea left him of *ignorance*, either *facti* or *juris*. Nor was the fault so much in his *will* as to make it a sin properly of *presumption*. For albeit *de facto* he did deny him when he was put to it, and that with fearful oaths and imprecations, yet was it not done with any premeditated apostacy, or out of design, yea, he came rather with a *contrary resolution*, and he still honoured his Master *in his heart*, even then when he denied him with his tongue; and as soon as ever the watchword was given him by the second cock, to prefer to his consideration what he had done, it grieved him sore that he had so done, and he wept bitterly for it. We find no circumstance, in the whole relation, that argueth any deep obstinacy in his *will*. But in his *affections*, then! Alas! there was the fail! A sudden qualm of fear surprising his soul when he saw his Master so despitefully used before his face (which made him apprehensive of what hard usage himself might fall under if he should there and then have owned him) took from him for that time the benefit and use of his reason, and so drew all his thoughts to this one point—how to decline the present danger—that he had never a thought at so much liberty as to consult his judgment, whether it were a sin or no. And this, proceeding from such a sudden distemper of passion, Peter's denial was a sin properly of *infirmity*. But David's sin, in contriving the death of Uriah, was of a yet higher pitch, and of a deeper dye than either of these. He was no such stranger in the law of God as not to know that the wilful murder of an innocent party, such as he also knew Uriah to be, was a most loud crying sin; and therefore nothing surer than that it was not merely a sin of *ignorance*. Neither yet was it a sin properly of *infirmity*, and so capable of that extenuating circumstance of being done in the heat of anger, as his uncleanness with Bathsheba was in the heat of lust, although that extenuation will not be allowed to pass there, unless *in tanto* only, and as it standeth in comparison with this fouler crime. But having time and leisure enough to bethink himself what he was about, he doth it *in cool blood*, and with much advised *deliberation*, plotting and contriving this way and that way to perfect his design. He was *resolved*, whatsoever should become of it, to have it done; in regard of which *settled resolution of his will*, this sin of David was therefore a high *presumptuous sin*.—Robert Sanderson (Bishop of Lincoln), 1587-1662-3.

Verse 13. "*Presumptuous sins*." David prays that God would keep him back from "*presumptuous sins*," from known and evident sins, such as proceed from the choice of the perverse will against the enlightened mind, which are committed with deliberation, with design, resolution, and eagerness, against the checks of conscience, and the motions of God's spirit: such sins are direct rebellion against God, a despising of his command, and they provoke his pure eyes.—Alexander Cruden.

Verse 13. "*Then shall I be innocent from the great transgression*." It is in the motions of a tempted soul to sin, as in the motions of a stone falling from the brow of a hill; it is easily stopped at first, but

when once it is set a-going, who shall stay it? And therefore it is the greatest wisdom in the world to observe the first motions of the heart, to check and stop it there.—*G. H. Salter.*

Verse 13. "The great transgression." Watch very diligently against all sin; but above all, take special heed of those sins that come near to the sin against the Holy Ghost; and these are, hypocrisy, taking only the outward profession of religion, and so dissembling and mocking of God; sinning wilfully against conviction of conscience, and against great light and knowledge, sinning presumptuously, with a high hand. These sins, though none of them are the direct sin against the Holy Ghost, yet they will come very near to it: therefore take special heed of them, lest they, in time, should bring you to the committing of that unpardonable sin.—*Robert Russel, 1705.*

Verse 13. "Let them not have dominion over me." Any small sin may get the upper-hand of the sinner and bring him under in time, and after that is once habituated by long custom so as he cannot easily shake off the yoke, neither redeem himself from under the tyranny thereof. We see the experiment of it but too often, and too evidently in our common swearers and drunkards. Yet do such kind of sins, for the most part, grow on by little and little, steal into the throne insensibly, and do not *exercise dominion* over the enslaved soul till they have got strength *by many and multiplied acts*. But a *presumptuous sin* worketh a great alteration in the state of the soul *at once*, and by one single act advanceth marvelously, weakening the spirit, and giving a mighty advantage to the flesh, even to the hazard of a *complete conquest*.—*Robert Sanderson.*

Verse 13. To sin presumptuously is the highest step. So in David's account; for first he prays, "*Lord, keep me from secret sins,*" which he maketh sins of ignorance, and then next he prays against "*presumptuous sins,*" which, as the opposition shows, are sins against knowledge; for says he, "if they get dominion over me, I shall not be free from that great offence," that is, that unpardonable sin which shall never be forgiven: so as these are nearest it of any other, yet not so as that every one that falls into such a sin commits it, but he is nigh to it, at the next step to it. For to commit that sin, but two things are required—light in the mind, and malice in the heart; not malice alone, unless there be light, for then that apostle had sinned it, so as knowledge is the parent of it, it is "after receiving the knowledge of the truth." Hebrews 10:27, 28.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 13. Happy souls, who, under a sense of peace through the blood of Jesus, are daily praying to be kept by the grace of the Spirit. Such truly know themselves, see their danger of falling, will not, dare not palliate or lessen the odious nature, and hateful deformity of their sin. They will not give a softer name to sin than it deserves, lest they depreciate the infinite value of that precious blood which Jesus shed to atone its guilt. Far will they be from flattering themselves into a deceitful notion that they are perfect, and have no sin in them. The spirit of truth delivers them from such errors; he teacheth them as poor sinners to look to the Saviour, and to beseech him to "*keep back*" the headstrong passions, the unruly lusts and evil concupiscences which dwell in their sinful natures.

Alas! the most exalted saint, the most established believer, if left to himself, how soon might the blackest crimes, the most "*presumptuous sins*," get the "*dominion*" over him! David had woful experience of this for a season. He prays from a heartfelt sense of past misery, and the dread of future danger, and he found the blessing of that covenant-promise: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Romans 6:14.—*William Mason*, 1719-1791, in "*A Spiritual Treasury for the Children of God*."

Verse 14. "*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord*," was David's prayer. David could not bear it, that a word, or a thought of his should miss acceptance with God. It did not satisfy him that his actions were well witnessed unto men on earth, unless his very thoughts were witnessed to by the Lord in heaven.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 14. "*Let the words of my mouth*," etc. The best of men have their failing, and an honest Christian may be a weak one; but weak as he may be, the goodness and sincerity of his heart will entitle him to put the petition of this verse, which no hypocrite or cunning deceiver can ever make use of,—*Thomas Sherlock (Bishop)*, 1676-1761.

Verse 14. "*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer*." Fast and pray; Lord, I do fast, and I would pray; for to what end do I withhold sustenance from my body if it be not the more to cheer up my soul? my hungry, my thirsty soul? But the bread, the water of life, both which I find nowhere but in thy word, I partake not but by exercising my soul therein. This I begin to do, and fain would do it well, but in vain shall I attempt except thou do bless: bless me then, O Lord; bless either part of me, both are thine, and I would withhold neither part from thee. Not my body; I would set my tongue on work to speak of thee; not my soul, I would exercise my heart in thinking on thee; I would join them in devotion which thou hast joined in creation. Yea, Lord, as they have conspired to sin against thee, so do they nor consort to do their duty to thee; my tongue is ready, my heart is ready; I would think, I would speak; think upon thee, speak to thee. But, Lord, what are my *words*? what are my *thoughts*? Thou knowest the thoughts of men, that they are altogether vanity, and our words are but the blast of such thoughts; both are vile. It were well it were no more; both are wicked, my heart a corrupt fountain, and my tongue an unclean stream; and shall I bring such a sacrifice to God? The halt, the lame, the blind, though otherwise the beasts be clean, yet are they sacrifices abominable to God: how much more if we offer those beasts which are unclean? And yet, Lord, my sacrifice is no better, faltering words, wandering thoughts, are neither of them presentable to thee; how much less evil thoughts and idle words? Yet such are the best of mine. What remedy? If any, it is in thee, O Lord, that I must find it, and for it now do I seek unto thee. Thou only, O Lord, canst hallow my tongue, and hallow my heart that my tongue may speak, and my heart think that which may "*be acceptable unto thee*," yea, that which may be thy delight. Do not I lavish? Were it not enough that God should bear with, that he

should not publish, the defects of my words, of my thoughts? May I presume that God shall accept of me? nay, delight in me? Forget I who the Lord is? Of what majesty? Of what felicity? Can it stand with his Majesty to vouchsafe acceptance? with his felicity to take content in the words of a worm? in the thoughts of a wretch? And, Lord, I am too proud that villify myself so little, and magnify thee no more. But see whither the desire of thy servant doth carry him; how, willing to please, I consider not how hard it is for dust and ashes to please God, to do that wherein God should take content. But Lord, here is my comfort that I may set God to give content unto God; God is *mine*, and I cannot want access unto God, if God may approach himself. Let me be weak, yet God is strong; O Lord, thou art *"my strength."* Let me be a slave to sin, God is a *Saviour*; O Lord, thou art *my Saviour*; thou hast *redeemed* me from all that woful state whereunto Adam cast me, yea, thou hast built me upon a rock, strong and sure, that the gates of hell might never prevail against me. These two things hast thou done for me, O Lord, and what may not he presume of for whom thou hast done these things! I fear not to come before thee. I presume my devotion shall content thee; be thine eyes never such all-seeing eyes, I will be bold to present my inward, my outward man before thee; be thy eyes never so holy eyes, I will not fly with Adam to hide my nakedness from thee, for I am able to keep my ground; seeing I am supported by *my Lord*, I doubt not but to prove a true Israelite, and to prevail with God. For all my woe, for all my sin, I will not shrink, nay, I will approach, approach to thee, for thou art *"My Redeemer."* The nearer I come to thee, the freer shall I be both from sin and woe. Oh, blessed state of man who is so weak, so strong; so wretched, and so happy; weak in himself, strong in God; most happy in God, though in himself a sinful wretch. And now, my soul, thou wouldst be devout; thou mayest be what thou wouldst: sacrifice to God thy words, sacrifice to God thy thoughts, make thyself a holocaust, doubt not but thou shalt be accepted, thou shalt content even the most glorious, the most holy eyes of God. Only presume not of thyself, presume on him; build thy words, build thy thoughts upon thy *Rock*, they shall not be shaken; free thy words, free thy thoughts (thoughts and words enthralled to sin), by thy Saviour, and thy sacrifice shall be accepted. So let me build on thee, so let me be enlarged by thee, in soul, in body, that *"The words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer."*—Arthur Lake (Bishop), in *"Divine Meditations,"* 1629.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. "Chalmers' Astronomical Discourses" will suggest to the preacher many ways of handling this theme. The power, wisdom, goodness, punctuality, faithfulness, greatness, and glory of God are very visible in the heavens.

Verses 1-5. Parallel between the heavens and the revelation of Scripture, dwelling upon Christ as the central Sun of Scripture.

Verse 1. "The heavens declare the glory of God." Work in which we may unite, the nobility, pleasure, usefulness, and duty of such service.

Verse 2. Voices of the day and of the night. Day and night thoughts.

Verse 3. The marginal reading, coupled with verse four, suggests the eloquence of an unobtrusive life—silent, yet heard.

Verse 4. In what sense God is revealed to all men.

Verses 4, 5, 6. The Sun of Righteousness.

- I. His tabernacle.
- II. His appearance as a Bridegroom.
- III. His joy as a champion.
- IV. His circuit and his influence.

Verse 5. "Rejoiceth as a strong man," etc. The joy of strength, the joy of holy labour, the joy of the anticipated reward.

Verse 6. The permeating power of the gospel.

Verse 7 (first clause). Holy Scripture.

- I. What it is—"law."
- II. Whose it is—"of the Lord."
- III. What is its character—"perfect."
- IV. What its result—"converting the soul."

Verse 7 (second clause).

- I. Scholars.
- II. Class-book.
- III. Teacher.
- IV. Progress.

Verses 7, 8, 9. The Hexapla. See notes.

Verse 7 (last clause). The wisdom of a simple faith.

Verse 8 (first clause). The heart-cheering power of the Word.

- I. Founded in its righteousness.
- II. Real in its quality.
- III. Constant in its operation.

Verse 8 (second clause). Golden ointment for the eyes.

Verse 9. The purity and permanence of true religion, and the truth and justice of the principles upon which it is founded.

Verse 10. Two arguments for loving God's statutes—Profit and Pleasure.

Verse 10. The inexpressible delights of meditation on Scripture.

Verse 11 (*first clause*).—

- I. What? "Warned."
- II. How? "By them."
- III. Who? "Thy servant."
- IV. When? "Is"—present.

Verse 11 (*second clause*). Evangelical rewards—"In," not *for* keeping.

Verse 12. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 116. "Secret Sins."

Verses 12, 13. The three grades of sin—secret, presumptuous, unpardonable.

Verse 13. See "Spurgeons Sermons," No. 135. "Presumptuous Sins."

Verse 13 (*last clause*). "*The great transgression.*" What it is not, may be, involves, and suggests.

Verse 14. A prayer concerning our holy things.

Verse 14. All wish to please. Some please *themselves*. Some please *men*. Some seek to please *God*. Such was David.

- I. The prayer shows his *humility*.
- II. The prayer show his *affection*.
- III. The prayer shows a *consciousness of duty*.
- IV. The prayer shows a *regard to self-interest*. *William Jay*.

Verse 14. The harmony of heart and lips needful for acceptance.

WORKS UPON THE NINETEENTH PSALM

"*The Works of JOHN BOYS*," 1626, folio, pp. 791-798. An Exposition of Psalm XIX.

Hulsean Lectures for 1827. On the Proofs of Divine Power and Wisdom, derived from the Study of Astronomy: and on the Evidence, Doctrines, and Precepts of Revealed Religion. By the Rev. TEMPLE CHEVALIER, M.A.

["The Nineteenth Psalm has been adopted as the model for the arrangement of the first twelve Lectures." *Extract from Preface.*]

Psalm 20

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Work

SUBJECT. *We have before us a National Anthem, fitted to be sung at the outbreak of war, when the monarch was girding on his sword for the fight. If David had not been vexed with wars, we might*

never have been favoured with such psalms as this. There is a need for the trials of one saint, that he may yield consolation to others. A happy people here plead for a beloved sovereign, and with loving hearts cry to Jehovah, "God save the King." We gather that this song was intended to be sung in public, not only from the matter of the song, but also from its dedication "To the Chief Musician." We know its author to have been Israel's sweet singer, from the short title, "A Psalm of David." The particular occasion which suggested it, it would be mere folly to conjecture, for Israel was almost always at war in David's day. His sword may have been hacked, but it was never rusted. Kimchi reads the title, concerning David, or, for David, and it is clear that the king is the subject as well as the composer of the song. It needs but a moment's reflection to perceive that this hymn of prayer is prophetic of our Lord Jesus, and is the cry of the ancient church on behalf of her Lord, as she sees him in vision enduring a great fight of afflictions on her behalf. The militant people of God, with the great Captain of salvation at their head, may still in earnest plead that the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in his hand. We shall endeavour to keep to this view of the subject in our brief exposition, but we cannot entirely restrict our remarks to it.

DIVISION. The first four verses are a prayer for the success of the king. Verses 5, 6, and 7 express unwavering confidence in God and his Anointed; verse 8 declares the defeat of the foe, and verse 9 is a concluding appeal to Jehovah.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble." All loyal subjects pray for their king, and most certainly citizens of Zion have good cause to pray for the Prince of Peace. In times of conflict loving subjects redouble their pleas, and surely in the sorrows of our Lord his church could not but be in earnest. All the Saviour's days were days of trouble, and he also made them days of prayer; the church joins her intercession with her Lord's, and pleads that he may be heard in his cries and tears. The agony in the garden was especially a gloomy hour, but he was heard in that he feared. He knew that his Father heard him always, yet in that troublous hour no reply came until thrice he had fallen on his face in the garden; then sufficient strength was given in answer to prayer, and he rose a victor from the conflict. On the cross also his prayer was not unheard, for in the twenty-second Psalm he tells us, "thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." The church in this verse implies that her Lord would be himself much given to prayer; in this he is our example, teaching us that if we are to receive any advantage from the prayers of others, we must first pray for ourselves. What a mercy that we may pray in the day of trouble, and what a still more blessed privilege that no trouble can prevent the Lord from hearing us! Troubles roar like thunder, but the believer's voice will be heard above the storm. O Jesus, when thou pleadest for us in our hour of trouble, the Lord Jehovah will hear thee. This is a most refreshing confidence, and it may be indulged in without fear.

"The name of the God of Jacob defend thee;" or, as some read it, "set thee in a high place." By "*the name*" is meant the revealed character and Word of God; we are not to worship "the unknown God," but we should seek to know the covenant God of Jacob, who has been pleased to reveal his name and attributes to his people. There may be much in a royal name, or a learned name, or a venerable name, but it will be a theme for heavenly scholarship to discover all that is contained in the divine name. The glorious power of God defended and preserved the Lord Jesus through the battle of his life and death, and exalted him above all his enemies. His warfare is now accomplished in his own proper person, but in his mystical body, the church, he is still beset with dangers, and only the eternal arm of our God in covenant can defend the soldiers of the cross, and set them on high out of the reach of their foes. The day of trouble is not over, the pleading Saviour is not silent, and the name of the God of Israel is still the defence of the faithful. The name, "*God of Jacob,*" is suggestive; Jacob had his day of trouble, he wrestled, was heard, was defended, and in due time was set on high, and his God is our God still, the same God to all his wrestling Jacobs. The whole verse is a very fitting benediction to be pronounced by a gracious heart over a child, a friend, or a minister, in prospect of trial; it includes both temporal and spiritual protection, and directs the mind to the great source of all good. How delightful to believe that our heavenly Father has pronounced it upon our favoured heads!

Verse 2. "*Send thee help from the sanctuary.*" Out of heaven's sanctuary came the angel to strengthen our Lord, and from the precious remembrance of God's doings in his sanctuary our Lord refreshed himself when on the tree. There is no help like that which is of God's sending, and no deliverance like that which comes out of his sanctuary. The sanctuary to us is the person of our blessed Lord, who was typified by the temple, and is the true sanctuary which God has pitched, and not man: let us fly to the cross for shelter in all times of need and help will be sent to us. Men of the world despise sanctuary help, but our hearts have learned to prize it beyond all material aid. They seek help out of the armoury, or the treasury, or the buttry, but we turn to the sanctuary. "*And strengthen thee out of Zion.*" Out of the assemblies of the pleading saints who had for ages prayed for their Lord, help might well result to the despised sufferer, for praying breath is never spent in vain. To the Lord's mystical body the richest comes in answer to the pleadings of his saints assembled for holy worship as his Zion. Certain advertisers recommend a strengthening plaster, but nothing can give such strength to the loins of a saint as waiting upon God in the assemblies of his people. This verse is a benediction befitting a Sabbath morning, and may be the salutation either of a pastor to his people, or of a church to its minister. God in the sanctuary of his dear Son's person, and in the city of his chosen church is the proper object of his people's prayers, and under such a character may they confidently look to him for his promised aid.

Verse 3. "*Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice. Selah.*" Before war kings offered sacrifice, upon the acceptance of which they depended for success; our blessed Lord presented

himself as a victim, and was a sweet savour unto the Most High, and then he met and routed the embattled legions of hell. Still does his burnt sacrifice perfume the courts of heaven, and through him the offerings of his people are received as *his* sacrifices and oblations. We ought in our spiritual conflicts to have an eye to the sacrifice of Jesus, and never venture to war until first the Lord has given us a token for good at the altar of the cross, where faith beholds her bleeding Lord. "*Selah.*" It is well to pause at the cross before we march onward to battle, and with the psalmist cry "*Selah.*" We are too much in a hurry to make good haste. A little pausing might greatly help our speed. Stay, good man, there is a haste which hinders; rest awhile, meditate on the burnt sacrifice, and put thy heart right for the stern work which lieth before thee.

Verse 4. "*Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.*" Christ's desire and counsel were both set upon the salvation of his people; the church of old desired for him good speed in his design, and the church in these latter days, with all her heart desires the complete fulfilment of his purpose. In Christ Jesus sanctified souls may appropriate this verse as a promise; they shall have their desire, and their plans to glorify their Master shall succeed. We may have our own will, when our will is God's will. This was always the case with our Lord, and yet he said, "not as I will, but as thou wilt." What need for submission in our case; if it was necessary to him, how much more for us?

Verse 5. "*We will rejoice in thy salvation.*" In Jesus there is salvation; it is his own, and hence it is called thy *salvation*; but it is ours to receive and ours to rejoice in. We should fixedly resolve that come what may, we will rejoice in the saving arm of the Lord Jesus. The people in this psalm, before their king went to battle, felt sure of victory, and therefore began to rejoice beforehand; how much more ought we to do this who have seen the victory completely won! Unbelief begins weeping for the funeral before the man is dead; why should not faith commence piping before the dance of victory begins? Buds are beautiful, and promises not yet fulfilled are worthy to be admired. If joy were more general among the Lord's people, God would be more glorified among men; the happiness of the subjects is the honour of the sovereign. "*And in the name of our God we will set up our banners.*" We lift the standard of defiance in the face of the foe, and wave the flag of victory over the fallen adversary. Some proclaim war in the name of one king, and some of another, but the faithful go to war in Jesu's name, the name of the incarnate God, Immanuel, God with us. The times are evil at present, but so long as Jesus lives and reigns in his church we need not furl our banners in fear, but advance them with sacred courage.

"Jesu's tremendous name
Puts all our foes to flight;
Jesus, the meek, the angry Lamb
A lion is in fight."

The church cannot forget that Jesus is her advocate before the throne, and therefore she sums up the desires already expressed in the short sentence, "*The Lord fulfil all thy petitions.*" Be it never forgotten that among those petitions is that choice one, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am."

Verse 6. "*Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed.*" We live and learn, and what we learn we are not ashamed to acknowledge. He who thinks he knows everything will miss the joy of finding out new truth; he will never be able to cry, "now know I," for he is so wise in his own conceit that he knows all that can be revealed and more. Souls conscious of ignorance shall be taught of the Lord, and rejoice as they learn. Earnest prayer frequently leads to assured confidence. The church pleaded that the Lord Jesus might win the victory in his great struggle, and now by faith she sees him saved by the omnipotent arm. She evidently finds a sweet relish in the fragrant title of "anointed;" she thinks of him as ordained before all worlds to his great work, and then endowed with the needful qualifications by being anointed of the Spirit of the Lord; and this is evermore the choicest solace of the believer, that Jehovah himself hath anointed Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour, and that our shield is thus the Lord's own anointed. "*He will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.*" It is here asserted confidently that God's holiness and power would both come to the rescue of the Saviour in his conflict, and surely these two glorious attributes found congenial work in answering the sufferer's cries. Since Jesus was heard, we shall be; God is in heaven, but our prayers can scale those glorious heights; those heavens are holy, but Jesus purifies our prayers, and so they gain admittance; our need is great, but the divine arm is strong, and all its strength is "saving strength;" that strength, moreover, is in the hand which is most used and which is used most readily—the right hand. What encouragements are these for pleading saints!

Verse 6. Contrasts frequently bring out the truth vividly, and here the church sets forth the creature confidences of carnal men in contrast with her reliance upon the Prince Immanuel and the invisible Jehovah. "*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses.*" Chariots and horses make an imposing show, and with their rattling, and dust, and fine caparisons, make so great a figure that vain man is much taken with them; yet the discerning eye of faith sees more in an invisible God than in all these. The most dreaded war-engine of David's day was the war-chariot, armed with scythes, which mowed down men like grass: this was the boast and glory of the neighbouring nations; but the saints considered the name of Jehovah to be a far better defence. As the Israelites might not keep horses, it was natural for them to regard the enemy's calvary with more than usual dread. It is, therefore, all the greater evidence of faith that the bold songster can here disdain even the horse of Egypt in comparison with the Lord of hosts. Alas, how many in our day who profess to be the Lord's are as abjectly dependent upon their fellow-men or upon an arm of flesh in some shape or other, as if they had never known the name of Jehovah at all. Jesus, be thou alone our rock and refuge, and never

may we mar the simplicity of our faith. "*We will remember the name of the Lord our God.*" "Our God" in covenant, who has chosen us and whom we have chosen; this God is our God. The name of our God is JEHOVAH, and this should never be forgotten; the self-existent, independent, immutable, ever-present, all-filling I AM. Let us adore that matchless name, and never dishonour it by distrust or creature confidence. Reader, you must *know* it before you can *remember* it. May the blessed Spirit reveal it graciously to your soul!

Verse 8. How different the end of those whose trusts are different! The enemies of God are uppermost at first, but they ere long are brought down by force, or else fall of their own accord. Their foundation is rotten, and therefore when the time comes it gives way under them; their chariots are burned in the fire, and their horses die of pestilence, and where is their boasted strength? As for those who rest on Jehovah, they are often cast down at the first onset, but an Almighty arm uplifts them, and they joyfully stand upright. The victory of Jesus is the inheritance of his people. The world, death, Satan, and sin, shall all be trampled beneath the feet of the champions of faith; while those who rely upon an arm of flesh shall be ashamed and confounded for ever.

Verse 9. The Psalm is here recapitulated. That Jesus might himself be delivered, and might then, as our King, hear us, is the two-fold desire of the Psalm. The first request is granted, and the second is sure to all the seed; and therefore we may close the Psalm with the hearty shout, "God save the King." "God save King Jesus, and may he soon come to reign."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is the prayer which the church might be supposed offering up, had all the redeemed stood by the cross, or in Gethsemane, in full consciousness of what was doing there. Messiah, in reading these words, would know that he had elsewhere the sympathy he longed for, when he said to the three disciples, "Tarry ye here, and watch with me." Matthew 26:38. It is thus a pleasant song, of the sacred singer of Israel, to set forth the feelings of the redeemed in their Head, whether in his sufferings or in the glory that was to follow.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Whole Psalm. There are traces of liturgical arrangement in many of the Psalms. There is frequently an adaptation to the circumstances of public worship. Thus, when the Jewish church wished to celebrate the great act of Messiah the High Priest making a sacrifice for the people on the day of atonement, as represented in the twenty-second Psalm, a subject so solemn, grand, and affecting, was not commenced suddenly and unpreparedly, but first a suitable occasion was sought, proper characters were introduced, and a scene in some degree appropriate to the great event was fitted for its reception. The priests and Levites endeavour to excite in the minds of the worshippers an exalted tone of reverent faith. The majesty and power of God, all the attributes which elevate the thoughts, are called in to fill the souls of the worshippers with the most intense emotion; and when the feelings

are strung to the highest pitch, an awful, astounding impression succeeds, when the words are slowly chanted, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We are to suppose, then, that the series of Psalms, from the twentieth to the twenty-fourth inclusive, was used as a service or office in the public worship of the Jewish church.*—*R. H. Ryland, M.A., in "The Psalms Restored to Messiah," 1853.*

* NOTE: This is a purely gratuitous statement, but is less unlikely than many other assertions of annotators who have a cause to plead.—*C. H. S.*

Whole Psalm. Really good wishes are good things, and should be expressed in words and deeds. The whole Psalm thus teaches. Christian sympathy is a great branch of Christian duty. There may be a great deal of obliging kindness in that which costs us little.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1. "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble." All the days of Christ were *days of trouble*. He was a brother born for adversity, a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. . . . But more particularly it was a "*day of trouble*" with him when he was in the garden, heavy and sore amazed, and his sweat was, as it were, drops of blood falling on the ground, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; but more especially this was his case when he hung upon the cross. . . . when he bore all the sins of his people, endured the wrath of his Father, and was forsaken by him. Now, in this "*day of trouble*," both when in the garden and on the cross, he prayed unto his Father, as he had been used to do in other cases, and at other times; and the church here prays that God would hear and answer him, as he did.—*Condensed from John Gill.*

Verse 1. "The name." Whereas they say, "*The name of the God of Jacob*," thereby they mean God himself; but they thus speak of God because all the knowledge that we have of God ariseth from the knowledge of his name, and as to that end he hath given himself in the Scriptures sundry names, that thereby we might know not only what he is in himself, so far as it is meet for us to know, but especially what he is to us, so by them, and them principally, we know him to be, as he is, not only in himself, but unto us. . . . From this knowledge of the name of God ariseth confidence in prayer! as when they know him, and here call him "*the God of Jacob*," that is, he that hath made a covenant of mercy with him and with his posterity, that he will be their God and they shall be his people, that they may be bold to flee to him for succour, and confidently call upon him in the day of their trouble to hear them, and to help them, as they do. And the more that they know of his name, that is, of his goodness, mercy, truth, power, wisdom, justice, etc., so may they the more boldly pray unto him, not doubting but that he will be answerable unto his name. . . . For as among men, according to the good name that they have for liberality and pity, so will men be ready to come unto them in their need, and the poor will say, "I will go to such an house, for they have a good name, and are counted good to the poor, and merciful, all men speak well of them for their liberality;" and this name of theirs giveth the

encouragement to come boldly and often. So when we know God thus by his name, it will make us bold to come unto him in prayer. . . . Or, if a man be never so merciful, and others know it not, and so they are ignorant of his good name that he hath, and that he is worthy of, they cannot, with any good hope, come unto him, for they know not what he is; they have heard nothing of him at all. So when, by unbelief, we hardly conceive of God and of his goodness, or for want of knowledge are ignorant of his good name, even of all his mercy, and of his truth, pity, and compassion that is in him, and so know not his great and glorious name, we can have little or no heart at all to come unto him in trouble, and seek unto him for help by prayer, as these did here; and this maketh some so forward unto prayer, they are so well acquainted with *the name of God*, that they doubt not of speeding, and others again are so backward unto it, they are so wholly ignorant of his name.—*Nicholas Bownd*, 1604.

Verse 1. "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." This is a beautiful allusion to the history of the patriarch Jacob. Jehovah had appeared for him, when he fled from his brother Esau, at Bethel, and Jacob said to his household, "Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, *who answered me in the day of my distress*, and was with me in the way which I went." Genesis 35:3.—*John Morison*.

Verse 1. "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." Hebrew, "*set thee in an high place*," such as God's name is. Proverbs 18:10. "The righteous runneth into it and is safe," as in a tower of brass, or town of war. By *the name of God* is meant, *Deus nominatissimus*, the most renowned God, saith Junias, and "worthy to be praised," as Psalm 18:3; and he is called the God of Jacob here, saith another, first, because Jacob was once in the like distress (Genesis 32:6, 7); secondly, because he prayed to the like purpose (Genesis 35:3); thirdly, because he prevailed with God as a prince; "and there God spake with us" (Hosea 12:4); fourthly, because *God of Jacob* is the same with "God of Israel," and so the covenant is pleaded.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 1. "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." There is an assurance of thy protection, of thy safety, in the midst of ten thousand foes, and of thy perseverance to the end. But you will say, how will the name of the God of Jacob defend me? Try it. I have, over and over again; therefore I speak what I do know, and testify what I have seen. "*The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*" I was once goaded by a poor silly Irish papist to try it, who told me, in his consummate ignorance and bigotry, that if a priest would but give him a drop of holy water, and make a circle with it around a field full of wild beasts, they would not hurt him. I retired in disgust at the abominable trickery of such villains, reflecting, what a fool I am that I cannot put such trust in my God as this poor deluded man puts in his priest and a drop of holy water! And I resolved to try what "*the name of the God of Jacob*" would do, having the Father's fixed decrees, the Son's unalterable responsibility, and the Spirit's invincible grace and operation around me. I tried it and felt my confidence brighten. O brethren, get encircled with covenant engagements, and covenant blood, and covenant grace, and covenant

promises, and covenant securities; then will "the Lord *hear you in the time of trouble, and the name of the God of Jacob will defend you.*"—*Joseph Irons.*

Verse 1. A sweeter wish, or a more consolatory prayer for a child of sorrow was never uttered by man, "*The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*" And who is there of the sons of men to whom a "*day of trouble*" does not come, whose path is not darkened at times, or with whom is it unclouded sunshine from the cradle to the grave? "Few plants," says old Jacomb, "have both the morning and the evening sun;" and one far older than he said, "Man is born to trouble." A "*day of trouble,*" then, is the heritage of every child of Adam. How sweet, as I have said, how sweet the wish, "*The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble.*" It is the prayer of another in behalf of some troubled one, and yet it implies that the troubled one himself had also prayed, "*The Lord hear thee*"—hear and answer thine own prayer!—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verses 1, 2. The scene presented in this place to the eye of faith is deeply affecting. Here is the Messiah pouring out his heart in prayer in the day of his trouble; his spouse overhears his agonising groans; she is moved with the tenderest sympathy towards him; she mingles her prayers with his; she entreats that he may be supported and defended. . . . It may now, perhaps, be said, he is out of the reach of trouble, he is highly exalted, he does not want our sympathies or our prayers. True; yet still we may pray for him—see Matthew 25:40—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." We can pray for him in his members. And thus is fulfilled what is written in Psalm 72:15, "And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; *prayer* also shall be made for him continually (that is, in his suffering members); and daily shall he be praised" (that is, in his own admirable person).—*Hamilton Verschoyle, 1843.*

Verses 1-5. These are the words of the people, which they spake unto God in the behalf of their king; and so they did as David desired them, namely, pray for him. If they did thus pray for him, being desired thereunto, and it was their bound duty so to do, and they knew it to be so, and therefore did make conscience of it, and it had been a great fault for them to have failed in it; then by consequence it followeth of necessity, that whensoever any of our brethren or sisters in Christ shall desire this duty at our hands, we must be careful to perform it; and it were a fault not to be excused in us, both against God and them, to fail in it. Therefore we must not think that when godly men and women at their parting or otherwise, desire our prayers, and say, "I pray you pray for me," or, "remember me in your prayers," that these are words of course (though I do not deny, but that many do so use them, and so doing they take the name of God in vain); but we should be persuaded, that out of the abundance of their feeling of their own wants they speak unto us, and so be willing by our prayers to help to supply them. And especially we should do it when they shall make known their estate unto us, as here David did to the people, giving them to understand that he should or might be in great danger of his enemies, and so it was "*a time of trouble*" unto him, as he called it. . . . Most of all, this duty of

prayer ought to be carefully performed when we have promised it unto any upon such notice of their estate. For as all promises ought to be kept, yea, though it be to our own hindrance, so those most of all that so nearly concern them. And as if when any should desire us to speak to some great man for them, and we promise to do it, and they trust to it, hoping that we will be as good as our words; it were a great deceit in us to fail them, and so to frustrate their expectation; so when any have desired us to speak to God for them, and upon our promise they would comfort themselves over it, if we should by negligence deceive them, it were a great fault in us, and that which the Lord would require at our hands, though they should never know of it. Therefore, as we ought daily to pray one for another unasked, as our Saviour Christ hath taught us, "O our Father which art in heaven," etc., so more especially and by name should we do it for them that have desired it of us. And so parents especially should not forget their children in their prayers, which daily ask their blessing, and hope to be blessed of God by their prayers. Secondly, if we should neglect to pray for them that have desired it at our hands, how could we have any hope that others whom we have desired to pray for us should perform that duty unto us? Nay, might not we justly fear that they would altogether neglect it, seeing we do neglect them? and should it not be just with God so to punish us? according to the saying of our Saviour Christ, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 7:2. And I remember that this was the saying of a reverend father in the church, who is now fallen asleep in the Lord, when any desired him to pray for them (as many did, and more than any that I have known), he would say unto them, "I pray you, pray for me, and pray that I may remember you, and then I hope I shall not forget you." Therefore if we would have others pray for us, let us pray for them.—*Nicholas Bownd.*

Verses 1, 5. In the first verse the psalmist says, "*The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble;*" and in the fifth he says, "*The Lord perform all thy petitions.*" Does he in both these cases refer to one and the same time? The prayers mentioned in the first verse are offered in "*the day of trouble,*" in the days of his flesh; are the petitions to which he refers in the fourth verse also offered in the days of his flesh? Many think not. Before our blessed Saviour departed out of this world, he prayed to the Father for those whom he had given him, that he would keep them from the evil of the world, that they might be one, even as he was one with the Father. He prayed too for his murderers. After his ascension into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of the Father, where he "maketh intercession for us." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." It is to this, as many think, that the prophet refers when he says, "*The Lord perform all thy petitions;*" to the intercession which he is continually making for us.—*F. H. Dunwell.*

Verse 2. "*Send thee help from the sanctuary.*" Here we see the nature of true faith, that it causeth us to see *help in heaven*, and so to pray for it when there is none to be seen in the earth. And this is the difference between faith and unbelief; that the very unbelievers can by reason conceive of help, so

long as they have any means to help them; but if they fail they can see none at all; so they are like unto those that are purblind, who can see nothing but near at hand. But faith seeth afar off, even into heaven, so that it is "the evidence of things that are not seen;" for it looketh unto the power of God, who hath all means in his hand, or can work without them, who made all of nothing, and "calleth the things that be not, as though they were." So that as the holy martyr Stephen, when his enemies were ready to burst for anger, and gnash at him with their teeth, looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw Christ standing at the right hand of God ready to defend him; so faith in the promises of the word doth see help in heaven ready for us, when there are no means in earth,—*Nicholas Bownd*.

Verse 2. "Send thee help from the sanctuary." Why "from the sanctuary," but because the Lord presented himself there as upon the mercy-seat! The sanctuary was in Zion, the mercy-seat was in the sanctuary, the Lord was in the mercy-seat; he would have himself set forth as residing there. Herein they pray, and pray in faith, for help and strength.—*David Clarkson*.

Verse 2. "Strengthen thee out of Zion." That is, out of the assemblies of the saints, where they are praying hard for thy welfare.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 3. "Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice." "All thy offerings;" the humiliation that brought him from heaven to earth; the patient tabernacling in the womb of the holy Virgin; the poor nativity; the hard manger; ox and ass for courtiers; the weary flight into Egypt; the poor cottage at Nazareth; the doing all good, and bearing all evil; the miracles, the sermons, the teachings; the being called a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, the friend of publicans and sinners; the attribution of his wondrous deeds to Beelzebub. "And accept thy burnt sacrifice." As every part of the victim was consumed in a burnt sacrifice, so what limb, what sense of our dear Lord did not agonise in his passion? The thorny crown on his head; the nails in his hands and feet; the reproaches that filled his ears; the gloating multitude on whom his dying gaze rested; the vinegar and the gall; the evil odours of the hill of death and corruption. The ploughers ploughed upon his back, and made long furrows; his most sacred face was smitten with the palm of the hand, his head with the reed. What could have been done more for the vineyard than he did not do in it? Isaiah 5:4. So, what more could have been borne by the vine, that this dear Vine did not bear? "Remember" them now, O Father, call to mind for us sinners, for us miserable sinners, and for our salvation, "all" these "offerings;" "accept," instead of our eternal punishment, who are guilty, his "burnt sacrifice," who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth!—*Dionysius, and Gerhohus (1093-1169), quoted by J. M. Neale*.

Verse 3. "Accept:" Hebrew, "turn to ashes," by fire from heaven, in token of his acceptance, as was usual.—*Matthew Poole*.

Verse 3. "That thy burnt offering may be fat." That is, abundant, fruitful, and full. But here we must understand this burnt offering, as we did the sacrifice, in a spiritual sense, as we have before observed. Thus Christ offered up himself wholly upon the cross to be consumed by the fire of love.

And here, instead of "all thy sacrifice," it might be rendered "the whole of thy sacrifice." Even as burnt sacrifice (*holocaustum*) signifies the whole of it being burnt with fire. By which groanings of the Spirit, he shows and teaches the righteous, that they should pray and hope that none of their sufferings shall be vain, but that all shall be well-pleasing, remembered, and fully acceptable.—*Martin Luther*.

Verse 3. "*Selah*." * This word, in the judgment of the learned, is sometime *vox optantis*, the voice of one that wisheth, equivalent to *amen*; of *vox admirantis*, the voice of one admiring, showing some special matter; or *vox affirmantis*, of one affirming, avouching what is said; or *vox meditantis*, of one meditating, requiring consideration of what is said. But withal, it is a rest in music. Jerome saith it is *commutatio metri*, or *vicissitudo canendi*.—*Edward Marbury*.

* See pages 25, 29, 38. Psalm 3.

Verse 4. "*Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel*." Let us here call to mind the zealous and earnest desire of the Redeemer to accomplish his work, "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Luke 12:50. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15); that he might leave a memorial of his sufferings and death, for the strengthening and refreshing of their souls. These earnest desires and anticipations did the Father satisfy, as of one with whom he was well pleased.—*W. Wilson*.

Verse 4. "*Fulfil all thy counsel*;" whatever was agreed upon in the counsel and covenant of peace between him and his Father, relating to his own glory, and the salvation of his people.—*John Gill*.

Verse 4. "*Fulfil all thy counsel*." Answer thee, *ad cardinem desiderii*, as a father, Augustine, expresseth it; let it be unto thee even as thou wilt. Sometimes God doth not only grant a man's prayer, but fulfilleth his counsel; that is, in that very way, by that very means, which his judgment pitched upon in his thoughts.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 5 (*first clause*). Whosoever do partake with Christ's subjects in trouble, shall share with them also in the joy of their deliverance; therefore it is said, "*We will rejoice in thy salvation*."—*David Dickson*.

Verse 5. "*In the name of our God*." As those cried out, Judges 7:20, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon;" and as we have it in Joshua 6:20, "And the people shouted, and the walls of Jericho fell down;" and king Abiah, crying out with his men in the same, killed five hundred thousand of the children of Israel; and so now also, according to the military custom in our day, the soldiers boast in the name and glory of their general, in order to encourage themselves against their enemies. And it is just this custom that the present verse is now teaching, only in a godly and religious manner.—*Martin Luther*.

Verse 5. "*In the name of our God we will set up our banners*." The banners formerly so much used were a part of military equipage, borne in times of war to assemble, direct, distinguish, and

encourage the troops. They might possibly be used for other purposes also. Occasions of joy, splendid processions, and especially a royal habitation, might severally be distinguished in this way. The words of the psalmist may perhaps be wholly figurative: but if they should be literally understood, the allusion of erecting a banner in the name of the Lord, acknowledging his glory, and imploring his favour, might be justified from an existing practice. Certain it is that we find this custom prevalent on this very principle in other places, into which it might originally have been introduced from Judea. Thus Mr. Turner (*Embassy to Thibet*, p. 31), says, "I was told that it was a custom with the Soobah to ascend the hill every month, when he sets up a white flag, and performs some religious ceremonies, to conciliate the favour of a dewata, or invisible being, the genius of the place, who is said to hover about the summit, dispensing at his will, good and evil to every thing around him.—*Samuel Burder's "Oriental Customs,"* 1812.

Verse 5. "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." In all religious as well as warlike processions the people carry banners. Hence, on the pinnacles of their sacred cars, on the domes or gateways of their temples, and on the roof of a new house, may be seen the banner of the caste or sect, floating in the air. Siva the Supreme, also, is described as having a banner in the celestial world.—*Joseph Robert's "Oriental Illustrations"*.

Verse 5. "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." 1. We will wage war in his name, we will see that our cause be good, and make his glory our end in every expedition; we will ask counsel at his mouth, and take him along with us; we will follow his conduct, implore his aid, and depend upon it, and refer the issue to him. David went against Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts. 1 Samuel 17:45. 2. We will celebrate our victories in his name. When "*we lift up our banners*" in triumph, and set up our trophies, it shall be "*in the name of our God,*" he shall have all the glory of our success, and no instrument shall have any part of the honour that is due to him.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 5. "We will set up our banners." Confession of Christ, as the only name whereby we can be saved, is the "*banner*" which distinguishes his faithful people. O that this confession were more distinct, more pure, more zealous, in those who seem to be his followers, then would they be more united, more bold, in the profession of their religion, more successful in the cause of Christ, terrible as an army with "*banners.*" Canticles 5:4.—*W. Wilson*.

Verse 5. "Our banners." Will you know the staff, the colours, and the flag or streamer of this ensign? Why, the staff is his cross, the colours are blood and water, and the streamer the gospel, or preaching of them to the world. The staff that carried the colours, was of old time fashioned like a cross, a cross bar near the top there was, from which the flag or streamer hung; so as it were prefiguring, that all the hosts and armies of the nations were one day to be gathered under the *banner of the cross*, to which soldiers should daily flow out of all the nations and kingdoms of the earth.—*Mark Frank, 1613-1664*.

Verse 5. "*The Lord fulfil all thy petitions,*" for thyself and for others, now that thou sittest on the right hand of the Father, pleading for us and showing thy side and thy wounds.—*Dionysius, quoted by Isaac Williams.*

Verse 6. "*Now know I.*" A sudden change of number, speaking in the person of one, thereby to note the unity and consent of the people to this prayer, as though they had been all one, and uttered it all with one mouth. "*The Lord will help his anointed;*" that is, his king, whom he hath established. See Psalm 2:2; 18:50. "*And will hear him* (see verse 1), *from his sanctuary.*" One readeth it thus—"from the heavens of his holiness;" meaning, from heaven where his holiness dwelleth.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 6. "*He will hear him.*" I would be glad of the prayers of all the churches of Christ; O that there were not a saint on earth but that I were by name in his morning and evening prayer (whosoever that art that readest, I beseech thee pray for me); but above all, let me have a property in those prayers and intercessions that are proper only to *Christ*; I am sure then I should never miscarry: Christ's prayers are heavenly, glorious, and very effectual.—*Isaac Ambrose, 1592-1674.*

Verse 6. "*His anointed.*" As priests, and sometimes kings and prophets, were among the Jews *anointed* to their offices, so our Saviour was anointed as a Prophet, to preach glad tidings to the meek; as a Priest, to bind up the broken-hearted; and as a King to deliver the captives. As the unction means designation and ordination, it is properly applied to the divine person of the Mediator: he is spoken of as God, who was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows." Hebrews 1:8, 9. As the anointing with the Holy Spirit signifies the *gifts* and *aids* of the Holy Spirit, it terminates upon his human nature only, and not his divine person, which has all the perfections in itself, and cannot properly, in the sense last mentioned, be said to be anointed with the Holy Spirit. But yet as the human nature is taken into a subsistence in his divine Person, the anointed may properly enough be predicated and affirmed of his Person. The unction of our Redeemer has a great *stress* laid upon it in Scripture. And therefore we read, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" 1 John 5:1; 2:22. Our Saviour's enemies were sensible of this, when they made an order, that if "any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out out of the synagogue." John 9:22. Our Saviour's anointing was *superior* to that of any other, and more excellent as to the work to which he was consecrated. The apostles and others, who are called his followers, had the Spirit *by measure*, but Christ *without measure*. He is "fairer than the sons of men" (Psalm 45:2); and had a glory as the "only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, 16); and of his fullness the apostles and all others receive. Christ's anointing answers to that of Aaron his type; the precious ointment which was "poured upon his head, ran down to the skirts of his garments." Psalm 133:2. Our Saviour was so anointed, as to "fill all in all." Ephesians 1:23. He filleth all his members, and all their faculties, with all those measures of the

Spirit, which they ever receive.—*Condensed from John Hurrion, 1675-1731.*

Verse 7. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." About Michaelmas I was in the utmost extremity, and having gone out in very fine weather, I contemplated the azure heavens, and my heart was so strengthened in faith (which I do not ascribe to my own powers, but solely to the grace of God), that I thought within myself, "What an excellent thing it is when we have nothing, and can rely upon nothing, but yet are acquainted with the living God, who made heaven and earth, and place our confidence alone in him, which enables us to be so tranquil even in necessity!" Although I was well aware that I required something that very day, yet my heart was so strong in faith that I was cheerful, and of good courage. On coming home I was immediately waited upon by the overseer of the workmen and masons, who, as it was Saturday, required money to pay their wages. He expected the money to be ready, which he wished to go and pay, but enquired, however, whether I had received anything. "Has anything arrived?" asked he. I answered, "No, but I have faith in God." Scarcely had I uttered the words when a student was announced, who brought me thirty dollars from some one, whom he would not name. I then went into the room again, and asked the other "how much he required this time for the workmen's wages?" He answered, "Thirty dollars." "Here they are," said I, and enquired at the same time, "if he needed any more?" He said, "No," which very much strengthened the faith of both of us, since we so visibly saw the miraculous hand of God, who sent it at the very moment when it was needed.—*Augustus Herman Frank, 1663-1727.*

Verse 7. "Some trust in chariots," etc. Vain is the confidence of all wickedness. In war, chariots, horses, navies, numbers, discipline, former successes, are relied on; but the battle is not to the strong. "Providence favours the strong battalions" may sound well in a worldling's ear, but neither Providence nor the Bible so teaches. In peace, riches, friends, ships, farms, stocks, are relied upon, yet they can neither help nor save. Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 7. "We will remember the name of the Lord our God." By *the name of God* is generally understood, in Holy Writ, the various properties and attributes of God: these properties and attributes make up and constitute the *name* of God. As when Solomon says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." And, by remembering, considering, meditating upon this name of God, the psalmist represents himself as comforted or strengthened, whatever might be the duties to which he was called, or the dangers to which he was exposed. Others were for looking to other sources of safety and strength, "some trusting in chariots, and some in horses;" but the psalmist always set himself to the "remembering the name of the Lord our God;" and always, it would seem, with satisfaction and success. And here is the peculiarity of the passage on which we wish to dwell, and from which we hope to draw important lessons and truths—the psalmist "remembers the name of the Lord his God;" not any one property or attribute of God; but the whole combination of

divine perfections. And he "*remembers*" this "name;" the expression implying, not a transient thought, but meditation—consideration; and yet the result of the recollection is gladness and confidence.—*Henry Melvill*.

Verse 7. It is easy to persuade papists to lean on priests and saints, on old rags and painted pictures—on any idol; but it is hard to get a Protestant to trust in the living God.—*William Arnot, 1858.*

Verse 7. Weak man cannot choose but have some confidence without himself in case of apparent difficulties, and natural men do look first to some earthly thing wherein they confide. "*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses,*" some in one creature, some in another. The believer must quit his confidence in these things, whether he have them or want them, and must rely on what God hath promised in his word to do unto us. "*But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 7. They that "*trust in chariots and horses,*" will have no king but Caesar; but the "armies in heaven" which follow thee have themselves no arms, and no strength but in following thee.—*Isaac Williams.*

Verse 7. Numa being told that his enemies were coming upon him, as he was offering sacrifices, thought it was sufficient for his safety that he could say, I am about the service of my God. When Jehoshaphat had once established a preaching ministry in all the cities of Judah, then, and not till then, the fear of the Lord fell on the neighbouring nations, and they made no war; albeit, he had before that placed forces in all the fenced cities.—*Charles Bradbury.*

Verse 7.

"Some their warrior horses boast,
Some their chariots' marshall'd host;
But our trust we will proclaim
In our God Jehovah's name."

Richard Mant.

Verse 8. "*They are brought down,*" from their horses and chariots in which they trusted. Hebrew: *they bowed down*, as being unable to stand longer because of their mortal wounds. Compare Judges 5:27. "*Stand upright.*" Standing firmly upon our legs, and keeping the field, as conquerors use to do.—*Matthew Poole.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

This Psalm has been much used for coronation, thanksgiving, and fast sermons, and no end of nonsense and sickening flattery has been tacked thereto by the trencher-chaplains of the world's church. If kings had been devils, some of these gentry would have praised their horns and hoofs; for although some of their royal highnesses have been very obedient servants of the prince of darkness,

these false prophets have dubbed them "most gracious sovereigns," and have been as much dazzled in their presence as if they had beheld the beatific vision.—C. H. S.

Whole Psalm. A loyal song and prayer for subjects of King Jesus.

Verse 1. Two great mercies in great trouble—hearing at the throne, and defence from the throne.

Verses 1, 2.

- I. The Lord's trouble in its nature and its cause.
- II. How the Lord exercised himself in his trouble.
- III. We ought not to be unmoved spectators of the trouble of Jesus.

Hamilton Verschoyle.

Verses 1-3. A model of good wishes for our friends.

I. *They include personal piety.* The person who is spoken of prays, goes to the sanctuary, and offers sacrifice. We must wish our friend grace.

II. *They point upward.* The blessings are distinctly recognised as divine.

III. *They do not exclude trouble.*

IV. *They are eminently spiritual.* Acceptance, etc.

Verse 2. Sanctuary help—a suggestive topic.

Verse 3. God's ceaseless respect to the sacrifice of Jesus.

Verses 3, 4. The great privilege of this fourfold acceptance in the Beloved.

Verse 5. Joy in salvation, to be resolved on and practised.

Verse 5. Setting up the banner. Open avowal of allegiance, declaration of war, index of perseverance, claim of possession, signal of triumph.

Verse 5 (last clause). The prevalence of our Lord's intercession, and the acceptance of our prayers through him.

Verse 6. "His anointed." Our Lord as the Anointed. When? With what unction? How? For what offices? etc.

Verse 6. "He will hear him." The ever-prevalent Intercessor.

Verse 6. God's "*saving strength*;" the strength of his most used and most skilful hand.

Verse 6 (first clause). "*Now know I.*" The moment when faith in Jesus fills the soul. The time when assurance is given. The period when a truth gleams into the soul. etc.

Verse 7. Creature confidence. Apparently mighty, well adapted, showy, noisy, etc. *Faithful trust.* Silent, spiritual, divine, etc.

Verse 7. "The name of the Lord our God." Comfortable reflections from the name and character of the true God.

Verse 8. Tables turned.

Verse 9. "Save, Lord." One of the shortest and most pithy prayers in the Bible.

Verse 9. (*last clause*).

- I. To whom we come, and what then. "*To a king.*"
- II. How we come, and what it means. "*We call.*"
- III. What we want, and what it implies. "*Hear us.*"

WORK UPON THE TWENTIETH PSALM

"Medicines for the plague; that is, Godly and Fruitful Sermons upon part of the Twentieth Psalme, full of instructions and comfort; very fit generally for all times of affliction, but more particularly applied to this late visitation of the Plague. Preached at the same time at Norton in Suffolke, by NICHOLAS BOWND, Doctor of Divinite. . . . 1604." [Twenty-one Sermons on verses 1-6. 4to.]

Psalm 21

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

SUBJECT. *The title gives us but little information; it is simply, To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. Probably written by David, sung by David, relating to David, and intended by David to refer in its fullest reach of meaning to David's Lord. It is evidently the fit companion of Psalm Twenty, and is in its proper position next to it. Psalm Twenty anticipates what this regards as realized. If we pray to-day for a benefit and receive it, we must, ere the sun goes down, praise God for that mercy, or we deserve to be denied the next time. It has been called David's triumphant song, and we may remember it as The Royal Triumphal Ode. "The king" is most prominent throughout, and we shall read it to true profit if our meditation of him shall be sweet while perusing it. We must crown him with the glory of our salvation; singing of his love, and praising his power, The next psalm will take us to the foot of the cross, this introduces us to the steps of the throne.*

DIVISION. *The division of the translators will answer every purpose. A thanksgiving for victory, verses 1 to 6. Confidence of further success, verses 7 to 13.*

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "*The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord.*" Jesus is a Royal Personage. The question, "Art thou a King then?" received a full answer from the Saviour's lips: "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth." He is not merely a King, but *the King*; King over minds and hearts, reigning with a dominion of

love, before which all other rule is but mere brute force. He was proclaimed King even on the cross, for there, indeed, to the eye of faith, he reigned as on a throne, blessing with more than imperial munificence the needy sons of earth. Jesus has wrought out the salvation of his people, but as a man he found his strength in Jehovah his God, to whom he addressed himself in prayer upon the lonely mountain's side, and in the garden's solitary gloom. That strength so abundantly given is here gratefully acknowledged, and made the subject of joy. The Man of Sorrows is now anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Returned in triumph from the overthrow of all his foes, he offers his own rapturous *Te Deum* in the temple above, and joys in the power of the Lord. Herein let every subject of King Jesus imitate the King; let us lean upon Jehovah's strength, let us joy in it by unstaggering faith, let us exult in it in our thankful songs. Jesus not only has thus rejoiced, but he *shall* do so as he sees the power of divine grace bringing out from their sinful hiding-places the purchase of his soul's travail; we also shall rejoice more and more as we learn by experience more and more fully the strength of the arm of our covenant God. Our weakness unstrings our harps, but his strength tunes them anew. If we cannot sing a note in honour of our own strength, we can at any rate rejoice in our omnipotent God.

"And in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" Everything is ascribed to God; the source is *thy strength* and the stream is *thy salvation*. Jehovah planned and ordained it, works it and crowns it, and therefore it is his salvation. The joy here spoken of is described by a note of exclamation and a word of wonder: *"how greatly!"* The rejoicing of our risen Lord must, like his agony, be unutterable. If the mountains of his joy rise in proportion to the depth of the valleys of his grief, then his sacred bliss is high as the seventh heaven. For the joy which was set before him as he endured the cross, despising the shame, and now that joy daily grows, for he rests in his love and rejoices over his redeemed with singing, as in due order they are brought to find their salvation in his blood. Let us with our Lord rejoice in salvation, as coming from God, as coming to us, as extending itself to others, and as soon to encompass all lands. We need not be afraid of too much rejoicing in this respect; this solid foundation will well sustain the loftiest edifice of joy. The shoutings of the early methodists in the excitement of the joy were far more pardonable than our own lukewarmness. Our joy should have some sort of inexpressibleness in it.

Verse 2. *"Thou hast given him his heart's desire."* That desire he ardently pursued when he was on earth, both by his prayer, his actions, and his suffering; he manifested that his heart longed to redeem his people, and now in heaven he has his desire granted him, for he sees his beloved coming to be with him where he is. The desires of the Lord Jesus were from his heart, and the Lord heard them; if our hearts are right with God, he will in our case also "fulfil the desires of them that fear him."

"And hast not withholden the request of his lips." What is in the well of the heart is sure to come

up in the bucket of the lips, and those are the only true prayers where the heart's desire is first, and the lip's request follows after. Jesus prayed vocally as well as mentally; speech is a great assistance to thought. Some of us feel that even when alone we find it easier to collect our thoughts when we can pray aloud. The requests of the Saviour were not withheld. He was and still is a prevailing Pleader. Our Advocate on high returns not empty from the throne of grace. He asked for his elect in the eternal council-chamber, he asked for blessings for them here, he asked for glory for them hereafter, and his requests have speeded. He is ready to ask for us at the mercy-seat. Have we not at this hour some desire to send up to his Father by him? Let us not be slack to use our willing, loving, all-prevailing Intercessor.

"*Selah.*" Here a pause is very properly inserted that we may admire the blessed success of the king's prayers, and that we may prepare our own requests which may be presented through him. If we had a few more quiet rests, a few more Selahs in our public worship, it might be profitable.

Verse 3. "*For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness.*" The word *prevent* formerly signified to precede or go before, and assuredly Jehovah preceded his Son with blessings. Before he died saints were saved by the anticipated merit of his death, before he came believers saw his day and were glad, and he himself had his delights with the sons of men. The Father is so willing to give blessings through his Son, that instead of his being constrained to bestow his grace, he outstrips the Mediatorial march of mercy. "I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you." Before Jesus calls the Father answers, and while he is yet speaking he hears. Mercies may be bought with blood, but they are also freely given. The love of Jehovah is not caused by the Redeemer's sacrifice, but that love, with its blessings of goodness, preceded the great atonement, and provided it for our salvation. Reader, it will be a happy thing for thee if, like thy Lord, thou canst see both providence and grace preceding thee, forestalling thy needs, and preparing thy path. Mercy, in the case of many of us, ran before our desires and prayers, and it ever outruns our endeavours and expectancies, and even our hopes are left to lag behind. Preventing grace deserves a song; we may make one out of this sentence; let us try. All our mercies are to be viewed as "*blessings*;" gifts of a blessed God, meant to make us blessed; they are "*blessings of goodness*," not of merit, but of free favour; and they come to us in a *preventing way*, a way of prudent foresight, such as only preventing love could have arranged. In this light the verse is itself a sonnet!

"*Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.*" Jesus wore the thorn-crown, but now wears the glory-crown. It is a "*crown*," indicating royal nature, imperial power, deserved honour, glorious conquest, and divine government. The crown is of the richest, rarest, most resplendent, and most lasting order—"gold," and that gold of the most refined and valuable sort, "*pure gold*," to indicate the excellence of his dominion. This crown is set upon his head most firmly, and whereas other monarchs find their diadems fitting loosely, his is fixed so that no power can move it, for Jehovah

himself has set it upon his brow. Napoleon crowned himself, but Jehovah crowned the Lord Jesus; the empire of the one melted in an hour, but the other has an abiding dominion. Some versions read, "a crown of precious stones;" this may remind us of those beloved ones who shall be as jewels in his crown, of whom he has said, "They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels." May we be set in the golden circlet of the Redeemer's glory, and adorn his head for ever!

Verse 4. *"He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever."* The first words may suit King David, but the length of days for ever and ever can only refer to the King Messiah. Jesus, as man, prayed for resurrection and he received it, and now possesses it in immortality. He died once, but being raised from the dead he dieth no more. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is the delightful intimation which the Saviour gives us, that we are partakers of his eternal life. We had never found this jewel, if he had not rolled away the stone which covered it.

Verse 5. *"His glory is great in thy salvation."* Immanuel bears the palm; he once bore the cross. The Father has glorified the Son, so that there is no glory like unto that which surroundeth him. See his person as it is described by John in the Revelation; see his dominion as it stretches from sea to sea; see his splendour as he is revealed in flaming fire. Lord, who is like unto thee? Solomon in all his glory could not be compared with thee, thou once despised Man of Nazareth! Mark, reader: salvation is ascribed to God; and thus the Son, as our Saviour, magnifies his Father; but the Son's glory is also greatly seen, for the Father glorifies his Son.

"Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him." Parkhurst reads, "splendour and beauty." These are put upon Jesus as chains of gold, and stars and tokens of honour are placed upon princes and great men. As the wood of the tabernacle was overlaid with pure gold, so is Jesus covered with glory and honour. If there be a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory for his humble followers, what must there be for our Lord himself? The whole weight of sin was laid upon him; it is but meet that the full measure of the glory of bearing it away should be laid upon the same beloved person. A glory commensurate with his shame he must and will receive, for well has he earned it. It is not possible for us to honour Jesus too much; what our God delights to do, we may certainly do to our utmost. Oh for new crowns for the lofty brow which once was marred with thorns!

"Let him be crowned with majesty
Who bowed his head to death,
And be his honours sounded high
By all things that have breath."

Verse 6. *"For thou hast made him most blessed for ever."* He is most blessed in himself, for he is God over all, blessed for ever; but this relates to him as our Mediator, in which capacity blessedness is given to him as a reward. The margin has it, *thou hast set him to be blessings*; he is an overflowing wellspring of blessings to others, a sun filling the universe with light. According as the Lord swore

unto Abraham, the promised seed is an everlasting source of blessings to all the nations of the earth. He is set for this, ordained, appointed, made incarnate with this very design, that he may bless the sons of men. Oh that sinners had sense enough to use the Saviour for that end to which he is ordained, viz., to be a Saviour to lost and guilty souls.

"Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." He who is a blessing to others cannot but be glad himself; the unbounded good-doing of Jesus ensures him unlimited joy. The loving favour of his Father, the countenance of God, gives Jesus exceeding joy. This is the purest stream to drink of, and Jesus chooses no other. His joy is full. Its source is divine. Its continuance is eternal. Its degree exceeding all bounds. The countenance of God makes the Prince of Heaven glad; how ought we to seek it, and how careful should we be lest we should provoke him by our sins to hide his face from us! Our anticipations may cheerfully fly forward to the hour when the joy of our Lord shall be shed abroad on all the saints, and the countenance of Jehovah shall shine upon all the blood-bought. So shall we "enter into the joy of our Lord."

So far all has been "the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast." Let us shout and sing with them, for Jesus is our King, and in his triumphs we share a part.

Verse 7. *"For the king trusteth in the Lord."* Our Lord, like a true King and leader, was a master in the use of the weapons, and could handle well the shield of faith, for he has set us a brilliant example of unwavering confidence in God. He felt himself safe in his Father's care until his hour was come, he knew that he was always heard in heaven; he committed his cause to him that judgeth right, and in his last moments he committed his spirit into the same hands. The joy expressed in the former verses was the joy of faith, and the victory achieved was due to the same precious grace. A holy confidence in Jehovah is the true mother of victories. This psalm of triumph was composed long before our Lord's conflict began, but faith overleaps the boundaries of time, and chants her "Io triumphe," while yet she sings her battle song.

"Through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved." Eternal mercy secures the mediatorial throne of Jesus. He who is Most High in every sense, engages all his infinite perfections to maintain the throne of grace upon which our King in Zion reigns. He was not moved *from* his purpose, nor *in* his sufferings, nor *by* his enemies, nor shall he be moved *from* the completion of his designs. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Other empires are dissolved by the lapse of years, but eternal mercy maintains his growing dominion evermore; other kings fail because they rest upon an arm of flesh, but our monarch reigns on in splendour because he trusteth in Jehovah. It is a great display of divine mercy to men that the throne of King Jesus is still among them: nothing but divine mercy could sustain it, for human malice would overturn it to-morrow if it could. We ought to trust in God for the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom, for in Jehovah the King himself trusts: all unbelieving methods of action, and especially all reliance upon mere human ability, should be for

ever discarded from a kingdom where the monarch sets the examples of walking by faith in God.

Verse 8. *"Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee."* The destruction of the wicked is a fitting subject for joy to the friends of righteousness; hence here, and in most scriptural songs, it is noted with calm thanksgiving. "Thou hast put down the mighty from their seats," is a note of the same song which sings, "and hast exalted them of low degree." We pity the lost for they are men, but we cannot pity them as enemies of Christ. None can escape from the wrath of the victorious King, nor is it desirable that they should. Without looking for his flying foes he will find them with his hand, for his presence is about and around them. In vain shall any hope for escape, he will find out all, and be able to punish all, and that too with the ease and rapidity which belong to the warrior's right hand. The finding out relates, we think, not only to the discovery of the hiding places of the haters of God, but to the touching of them in their tenderest parts, so as to cause the severest suffering. When he appears to judge the world hard hearts will be subdued into terror, and proud spirits humbled into shame. He who has the key of human nature can touch all its springs at his will, and find out the means of bringing the utmost confusion and terror upon those who aforetime boastfully expressed their hatred of him.

Verse 9. *"Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger."* They themselves shall be an oven to themselves, and so their own tormentors. Those who burned with anger against thee shall be burned by thine anger. The fire of sin will be followed by the fire of wrath. Even as the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah went up to heaven, so shall the enemies of the Lord Jesus be utterly and terribly consumed. Some read it, "thou shalt put them as it were into a furnace of fire." Like faggots cast into an oven they shall burn furiously beneath the anger of the Lord; "they shall be cast into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." These are terrible words, and those teachers do not well who endeavour by their sophistical reasonings to weaken their force. Reader, never tolerate slight thoughts of hell, or you will soon have low thoughts of sin. The hell of sinners must be fearful beyond all conception, or such language as the present would not be used. Who would have the Son of God to be his enemy when such an overthrow awaits his foes? The expression, "the time of thine anger," reminds us that as now is the time of his grace, so there will be a set time for his wrath. The judge goes upon assize at an appointed time. There is a day of vengeance of our God; let those who despise the day of grace remember this day of wrath.

"The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them." Jehovah will himself visit with his anger the enemies of his Son. The Lord Jesus will, as it were, judge by commission from God, whose solemn assent and co-operation shall be with him in his sentences upon impenitent sinners. An utter destruction of soul and body, so that both shall be swallowed up with misery, and be devoured with anguish, is here intended. Oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! Who can endure it? Lord, save us from it, for Jesu's sake.

Verse 10. *"Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth."* Their life's work shall be a failure, and the result of their toil shall be disappointment. That in which they prided themselves shall be forgotten; their very names shall be wiped out as abominable, *"and their seed from among the children of men."* Their posterity following in their footsteps shall meet with a similar overthrow, till at last the race shall come to an end. Doubtless the blessing of God is often handed down by the righteous to their sons, as almost a heirloom in the family, while the dying sinner bequeaths a curse to his descendants. If men will hate the Son of God, they must not wonder if their own sons meet with no favour.

Verse 11. *"For they intended evil against thee."* God takes notice of intentions. He who would but could not is as guilty as he who did. Christ's church and cause are not only attacked by those who do not understand it, but there are many who have the light and yet hate it. Intentional evil has a virus in it which is not found in sins of ignorance; now as ungodly men with malice aforethought attack the gospel of Christ, their crime is great, and their punishment will be proportionate. The words *"against thee"* show us that he who intends evil against the poorest believer means ill to the King himself: let persecutors beware.

"They imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform." Want of power is the clog on the foot of the haters of the Lord Jesus. They have the wickedness to *imagine*, and the cunning to *devise*, and the malice to plot *mischievous*, but blessed be God, they fail in ability; yet they shall be judged as to their hearts, and the will shall be taken for the deed in the great day of account. When we read the boastful threatenings of the enemies of the gospel at the present day, we may close our reading by cheerfully repeating, *"which they are not able to perform."* The serpent may hiss, but his head is broken; the lion may worry, but he cannot devour: the tempest may thunder, but cannot strike. Old Giant Pope bites his nails at the pilgrims, but he cannot pick their bones as aforetime. Growling forth a hideous "non possumus," the devil and all his allies retire in dismay from the walls of Zion, for the Lord is there.

Verse 12. *"Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them."* For a time the foes of God may make bold advances, and threaten to overthrow everything, but a few ticks of the clock will alter the face of their affairs. At first they advance impudently enough, but Jehovah meets them to their teeth, and a taste of the sharp judgment of God speedily makes them flee in dismay. The original has in it the thought of the wicked being set as a butt for God to shoot at, a target for his wrath to aim at. What a dreadful situation! As an illustration upon a large scale, remember Jerusalem during the siege; and for a specimen in an individual, read the story of the death-bed of Francis Spira. God takes sure aim; who would be his target? His arrows are sharp and transfix the heart; who would wish to be wounded by them? Ah, ye enemies of God, your boastings will soon be over when once the shafts begin to fly!

Verse 13. *"Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength."* A sweet concluding verse. Our hearts shall

join in it. It is always right to praise the Lord when we call to remembrance his goodness to his Son, and the overthrow of his foes. The exaltation of the name of God should be the business of every Christian; but since such poor things as we fail to honour him as he deserves, we may invoke his own power to aid us. Be high, O God, but do thou maintain thy loftiness by thine own almightiness, for no other power can worthily do it.

"So will we sing and praise thy power." For a time the saints may mourn, but the glorious appearance of their divine Helper awakens their joy. Joy should always flow in the channel of praise. All the attributes of God are fitting subjects to be celebrated by the music of our hearts and voices, and when we observe a display of his *power*, we must extol it. He wrought our deliverance alone, and he alone shall have the praise.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The last Psalm was a litany before the king went forth to battle. This is apparently a *Te Deum* on his return.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne, B.D., in the "Book of Psalms: a New Translation, with Introduction and Notes," 1864.*

Whole Psalm. The prayer which the church offers up at the conclusion of the preceding Psalm now issues in a hymn of praise, the result of a believing view of the glory which is to follow, when Messiah's sufferings are ended. This is one of the beautiful songs of which we find many in Scripture, prepared by the Holy Spirit to awaken and enliven the hopes and expectations of the church while she waits for the Lord, and to give utterance to her joy at the time of his arrival. The theme is Messiah's exaltation and glory, and the time chosen for its delivery is just the moment when darkness covered the earth, and all nature seemed about to die with its expiring Lord. Scripture deals largely in contrasts. It seems to be suitable to the human mind to turn from one extreme to another. Man can endure any change, however violent and contradictory, but a long continuance, a sameness either of joy or sorrow, has a debilitating and depressing effect.—*R. H. Ryland.*

Whole Psalm. "After this I looked. . . and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." Revelation 4:1, 2. Such may be considered as the description of this Psalm, after the foregoing prayer. "He who in the preceding Psalm," says St. Jerome, "was prayed for as having taken the form of a servant, in this is King of kings, and Lord of lords."—*Isaac Williams.*

Whole Psalm. I am persuaded that there is not one who consents to the application of the preceding Psalm to Christ in his trouble, who will fail to recognise in this, Christ in his triumph. There he was in the dark valley—the valley of Achor; now he is on the mount of Zion; there he was enduring sorrow and travail; now he remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a spiritual seed is born into the world; there he was beset with deadly enemies, who encompassed him on every side; but here he has entered upon that which is written in Psalm 78:65, 66, "Then the Lord awaked as one out of

sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach."—*Hamilton Verschoyle*.

Whole Psalm. As you have already observed in the heading of this Psalm, it is said to have been composed by David. He wrote of himself in the third person, and as "*the king*." He penned the Psalm, not so much for his own use, as for his people's. It is, in fact, a national anthem, celebrating the majesty and glory of David, but ascribing both to God—expressing confidence in David's future, but building that confidence upon God alone.—*Samuel Martin, in "Westminster Chapel Pulpit," 1860.*

Verse 1. "Thy strength. . . thy salvation." So you have two words, "*virtus* and *salus*," strength and salvation. Note them well; for not *virtus* without *salus*, not *salus* without *virtus*, neither without the other is full, nor both without *Tua Domine*. *In virtute* is well, so it have *in salute* after it. For not in strength alone is there matter of joy, every way considered. No, not in *God's strength*, if it have not *salvation* behind it. Strength, not to smite us down, but strength to deliver; this is the joyful side. Now turn it the other way. As strength, if it end in salvation, is just cause for joy, so salvation, if it go with strength, makes joy yet more joyful; for it becomes a strong salvation, a mighty deliverance.—*Launcelot Andrews (Bishop), 1555-1626, in "Conspiracie of the Goweries."*

Verse 1. "In thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice." Oh, it is good rejoicing in the strength of that arm which shall never wither, and in the shadow of those wings which shall never cast their feathers! In him that is not there yesterday and here to-day, but the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! For as he is, so shall the joy be.—*Launcelot Andrews*.

Verse 2. "Thou hast given him the desire of his soul." He desired to eat the passover, and to lay down his life when he would, and again when he would to take it; and thou hast given it to him. "*And hast not deprived him of the good pleasure of his lips.*" "My peace," saith he, "I leave with you;" and it was done.—*Augustine, in loc.*

Verse 2 (first clause). Good men are sure to have out their prayers either in money, or in money's worth, as they say—in that very thing, or a better.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 2. "Selah." See pages 25, 29, 38, 345.

Verse 3. "For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." The Son of God could not be more ready to ask for the blessings of the divine goodness, than the Father was to give them; and his disposition is the same towards all his adopted sons. Christ, as King and Priest, weareth a crown of glory, represented by the purest and most resplendent of metals—gold. He is pleased to esteem his saints, excelling in different virtues, as the rubies, the sapphires, and the emeralds, which grace and adorn that crown. Who would not be ambitious of obtaining a place therein?—*George Horne*.

Verse 3. "Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness." As if he should say, "Lord, I never asked for a kingdom, I never thought of a kingdom, but thou hast prevented me with the

blessings of thy goodness." From whence I take up this note or doctrine, that it is a sweet thing and worthy of all our thankful acknowledgments, to be prevented with the blessings of God's goodness, or God's good blessings. . . . It is no new thing for God to walk in a way of preventing love and mercy with the children of men. Thus he hath always dealt, doth deal, and will deal; thus he hath always dealt with the world, with the nations of the world, with great towns and places, with families, and with particular souls. . . . As for particular souls, you know how it was with Matthew the publican, sitting at the receipt of custom. "Come and follow me," says Christ; preventing of him. And you know how it was with Paul: "I was a blasphemer, and I was a persecutor, but I obtained mercy." How so? Did he seek it first? "No," says he, "I went breathing out threatenings against the people of God, and God met me, and unhorsed me; God prevented me with his grace and mercy." Thus Paul. And pray tell me what do you think of that whole chapter of Luke—the fifteenth? There are three parables: the parable of the lost groat, of the lost sheep, and of the lost son. The woman lost her groat, and swept to find it; but did the groat make first toward the woman, or the woman make after the groat first? The shepherd lost his sheep, but did the sheep make first after the shepherd, or the shepherd after the sheep? Indeed, it is said concerning the lost son, that he first takes up a resolution, "I will return home to my father," but when his father saw him afar off, he ran and met him, and embraced him, and welcomed him home. Why? But to show that the work of grace and mercy shall be all along carried on in a way of preventing love.—*Condensed from William Bridge, 1600-1670.*

Verse 3. "For thou hast prevented him with the blessings of sweetness." Because he had first quaffed the blessings of thy sweetness, the gall of our sins did not hurt him.—*Augustine.*

Verse 3. "Thou preventest him." The word "*prevent*" is now generally used to represent the idea of hindrance. "*Thou preventest him,*" would mean commonly, "Thou hinderest him." But here the word "*prevent*" means *to go before*. Thou goest before him with the blessings of thy goodness as a pioneer, to make crooked ways straight, and rough places smooth; or, as one who strews flowers in the path of another, to render the way beautiful to the eye and pleasant to the tread.—*Samuel Martin.*

Verse 3 (first clause). The text is an acknowledgment of God's goodness. God has anticipated David's wants; and he writes, "*Thou preventest—thou goest before him—with goodness.*" The words "*blessings of goodness*" suggest that God's gifts are God's love embodied and expressed. And this greatly enhances the value of our blessings— that they are cups as full of God and of God's kindness as of happiness and blessedness.—*Samuel Martin.*

Verse 3 (first clause). A large portion of our blessing is given us before our asking or seeking. Existence, reason, intellect, a birth in a Christian land, the calling of our nation to the knowledge of Christ, and Christ himself, with many other things, are unsought bestowed on men, as was David's right to the throne on him. No one ever asked for a Saviour till God of his own motion promised "the seed of the woman."—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3. "*Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.*" Christ may be said to have a fourfold glory, or crown. 1. As God co-essential with the Father; "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Hebrews 1:1, 2, 3. 2. He hath a crown and glory as Mediator, in respect of the power, authority, and glory wherewith he is invested as God's great deputy, and anointed upon the hill of Zion, having power, and a rod of iron, even in reference to enemies. 3. He hath a crown and glory in respect of the manifestation of his glory in the executing of his offices, when he makes his mediatory power and glory apparent in particular steps: thus sometimes he is said *to take his power to him* (Revelation 11:17); and is said *to be crowned* when the white horse of the gospel rides in triumph. Revelation 6:2. The last step of this glory will be in the day of judgment; in short, this consists in his exercising his former power committed to him as Mediator. 4. There is a crown and glory which is in a manner put on him by particular believers, when he is glorified by them, not by adding anything to his infinite glory, but by their acknowledging of him to be so.—*James Durham, 1622-1658.*

Verse 3. "*The crown of pure gold*" has respect to his exaltation at the right hand of God, where he is crowned with glory and honour, and this "*crown*" being of "*pure gold,*" denotes the purity, glory, solidity, and perpetuity of his kingdom.—*John Gill.*

Verse 4. "*He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*" The glory of God is concerned in Christ's living for ever—1. The glory of his *faithfulness*: for eternal life and blessedness were pledged to Immanuel in covenant as the reward of his work (Psalm 110:1-4; Isaiah 9:6, 7, etc.); and it was in the anticipation and confident hope of this, that he "endured the cross, despising the shame." Hebrews 12:2; Psalm 16:8-11. 2. The glory of his *justice*. The justice of God was honoured and fully satisfied in all its righteous demands by the death of Christ. His subsequent life is the expression on the part of God of that satisfaction. His perpetual life is a permanent declaration that in him and his finished work the everlasting righteousness of Jehovah rests for ever satisfied. Death can "never more have dominion over him:" for to inflict the penalty again would be a violation of justice. 3. The glory of his *grace*. The glory of this grace he now lives actively to promote. John 17:2. By living "ever" at God's right hand, he appears as an eternal memorial of God's love in making him our Mediator and Substitute—our Saviour from sin and wrath; and his permanent appearance there will keep all heaven perpetually in mind that "by the grace of God they are what they are," owing all to the sovereign mercy of God through Jesus Christ. He shall appear as the blessed medium through which all the gifts and joys of salvation shall flow to the guilty for evermore. Thus the power of God and all his moral attributes secure the perpetuity of the life of the risen and exalted Saviour.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

Verse 4. "*He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him.*" He asked a resurrection, saying, "Father, glorify thy Son;" and thou gavest it him. "*Length of days for ever and ever.*" The prolonged ages of

this world which the church was to have, and after them an eternity, world without end.—*Augustine.*

Verse 4. "He asked life of thee," etc. Thus God is better to his people than their prayers; and when they ask but one blessing, he answereth them as Naaman did Gehazi, with, Nay, take two. Hezekiah asked but one life, and God gave him fifteen years, which we reckon at two lives and more. He giveth liberally and like himself; as great Alexander did when he gave the poor beggar a city; and when he sent his schoolmaster a ship full of frankincense, and bade him sacrifice freely.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 4-8. If David had before been without the symbol of his royal dignity, namely, the diadem, he was the more justified in praising the goodness of God, which had now transferred it from the head of an enemy to his own.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 5. "His glory is great in thy salvation." I remember one dying, and hearing some discourse of Jesus Christ; "Oh," said she, "speak more of this—let me hear more of this—be not weary of telling his praise; I long to see him, how should I but long to hear of him?" Surely I cannot say too much of Jesus Christ. On this blessed subject no man can possibly hyperbolise. Had I the tongues of men and angels, I could never fully set forth Christ. It involves an eternal contradiction, that the creature can see to the bottom of the Creator. Suppose all the sands on the sea-shore, all the flowers, herbs, leaves, twigs of trees in woods and forests, all the stars of heaven, were all rational creatures; and had they that wisdom and tongues of angels to speak of the loveliness, beauty, glory, and excellency of Christ, as gone to heaven, and sitting at the right hand of his Father, they would, in all their expressions, stay millions of miles on this side Jesus Christ. Oh, the loveliness, beauty, and glory of his countenance! Can I speak, or you hear of such a Christ? And are we not all in a burning love, in a seraphical love, or at least in a conjugal love? O my heart, how is it thou art not love sick? How is it thou dost not charge the daughters of Jerusalem as the spouse did: "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye shall tell him, that I *am* sick of love." Canticles 5:8.—*Isaac Ambrose.*

Verse 5. "Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him." If it be demanded whether Christ were exalted unto his glory and dignity, according to both his natures, both his Godhead and his manhood, I answer, according to both. According to his Godhead, not as it is considered in itself, but inasmuch as his Godhead, which from his birth unto his death did little show itself, after his resurrection was made manifest in his manhood; for, as the apostle saith (Romans 1:4), "He was declared mightily to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead," even by the resurrection and after his resurrection from the dead, he which was thought only to be man, was most plainly manifested likewise to be God. Now, as touching his manhood, he was therein exalted unto highest majesty in the heavenly places, not only shaking off all infirmities of man's nature, but also being beautified and adorned with all qualities of glory, both in his soul and in his body, yet so that he still retaineth the properties of a true body, for even as he was man, he was set at the right hand of the Father, to rule

and reign over all, till all his enemies be destroyed, and put under his feet. To knit up all in a word, Christ, God and man, after his resurrection, was crowned with glory and honour, even such as plainly showed him to be God, and was set on the throne of God, there to rule and reign as sovereign Lord and King, till he come in the clouds to judge both quick and dead. Here, then, is both matter of comfort and consolation unto the godly, and likewise for fear and astonishment unto the wicked and ungodly.—*Henry Airway, 1560-1616.*

Verse 5 (last clause). Christ was "a man of sorrows" on earth, but he is full of joy in heaven. He that "wipes away all tears from the eyes of his people," surely has none in his own. There was a *joy set before him* before he suffered, and doubtless it was given him, when he sat down at God's right hand. We may take the latter to be an actual donation of the former; the joy he had in prospect when he suffered he had in possession when he came to his throne. This is the time of his receiving the Father's public approbation, and the tokens of his love, before the whole heavenly assembly, which must be matter of great joy to him who so much valued and delighted in his Father's love.—*John Hurrion, 1675-1731.*

Verse 5. Happy he who hath a bone, or an arm, to put the crown upon the head of our highest King, whose chariot is paved with love. Were there ten thousand millions of heavens created above these highest heavens, and again as many above them, and as many above them, till angels were wearied with counting, it were but too low a seat to fix the princely throne of that Lord Jesus (whose ye are) above them all.—*Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 6. "Thou hast made him exceeding glad:" literally, "brightened him," possibly in allusion to the brightness of Moses' face. *Dalman Hapstone, M.A., in "The Ancient Psalms. . . . A Literal—Translation and Notes,"* etc., 1867.

Verse 6. "Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." Though this be metamorphically used for *favour*, yet is the speech not all metaphor, and that well-experienced Christians will tell you.—*Zachary Bogan, in "The Mirth of a Christian Life,"* 1653.

Verse 6 (first clause). Literally, as in the Bible marginal translation, "Thou hast set him *to be blessings for ever.*" Most truly said of the King in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 8. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee." By a kind of climax in the form of expression, "*hand,*" is followed by "*right hand,*" a still more emphatic sign of active strength. To "*find,*" in this connection, includes the ideas of detecting and reaching. Compare 1 Samuel 23:17; Isaiah 10:10; in the latter of which places the verb is construed with a preposition (Heb.), as it is in the first clause of the verse before us, whereas in the other clause it governs the noun directly. If any difference of meaning was intended, it is probably not greater than that between *find* and *find out* in English.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 8. *"Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee."* Saul killed himself, for fear of falling into the hands of his enemies, and thought death less terrible than the shame that he would have endured in seeing himself in their power. What will it be then "to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31), of an offended God? of God unchangeably determined to be avenged? "Who can stand before his indignation?" says the prophet Nahum (chap. 1:6). Who will dare look on him? Who will dare show himself? *"Who may abide the day of his coming"* (Malachi 3:2) without shuddering and fainting for fear? If Joseph's brethren were so terrified that they "could not answer him," when he said, "I am Joseph your brother," how will it be with sinners, when they shall hear the voice of the Son of God, when he shall triumph over them in his wrath, and say unto them, "I am he" whom ye despised; "I am he" whom ye have offended; "I am he" whom ye have crucified? If these words, "I am he," overthrew the soldiers in the garden of Olives (John 18:6), though spoken with extreme gentleness, how will it be when his indignation bursts forth, when it falls upon his enemies like a thunderbolt, and reduces them into dust? Then will they cry out in terror, and say to the mountains, *"Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."* Revelation 6:16.—*James Nouet.*

Verse 8. *"Thine hand shall find out,"* etc. It is not meant only of a discovery of a person (though it be a truth, that the Lord will discover all that are his enemies), but *thine hand shall find them out,* is, it shall take hold of them, grasp them, and arrest them. "Thine hand shall find out" *all* "thine enemies," though close, though covert enemies; not only thy above-ground enemies, but thy under-ground enemies; as well those that undermine thee, as those that assault thee.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9. *"Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them."* How then shall it fare with sinners, when, after all, shall come that general fire so often foretold, which shall either fall from heaven, or ascend out of hell, or (according to Albertus Magnus), proceed from both, and shall devour and consume all it meets with? Whither shall the miserable fly, when that river of flames, or (to say better), that inundation and deluge of fire shall so encompass them, as no place of surety shall be left; where nothing can avail but a holy life; when all besides shall perish, in that universal ruin of the whole world? What lamentations were in Rome, when it burnt for seven days together! What shrieks were heard in Troy, when it was wholly consumed with flames! What howling and astonishment in Pentapolis, when those cities were destroyed with fire from heaven! What weeping there was in Jerusalem, when they beheld the house of God, the glory of their kingdom, the wonder of the world, involved in fire and smoke! Imagine what these people felt; they saw their houses and goods on fire, and no possibility of saving them; when the husband heard the shrieks and cries of his dying wife; the father, of his little children; and, unawares, perceived himself so encompassed with flames, that he could neither relieve them, nor free himself. What shall it then profit the worldlings, to have rich

vessels of gold and silver, curious embroideries, precious tapestries, pleasant gardens, sumptuous palaces, and all what the world now esteems, when they shall with their own eyes, behold their costly palaces burnt, their rich and curious pieces of gold melted, and their flourishing and pleasant orchards consumed, without power to preserve them or themselves? All shall burn, and with it the world, and all the memory and fame of it shall die; and that which mortals thought to be immortal, shall then end and perish.—*Jeremy Taylor*.

Verse 9. "Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger." They shall not only be cast into a furnace of fire (Matthew 13:42), but he shall make them themselves as a fiery oven or furnace, they shall be their own tormentors, the reflections and terrors of their own consciences will be their hell. Those that might have had Christ to rule and save them, but rejected him, and fought against him, even the remembrance of that will be enough to make them to eternity a fiery oven to themselves.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 9. "Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven:" thou shalt make them on fire within, by the consciousness of their ungodliness: "*In the time of thy countenance;*" in the time of thy manifestation.—*Augustine*.

Verse 9. "As a fiery oven," where the burning is extremely hot, the heat striking upon what is in it from all sides, above, below, and about, on all hands, and the door closed from going out, or from suffering any cool refreshment to come in.—*David Dickson*.

Verse 9. "As a fiery oven." Shall make them like a vault of fire, literally, "*an oven,*" as in our translation, or "furnace of fire." Bishop Horsley remarks, "It describes the smoke of the Messiah's enemies perishing by fire, ascending like the smoke of a furnace. 'The smoke of their torments shall ascend for ever and ever.'" How awfully grand is that description of the ruins of the cities of the plain, as the prospect struck on Abraham's eye on the fatal morning of their destruction! "And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Milton puts it—

"Overhead the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And flying vaulted either host with fire."

Richard Mant.

Verse 9. The Chaldee reads:—"The fire of Gehenna, or hell."—*John Morison*.

Verse 9. "The time of thine anger." If God be willing to pour out his heavy displeasure upon those that displease him, what can hinder his mighty arm from performing? Creatures indeed may be angry, but oftentimes, like drones without stings, cannot hurt; as cannons charged with powder without shot only make a roaring; like the Pope's Bulls, threaten many, hurt none but those whose conscience is enslaved. Saul may be angry at David, but cannot find him out; but from God's all-piercing eye none

can hide himself. Satan may desire to kill Job, Jonah may be angry till death for Nineveh's preservation; yet God puts a bit in both their mouths, who, if he be angry, nothing can be holden out of his reach. Princes, if they take captives, may have them rescued from them again, as Lot was from the King of Sodom; bought with a price, as Joseph of the Ishmaelites. But no power can rescue us from God's anger, no ransom but Christ's blood redeem us. God's will being set afoot, all his attributes follow; if his will say, Be angry, his eye seek out the object of his anger, and finds it; his wisdom tempers the cup, his hand whets the sword, his arm strikes the blow. Thus you see there is a time of God's anger for sin, because he will have it so.—*John Cragge*.

Verse 9. "The fire shall devour them." Being troubled by the vengeance of the Lord, after the accusation of their conscience, they shall be given up to eternal fire to be devoured.—*Augustine*.

Verse 9. I have read that a frown of Queen Elizabeth killed Sir Christopher Hatton, the Lord Chancellor of England. What then shall the frowns of the King of nations do? If the rocks rend, the mountains melt, and the foundations of the earth tremble under his wrath; how will the ungodly sinner appear when he comes in all his royal glory to take vengeance on all that knew him not, and that obeyed not his glorious gospel?—*Charles Bradbury*.

Verse 10. "Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men." A day is coming when all the "*fruits*" of sin, brought forth by sinners in their words, their writings, and their actions shall be "*destroyed*;" yea, the tree itself, which had produced them, shall be rooted up, and cast into the fire. The "*seed*" and posterity of the wicked, if they continue in the way of their forefathers, will be punished like them. Let parents consider, that upon their principles and practices may depend the salvation or destruction of multitudes after them. The case of the Jews, daily before their eyes, should make them tremble.—*George Horne*.

Verse 11. "They intended," or warped. Hebrew, *have bent or stretched*. A similitude taken from weavers, who warp their yarn before they weave: or from archers, who, when they have bent their bow and put in their arrow, do take their aim.—*John Diodati*.

Verse 12. "Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back," or *thou shalt set them as a butt,* "*when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.*" The judgments of God are called his "*arrows*," being sharp, swift, sure and deadly. What a dreadful situation, to be set as a mark and "*butt*" at which these arrows are directed! View Jerusalem encompassed by the Roman armies without, and torn to pieces by the animosity of desperate and bloody factions within! No farther commentary is requisite upon this verse.—*George Horne*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The joy of Jesus and of his people in the strength and salvation of God.

Verses 1, 2. The doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ contained in the text, may be considered

under three heads:

- I. *As an answer to prayer.*
- II. *His joy therein—even in the resurrection.*
- III. *As a necessary appendage to this—our own individual concern in his glory and in his joy.*

Hamilton Verschoyle.

Verse 2. The successful Advocate.

Verse 3 (first clause). Preventing mercies.

Verse 3 (first clause). GOD GOING BEFORE US, or God's anticipation of our necessities by his merciful dispensations. God prevents us with the blessings of his goodness:

- I. When we come into the world.
- II. When we become personal transgressors.
- III. When we enter upon the duties and upon the cares of mature life.
- IV. When, in the general course of life, we enter upon new paths.
- V. In the dark "valley of the shadow of death."
- VI. By giving us many mercies without our asking for them; and thus creating occasion, not for prayer, but for praise only.
- VII. By opening to us the gate of heaven, and by storing heaven with every provision for our blessedness.—*Samuel Martin.*

Verse 3 (second clause). Jesus crowned.

- I. His previous labours.
- II. The dominion bestowed.
- III. The character of the crown.
- IV. The divine coronant.

Verse 4. Jesus ever living.

Verse 5. The glory of the Mediator.

Verse 6. The blessedness of Jesus.

Verse 7. Jesus, and example of faith and of its results.

Verse 8. The secret sinner unearthed, and deprived of all hope of concealment.

Verses 8, 9. The certainty and terror of the punishment of the wicked.

Verses 11, 12. The guilt and punishment of evil intentions.

Verse 12. The retreat of the grand army of hell.

Verse 13. *A devout Doxology.*

- I. God exalted.
- II. God alone exalted.
- III. God exalted by his own strength.

IV. His people singing his praise.

Psalm 22

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Work

TITLE. "To the chief Musician upon Ajeleth Shahar. A Psalm of David." *This ode of singular excellence was committed to the most excellent of the temple songsters; the chief among ten thousand is worthy to be extolled by the chief Musician; no meaner singer must have charge of such a strain; we must see to it that we call up our best abilities when Jesus is the theme of praise. The words Ajeleth Shahar are enigmatical, and their meaning is uncertain; some refer them to a musical instrument used upon mournful occasions, but the majority adhere to the translation of our margin, "Concerning the kind of the morning." This last interpretation is the subject of much enquiry and conjecture. Calmet believed that the psalm was addressed to the music master who presided over the band called the "Morning Hind," and Adam Clarke thinks this to be the most likely of all the conjectural interpretations, although he himself inclines to the belief that no interpretation should be attempted, and believes that it is a merely arbitrary and unmeaning title, such as Orientals have always been in the habit of appending to their songs. Our Lord Jesus is so often compared to a hind, and his cruel huntings are so pathetically described in this most affecting psalm, that we cannot but believe that the title indicates the Lord Jesus under a well-known poetical metaphor; at any rate, Jesus is the Hind of the morning concerning whom David here sings.*

SUBJECT. *This is beyond all others THE PSALM OF THE CROSS. It may have been actually repeated word by word by our Lord when hanging on the tree; it would be too bold to say that it was so, but even a casual reader may see that it might have been. It begins with, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and ends, according to some, in the original with "It is finished." For plaintive expressions uprising from unutterable depths of woe we may say of this psalm, "there is none like it." It is the photograph of our Lord's saddest hours, the record of his dying words, the lachrymatory of his last tears, the memorial of his expiring joys. David and his afflictions may be here in a very modified sense, but, as the star is concealed by the light of the sun, he who sees Jesus will probably neither see nor care to see David. Before us we have a description both of the darkness and of the glory of the cross, the sufferings of Christ and the glory which shall follow. Oh for grace to draw near and see this great sight! We should read reverently, putting off our shoes from off our feet, as Moses did at the burning bush, for if there be holy ground anywhere in Scripture it is in this psalm.*

DIVISION. *From the commencement to the twenty-first verse is a most pitiful cry for help, and from verse 21 to 31 is a most precious foretaste of deliverance. The first division may be subdivided at the tenth verse, from verse 1 to 10 being an appeal based upon covenant relationship; and from verse 10 to 21 being an equally earnest plea derived from the imminence of his peril.*

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* This was the startling cry of Golgotha: Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani. The Jews mocked, but the angels adored when Jesus cried this exceeding bitter cry. Nailed to the tree we behold our great Redeemer in extremities, and what see we? Having ears to hear let us hear, and having eyes to see let us see! Let us gaze with holy wonder, and mark the flashes of light amid the awful darkness of that midday-midnight. First, our Lord's faith beams forth and deserves our reverent imitation; he keeps his hold upon his God with both hands and cries twice, *"My God, my God!"* The spirit of adoption was strong within the suffering Son of Man, and he felt no doubt about his interest in his God. Oh that we could imitate this cleaving to an afflicting God! Nor does the sufferer distrust the power of God to sustain him, for the title used —*"E!"*—signifies *strength*, and is the name of the Mighty God. He knows the Lord to be the all-sufficient support and succour of his spirit, and therefore appeals to him in the agony of grief, but not in the misery of doubt. He would fain know why he is left, he raises that question and repeats it, but neither the power nor the faithfulness of God does he mistrust. What an enquiry is this before us! *"Why hast thou forsaken me?"* We must lay the emphasis on every word of this saddest of all utterances. *"Why?"* what is the great cause of such a strange fact as for God to leave his own Son at such a time and in such a plight? There was no cause in him, why then was he deserted? *"Hast:"* it is done, and the Saviour is feeling its dread effect as he asks the question; it is surely true, but how mysterious! It was no threatening of forsaking which made the great Surety cry aloud, he endured that forsaking in very deed. *"Thou:"* I can understand why traitorous Judas and timid Peter should be gone, but *thou*, my God, my faithful friend, how canst thou leave me? This is worst of all, yea, worse than all put together. Hell itself has for its fiercest flame the separation of the soul from God. *"Forsaken:"* if thou hadst chastened I might bear it, for thy face would shine; but to forsake me utterly, ah! why is this? *"Me:"* thine innocent, obedient, suffering Son, why leavest thou *me* to perish? A sight of self seen by penitence, and of Jesus on the cross seen by faith will best expound this question. Jesus is forsaken because our sins had separated between us and our God.

"Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" The Man of Sorrows had prayed until his speech failed him, and he could only utter moanings and groanings as men do in severe sicknesses, like the roarings of a wounded animal. To what extremity of grief was our Master driven? What strong crying and tears were those which made him too hoarse for speech! What must

have been his anguish to find his own beloved and trusted Father standing afar off, and neither granting help nor apparently hearing prayer! This was good cause to make him "roar." Yet there was reason for all this which those who rest in Jesus as their Substitute well know.

Verse 2. "*O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not.*" For our prayers to appear to be unheard is no new trial, Jesus felt it before us, and it is observable that he still held fast his believing hold on God, and cried still, "*My God.*" On the other hand his faith did not render him less importunate, for amid the hurry and horror of that dismal day he ceased not his cry, even as in Gethsemane he had agonized all through the gloomy night. Our Lord continued to pray even though no comfortable answer came, and in this he set us an example of obedience to his own words, "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." No daylight is too glaring, and no midnight too dark to pray in; and no delay or apparent denial, however grievous, should tempt us to forbear from importunate pleading.

Verse 3. "*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" However ill things may look, there is no ill in thee, O God! We are very apt to think and speak hardly of God when we are under his afflicting hand, but not so the obedient Son. He knows too well his Father's goodness to let outward circumstances libel his character. There is no unrighteousness with the God of Jacob, he deserves no censure; let him do what he will, he is to be praised, and to reign enthroned amid the songs of his chosen people. If prayer be unanswered it is not because God is unfaithful, but for some other good and weighty reason. If we cannot perceive any ground for the delay, we must leave the riddle unsolved, but we must not fly in God's face in order to invent an answer. While the holiness of God is in the highest degree acknowledged and adored, the afflicted speaker in this verse seems to marvel how the holy God could forsake him, and be silent to his cries. The argument is, thou art holy, Oh! why is it that thou dost disregard thy holy One in his hour of sharpest anguish? We may not question the holiness of God, but we may argue from it, and use it as a plea in our petitions.

Verse 4. "*Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*" This is the rule of life with all the chosen family. Three times over is it mentioned, they *trusted*, and *trusted*, and *trusted*, and never left off trusting, for it was their very life; and they fared well too, for *thou didst deliver them*. Out of all their straits, difficulties, and miseries faith brought them by calling their God to the rescue; but in the case of our Lord it appeared as if faith would bring no assistance from heaven, he alone of all the trusting ones was to remain without deliverance. The experience of other saints may be a great consolation to us when in deep waters if faith can be sure that their deliverance will be ours; but when we feel ourselves sinking, it is poor comfort to know that others are swimming. Our Lord here pleads the past dealings of God with his people as a reason why he should not be left alone; here again he is an example to us in the skilful use of the weapon of all prayer. The use of the plural pronoun "*our*" shows how one with his people Jesus was even on the cross. We say, "Our Father

which art in heaven," and he calls those "our fathers" through whom we came into the world, although he was without father as to the flesh.

Verse 5. *"They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded."*

As if he had said, "How is it that I am now left without succour in my overwhelming griefs, while all others have been helped? We may remind the Lord of his former lovingkindnesses to his people, and beseech him to be still the same. This is true wrestling; let us learn the art. Observe, that ancient saints *cried* and *trusted*, and that in trouble we must do the same; and the invariable result was that they were not ashamed of their hope, for deliverance came in due time; this same happy portion shall be ours. The prayer of faith can do the deed when nothing else can. Let us wonder when we see Jesus using the same pleas as ourselves, and immersed in griefs far deeper than our own.

Verse 6. *"But I am a worm, and no man."* This verse is a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement as to be not only lower than the angels, but even lower than men. What a contrast between "I AM" and *"I am a worm"*! yet such a double nature was found in the person of our Lord Jesus when bleeding upon the tree. He felt himself to be comparable to a helpless, powerless, down-trodden worm, passive while crushed, and unnoticed and despised by those who trod upon him. He selects the weakest of creatures, which is all flesh; and becomes, when trodden upon, writhing, quivering flesh, utterly devoid of any might except strength to suffer. This was a true likeness of himself when his body and soul had become a mass of misery—the very essence of agony—in the dying pangs of crucifixion. Man by nature is but a worm; but our Lord puts himself even beneath man, on account of the scorn that was heaped upon him and the weakness which he felt, and therefore he adds, *"and no man."* The privileges and blessings which belonged to the fathers he could not obtain while deserted by God, and common acts of humanity were not allowed him, for he was rejected of men; he was outlawed from the society of earth, and shut out from the smile of heaven. How utterly did the Saviour empty himself of all glory, and become of no reputation for our sakes! *"A reproach of men"*—their common butt and jest; a byword and a proverb unto them: the sport of the rabble, and the scorn of the rulers. Oh the caustic power of reproach, to those who endure it with patience, yet smart under it most painfully! *"And despised of the people."* The *vox populi* was against him. The very people who would once have crowned him then contemned him, and they who were benefited by his cures sneered at him in his woes. Sin is worthy of all reproach and contempt, and for this reason Jesus, the Sinbearer, was given up to be thus unworthily and shamefully entreated.

Verse 7. *"All they that see me laugh me to scorn."* Read the evangelistic narrative of the ridicule endured by the Crucified One, and then consider, in the light of this expression, how it grieved him. The iron entered into his soul. Mockery has for its distinctive description "cruel mockings;" those endured by our Lord were of the most cruel kind. The scornful ridicule of our Lord was universal; all

sorts of men were unanimous in the derisive laughter, and vied with each other in insulting him. Priests and people, Jews and Gentiles, soldiers and civilians, all united in the general scoff, and that at the time when he was prostrate in weakness and ready to die. Which shall we wonder at the most, the cruelty of man or the love of the bleeding Saviour? How can we ever complain of ridicule after this?

"They shoot out the lip, they shake the head." These were gestures of contempt. Pouting, grinning, shaking of the head, thrusting out of the tongue, and other modes of derision were endured by our patient Lord; men made faces at him before whom angels veil their faces and adore. The basest signs of disgrace which disdain could devise were maliciously cast at him. They punned upon his prayers, they made matter for laughter of his sufferings, and set him utterly at nought. Herbert sings of our Lord as saying,—

"Shame tears my soul, my body many a wound;
Sharp nails pierce this, but sharper that confound;
Reproaches which are free, while I am bound.
Was ever grief like mine?"

Verse 8. *"Saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."* Here the taunt is cruelly aimed at the sufferer's faith in God, which is the tenderest point in a good man's soul, the very apple of his eye. They must have learned the diabolical art from Satan himself, for they made rare proficiency in it. According to Matthew 27:39-44, there were five forms of taunt hurled at the Lord Jesus; this special piece of mockery is probably mentioned in this psalm because it is the most bitter of the whole; it has a biting, sarcastic irony in it, which gives it a peculiar venom; it must have stung the Man of Sorrows to the quick. When we are tormented in the same manner, let us remember him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, and we shall be comforted. On reading these verses one is ready, with Trapp, to ask, Is this a prophecy or a history? for the description is so accurate. We must not lose sight of the truth which was unwittingly uttered by the Jewish scoffers. They themselves are witnesses that Jesus of Nazareth trusted in God: why then was he permitted to perish? Jehovah had aforetime delivered those who rolled their burdens upon him: why was this man deserted? Oh that they had understood the answer! Note further, that their ironical jest, *"seeing he delighted in him,"* was true. The Lord did delight in his dear Son, and when he was found in fashion as a man, and became obedient unto death, he still was well pleased with him. Strange mixture! Jehovah delights in him, and yet bruises him; is well pleased, and yet slays him.

Verse 9. *"But thou art he that took me out of the womb."* Kindly providence attends with the surgery of tenderness at every human birth; but the Son of Man, who was marvelously begotten of the Holy Ghost, was in an especial manner watched over by the Lord when brought forth by Mary. The

destitute state of Joseph and Mary, far away from friends and home, led them to see the cherishing hand of God in the safe delivery of the mother, and the happy birth of the child; that Child now fighting the great battle of his life, uses the mercy of his nativity as an argument with God. Faith finds weapons everywhere. He who wills to believe shall never lack reasons for believing. *"Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts."* Was our Lord so early a believer? Was he one of those babes and sucklings out of whose mouths strength is ordained? So it would seem; and if so, what a plea for help! Early piety gives peculiar comfort in our after trials, for surely he who loved us when we were children is too faithful to cast us off in our riper years. Some give the text the sense of "gave me cause to trust, by keeping me safely," and assuredly there was a special providence which preserved our Lord's infant days from the fury of Herod, the dangers of travelling, and the ills of poverty.

Verse 10. *"I was cast upon thee from the womb."* Into the Almighty arms he was first received, as into those of a loving parent. This is a sweet thought. God begins his care over us from the earliest hour. We are dandled upon the knee of mercy, and cherished in the lap of goodness; our cradle is canopied by divine love, and our first totterings are guided by his care. *"Thou art my God from my mother's belly."* The psalm begins with *"My God, my God,"* and here, not only is the claim repeated, but its early date is urged. Oh noble perseverance of faith, thus to continue pleading with holy ingenuity of argument! Our birth was our weakest and most perilous period of existence; if we were then secured by Omnipotent tenderness, surely we have no cause to suspect that divine goodness will fail us now. He who was our God when we left our mother, will be with us till we return to mother earth, and will keep us from perishing in the belly of hell.

Verses 11-21. The crucified Son of David continues to pour out his complaint and prayer. We need much grace that while reading we may have fellowship with his sufferings. May the blessed Spirit conduct us into a most clear and affecting sight of our Redeemer's woes.

Verse 11. *"Be not far from me."* This is the petition for which he has been using such varied and powerful pleas. His great woe was that God had forsaken him, his great prayer is that he would be near him. A lively sense of the divine presence is a mighty stay to the heart in times of distress. *"For trouble is near; for there is none to help."* There are two *"fors,"* as though faith gave a double knock at mercy's gate; that is a powerful prayer which is full of holy reasons and thoughtful arguments. The nearness of trouble is a weighty motive for divine help; this moves our heavenly Father's heart, and brings down his helping hand. It is his glory to be our very present help in trouble. Our Substitute had trouble in his inmost heart, for he said, "the waters have come in, even unto my soul;" well might he cry, *"be not far from me."* The absence of all other helpers is another telling plea. In our Lord's case none either could or would help him, it was needful that he should tread the winepress alone; yet was it a sore aggravation to find that all his disciples had forsaken him, and lover and friend were put far

from him. There is an awfulness about absolute friendlessness which is crushing to the human mind, for man was not made to be alone, and is like a dismembered limb when he has to endure heart-loneliness.

Verse 12. *"Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round."* The mighty ones in the crowd are here marked by the tearful eye of their victim. The priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, rulers, and captains bellowed round the cross like wild cattle, fed in the fat and solitary pastures of Bashan, full of strength and fury; they stamped and foamed around the innocent One, and longed to gore him to death with their cruelties. Conceive of the Lord Jesus as a helpless, unarmed, naked man, cast into the midst of a herd of infuriated wild bulls. They were brutal as bulls, many, and strong, and the Rejected One was all alone, and bound naked to the tree. His position throws great force into the earnest entreaty, "Be not far from me."

Verse 13. *"They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion."* Like hungry cannibals they opened their blasphemous mouths as if they were about to swallow the man whom they abhorred. They could not vomit forth their anger fast enough through the ordinary aperture of their mouths, and therefore set the doors of their lips wide open like those who gape. Like roaring lions they howled out their fury, and longed to tear the Saviour in pieces, as wild beasts raven over their prey. Our Lord's faith must have passed through a most severe conflict while he found himself abandoned to the tender mercies of the wicked, but he came off victorious by prayer; the very dangers to which he was exposed being used to add prevalence to his entreaties.

Verse 14. Turning from his enemies, our Lord describes his own personal condition in language which should bring the tears into every loving eye. *"I am poured out like water."* He was utterly spent, like water poured upon the earth; his heart failed him, and had no more firmness in it than running water, and his whole being was made a sacrifice, like a libation poured out before the Lord. He had long been a fountain of tears; in Gethsemane his heart welled over in sweat, and on the cross he gushed forth with blood; he poured out his strength and spirit, so that he was reduced to the most feeble and exhausted state. *"All my bones are out of joint,"* as if distended upon a rack. Is it not most probable that the fastenings of the hands and feet, and the jar occasioned by fixing the cross in the earth, may have dislocated the bones of the Crucified One? If this is not intended, we must refer the expression to that extreme weakness which would occasion relaxation of the muscles and a general sense of parting asunder throughout the whole system. *"My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."* Excessive debility and intense pain made his inmost life to feel like wax melted in the heat. The Greek liturgy uses the expression, "thine unknown sufferings," and well it may. The fire of Almighty wrath would have consumed our souls for ever in hell; it was no light work to bear as a substitute the heat of an anger so justly terrible. Dr. Gill wisely observes, "if the heart of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, melted at it, what heart can endure, or hands be strong, when God deals

with them in his wrath?"

Verse 15. *"My strength is dried up like a potsherd."* Most complete debility is here portrayed; Jesus likens himself to a broken piece of earthenware, or an earthen pot, baked in the fire till the last particle of moisture is driven out of the clay. No doubt a high degree of feverish burning afflicted the body of our Lord. All his strength was dried up in the tremendous flames of avenging justice, even as the paschal lamb was roasted in the fire. *"My tongue cleaveth to my jaws;"* thirst and fever fastened his tongue to his jaws. Dryness and a horrible clamminess tormented his mouth, so that he could scarcely speak. *"Thou hast brought me into the dust of death;"* so tormented in every single part as to feel dissolved into separate atoms, and each atom full of misery; the full price of our redemption was paid, and no part of the Surety's body or soul escaped its share of agony. The words may set forth Jesus as having wrestled with Death until he rolled into the dust with his antagonist. Behold the humiliation of the Son of God! The Lord of Glory stoops to the dust of death. Amid the mouldering relics of mortality Jesus condescends to lodge!

Bishop Mant's version of the two preceding verses is forcible and accurate:—

"Pour'd forth like water is my frame;
My bones asunder start;
As wax that feels the searching flame,
Within me melts my heart.
My wither'd sinews shrink unstrung
Like potsherd dried and dead:
Cleaves to my jaws my burning tongue
The dust of death my bed."

Verse 16. We are to understand every item of this sad description as being urged by the Lord Jesus as a plea for divine help; and this will give us a high idea of his perseverance in prayer. *"For dogs have compassed me."* Here he marks the more ignoble crowd, who, while less strong than their brutal leaders, were not less ferocious, for there they were howling and barking like unclean and hungry dogs. Hunters frequently surround their game with a circle, and gradually encompass them with an ever-narrowing ring of dogs and men. Such a picture is before us. In the centre stands, not a panting stag, but a bleeding, fainting man, and around him are the enraged and unpitying wretches who have hounded him to his doom. Here we have the "hind of the morning" of whom the psalm so plaintively sings, hunted by bloodhounds, all thirsting to devour him. *The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me:* thus the Jewish people were unchurched, and that which called itself an assembly of the righteous is justly for its sins marked upon the forehead as an assembly of the wicked. This is not the only occasion when professed churches of God have become synagogues of Satan, and have persecuted the Holy One and the Just. *They pierced my hands and my feet.* This can by no

means refer to David, or to any one but Jesus of Nazareth, the once crucified but now exalted Son of God. Pause, dear reader, and view the wounds of thy Redeemer.

Verse 17. So emaciated was Jesus by his fastings and sufferings that he says, "*I may tell all my bones.*" He could count and recount them. The posture of the body on the cross, Bishop Horne thinks, would so distend the flesh and skin as to make the bones visible, so that they might be numbered. The zeal of his Father's house had eaten him up; like a good soldier he had endured hardness. Oh that we cared less for the body's enjoyment and ease and more for our Father's business! It were better to count the bones of an emaciated body than to bring leanness into our souls.

"*They look and stare upon me.*" Unholy eyes gazed insultingly upon the Saviour's nakedness, and shocked the sacred delicacy of his holy soul. The sight of the agonizing body ought to have ensured sympathy from the throng, but it only increased their savage mirth, as they gloated their cruel eyes upon his miseries. Let us blush for human nature, and mourn in sympathy with our Redeemer's shame. The first Adam made us all naked, and therefore the second Adam became naked that he might clothe our naked souls.

Verse 18. "*They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*" The garments of the executed were the perquisites of the executioners in most cases, but it was not often that they cast lots at the division of the spoil; this incident shows how clearly David in vision saw the day of Christ, and how surely the Man of Nazareth is he of whom the prophets spake: "these things, *therefore*, the soldiers did." He who gave his blood to cleanse us gave his garments to clothe us. As Ness says, "this precious Lamb of God gave up his golden fleece for us." How every incident of Jesus' griefs is here stored up in the treasury of inspiration, and embalmed in the amber of sacred song; we must learn hence to be very mindful of all that concerns our Beloved, and to think much more of everything which has a connection with him. It may be noted that the habit of gambling is of all others the most hardening, for men could practise it even at the cross-foot while besprinkled with the blood of the Crucified. No Christian will endure the rattle of the dice when he thinks of this.

Verse 19. "*But be thou not far from me, O Lord.*" Invincible faith returns to the charge, and uses the same means, viz., importunate prayer. He repeats the petition so piteously offered before. He wants nothing but his God, even in his lowest state. He does not ask for the most comfortable or nearest presence of God, he will be content if he is not far from him; humble requests speed at the throne. "*O my strength, haste thee to help me.*" Hard cases need timely aid: when necessity justifies it we may be urgent with God as to time, and cry, "make haste;" but we must not do this out of willfulness. Mark how in the last degree of personal weakness he calls the Lord "*my strength*;" after this fashion the believer can sing, "when I am weak, then am I strong."

Verse 20. "*Deliver my soul from the sword.*" By the sword is probably meant entire destruction, which

as a man he dreaded; or perhaps he sought deliverance from the enemies around him, who were like a sharp and deadly sword to him. The Lord had said, "Awake, O sword," and now from the terror of that sword the Shepherd would fain be delivered as soon as justice should see fit. *"My darling from the power of the dog."* Meaning his soul, his life, which is most dear to every man. The original is, "my only one," and therefore is our soul dear, because it is our only soul. Would that all men made their souls their darlings, but many treat them as if they were not worth so much as the mire of the streets. *The dog* may mean Satan, that infernal Cerberus, that cursed and cursing cur; or else the whole company of Christ's foes, who though many in number were as unanimous as if there were but one, and with one consent sought to rend him in pieces. If Jesus cried for help against the dog of hell, much more may we. *Cave canem*, beware of the dog, for his power is great, and only God can deliver us from him. When he fawns upon us, we must not put ourselves in his power; and when he howls at us, we may remember that God holds him with a chain.

Verse 21. *"Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns."* Having experienced deliverance in the past from great enemies, who were strong as the unicorns, the Redeemer utters his last cry for rescue from death, which is fierce and mighty as the lion. This prayer was heard, and the gloom of the cross departed. Thus faith, though sorely beaten, and even cast beneath the feet of her enemy, ultimately wins the victory. It was so in our Head, it shall be so in all the members. We have overcome the unicorn, we shall conquer the lion, and from both lion and unicorn we shall take the crown.

Verses 22-31. The transition is very marked; from a horrible tempest all is changed into calm. The darkness of Calvary at length passed away from the face of nature, and from the soul of the Redeemer, and beholding the light of his triumph and its future results the Saviour smiled. We have followed him through the gloom, let us attend him in the returning light. It will be well still to regard the words as a part of our Lord's soliloquy upon the cross, uttered in his mind during the last few moments before his death.

Verse 22. *"I will declare thy name unto my brethren."* The delights of Jesus are always with his church, and hence his thoughts, after much distraction, return at the first moment of relief to their usual channel; he forms fresh designs for the benefit of his beloved ones. He is not ashamed to call them brethren, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Among his first resurrection words were these, "Go to my brethren." In the verse before us, Jesus anticipates happiness in having communication with his people; he purposes to be their teacher and minister, and fixes his mind upon the subject of his discourse. The *name*, *i.e.*, the character and conduct of God are by Jesus Christ's gospel proclaimed to all the holy brotherhood; they behold the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him, and rejoice greatly to see all the infinite perfections manifested in one who is bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. What a

precious subject is the name of our God! It is the only one worthy of the only Begotten, whose meat and drink it was to do the Father's will. We may learn from this resolution of our Lord, that one of the most excellent methods of showing our thankfulness for deliverances is to tell to our brethren what the Lord has done for us. We mention our sorrows readily enough; why are we so slow in declaring our deliverances? *"In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee."* Not in a little household gathering merely does our Lord resolve to proclaim his Father's love, but in the great assemblies of his saints, and in the general assembly and church of the first-born. This the Lord Jesus is always doing by his representatives, who are the heralds of salvation, and labour to praise God. In the great universal church Jesus is the One authoritative teacher, and all others, so far as they are worthy to be called teachers, are nothing but echoes of his voice. Jesus, in this second sentence, reveals his object in declaring the divine name, it is that God may be praised; the church continually magnifies Jehovah for manifesting himself in the person of Jesus, and Jesus himself leads the song, and is both precentor and preacher in his church. Delightful are the seasons when Jesus communes with our hearts concerning divine truth; joyful praise is the sure result.

Verse 23. *"Ye that fear the Lord praise him."* The reader must imagine the Saviour as addressing the congregation of the saints. He exhorts the faithful to unite with him in thanksgiving. The description of "fearing the Lord" is very frequent and very instructive; it is the beginning of wisdom, and is an essential sign of grace. "I am a Hebrew and I fear God" was Jonah's confession of faith. Humble awe of God is so necessary a preparation for praising him that none are fit to sing to his honour but such as reverence his word; but this fear is consistent with the highest joy, and is not to be confounded with legal bondage, which is a fear which perfect love casteth out. Holy fear should always keep the key of the singing pew. Where Jesus leads the tune none but holy lips may dare to sing. *"All ye the seed of Jacob glorify him."* The genius of the gospel is praise. Jew and Gentile saved by sovereign grace should be eager in the blessed work of magnifying the God of our salvation. *All* saints should unite in the song; no tongue may be silent, no heart may be cold. Christ calls us to glorify God, and can we refuse? *"And fear him, all ye the seed of Israel."* The spiritual Israel all do this, and we hope the day will come when Israel after the flesh will be brought to the same mind. The more we praise God the more reverently shall we fear him, and the deeper our reverence the sweeter our songs. So much does Jesus value praise that we have it here under his dying hand and seal that all the saints must glorify the Lord.

Verse 24. *"For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted."* Here is good matter and motive for praise. The experience of our covenant Head and Representative should encourage all of us to bless the God of grace. Never was man so afflicted as our Saviour in body and soul from friends and foes, by heaven and hell, in life and death; he was the foremost in the ranks of the afflicted, but all those afflictions were sent in love, and not because his Father despised and abhorred

him. 'Tis true that justice demanded that Christ should bear the burden which as a substitute he undertook to carry, but Jehovah always loved him, and in love laid that load upon him with a view to his ultimate glory and to the accomplishment of the dearest wish of his heart. Under all his woes our Lord was honourable in the Father's sight, the matchless jewel of Jehovah's heart. "*Neither hath he hid his face from him.*" That is to say, the hiding was but temporary, and was soon removed; it was not final and eternal. "*But when he cried unto him, he heard.*" Jesus was heard in that he feared. He cried *in extremis* and *de profundis*, and was speedily answered; he therefore bids his people join him in singing a *Gloria in excelsis*.

Every child of God should seek refreshment for his faith in this testimony of the Man of Sorrows. What Jesus here witnesses is as true to-day as when it was first written. It shall never be said that any man's affliction or poverty prevented his being an accepted suppliant at Jehovah's throne of grace. The meanest applicant is welcome at mercy's door:—

"None that approach his throne shall find
A God unfaithful or unkind."

Verse 25. "*My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation.*" The one subject of our Master's song is the Lord alone. The Lord and the Lord only is the theme which the believer handleth when he gives himself to imitate Jesus in praise. The word in the original is "from thee,"—true praise is of celestial origin. The rarest harmonies of music are nothing unless they are sincerely consecrated to God by hearts sanctified by the Spirit. The clerk says, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God;" but the choir often sing to the praise and glory of themselves. Oh when shall our service of song be a pure offering? Observe in this verse how Jesus loves the public praises of the saints, and thinks with pleasure of the great congregation. It would be wicked on our part to despise the twos and threes; but, on the other hand, let not the little companies snarl at the greater assemblies as though they were necessarily less pure and less approved, for Jesus loves the praise of the great congregation. "*I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*" Jesus dedicates himself anew to the carrying out of the divine purpose in fulfilment of his vows made in anguish. Did our Lord when he ascended to the skies proclaim amid the redeemed in glory the goodness of Jehovah? And was that the vow here meant? Undoubtedly the publication of the gospel is the constant fulfilment of covenant engagements made by our Surety in the councils of eternity. Messiah vowed to build up a spiritual temple for the Lord, and he will surely keep his word.

Verse 26. "*The meek shall eat and be satisfied.*" Mark how the dying Lover of our souls solaces himself with the result of his death. The spiritually poor find a feast in Jesus, they feed upon him to the satisfaction of their hearts, they were famished until he gave himself for them, but now they are filled with royal dainties. The thought of the joy of his people gave comfort to our expiring Lord. Note the characters who partake of the benefit of his passion; "*the meek,*" the humble and lowly. Lord,

make us so. Note also the certainty that gospel provisions shall not be wasted, *"they shall eat;"* and the sure result of such eating, *"and be satisfied."* *"They shall praise the Lord that seek him."* For a while they may keep a fast, but their thanksgiving days must and shall come. *"Your heart shall live for ever."* Your spirits shall not fail through trial, you shall not die of grief, immortal joys shall be your portion. Thus Jesus speaks even from the cross to the troubled seeker. If his dying words are so assuring, what consolation may we not find in the truth that he ever liveth to make intercession for us! They who eat at Jesus' table receive the fulfilment of the promise, "Whosoever eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Verse 27. In reading this verse one is struck with the Messiah's missionary spirit. It is evidently his grand consolation that Jehovah will be known throughout all places of his dominion. *"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord."* Out from the inner circle of the present church the blessing is to spread in growing power until the remotest parts of the earth shall be ashamed of their idols, mindful of the true God, penitent for their offences, and unanimously earnest for reconciliation with Jehovah. Then shall false worship cease, *"and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee,"* O thou only living and true God. This hope which was the reward of Jesus is a stimulus to those who fight his battles.

It is well to mark the order of conversion as here set forth; they shall *"remember"*—this is reflection, like the prodigal who came unto himself; *"and turn unto Jehovah"*—this is repentance, like Manasseh who left his idols and *"worship"*—this is holy service, as Paul adored the Christ whom once he abhorred.

Verse 28. *"For the kingdom is the Lord's."* As an obedient Son the dying Redeemer rejoiced to know that his Father's interests would prosper through his pains. "The Lord reigneth" was *his* song as it is ours. He who by his own power reigns supreme in the domains of creation and providence, has set up a kingdom of grace, and by the conquering power of the cross that kingdom will grow until all people shall own its sway and proclaim that *"he is the governor among the nations."* Amid the tumults and disasters of the present the Lord reigneth; but in the halcyon days of peace the rich fruit of his dominion will be apparent to every eye. Great Shepherd, let thy glorious kingdom come.

Verse 29. *"All they that be fat upon earth,"* the rich and great are not shut out. Grace now finds the most of its jewels among the poor, but in the latter days the mighty of the earth *"shall eat,"* shall taste of redeeming grace and dying love, and shall *"worship"* with all their hearts the God who deals so bountifully with us in Christ Jesus. Those who are spiritually fat with inward prosperity shall be filled with the marrow of communion, and shall worship the Lord with peculiar fervour. In the covenant of grace Jesus has provided good cheer for our high estate, and he has taken equal care to console us in our humiliation, for the next sentence is, *"all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him."* There is relief and comfort in bowing before God when our case is at its worst; even amid the dust of

death prayer kindles the lamp of hope.

While all who come to God by Jesus Christ are thus blessed, whether they be rich or poor, none of those who despise him may hope for a blessing. *"None can keep alive his own soul."* This is the stern counterpart of the gospel message of "look and live." There is no salvation out of Christ. We must hold life, and have life as Christ's gift, or we shall die eternally. This is very solid evangelical doctrine, and should be proclaimed in every corner of the earth, that like a great hammer it may break in pieces all self-confidence.

Verse 30. *"A seed shall serve him."* Posterity shall perpetuate the worship of the Most High. The kingdom of truth on earth shall never fail. As one generation is called to its rest, another will arise in its stead. We need have no fear for the true apostolic succession; that is safe enough. *"It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation."* He will reckon the ages by the succession of the saints, and set his accounts according to the families of the faithful. Generations of sinners come not into the genealogy of the skies. God's family register is not for strangers, but for the children only.

Verse 31. *"They shall come."* Sovereign grace shall bring out from among men the bloodbought ones. Nothing shall thwart the divine purpose. The chosen shall come to life, to faith, to pardon, to heaven. In this the dying Saviour finds a sacred satisfaction. Toiling servant of God, be glad at the thought that the eternal purpose of God shall suffer neither let nor hindrance. *"And shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born."* None of the people who shall be brought to God by the irresistible attractions of the cross shall be dumb, they shall be able to tell forth the righteousness of the Lord, so that future generations shall know the truth. Fathers shall teach their sons, who shall hand it down to their children; the burden of the story always being *"that he hath done this,"* or, that "It is finished." Salvation's glorious work is done, there is peace on earth, and glory in the highest. "It is finished," these were the expiring words of the Lord Jesus, as they are the last words of this Psalm. May we by living faith be enabled to see our salvation finished by the death of Jesus!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Title.—Aije le th Shahar. The title of the twenty-second Psalm is Aije le th Shahar—*the morning hart.* The whole Psalm refers to Christ, containing much that cannot be applied to another: parting his garments, casting lots for his vesture, etc. He is described as a kindly, meek and beautiful hart, started by the huntsman at the dawn of the day. Herod began hunting him down as soon as he appeared. Poverty, the hatred of men, and the temptation of Satan, joined in the pursuit. There always was some "dog," or "bull," or "unicorn," ready to attack him. After his first sermon the huntsmen gathered about him, but he was too fleet of foot, and escaped. The church had long seen the Messiah "like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains," had "heard the voice of her Beloved," and had cried out, "Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills;"

sometimes he was even seen, with the dawn of the day, in the neighbourhood of the temple, and beside the enclosures of the vineyards. The church requested to see him "on the mountains of Bether," and upon "the mountains of spices." The former probably signifying the place of his sufferings, and the latter the sublime acclivities of light, glory, and honour, where the "hart" shall be hunted no more. But in the afternoon, the huntsmen who had been following the "young roe" from early day-break, had succeeded in driving him to the mountains of Bether. Christ found Calvary a craggy, jagged, and fearful hill—"a mountain of division." Here he was driven by the huntsmen to the edges of the awful precipices yawning destruction from below, while he was surrounded and held at bay by all the beasts of prey and monsters of the infernal forest. The "unicorn," and the "bulls of Bashan," gored him with their horns; the great "lion" roared at him; and the "dog" fastened himself upon him. But he foiled them all. In his own time he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. He was buried in a new grave; and his assailants reckoned upon complete victory. They had not considered that he was a "morning hart." Surely enough, at the appointed time, did he escape from the hunter's net, and stand forth on the mountains of Israel ALIVE, and *never*, NEVER to die again. Now he is with Mary in the garden, giving evidence of his own resurrection; in a moment he is at Emmaus, encouraging the too timid and bewildered disciples. Nor does it cost him any trouble to go thence to Galilee to his friends, and again to the Mount of Olives, "on the mountains of spices," *carrying with him the day-dawn*, robed in life and beauty for ever more." *Christmas Evans, 1766-1838.*

Title. It will be very readily admitted that the *hind* is a very appropriate emblem of the suffering and persecuted righteous man who meets us in this Psalm. . . . That the *hind* may be a figurative expression significant of suffering innocence, is put beyond a doubt by the fact, that the wicked and the persecutors in this Psalm, *whose peculiar physiognomy is marked by emblems drawn from the brute creation*, are designed by the terms *dogs, lions, bulls*, etc. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Title. "*The hind.*" Much extraordinary symbolism has by old authors been conjured up and clustered around the hind. According to their curious natural history, there exists a deadly enmity between the deer and the serpent, and the deer by its warm breath draws serpents out of their holes in order to devour them. The old grammarians derived *Elaphas*, or hart, from *elaunein tous opheis*, that is, of driving away serpents. Even the burning a portion of the deer's horns was said to drive away all snakes. If a snake had escaped the hart after being drawn out by the hart by its breath, it was said to be more vehemently poisonous than before. The timidity of the deer was ascribed to the great size of its heart, in which they thought was a bone shaped like a cross. *Condensed from Wood's "Bible Animals," by C. H. S.*

Whole Psalm. This is a kind of gem among the Psalms, and is peculiarly excellent and remarkable. It contains those deep, sublime, and heavy sufferings of Christ, when agonising in the midst of the terrors and pangs of divine wrath and death, which surpass all human thought and comprehension. I

know not whether any Psalm throughout the whole book contains matter more weighty, or from which the hearts of the godly can so truly perceive those sighs and groans, inexpressible by man, which their Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, uttered when conflicting for us in the midst of death, and in the midst of the pains and terrors of hell. Wherefore this Psalm ought to be most highly prized by all who have any acquaintance with temptations of faith and spiritual conflicts. *Martin Luther.*

Whole Psalm. This Psalm, as it sets out the sufferings of Christ to the full, so also his three great offices. His sufferings are copiously described from the beginning of the Psalm to verse 22. The prophetic office of Christ, from verse 22 to verse 25. That which is foretold about his vows (verse 25), hath respect to his priestly function. In the rest of the Psalm the kingly office of Christ is set forth.

William Gouge, D.D. (1575-1653), in "A Commentary on the whole Epistle to the Hebrews."
[Reprinted in Nichol's Series of Commentaries.]

Whole Psalm. This Psalm seems to be less a prophecy than a history. *Cassiodorus.*

Whole Psalm. This Psalm must be expounded, word for word, entire and in every respect, of Christ only; without any allegory, trope, or *anagoge*. *Bakius, quoted by F. Delitzsch, D.D., on Hebrews, ii. 12.*

Whole Psalm. A prophecy of the passion of Christ, and of the vocation of the *Gentiles*. *Eusebius of Cæsarea.*

Verse 1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We contrast this with John 16:32, "*I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*" That these words in David were notwithstanding the words of Christ, there is no true believer ignorant; yet how cross our Lord's words in John! Answer:— It is one thing to speak out of present sense of misery, another thing to be confident of a never-separated Deity. The condition of Christ in respect of his human state (not the divine), is in all outward appearances, like ours; we conceive the saints' condition very lamentable at times, as if God were forever gone. And Christ (to teach us to cry after God the Father, like children after the mother, whose very stepping but at the door, oftentimes makes the babe believe, and so saith that his father is gone forever), presents in his own sufferings how much he is sensible of ours in that case. As for his divine nature, he and his Father can never sunder in that, and so at no time is he alone, but the Father is always with him. *William Streat, in "The Dividing of the Hoof," 1654.*

Verse 1. "My God, my God," etc. There is a tradition that our Lord, hanging on the cross, began, as we know from the gospel, this Psalm; and repeating it and those that follow, gave up his most blessed spirit when he came to the sixth verse of the thirty-first Psalm. However that may be, by taking these first words on his lips, he stamped the Psalm as belonging to himself. *Ludolph, the Carthusian (circa. 1350), in J. M. Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 1. "My God, my God," etc. It was so sharp, so heavy an affliction to Christ's soul, that it caused him who was meek under all other sufferings as a lamb, to roar under this like a lion. For so much

those words of Christ signify, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*" It comes from a root that signifies to howl or roar as a lion, and rather signifies the noise made by a wild beast than the voice of a man. And it is as much as if Christ had said, O my God, no words can express my anguish, I will not speak, but roar, howl out my complaints. Pour it out in volleys of groans. I roar as a lion. It's no small matter will make that majestic creature to roar. And sure so great a spirit as Christ's would not have roared under a slight burden.

Did God really forsake Jesus Christ upon the cross? then from the desertion of Christ singular consolation springs up to the people of God; yea, manifold consolation. Principally it's a support in these two respects, as it is *preventive* of your final desertion, and a comfortable pattern to you in your present sad desertions. 1. Christ's desertion is *preventive* of your final desertion. Because he was forsaken for a time you shall not be forsaken for ever. For he was forsaken for you. It is every way as much for the dear Son of God, the darling delight of his soul, to be forsaken of God for a time, as if such a poor inconsiderable thing as thou art shouldst be cast off to eternity. Now, this being equivalent and borne in thy room, must needs give thee the highest security in the world that God will never finally withdraw from thee. 2. Moreover, this sad desertion of Christ becomes a comfortable *pattern* to poor deserted souls in divers respects; and the proper business of such souls, at such times, is to eye it believingly. Though God deserted Christ, yet at the same time he powerfully supported him. His omnipotent arms were under him, though his pleased face was hid from him. He had not indeed his smiles, but he had his supportations. So, Christian, just so shall it be with thee. Thy God may turn away his face, he will not pluck away his arm. When one asked of holy Mr. Baines how the case stood with his soul, he answered, "Supports I have, though suavities I want." Our Father in this deals with us as we ourselves sometimes do with a child that is stubborn and rebellious. We turn him out of doors and bid him begone out of our sight, and there he sighs and weeps; but however for the humbling of him, we will not presently take him into house and favour; yet we order, at least permit the servants to carry him meat and drink: here is fatherly care and support, though no former smiles or manifested delights. . . . Though God forsook Christ, yet at that time he could justify God. So you read, "O my God (saith he), I cry in the day time; but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent; but thou art holy." Is not thy spirit according to thy measure, framed like Christ's in this; canst thou not, say even when he writes bitter things against thee, he is a holy, faithful and good God for all this! I an deserted but not wronged. There is not one drop of injustice in all the sea of my sorrows. Though he condemned me I must and will justify him: this also is Christ-like. *John Flavel*.

Verse 1. "*My God, my God.*" The repetition is expressive of fervent desire—"My God," in an especial sense, as in his words after the resurrection to Mary Magdalene, "I ascend unto my God, and your

God;" "My God," not as the Son of God only, but in that nature which he hath assumed, as the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased; who is loved of the Father and who loveth the Father more than the whole universe. It is observed that this expression, "My God," is three times repeated. *Dionysius, quoted by Isaac Williams.*

Verse 1. "My God." It was possible for Christ by *faith* to know that he was beloved of God, and he did know that he was beloved of God, when yet as to *sense* and *feeling* he tasted of God's *wrath*. Faith and the want of sense are not inconsistent; there may be no present sense of God's love, nay, there may be a present sense of his wrath, and yet there may be faith at the same time. *John Row's "Emmanuel," 1680.*

Verse 1. This word, "My God," takes in more than all the philosophers in the world could draw out of it. *Alexander Wedderburn, 1701.*

Verse 1. That there is something of a singular force, meaning, and feeling in these words is manifest from this—the evangelists have studiously given us this verse in the very words of the Hebrew, in order to show their emphatic force. And moreover I do not remember any one other place in the Scriptures where we have this repetition, ELI, ELI. *Martin Luther.*

Verse 1. "Why?" Not the "why" of impatience or despair, not the sinful questioning of one whose heart rebels against his chastening, but rather the cry of a lost child who cannot understand why his father has left him, and who longs to see his father's face again. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 1. "My roaring." (Heb.), seems primarily to denote the roaring of a lion; but, as applied to intelligent beings, it is generally expressive of profound mental anguish poured forth in audible and even vehement strains. Psalm 38:9; 33:3; Job 3:24. Thus did the suffering Messiah pour forth strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save him from death. Hebrews 5:7. *John Morison.*

Verse 1. When Christ complains of having been forsaken by God, we are not to understand that he was forsaken by the First Person, or that there was a dissolution of the hypostatic union, or that he lost the favour and friendship of the Father; but he signifies to us that God permitted his human nature to undergo those dreadful torments, and to suffer an ignominious death, from which he could, if he chose, most easily deliver him. Nor did such complaints proceed either from impatience or ignorance, as if Christ were ignorant of the cause of his suffering, or was not most willing to bear such abandonment in his suffering; such complaints were only a declaration of his most bitter sufferings. And whereas, through the whole course of his passion, with such patience did our Lord suffer, as not to let a single groan or sigh escape from him, so now, lest the bystanders may readily believe that he was rendered impassible by some superior power; therefore, when his last moments were nigh he protests that he is true man, truly passible; forsaken by his Father in his sufferings, the bitterness and acuteness of which he then intimately felt. *Robert Bellarmine (Cardinal), 1542-1621.*

Verse 1. Divines are wont commonly to say, that Christ, from the moment of his conception, had the

sight of God, his human soul being immediately united to the Deity, Christ from the very moment of his conception had the sight of God. Now for our Saviour, who had known experimentally how sweet the comfort of his Father's face had been, and had lived all his days under the warm beams and influences of the Divinity, and had had his soul all along refreshed with the sense of the Divine presence, for him to be left in that horror and darkness, as to have no taste of comfort, no glimpse of the Divinity breaking in upon his human soul, how great an affliction must that needs be unto him!

John Row.

Verse 1. Desertion is in itself no sin; for Christ endured its bitterness, ay, he was so deep in it, that when he died, he said, "*Why hast thou forsaken me?*" A total, a final desertion ours is not; partial the best have had and have. God turns away his face, David himself is troubled: "*The just shall live by faith,*" and not by feeling. *Richard Capel.*

Verse 1. Oh! how will our very hearts melt with love, when we remember that as we have been distressed for our sins against him; so he was in greater agonies for us? We have had gall and wormwood, but he tasted a more bitter cup. The anger of God has dried up our spirits, but he was scorched with a more flaming wrath. He was under violent pain in the garden, and on the cross; ineffable was the sorrow that he felt, being forsaken of his Father, deserted by his disciples, affronted and reproached by his enemies, and under a curse for us. This Sun was under a doleful eclipse, this living Lord was pleased to die, and in his death was under the frowns of an angry God. That face was then hid from him that had always smiled before; and his soul felt that horror and that darkness which it had never felt before. So that there was no separation between the divine and human nature, yet he suffered pains equal to those which we had deserved to suffer in hell for ever. God so suspended the efficacies of his grace that it displayed in that hour none of its force and virtue on him. He had no comfort from heaven, none from his angels, none from his friends, even in that sorrowful hour when he needed comfort most. Like a lion that is hurt in the forest, so he roared and cried out, though there was no despair in him; and when he was forsaken, yet there was trust and hope in these words, "*My God, my God.*" *Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 1. Here is comfort to *deserted souls*; Christ himself was deserted; therefore, if thou be deserted, God dealeth no otherwise with thee than he did with Christ. Thou mayest be beloved of God and not feel it; Christ was so, he was beloved of the Father, and yet he had no present sense and feeling of his love. This may be a great comfort to holy souls under the suspension of those comforts and manifestations which sometimes they have felt; Christ himself underwent such a suspension, therefore such a suspension of divine comfort may consist with God's love. Thou mayest conclude possibly, "I am a hypocrite, and therefore God hath forsaken me;" this is the complaint of some doubting Christians, "I am a hypocrite, and therefore God hath forsaken me;" but thou hast no reason so to conclude: there was no failure in Christ's obedience, and yet Christ was forsaken in

point of comfort; therefore desertion, in point of comfort, may consist with truth of grace, yea, with the highest measure of grace; so it did in our Saviour. *John Row.*

Verse 1. Lord, thou knowest what it is for a soul to be forsaken, it was sometime thine own case when thou complainedst, "*My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" not, O my Lord! but that thou hadst a divine supportment, but thou hadst not (it seemeth) that inward joy which at other times did fill thee; now thou art in thy glory, pity *a worm* in misery, that mourns and desires more after thee than all things: Lord, thou paidst dear for my good, let good come unto me. *Joseph Symonds, 1658.*

Verse 1. The first verse expresses a species of suffering that never at any other time was felt in this world, and never will be again—the vengeance of the Almighty upon his child—"MY God, why hast thou forsaken me? *R. H. Ryland.*

Verse 2. "*O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not,*" etc. How like is this expostulation to that of a human child with its earthly parent! It is based on the ground of relationship—"I am thine; I cry day and night, yet I am not heard. Thou art my God, yet nothing is done to silence me. In the daytime of my life I cried; in this night season of my death I intreat. In the garden of Gethsemane I occupied the night with prayers; with continual ejaculations have I passed through this eventful morning. O my God, thou hast not yet heard me, therefore am I not yet silent; I cannot cease till thou answerest." Here Christ urges his suit in a manner which none but filial hearts adopt. The child knows that the parent yearns over him. His importunity is strengthened by confidence in paternal love. He keeps not silence, he gives him no rest because he confides in his power and willingness to grant the desired relief. This is natural. It is the argument of the heart, an appeal to the inward yearnings of our nature. It is also scriptural, and is thus stated, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:13. *John Stevenson, in "Christ on the Cross," 1842.*

Verse 2. The princely prophet says, "*Lord, I cry unto thee in the daytime, but thou hearest not, also in the night time, and yet this is not to be thought folly to me.*" (Septuagint version.) Some perhaps would think it a great point of folly for a man to cry and call unto him who stops his ears, and seems not to hear. Nevertheless, this folly of the faithful is wiser than all the wisdom of the world. For we know well enough, that howsoever God seem at the first not to hear, yet the Lord is a sure refuge *in due time—in affliction.* Psalm 9:9. *Thomas Playfere.*

Verses 2, 3. Well, what hears God from him, now he hears nothing from God, as to the deliverance prayed for? No murmuring at God's proceedings; nay, he hears quite the contrary, for he justifies and praises God: "*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" Observe whether thou canst not gather something from the manner of God's denying the thing prayed for, which may sweeten it to thee! Haply thou shalt find he denies thee, but it is with a smiling countenance, and ushers it in with some expressions of grace and favour, that may assure thee his denial proceeds not

from displeasure. As you would do with a dear friend, who, may be, comes to borrow a sum of money of you; lend it you dare not, because you see plainly it is not for his good; but in giving him the denial, lest he should misinterpret it, as proceeding from want of love and respect, you preface it with some kind of language of your hearty affection to him, as that you love him, and therefore deny him, and shall be ready to do for him more than that comes to. Thus God sometimes wraps up his denials in such sweet intimations of love, as prevents all jealousies arising in the hearts of his people. *William Gurnall.*

Verses 2, 3. They that have conduit-water come into their houses, if no water come they do not conclude the spring to be dry, but the pipes to be stopped or broken. If prayer speed not, we must be sure that the fault is not in God, but in ourselves; were we but ripe for mercy, he is ready to extend it to us, and even waits for the purpose. *John Trapp.*

Verse 3. "*But thou art holy.*" Here is the triumph of faith—the Saviour stood like a rock in the wide ocean of temptation. High as the billows rose, so did his faith, like the coral rock, wax greater and stronger till it became an island of salvation to our shipwrecked souls. It is as if he had said, "It matters not what I endure. Storms may howl upon me; men despise; devils tempt; circumstances overpower; and God himself forsake me, still God is holy; there is no unrighteousness in him." *John Stevenson.*

Verse 3. "*But thou art holy.*" Does it seem strange that the heart in its darkness and sorrow should find comfort in this attribute of God? No, for God's holiness is but another aspect of his faithfulness and mercy. And in that remarkable name, "the Holy One of Israel," we are taught that he who is the "holy" God is also the God who has made a covenant with his chosen. It would be impossible for an Israelite to think of God's holiness without thinking also of that covenant relationship. "Be ye holy; for I, the Lord your God am holy," were the words in which Israel was reminded of their relation to God. See especially Leviticus 19:1. We see something of this feeling in such passages as Psalm 89:16-19; 99:5-9; Hosea 11:8, 9; Isaiah 41:14; 47:4. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3. Were temptations never so black, faith will not hearken to an ill word spoken against God, but will justify God always. *David Dickson.*

Verses 4, 5. Those who look upon this Psalm as having a primary reference to the King of Israel, attribute great beauty to these words, from the very pleasing conjecture that David was, at the time of composing them, sojourning at Mahanaim, where Jacob, in his distress, wrestled with the angel, and obtained such signal blessings. That, in a place so greatly hallowed by associations of the past, he should make his appeal to the God of his fathers, was alike the dictate of patriarchal feeling and religion. *John Morison, D.D., in "Morning Meditations."*

Verse 5. "*Thou didst deliver them,*" but thou wilt not deliver me; nay, rather thou didst deliver them because thou wilt not deliver me. *Gerhohus.*

Verse 6. "*But I am a worm, and no man.*" A fisherman, when he casts his angle into the river, doth not throw the hook in bare, naked and uncovered, for then he knows the fish will never bite, and therefore he hides the hook within a worm, or some other bait, and so, the fish, biting at the worm, is caught by the hook. Thus Christ, speaking of himself, saith, "*Ego vermis et non homo.*" He, coming to perform the great work of our redemption, did cover and hide his Godhead within the worm of his human nature. The grand water-serpent, Leviathan, the devil, thinking to swallow the worm of his humanity, was caught upon the hook of his divinity. This hook stuck in his jaws, and tore him very sore. By thinking to destroy Christ, he destroyed his own kingdom, and lost his own power for ever.

Lancelot Andrewes.

Verse 6. "*I am a worm.*" Christ calls himself "*a worm*" . . . on account of the opinion that men of the world had of him . . . the Jews esteemed Christ as a worm, and treated him as such; he was loathsome to them and hated by them; every one trampled upon him, and trod him under foot as men do worms . . . The Chaldee paraphrase renders it here *a weak worm*; and though Christ is the mighty God, and is also the Son of man, whom God made strong for himself; yet there was a weakness in his human nature, and he was crucified through it, 2 Corinthians 13:4: and it has been observed by some, that the word (Heb.) there used signifies the scarlet worm, or the worm that is in the grain or berry with which scarlet is dyed: and like this scarlet worm did our Lord look, when by way of mockery he was clothed with a scarlet robe; and especially when he appeared in his dyed garments, and was red in his apparel, as one that treadeth in the wine fat; when his body was covered with blood when he hung upon the cross, which was shed to make crimson and scarlet sins as white as snow. *John Gill.*

Verse 6. "*I am a worm.*" An humble soul is emptied of all swelling thoughts of himself. Bernard calls humility a self-annihilation. Job 22:29. "Thou wilt save the humble;" in the Hebrew it is, "Him that is of low eyes." An humble man has lower thoughts of himself than others can have of him; David, though a king, yet looked upon himself as "*a worm*:" "*I am a worm, and no man.*" Bradford, a martyr, yet subscribes himself "a sinner." Job 10:15. "If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head:" like the violet a sweet flower, but hangs down the head. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 6. "*A worm.*" So trodden under foot, trampled on, maltreated, buffeted and spit upon, mocked and tormented, as to seem more like a worm than a man. Behold what great contempt hath the Lord of Majesty endured, that his confusion may be our glory; his punishment our heavenly bliss! Without ceasing impress this spectacle, O Christian, on thy soul! *Dionysius, quoted by Isaac Williams.*

Verse 6. "*I am a worm.*" Among the Hindoos, when a man complains and abhors himself, he asks; "What am I! a worm! a worm!" "Ah, the proud man! he regarded me as a worm, well should I like to say to him, 'We are all worms.'" "Worm, crawl out of my presence." *Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 7. "*All they that see me laugh me to scorn,*" etc. Imagine this dreadful scene. Behold this

motley multitude of rich and poor, of Jews and Gentiles! Some stand in groups and gaze. Some recline at ease and stare. Others move about in restless gratification at the event. There is a look of satisfaction on every countenance. None are silent. The velocity of speech seems tardy. The theme is far too great for one member to utter. Every lip, and head, and finger, is now a tongue. The rough soldiers, too, are busied in their coarse way. The work of blood is over. Refreshment has become necessary. Their usual beverage of vinegar and water is supplied to them. As they severally are satisfied, they approach the cross, hold some forth to the Saviour, and bid him drink as they withdraw it. Luke 23:36. They know he must be suffering an intense thirst, they therefore aggravate it with the mockery of refreshment. Cruel Romans! and ye, O regicidal Jews! Was not death enough? Must mockery and scorn be added? On this sad day Christ made you *one* indeed! Dreadful unity—which constituted you the joint mockers and murderers of the Lord of glory! *John Stevenson.*

Verse 7. "All they that see me, laugh me to scorn," etc. There have been persons in our own days, whose crimes have excited such detestation that the populace would probably have torn them in pieces, before, and even after their trial, if they could have had them in their power. Yet when these very obnoxious persons have been executed according to their sentence, if, perhaps, there was not one spectator who wished them to escape, yet neither was one found so lost to sensibility as to insult them in their dying moments. But when Jesus suffers, *all that see him laugh him to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head;* they insult his character and his hope. *John Newton.*

Verse 7. "They shoot out the lip." To protrude the lower lip is, in the East, considered a very strong indication of contempt. Its employment is chiefly confined to the lower orders. *Illustrated Commentary.*

Verses 7, 8. It was after his crucifixion, and during the hours that he hung upon the cross, that his sufferings in this way—the torment of beholding and hearing the scorn and mockery which was made of the truth of his person and doctrine—exceedingly abounded, and in such and so many kinds of mockery and insult that some consider this to have been the chiefest pain and sorrow which he endured in his most sacred passion. For as, generally, those things are considered the most painful to endure of which we are most sensible, so it seems to these persons, that sufferings of this kind contain in them more cause for feeling than any other sufferings. And, therefore, although all the torments of the Lord were very great, so that each one appears the greatest, and no comparison can be made between them; yet, nevertheless, this kind of suffering appears to be the most painful. Because in other troubles, not only the pain and suffering of them, but the troubles themselves, in themselves, may be desired by us, and such as we suffer for love's sake, in order by them to evince that love. Wherefore, the stripes, the crown of thorns, the buffetings, the cross, the gall, the vinegar, and other bodily torments, besides that they torment the body, are often a means for promoting the divine honour, which it holds in esteem above all else. But to blaspheme God, to give the lie to

eternal truths, to deface the supreme demonstration of the divinity and majesty of the Son of God (although God knoweth how to extract from these things the good which he intends), nevertheless are, in their nature, things, which, from their so greatly affecting the divine honour, although they may be, for just considerations, endured, can never be desired by any one, but must be abhorrent to all. Our Lord then, being, of all, the most zealous for the divine honour, for which he also died, found in this kind of suffering, more than in all other, much to abhor and nothing to desire. Therefore with good reason it may be held to be the greatest of all, and that in which, more than in all other, he exhibited the greatest suffering and patience. *Fra Thom, de Jesu, in "The Sufferings of Jesus,"* 1869.

Verses 7-9. All that see me made but a laughynge stocke on me, they mocked me wyth their lypes, and wagged theyr heades at me. Sayenge, thys vyllayne referred all thynges to the Lord, let him now delyver hym yf he wyll, for he loveth hym well. But yet thou arte he whyche leddest me oute of my mother's wombe myne own refuge, even from my mother's teats. As sone as I came into this worlde, I was layde in thy lappe, thou art my God even from my mother's wombe. *From "The Psalter of David in English, truly translated out of Latyn," in "Devout Psalms," etc., by E. Whitchurche, 1547.*

Verse 8. Here are recorded some of those very words, by which the persecutors of our Lord expressed their mockery and scorn. How remarkable to find them in a Psalm written so many hundred years before! *John Stevenson.*

Verses 9, 10. Faith is much strengthened by constant evidences of God's favour. Herewith did he support his faith that said to God, "*Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.*" "Thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels." Psalm 71:5, 6. It was not only the disposition of Obadiah towards God, but also the evidence that thereby he had of God's affection towards him, that made him with confidence say to Elijah, "I fear the Lord from my youth." 1 Kings 18:12. By long continuance of ancient favour, many demonstrations are given of a fast, fixed, and unremovable affection. So as if, by reason of temptations, one or more evidences should be questioned, yet others would remain to uphold faith, and to keep it from an utter languishing, and a total falling away. As when a house is supported by many pillars, though some be taken away, yet by the support of them which remain, the house will stand. *William Gouge.*

Verses 9, 10. David acknowledges ancient mercies, those mercies which had been cast upon him long ago, these were still fresh and new in his memory, and this is one affection and disposition of a thankful heart—to remember those mercies which another would have quite forgotten, or never thought of. Thus does David here; the mercies of his *infancy*, and his *childhood*, and his *younger years*, which one would have imagined, that now in his age had been quite out of his mind; yet these does he here stir up himself to remember and bring to his thoughts. "*Took me out of the womb:*"

when was that? It may have been threescore years ago when David penned the Psalms. He thinks of those mercies which God vouchsafed him *when he was not capable of thinking*, nor considering what was bestowed upon him; and so are we taught hence to do, in an imitation of this holy example which is here set before us: those mercies which God hast bestowed in our minority, we are to call to mind and acknowledge in our riper years. *Thomas Horton.*

Verses 9, 10. Here the tribulation begins to grow lighter, and hope inclines towards victory; a support, though small, and sought out with deep anxiety, is now found. For after he had felt that he had suffered without any parallel or example, so that the wonderful works of God as displayed toward the fathers afforded him no help, he comes to the wonderful works of God toward himself, and in these he finds the goodwill of God towards him, and which was displayed towards him alone in so singular a way. *Martin Luther.*

Verses 9, 10. The bitter severity of the several taunts with which his enemies assailed our Lord, had no other effect than to lead the Saviour to make a direct appeal to his Father. . . . That appeal is set before us in these two verses. It is of an unusual and remarkable nature. The argument on which it is founded is most forcible and conclusive. At the same time, it is the most seasonable and appropriate that can be urged. We may thus paraphrase it, "I am now brought as a man to my last extremity. It is said that God disowns me; but it cannot be so. My first moment of existence he tenderly cared for. When I could not even ask for, or think of his kindness, he bestowed it upon me. If, of his mere good pleasure he brought me into life at first, he will surely not forsake me when I am departing out of it. In opposition, therefore, to all their taunts, I can and I will appeal to himself. Mine enemies declare, O God, that thou hast cast me off —*but thou art he that took me out of the womb*. They affirm that I do not, and need not trust in thee; but *thou didst make me hope* (or, *keptest me in safety*, margin) *when I was upon my mother's breasts*. They insinuate that thou wilt not acknowledge me as thy Son; but *I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.*" *John Stevenson.*

Verse 10. "*I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.*" There is a noble passage in Eusebius, in which he shows the connection between our Lord's incarnation and his passion: that he might well comfort himself while hanging on the cross by the remembrance that the very same body then "marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14), was that which had been glorified by the Father with such singular honour, when the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. That this body, therefore, though now so torn and so mangled, as it had once been the wonder, so it would for ever be the joy, of the angels; and having put on immortality, would be the support of his faithful people to the end of time. *J. M. Neale, in loc.*

Verse 10. I was like one forsaken by his parent, and wholly cast upon Providence. I had no father upon earth, and my mother was poor and helpless. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 11. *"Be not far from me; for trouble is near;"* and so it is high time for thee to put forth a helping hand. *Hominibus profanis mirabilis videtur h'cratio*, to profane persons, this seemeth to be a strange reason, saith an interpreter; but it is a very good one, as this prophet knew, who therefore makes it his plea. *John Trapp*.

Verse 12. *"Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round."* These animals are remarkable for the proud, fierce, and sullen manner in which they exercise their great strength. Such were the persecutors who now beset our Lord. These were first, human, and secondly, spiritual foes; and both were alike distinguished by the proud, fierce, and sullen manner in which they assaulted him. *John Stevenson*.

Verses 12, 13. "Bashan" was a fertile country (Numbers 32:4), and the cattle there fed were fat and "strong." Deuteronomy 32:14. Like them, the Jews, in that good land, "waxed fat and kicked," grew proud, and rebelled; forsook God "that made them, and lightly esteemed the rock of their salvation." *George Horne*.

Verse 13. A helpless infant, or a harmless lamb, surrounded by furious bulls, and hungry lions, aptly represented the Saviour encompassed by his insulting and bloody persecutors. *Thomas Scott*, 1747-1821.

Verse 14. *"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."* He was faint. Such a feeling of languor and faintness supervened that language fails to express it, and the emblem of "water poured out" is employed to represent it. As the water falls from the vessel to the earth, see how its particles separate farther and farther from each other. Its velocity increases as it falls. It has no power to stay itself midway, much less to return to its place. It is the very picture of utter weakness. So did our Lord feel himself to be when hanging on the cross. He was faint with weakness. The sensations experienced when about to faint away are very overpowering. We appear to our own consciousness to be nothing but weakness, as water poured out. All our bones feel relaxed and out of joint; we seem as though we had none. The strength of bone is gone, the knitting of the joints is loosened, and the muscular vigour fled. A sickly giddiness overcomes us. We have no power to bear up. All heart is lost. Our strength disappears like that of wax, of melting wax, which drops upon surrounding objects, and is lost. Daniel thus describes his sensations on beholding the great vision, "There remained no strength in me: for my vigour was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength." Daniel 10:8. In regard, however, to the faintness which our Lord experienced, we ought to notice this additional and remarkable circumstance, that he did not altogether faint away. The relief of insensibility he refused to take. When consciousness ceases, all perception of pain is necessarily and instantly terminated. But our Lord retained his full consciousness throughout the awful scene; and patiently endured for a considerable period, those, to us, insupportable sensations which precede the actual swoon. *John Stevenson*.

Verse 14. "*I am poured out like water:*" that is, in the thought of my enemies I am utterly destroyed. "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." 2 Samuel 14:14. "What marvel," asks St. Bernard, "that the name of the Bridegroom should be as ointment poured forth, when he himself, for the greatness of his love, was poured forth like water!" *J. M. Neale.*

Verse 14. "*I am poured out like water,*" *i.e.*, I am almost past all recovery, as water spilt upon the ground. *John Trapp.*

Verse 14. "*All my bones are out of joint.*" The *rack* is devised as a most exquisite pain, even for terror. And the *cross* is a *rack*, whereon he was stretched till, saith the Psalm, "*all his bones were out of joint.*" But even to *stand*, as he *hung*, three long hours together, holding up but the arms at length, I have heard it avowed of some that have felt it, to be a pain scarce credible. But the hands and the feet being so cruelly *nailed* (part, of all other, most sensible, by reason of the texture of sinews there in them most) it could not but make his pain out of measure painful. It was not for nothing, that *dolores acerrimi dicuntur cruciatus* (saith the heathen man), that the most sharp and bitter pains of all other have their name from hence, and are called *cruciatus*—pains like those of the *cross*. It had a meaning, that *they gave him*, that he had (for his *welcome* to the cross) a cup mixed with gall or myrrh; and (for his *farewell*) *a sponge of vinegar*; to show by the one the *bitterness*, and by the other the *sharpness* of the pains of this painful death. *Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 14. "*All my bones are out of joint.*" We know that the greatest and most intolerable pain that the body can endure, is that arising from a bone out of its place, or dislocated joint. Now when the Lord was raised up upon the cross, and his sacred body hung in the air from the nails, all the joints began to give, so that the bones were parted the one from the other so visibly that, in very truth (as David had prophesied) *they might tell all his bones*, and thus, throughout the whole body, he endured acute torture. Whilst our Lord suffered these torments, his enemies, who had so earnestly desired to see him crucified, far from pitying him, were filled with delight, as though celebrating a victory. *Fra Thom, de Jesu.*

Verse 15. "*My strength is dried up,*" etc. Inflammation must have commenced early and violently in the wounded parts—then been quickly imparted to those that were strained, and have terminated in a *high degree of feverish burning over the whole body*. The animal juices would be thus dried up, and the watery particles of the blood absorbed. The skin parched by the scorching sun till midday would be unable to supply or to imbibe any moisture. The loss of blood at the hands and feet would hasten the desiccation. Hence our Lord says, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws." The fever would devour his small remaining strength. And THIRST, that most intolerable of all bodily privations, must have been overpowering. His body appeared to his feeling like a potsherd that had been charred in the potter's kiln. It seemed to have neither strength nor

substance left in it. So feeble had he become, so parched and dried up that CLAMMINESS OF THE MOUTH, one of the forerunners of immediate dissolution, had already seized him; "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." *John Stevenson.*

Verse 15. "My strength is dried up;" not as in the trial of gold and silver, but "*like a potsherd,*" as the earthen vessel dried up by the heat, spoken in humiliation. *Isaac Williams, in loc.*

Verse 15. "A potsherd." (Heb.) rendered *potsherd*, is a word which denotes a piece of earthenware, frequently in a broken state. As employed in the verse under consideration, it seems to derive considerable illustration from the corresponding word in ARABIC, which expresses roughness of skin, and might well convey to the mind the idea of the bodily appearance of one in whom the moisture of the fluids had been dried up by the excess of grief. *John Morison.*

Verse 15. That hour what his feelings were is dangerous to define: we know them not; we may be too bold to determine of them. To very good purpose it was that the ancient Fathers of the Greek church in their liturgy, after they had recounted all the particular pains, as they are set down in his passion, and by all and by everyone of them called for mercy, do, after all, shut up with this *Di agnwstwn kopwn basanwn elehson ki swson emas.* By thine unknown sorrows and sufferings, felt by thee, but not distinctly known by us, have mercy upon us and save us. *Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 16. "Dogs have compassed me." So great and varied was the malignity exhibited by the enemies of our Lord, that the combined characteristics of two species of ferocious animals were not adequate to its representation. Another emblematical figure is therefore introduced. The assembly of the wicked is compared to that of "dogs" who haunt about the cities, prowl in every corner, snarl over the carrion, and devour it all with greediness—like "dogs," with their wild cry in full pursuit, with unfailing scent tracking their victim, with vigilant eye on all its movements, and with a determination which nothing can falter, they run it on to death. The Oriental mode of hunting, both in ancient and modern times, is murderous and merciless in the extreme. A circle of several miles in circumference is beat round; and the men, driving all before them, and narrowing as they advance, inclose the prey on every side. Having thus made them prisoners, the cruel hunters proceed to slaughter at their own convenience. So did the enemies of our Lord: long before his crucifixion it is recorded that they used the most treacherous plans to get him into their power. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 16. "Dogs have compassed me." At the hunting of the lion, a whole district is summoned to appear, who, forming themselves first into a circle, enclose a space of four or five miles in compass, according to the number of the people and the quality of the ground which is pitched upon for the scene of action. The footmen advance first, running into the thickets with their dogs and spears, to put up the game; while the horsemen, keeping a little behind, are always ready to charge upon the first sally of the wild beast. In this manner they proceed, still contracting their circle, till they all at last close in together, or meet with some other game to divert them. *Dr. Shaw's Travels, quoted in*

Paxton's "Illustrations of Scripture."

Verse 16. "*They pierced my hands and my feet;*" namely, when they nailed Christ to the cross. Matthew 27:35; John 20:25. Where let me simulate, saith a learned man, the orator's gradation, *Facinus vincire civem Romanum*, etc. It was much for the Son of God to be bound, more to be beaten, most of all to be slain; *Quid dicam in crucem tolle?* but what shall I say to this, that he was crucified? That was the most vile and ignominious; it was also a cruel and cursed kind of death, which yet he refused not; and here we have a clear testimony for his cross. *John Trapp.*

Verse 16. "*They pierced my hands and my feet.*" Of all sanguinary punishments, that of crucifixion is one of the most dreadful—no vital part is immediately affected by it. The hands and the feet which are furnished with the most numerous and sensitive organs, are perforated with nails, which must necessarily be of some size to suit their intended purpose. The tearing asunder of the tender fibres of the hands and feet, the lacerating of so many nerves, and bursting so many blood-vessels, must be productive of intense agony. The nerves of the hand and foot are intimately connected, through the arm and leg, with the nerves of the whole body; their laceration therefore must be felt over the entire frame. Witness the melancholy result of even a needle's puncture in even one of the remotest nerves. A spasm is not unfrequently produced by it in the muscles of the face, which locks the jaws inseparably. When, therefore the hands and feet of our blessed Lord were transfixed with nails, he must have felt the sharpest pangs shoot through every part of his body. Supported only by his lacerated limbs, and suspended from his pierced hands, our Lord had nearly six hours' torment to endure. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 16. "*They pierced my hands and my feet.*" That evangelical prophet testifies it, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Isaiah 49:16. Were we not engraven there when his hands were pierced for us? "They digged my hands and my feet." And they digged them so deep, that the very prints remained after his resurrection, and their fingers were thrust into them for evidence sake. Some have thought that those scars remain still in his glorious body, to be showed at his second appearing: "They shall see him whom they have pierced." That is improbable, but this is certain; there remains still an impression upon Christ's hands and his heart, the sealing and wearing of the elect there, as precious jewels. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 17. "*I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*" The skin and flesh were distended by the posture of the body on the cross, that the bones, as through a thin veil, became visible, and might be counted. *George Horne.*

Verse 17. "*I may tell all my bones.*" For, as the first Adam by his fall, lost the robe of innocence, and thenceforth needed other garments, so the second Adam vouchsafed to be stripped of his earthly vestments, to the end it might hereafter be said to us, "Bring forth the first robe, and put it on him." Luke 15:22. *Gerhohus, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 17. "They look and stare upon me." Sensitively conscious of his condition upon the cross, the delicate feelings of the holy Saviour were sorely pained by the gaze of the multitude. With impudent face they looked upon him. To view him better they halted as they walked. With deliberate insolence they collected in groups, and made their remarks to each other on his conduct and appearance. Mocking his naked, emaciated, and quivering body, they "looked and stared upon him." *John Stevenson.*

Verse 17. "They look and stare upon me." Oh, how different is that look which the awakened sinner directs to Calvary, when faith lifts up her eye to him who agonised, and bled, and died, for the guilty! And what gratitude should perishing men feel, that from him that hangs upon the accursed tree there is heard proceeding the inviting sound, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and besides me there is none else." *John Morison.*

Verse 18. "They part my garments," etc. Perfectly naked did the cruciarii hang upon the cross, and the executioners received their clothes. There is nothing to show that there was a cloth even round the loins. The clothes became the property of the soldiers, after Roman usage. The outer garment was divided probably into four, by ripping up the seams. Four soldiers were counted off as a guard, by the Roman code. The under garment could not be divided being woven; and this led the soldiers to the dice-throwing. *J. P. Lange, D.D., on Matthew, 27:35.*

Verse 18. "They part my garments," etc. Instruments will not be wanting to crucify Christ, if it were but for his old clothes, and those but little worth; for these soldiers crucify him, though they got but his garments for their reward. Christ did submit to suffer naked, hereby to teach us:—1. That all flesh are really naked before God by reason of sin (Exodus 32:25; 2 Chronicles 28:19), and therefore our Surety behaved to suffer naked. 2. That he offered himself a real captive in his sufferings, that so he might fully satisfy justice by being under the power of his enemies, till he redeemed himself by the strong hand, having fully paid the price; for therefore did he submit to be stripped naked, as conquerors use to do with prisoners. 3. That by thus suffering naked he would expiate our abuse of apparel, and purchase to us a liberty to make use of suitable raiment, and such as becometh us in our station. 4. That by this suffering naked he would purchase unto them who flee to him, to be covered with righteousness and glory, and to walk with him in white for ever, and would point out the nakedness of those, who, not being found clothed with his righteousness, shall not be clothed upon with immortality and glory. 2 Corinthians 5:2, 3. 5. He would also by this, teach all his followers to resolve on nakedness in their following of him, as a part of their conformity with their Head (1 John 4:17; Romans 8:35; Hebrews 11:37), and that therefore they should not dote much on their apparel when they have it. *George Hutcheson, 1657.*

Verse 18. "And cast lots upon my vesture." Trifling as this act of casting the lot for our Lord's vesture may appear, it is most significant. It contains a double lesson. It teaches us how greatly that

seamless shirt was valued; how little he to whom it had belonged. It seemed to say, this garment is more valuable than its owner. As it was said of the thirty pieces of silver, "A goodly price at which I was prized at of them;" so may we say regarding the casting of the lot, "How cheaply Christ was held!" *John Stevenson.*

Verse 20. "My darling" had better be rendered "my lonely, or solitary one." For he wishes to say that his soul was lonely and forsaken by all, and that there was no one who sought after him as a friend, or cared for him, or comforted him: as we have it, Psalm 142:4, "Refuge failed me; no one cared for my soul; I looked on my right hand, but there was no one who would know me;" that is, solitude is of itself a certain cross, and especially so in such great torments, in which it is most grievous to be immersed without an example and without a companion. And yet, in such a state, everyone of us must be, in some suffering or other, and especially in that of death; and we must be brought to cry out with Psalm 25:16, "Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted." *Martin Luther.*

Verse 20. "The dog." It is scarcely possible for a European to form an idea of the intolerable nuisance occasioned in the villages and cities of the East, by the multitudes of dogs that infest the streets. The natives, accustomed from their earliest years to the annoyance, come to be regardless of it; but to a stranger, these creatures are the greatest plague to which he is subjected; for as they are never allowed to enter a house, and do not constitute the property of any particular owner, they display none of those habits of which the domesticated species among us are found susceptible, and are destitute of all those social qualities which often render the dog the trusty and attached friend of man. . . . The race seems wholly to degenerate in the warm regions of the East, and to approximate to the character of beasts of prey, as in disposition they are ferocious, cunning, bloodthirsty, and possessed of the most insatiable voracity: and even in their very form there is something repulsive; their sharp and savage features; their wolf-like eyes; their long hanging ears; their straight and pointed tails; their lank and emaciated forms, almost entirely without a belly, give them an appearance of wretchedness and degradation, that stands in sad contrast with the general condition and qualities of the breed in Europe. . . . These hideous creatures, dreaded by the people for their ferocity, or avoided by them as useless and unclean, are obliged to prowl about everywhere in search of a precarious existence. . . . They generally run in bands, and their natural ferocity, inflamed by hunger, and the consciousness of strength, makes them the most troublesome and dangerous visitors to the stranger who unexpectedly finds himself in their neighbourhood, as they will not scruple to seize whatever he may have about him, and even, in the event of his falling, and being otherwise defenceless, to attack and devour him. . . . These animals, driven by hunger, greedily devour everything that comes in their way; they glut themselves with the most putrid and loathsome substances that are thrown about the cities, and of nothing are they so fond as of human flesh, a

repast, with which the barbarity of the despotic countries of Asia frequently supplies them, as the bodies of criminals slain for murder, treason, or violence, are seldom buried, and lie exposed till the mangled fragments are carried off by the dogs. *From "Illustrations of Scripture, by the late Professor George Paxton, D.D., revised and enlarged by Robert Jamieson," 1843.*

Verse 21. "Save me from the lion's mouth." Satan is called a lion, and that fitly; for he hath all the properties of the lion: as bold as a lion, as strong as a lion, as furious as a lion, as terrible as the roaring of a lion. Yea, worse: the lion wants subtlety and suspicion; herein the devil is beyond the lion. The lion will spare the prostrate, the devil spares none. The lion is full and forbears, the devil is full and devours. He seeks all; let not the simple say, He will take no notice of me; nor the subtle, He cannot overreach me; nor the noble say, He will not presume to meddle with me; nor the rich, He dares not contest with me; for he seeks to devour all. He is our common adversary, therefore let us cease all quarrels amongst ourselves, and fight with him. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 21. "Save me . . . from the horns of the unicorns." Those who are in great trouble from the power or cruelty of others, often cry out to their gods, "Ah! save me from the tusk of the elephant! from the mouth of the tiger and the tusks of the boar, deliver me, deliver me!" Who will save me from the horn of the *K,ndam*?" This animal is now extinct in these regions, and it is not easy to determine what it was; the word in the Sathur —*Agar, the*—is rendered "jungle cow." *Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 21. "The horns of the unicorns." On turning to the Jewish Bible we find that the word (Heb.) is translated as buffalo, and there is no doubt that this rendering is nearly the correct one, and at the present day naturalists are nearly agreed that the re[^]m of the Old Testament must have been now the extinct urus. . . . The presence of these horns affords a remarkable confirmation to a well-known passage in Julius Caesar's familiar "Commentaries." "The uri are little inferior to elephants in size (*"magnitudine paulo infra elephantos;"*) "but are bulls in their nature, color, and figure. Great is their strength, and great their swiftness; nor do they spare man or beast when they have caught sight of them." *J. G. Wood, M.A., F.L.S., in "Bible Animals." 1869.*

Verse 22. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." Having thus obtained relief from the oppressive darkness, and regained conscious possession of the joy and light of his Father's countenance, the thoughts and desires of the Redeemer flow into their accustomed channel. The glory of God in the salvation of his church. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 22. "My brethren." This give evidence of the low condescension of the Son of God, and also of the high exaltation of sons of men; for the Son of God to be a brother to sons of men is a great degree of humiliation, and for the sons of men to be made brethren with the Son of God is a high degree of exaltation; for Christ's brethren are in that respect sons of God, heirs of heaven, or kings, not earthly, but heavenly; not temporary, but everlasting kings. . . . This respect of Christ to his brethren is a great encouragement and comfort to such as are despised and scorned by men of this

world for Christ's professing of them. *William Gouge.*

Verse 24. "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the prayer of the poor, neither hath he hid his face from me; but when I cried unto him, he heard me." Let him, therefore, that desires to be of the seed of Israel, and to rejoice in the grace of the gospel, become poor, for this is a fixed truth, our God is one that has respect unto the poor! And observe the fulness and diligence of the prophet. He was not content with having said "will not despise," but adds, "and will not abhor;" and, again, "will not turn away his face;" and again, "will hear." And then he adds himself as an example, saying, "When I cried," as our translation has it. As if he had said, "Behold ye, and learn by my example, who have been made the most vile of all men, and numbered among the wicked; when I was despised, cast out, rejected, behold! I was held in the highest esteem, and taken up, and heard. Let not this state of things, therefore, after this, my encouraging example, frighten you; the gospel requires a man to be such a character before it will save him. These things, I say, because our weakness requires so much exhortation, that it might not dread being humbled, nor despair when humbled, and thus might, after the bearing of the cross, receive the salvation. *Martin Luther.*

Verse 25. "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation," etc. The joy and gratitude of our adorable Lord rise to such a height at this great deliverance, his heart so overflows with fresh and blessed consciousness of his heavenly Father's nearness, that he again pours forth the expression of his praise. By its repetition, he teaches us that this is not a temporary burst of gratitude, but an abiding determination, a full and settled resolution. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 25. "In the great congregation." Saints are fittest witnesses of sacred duties. That which, in Psalm 116:14, is implied under this particle of restraint, "his," in "the presence of all his people," is in Psalm 22:25, more expressly noted by a more apparent description, thus: "*I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*" None but true saints do truly fear God. 1. This property of God's people, that they fear the Lord, showeth that they will make the best use of such sacred, solemn duties performed in their presence. They will glorify God for this your zeal; they will join their spirits with your spirit in this open performance of duty; they will become followers of you, and learn of you to vow and pay unto the Lord, and that openly, publicly. 2. As for others, they are no better than such hogs and dogs as are not meet to have such precious pearls and holy things cast before them, lest they trample them under their feet. *William Gouge.*

Verse 26. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever." A spiritual banquet is prepared in the church for the "meek" and lowly in heart. The death of Christ was the sacrifice for sin; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. The poor in spirit feed on this provision, in their hearts by faith, and are *satisfied*; and thus, whilst they "seek" the Lord, they "praise" him also, and their "hearts" (or souls), are preserved unto eternal life. *Practical Illustrations of the Book of Psalms,* 1826.

Verse 26. *"The meek."* Bonaventure engraved this sweet saying of our Lord, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," in his study. O that this saying was engraved upon all your foreheads, and upon all your hearts! *Charles Bradbury.*

Verse 26. *"They shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever."* Now, I would fain know the man that ever went about to form such laws as should bind the *hearts* of men, or prepare such rewards as should reach the souls and consciences of men! Truly, if any mortal man should make a law that his subjects should love him with all their hearts and souls, and not dare, upon peril of his greatest indignation, to entertain a traitorous thought against his royal person, but presently confess it to him, or else he would be avenged on him, he would deserve to be more laughed at for his pride and folly, than Xerxes for casting his fetters into the Hellespont, to chain the waves into his obedience; or Caligula, that threatened the air, if it durst rain when he was at his pastimes, who durst not himself so much as look into the air when it thundered. Certainly a madhouse would be more fit for such a person than a throne, who should so far forfeit his reason, as to think that the thoughts and hearts of men were within his jurisdiction. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 26. *"Your heart,"* that is, not your outward man, but the hidden man of the heart (Ezekiel 36:26); the new man which is created after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, *"shall live for ever."* The life which animates it is the life of the Spirit of God. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 27. *"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him."* This passage is a prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles. It furnishes us with two interesting ideas; the nature of true conversion—and the extent of it under the reign of the Messiah. 1. The NATURE of true conversion: —It is to *"remember"*—to *"turn to the Lord"*—and to *"worship before him."* This is a plain and simple process. Perhaps the first religious exercise of mind of which we are conscious is reflection. A state of unregeneracy is a state of forgetfulness. God is forgotten. Sinners have lost all just sense of his glory, authority, mercy, and judgment; living as if there were no God, or as if they thought there was none. But if ever we are brought to be the subjects of true conversion, we shall be brought to remember these things. This divine change is fitly expressed by the case of the prodigal, who is said to have *come to himself*, or to his right mind. But further, true conversion consists not only in remembering, but in *"turning to the Lord."* This part of the passage is expressive of a cordial relinquishment of our idols, whatever they have been, and an acquiescence in the gospel way of salvation by Christ alone. Once more, true conversion to Christ will be accompanied with the *"worship"* of him. Worship, as a religious exercise, is the homage of the heart, presented to God according to his revealed will. . . . 2. The EXTENT of conversion under the kingdom or reign of the Messiah: *"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him."* It was fit that the accession of the Gentiles should be reserved for the gospel day, that it might grace the triumph of

Christ over his enemies, and appear to be what it is, "the travail of his soul." This great and good work, begun in the apostles' day, *must* go on, and "must increase," till "*All the ends of the world shall remember and turn,*" and "*all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him.*" Conversion work has been *individual*; God has gathered sinners one by one. Thus it is at present with us; but it will not be thus always. People will flock to Zion as doves to their windows. Further, conversion work has hitherto been circumscribed within certain parts of the world. But the time will come when "all the kindreds of the earth" shall worship. These hopes are not the flight of an ardent imagination; they are founded on the true sayings of God. Finally, while we are concerned for the world, let us not forget our own souls. So the whole world be saved and we lost, what will it avail us? *Condensed from Andrew Fuller.*

Verse 27. "All the ends of the world shall REMEMBER"—this is a remarkable expression. It implies that man has forgotten God. It represents all the successive generations of the world as but *one*, and then it exhibits that one generation, as if it had been once in paradise, suddenly remembering the Lord whom it had known there, but had long forgotten. . . . The converted nations, we learn by this verse, will not only obtain remembrance of their past loss, but will also be filled with the knowledge of present duty. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 27. "All the nations of the world" ((Heb.) *jizkeru*, the same Hebrew root with (Heb.) *azkir*) "*shall remember;*" why? what is that? or what shall they remember? Even this: they shall turn to the Lord, and worship him, in his name, in his ordinances; as is explained in the words following of this verse: "*And all the families of the nations*" ((Heb.) *jishtachavu*, "shall bow" down themselves, or) "*worship before thee,*" etc. And so in Psalm 86:9, "All nations whom thou hast made shall come" ((Heb.) *vejishtachavu*) "and they shall worship before thee;" and how shall they do so? Even by recording, remembering, and making mention of the glory of thy name; as in the words following ((Hebrew) *vicabbedu lishmecha*), "and shall glorify thy name." *William Strong's "Saints Communion with God," 1656.*

Verses 27, 28. The one undeviating object of the Son all through was, the glory of the Father: he came to do his will, and he fulfilled it with all the unvarying intensity of the most heavenly affection. What, then, will not be the exuberant joy of his heart, when in his glorious kingdom, he shall see the Father beyond all measure glorified? . . . The praise and honour and blessing which will be yielded to the Father in that day through him, so that God shall be all in all, will make him feel he underwent not a sorrow too much for such a precious consummation. . . . Every note of thanksgiving which ascends to the Father, whether from the fowls of the air, or the beasts of the field, or the fishes of the sea, or the hills, or the mountains, or the trees of the forest, or the rivers of the valleys—all shall gladden his heart, as sweet in the ears of God, for the sake of him who redeemed even them from the curse, and restored to them a harmony more musical than burst from them on the birthday of their creation. And

man! renewed and regenerated man! for whose soul the blood was spilt, and for the redemption of whose body death was overcome, how shall the chorus of his thanksgiving, in its intelligent and articulate hallelujahs, be the incense which that Saviour shall still love to present unto the Father, a sweet-smelling savour through himself, who, that he might sanctify his people by his own blood, suffered without the camp. How are the channels choked up or impaired in this evil world, wherein the praise and glory of our God should flow as a river! How will Christ then witness, to the delight of his soul, all cleared and restored! No chill upon the heart, no stammering in the tongue, in his Father's praises! No understanding dull, or eye feeble, in the apprehension of his glory! No hand unready, or foot stumbling, in the fulfilling of his commandments. God, the glory of his creatures: his glory their service and their love; and *all* this the reward to Jesus of once suffering himself. C. J. Goodhart, M.A., in *"Bloomsbury Lent Lectures,"* 1848.

Verse 29. "And they shall bow that go down into the dust; their soul liveth not:" that is, *whose soul liveth not*, by an Hebraism; it being meant, that he who is of most desperate condition, being without hope of life and salvation, his sins are so notorious, shall "eat" also of this feast, and be turned to God to "worship" and serve him; being thus plucked out of the jaws of death and everlasting destruction, as it were, being before this very hour ready to seize upon him. The new translation, *"None can keep alive his own soul,"* as it agreeth not with the Hebrew, so it makes the sense more perplexed. By *"him that goeth down to the dust, whose soul liveth not,"* some understand the most miserably poor, who have nothing to feed upon, whereby their life may be preserved, yet shall feed also of this feast as well as the rich, and praise God. Ainsworth is for either spiritually poor and miserable, because most wicked, or worldly poor; and there is an exposition of Basil's, understanding by the rich, the rich in faith and grace, touching which, or the rich properly so called, he is indifferent. But because it is said, *"The fat of the earth,"* I prefer the former, and that the close of the verse may best answer to the first part; the latter by *"those that are going to the dust,"* understand the miserably poor. So that there is a commonplace of comfort for all, both richest and poorest, if they be subjects of God's kingdom of grace: their souls shall be alike fed by him and saved. John Mayer.

Verse 29. "All they that go down to the dust;" either those who stand quivering on the brink of the grave, or those who occupy the humble, sequestered walks of life. As the great and opulent of the earth are intended in the first clause, it is not by any means unnatural to suppose that the image of going *"down to the dust,"* is designed to represent the poor and mean of mankind, who are unable to support themselves, and to provide for their multiplied necessities. If the grave be alluded to, as is thought by many eminent divines, the beautiful sentiment of the verse will be, that multitudes of dying sinners shall be brought to worship Jehovah, and that those who cannot save or deliver themselves shall seek that shelter which none can find but those who approach the mercy-seat. "Rich and poor," as Bishop Horne observes, "are invited"—that is, to "worship God;" "and the hour is coming when all

the race of Adam, as many as sleep in the 'dust' of the earth, unable to raise themselves from thence, quickened and called forth by the voice of the Son of Man, must bow the knee to King Messiah." *John Morison*.

Verse 29. To be brought to the dust, is, at first, a circumlocution or description of death: "*Shall the dust praise thee, shall it declare thy truth?*" Psalm 30:9. That is, shall I praise thee when I am among the dead? "*What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?*" Not that profit, sure, I cannot bring thee in the tribute of praise when my life's gone out. Secondly, to be brought to the dust is a description of any low and poor condition. "*All they that be fat upon the earth*" (that is, the great and mighty), "*shall eat and worship*" "*all they that go down to the dust*" (that is, the mean and base), "*shall bow before him.*" As if he had said, rich and poor, high and low, the king and the beggar, have alike need of salvation by Jesus Christ, and must submit unto him, that they may be saved, for, as it there follows, "*none can keep alive his own soul.*" The captivity of the Jews in Babylon is expressed under those notions of *death*, and of *dwelling in the dust* (Isaiah 26:19); to show how low, that no power but his who can raise the dead, could work their deliverance. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 29. "*None can keep alive his own soul.*" And yet we look back to our conversion, and its agonies of earnestness, its feelings of deep, helpless dependence—of Christ's being absolutely our daily, hourly need—supplier—as a *past* something—a stage of spiritual life which is *over*. And we are satisfied to have it so. The Spirit of God moved over our deadness, and breathed into us the breath of life. My soul became a *living soul*. But was this enough? God's word says, No. "*None can keep alive his own soul.*" My heart says, No. Truth must ever answer to truth. I cannot (ah! have I not tried, and failed?) I cannot *keep alive* my own soul. We cannot live upon ourselves. Our physical life is kept up by supply from without—air, food, warmth. So must the spiritual life. Jesus gives, Jesus feeds us day by day, else must the life fade out and die. "*None can keep alive his own soul.*" It is not enough to be made alive. I must be fed, and guided, and taught, and kept in life. Mother, who hast brought a living babe into the world, is your work done? Will you not nurse it, and feed it, and care for it, that it may be *kept alive*? Lord, I am this babe. I live indeed, for I can crave and cry. Leave me not, O my Saviour. Forsake not the work of thine own hands. In thee I live. Hold me, carry me, feed me, let me abide in thee. "*For thy kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.*" In our work for God, we need to remember this. Is not the conversion, the arousing of sinners, the great, and with many, the sole aim in working for God? Should it be so? Let us think of this other work. Let us help to *keep alive*. Perhaps it is less distinguished, as it may be less distinguished to feed a starving child than to rescue a drowning man. But let us walk less by sight, more by faith. Let us not indeed neglect to call to life those who are spiritually dead. But Oh! let us watch for the more hidden needs of the living—the fading, starving,

fainting souls, which yet can walk and speak, and cover their want and sorrow. Let us be fellow-workers with God in *all* his work. And with a deep heart-feeling of the need of *constant* life supplies from above, let us try how often, how freely, we may be made the channels of those streams of the "water of life,"—for "none can keep alive his own soul." *Mary B. M. Duncan, in "Bible Hours."* 1856.

Verse 29. Having considered the vastness and glory of the prospect, our Lord next contemplates the reality and minuteness of its accomplishment. He sets before his mind individual cases and particular facts. He appears to look upon this picture of the future as we do upon a grand historical painting of the past. It seems natural to gaze with silent admiration on the picture as a whole, then to fix the attention on particular groups, and testify our sense of the general excellence, by expatiating on the truth and beauty of the several parts. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 30. "A seed shall serve him." This figurative expression signifies Christ and his people, who yield true obedience to God—they are called by this name in a spiritual and figurative, but most appropriate sense. The idea is taken from the operations of the husbandman who carefully reserves every year a portion of his grain for seed. Though it be small, compared with all the produce of his harvest, yet he prizes it very highly and estimates it by the value of that crop which it may yield in the succeeding autumn. Nor does he look only to the quantity, he pays particular regard to the quality of the seed. He reserves only the best, nay, he will put away his own if spoiled, that he may procure better. The very smallest quantity of really good seed, is, to him, an object of great desire, and if by grievous failure of crops, he should not be able to procure more than a single grain, yet would he accept it thankfully, preserve it carefully, and plant it in the most favourable soil. Such is the source from which the metaphor is taken. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 31. "And shall declare his righteousness." The occupation of the seed is to "*declare*," to testify from their own experience, from their own knowledge and convictions, that grand subject, theme, or lesson, which they have learned. . . . They will declare the righteousness of God the Holy Ghost in his convictions of sin, in his reproofs of conscience, in his forsaking of the impenitent, and in his abiding with the believer. And in a special manner, they will declare the righteousness of God the Son, during his human life, in his sufferings, and death, as man's surety, by which he "magnified the law, and made it honourable" (Isaiah 42:21), and on account of which they are able to address him by this name, "The Lord our Righteousness." (Jeremiah 23:6.) *John Stevenson.*

Verse 31. "A people that shall be born." What is this? What people is there that is not born? According to my apprehensions I think this is said for this reason—because the people of other kings are formed by laws, by customs, and by manners; by which, however, you can never move a man to true righteousness: it is only a fable of righteousness, and a mere theatrical scene or representation. For even the law of Moses could form the people of the Jews unto nothing but unto hypocrisy. But the

people of this King are not formed by laws to make up an external appearance, but they are begotten by water and by the Spirit unto a new creature of truth. *Martin Luther.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Whole Psalm. The volume entitled "Christ on the Cross," by Rev. J. Stevenson, has a sermon upon every verse. We give the headings, they are suggestive. Verse 1. The Cry. 2. The Complaint. 3. The Acknowledgment. 4-6. The Contrast. 6. The Reproach. 7. The Mockery. 8. The Taunt. 9, 10. The Appeal. 11. The Entreaty. 12, 13. The Assault. 14. The Faintness. 15. The Exhaustion. 16. The Piercing. 17. The Emaciation. 17. The Insulting Gaze. 18. The Partition of the Garments and Casting Lots. 19-21. The Importunity. 21. The Deliverance. 22. The Gratitude. 23. The Invitation. 24. The Testimony. 25. The Vow. 26. The Satisfaction of the Meek; the Seekers of the Lord Praising Him; the Eternal Life. 27. The Conversion of the World. 28. The Enthronement. 29. The Author of the Faith. 30. The Seed. 31. The Everlasting Theme and Occupation. The Finish of the Faith.

Verse 1. The Saviour's dying cry.

Verse 2. *Unanswered prayer.* Enquire the reason for it; encourage our hope concerning it; urge to continue in importunity.

Verse 3. Whatever God may do, we must settle it in our minds that he is holy and to be praised.

Verse 4. God's faithfulness in past ages a plea for the present.

Verses 4, 5. Ancient saints.

I. Their life. "*They trusted.*"

II. Their practice. "*They cried.*"

III. Their experience. "*Were not confounded.*"

IV. Their voice to us.

Verses 6-18. Full of striking sentences upon our Lord's suffering.

Verse 11. A saint's troubles, his arguments in prayer.

Verse 20. "*My darling.*" A man's soul to be very dear to him.

Verse 21 (*first clause*). "*Lion's mouth.*" Men of cruelty. The devil. Sin. Death. Hell.

Verse 22. Christ as a brother, a preacher, and a precentor.

Verse 22. A sweet subject, a glorious preacher, a loving relationship, a heavenly exercise.

Verse 23. A *threefold duty*, "praise him, "glorify him;" "fear him;" *towards one object*, "the Lord;" *for three characters*, "ye that fear him, seed of Jacob, seed of Israel," *which are but one person.*

Verse 23. Glory to God the fruit of the tree on which Jesus died.

Verse 24. A consoling fact in history attested by universal experience.

Verse 24. (*first clause*). A common fear dispelled.

Verse 25. Public praise.

- I. A delightful exercise—"praise."
- II. A personal participation—"My praise."
- III. A fitting object—"of thee."
- IV. A special source—"from thee."
- V. An appropriate place—"in the great congregation."

Verse 25. (second clause). Vows. What vows to make, when and how to make them, and the importance of paying them.

Verse 26. Spiritual feasting. The guests, the food, the host, and the satisfaction.

Verse 26. (second clause). Seekers who shall be singers. Who they are? What they shall do? When? and what is the reason for expecting that they shall?

Verse 27. (last clause). Life everlasting. What lives? Source of life. Manner of life. Why for ever? What occupation? What comfort to be derived from it?

Verse 27. Nature of true conversion, and extent of it under the reign of the Messiah. *Andrew Fuller.*

Verse 27. The universal triumph of Christianity certain.

Verse 27. The order of conversion. See the Exposition.

Verse 28. The empire of the King of kings as it is, and as it shall be.

Verse 29. Grace for the rich, grace for the poor, but all lost without it.

Verse 29 (last clause). A weighty text upon the vanity of self-confidence.

Verse 30. The perpetuity of the church.

Verse 30 (last clause). Church history, the marrow of all history.

Verse 31. Future prospects for the church.

- I. Conversions certain.
- II. Preachers promised.
- III. Succeeding generations blest.
- IV. Gospel published.
- V. Christ exalted.

WORK UPON THE TWENTY-SECOND PSALM

Christ on the Cross: An Exposition of the Twenty-second Psalm. By the Rev. JOHN STEVENSON, Perpetual Curate of Curry and Gunwalloe, Cornwall. 1842.

Psalm 23

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

There is no inspired title to this psalm, and none is needed, for it records no special event, and needs no other key than that which every Christian may find in his own bosom. It is David's Heavenly Pastoral; a surpassing ode, which none of the daughters of music can excel. The clarion of war here gives place to the pipe of peace, and he who so lately bewailed the woes of the Shepherd tunefully rehearses the joys of the flock. Sitting under a spreading tree, with his flock around him, like Bunyan's shepherd-boy in the Valley of Humiliation, we picture David singing this unrivalled pastoral with a heart as full of gladness as it could hold; or, if the psalm be the product of his after-years, we are sure that his soul returned in contemplation to the lonely water-brooks which rippled among the pastures of the wilderness, where in early days she had been wont to dwell. This is the pearl of psalms whose soft and pure radiance delights every eye; a pearl of which Helicon need not be ashamed, though Jordan claims it. Of this delightful song it may be affirmed that its piety and its poetry are equal, its sweetness and its spirituality are unsurpassed.

The position of this psalm is worthy of notice. It follows the twenty-second, which is peculiarly the Psalm of the Cross. There are no green pastures, no still waters on the other side of the twenty-second psalm. It is only after we have read, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that we come to "The Lord is my Shepherd." We must by experience know the value of blood-shedding, and see the sword awakened against the Shepherd, before we shall be able truly to know the Sweetness of the good Shepherd's care.

It has been said that what the nightingale is among birds, that is this divine ode among the psalms, for it has sung sweetly in the ear of many a mourner in his night of weeping, and has bidden him hope for a morning of joy. I will venture to compare it also to the lark, which sings as it mounts, and mounts as it sings, until it is out of sight, and even then is not out of hearing. Note the last words of the psalm—"I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever;" these are celestial notes, more fitted for the eternal mansions than for these dwelling places below the clouds. Oh that we may enter into the spirit of the psalm as we read it, and then we shall experience the days of heaven upon the earth!

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *"The Lord is my shepherd."* What condescension is this, that the infinite Lord assumes towards his people the office and character of a Shepherd! It should be the subject of grateful admiration that the great God allows himself to be compared to anything which will set forth his great love and care for his own people. David had himself been a keeper of sheep, and understood both the needs of the sheep and the many cares of a shepherd. He compares himself to a creature weak, defenceless, and foolish, and he takes God to be his Provider, Preserver, Director, and, indeed, his

everything. No man has a right to consider himself the Lord's sheep unless his nature has been renewed for the scriptural description of unconverted men does not picture them as sheep, but as wolves or goats. A sheep is an object of property, not a wild animal; its owner sets great store by it, and frequently it is bought with a great price. It is well to know, as certainly David did, that we belong to the Lord. There is a noble tone of confidence about this sentence. There is no "if" nor "but," nor even "I hope so;" but he says, "The Lord *is* my shepherd." We must cultivate the spirit of assured dependence upon our heavenly Father. The sweetest word of the whole is that monosyllable, "*My.*" He does not say, "The Lord is the shepherd of the world at large, and leadeth forth the multitude as his flock," but "The Lord is *my* shepherd;" if he be a Shepherd to no one else, he is a Shepherd to *me*; he cares for *me*, watches over *me*, and preserves *me*. The words are in the present tense. Whatever be the believer's position, he is even now under the pastoral care of Jehovah.

The next words are a sort of inference from the first statement—they are sententious and positive—"I shall not want." I might want otherwise, but when the Lord is my Shepherd he is able to supply my needs, and he is certainly willing to do so, for his heart is full of love, and therefore "I shall not want." I shall not lack for *temporal things*. Does he not feed the ravens, and cause the lilies to grow? How, then, can he leave his children to starve? I shall not want *for spirituals*, I know that his grace will be sufficient for me. Resting in him he will say to me, "As thy day so shall thy strength be." I may not possess all that I wish for, but "I shall not want." Others, far wealthier and wiser than I, may want, but "I shall not." "The young lions *do* lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." It is not only "I do not want," but "I shall not want." Come what may, if famine should devastate the land, or calamity destroy the city, "I shall not want." Old age with its feebleness shall not bring me any lack, and even death with its gloom shall not find me destitute. I have all things and abound; not because I have a good store of money in the bank, not because I have skill and wit with which to win my bread, but because "*The Lord is my shepherd.*" The wicked always want, but the righteous never; a sinner's heart is far from satisfaction, but a gracious spirit dwells in the palace of content.

Verse 2. "*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*" The Christian life has two elements in it, the contemplative and the active, and both of these are richly provided for. First, the contemplative. "*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.*" What are these "*green pastures*" but the Scriptures of truth—always fresh, always rich, and never exhausted? There is no fear of biting the bare ground where the grass is long enough for the flock to lie down in it. Sweet and full are the doctrines of the gospel; fit food for souls, as tender grass is natural nutriment for sheep. When by faith we are enabled to find rest in the promises, we are like the sheep that lie down in the midst of the pasture; we find at the same moment both provender and peace, rest and refreshment, serenity and satisfaction. But observe: "*He maketh me to lie down.*" It is the Lord who

graciously enables us to perceive the preciousness of his truth, and to feed upon it. How grateful ought we to be for the power to appropriate the promises! There are some distracted souls who would give worlds if they could but do this. They know the blessedness of it, but they cannot say that this blessedness is theirs. They know the "*green pastures*," but they are not made to "*lie down*" in them. Those believers who have for years enjoyed a "full assurance of faith" should greatly bless their gracious God.

The second part of a vigorous Christian's life consists in gracious activity. We not only think, but we act. We are not always lying down to feed, but are journeying onward toward perfection; hence we read, "*he leadeth me beside the still waters*." What are these "still waters" but the influences and graces of his blessed Spirit? His Spirit attends us in various operations, like waters—in the plural—to cleanse, to refresh, to fertilise, to cherish. They are "*still waters*," for the Holy Ghost loves peace, and sounds no trumpet of ostentation in his operations. He may flow into our soul, but not into our neighbour's, and therefore our neighbour may not perceive the divine presence; and though the blessed Spirit may be pouring his floods into one heart, yet he that sitteth next to the favoured one may know nothing of it.

"In sacred silence of the mind

My heaven, and there my God I find."

Still waters run deep. Nothing more noisy than an empty drum. That silence is golden indeed in which the Holy Spirit meets with the souls of his saints. Not to raging waves of strife, but to peaceful streams of holy love does the Spirit of God conduct the chosen sheep. He is a dove, not an eagle; the dew, not the hurricane. Our Lord leads us beside these "*still waters*;" we could not go there of ourselves, we need his guidance, therefore it is said, "*he leadeth me*." He does not drive us. Moses drives us by the law, but Jesus leads us by his example, and the gentle drawing of his love.

Verse 3. "*He restoreth my soul*." When the soul grows sorrowful he revives it; when it is sinful he sanctifies it; when it is weak he strengthens it. "*He*" does it. His ministers could not do it if he did not. His Word would not avail by itself. "*He restoreth my soul*." Are any of us low in grace? Do we feel that our spirituality is at its lowest ebb? He who turns the ebb into the flood can soon restore our soul. Pray to him, then, for the blessing—"Restore thou me, thou Shepherd of my soul!"

"*He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake*." The Christian delights to be obedient, but it is the obedience of love, to which he is constrained by the example of his Master. "*He leadeth me*." The Christian is not obedient to some commandments and neglectful of others; he does not pick and choose, but yields to all. Observe, that the plural is used—"the *paths* of righteousness." Whatever God may give us to do we would do it, led by his love. Some Christians overlook the blessing of sanctification, and yet to a thoroughly renewed heart this is one of the sweetest gifts of

the covenant. If we could be saved from wrath, and yet remain unregenerate, impenitent sinners, we should not be saved as we desire, for we mainly and chiefly pant to be saved *from* sin and led in the way of holiness. All this is done out of pure free grace; "*for his name's sake.*" It is to the honour of our great Shepherd that we should be a holy people, walking in the narrow way of righteousness. If we be so led and guided we must not fail to adore our heavenly Shepherd's care.

Verse 4. "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*" This unspeakably delightful verse has been sung on many a dying bed, and has helped to make the dark valley bright times out of mind. Every word in it has a wealth of meaning. "*Yea, though I walk,*" as if the believer did not quicken his pace when he came to die, but still calmly *walked* with God. To walk indicates the steady advance of a soul which knows its road, knows its end, resolves to follow the path, feels quite safe, and is therefore perfectly calm and composed. The dying saint is not in a flurry, he does not run as though he were alarmed, nor stand still as though he would go no further, he is not confounded nor ashamed, and therefore keeps to his old pace. Observe that it is not walking *in* the valley, but *through* the valley. We go through the dark tunnel of death and emerge into the light of immortality. We do not die, we do but sleep to wake in glory. Death is not the house but the porch, not the goal but the passage to it. The dying article is called a *valley*. The storm breaks on the mountain, but the valley is the place of quietude, and thus full often the last days of the Christian are the most peaceful of his whole career; the mountain is bleak and bare, but the valley is rich with golden sheaves, and many a saint has reaped more joy and knowledge when he came to die than he ever knew while he lived. And, then, it is not "the valley of death," but "the valley *of the shadow* of death," for death in its substance has been removed, and only the shadow of it remains. Some one has said that when there is a shadow there must be light somewhere, and so there is. Death stands by the side of the highway in which we have to travel, and the light of heaven shining upon him throws a shadow across our path; let us then rejoice that there is a light beyond. Nobody is afraid of a shadow, for a shadow cannot stop a man's pathway even for a moment. The shadow of a dog cannot bite; the shadow of a sword cannot kill; the shadow of death cannot destroy us. Let us not, therefore, be afraid. "*I will fear no evil.*" He does not say there shall not be any evil; he had got beyond even that high assurance, and knew that Jesus had put all evil away; but "*I will fear no evil;*" as if even his fears, those shadows of evil, were gone for ever. The worst evils of life are those which do not exist except in our imagination. If we had no troubles but real troubles, we should not have a tenth part of our present sorrows. We feel a thousand deaths in fearing one, but the psalmist was cured of the disease of fearing. "*I will fear no evil,*" not even the Evil One himself; I will not dread the last enemy, I will look upon him as a conquered foe, an enemy to be destroyed, "*For thou art with me.*" This is the joy of the Christian! "*Thou art with me.*" The little child out at sea in the storm is not frightened like all the other

passengers on board the vessel, it sleeps in its mother's bosom; it is enough for it that its mother is with it; and it should be enough for the believer to know that Christ is with him. "*Thou art with me; I have, in having thee, all that I can crave: I have perfect comfort and absolute security, for thou art with me.*" "*Thy rod and thy staff,*" by which thou governest and rulest thy flock, the ensigns of thy sovereignty and of thy gracious care—"*they comfort me.*" I will believe that thou reignest still. The rod of Jesse shall still be over me as the sovereign succour of my soul.

Many persons profess to receive much comfort from the hope that they shall not die. Certainly there will be some who will be "alive and remain" at the coming of the Lord, but is there so very much of advantage in such an escape from death as to make it the object of Christian desire? A wise man might prefer of the two to die, for those who shall not die, but who "shall be caught up together with the Lord in the air," will be losers rather than gainers. They will lose that actual fellowship with Christ in the tomb which dying saints will have, and we are expressly told that they shall have no preference beyond those who are asleep. Let us be of Paul's mind when he said that "To die is gain," and think of "departing to be with Christ, which is far better." This twenty-third psalm is not worn out, and it is as sweet in a believer's ear now as it was in David's time, let novelty-hunters say what they will.

Verse 5. "*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.*" The good man has his enemies. He would not be like his Lord if he had not. If we were without enemies we might fear that we were not the friends of God, for the friendship of the world is enmity to God. Yet see the quietude of the godly man in spite of, and in the sight of, his enemies. How refreshing is his calm bravery! "*Thou preparest a table before me.*" When a soldier is in the presence of his enemies, if he eats at all he snatches a hasty meal, and away he hastens to the fight. But observe: "*Thou preparest a table,*" just as a servant does when she unfolds the damask cloth and displays the ornaments of the feast on an ordinary peaceful occasion. Nothing is hurried, there is no confusion, no disturbance, the enemy is at the door, and yet God prepares a table, and the Christian sits down and eats as if everything were in perfect peace. Oh! the peace which Jehovah gives to his people, even in the midst of the most trying circumstances!

"Let earth be all in arms abroad,
They dwell in perfect peace."

"*Thou anointest my head with oil.*" May we live in the daily enjoyment of this blessing, receiving a fresh anointing for every day's duties. Every Christian is a priest, but he cannot execute the priestly office without unction, and hence we must go day by day to God the Holy Ghost, that we may have our heads anointed with oil. A priest without oil misses the chief qualification for his office, and the Christian priest lacks his chief fitness for service when he is devoid of new grace from on high. "*My cup runneth over.*" He had not only enough, a cup full, but more than enough, a cup which

overflowed. A poor man may say this as well as those in higher circumstances. "What, all this, and Jesus Christ too?" said a poor cottager as she broke a piece of bread and filled a glass with cold water. Whereas a man may be ever so wealthy, but if he be discontented his cup cannot run over; it is cracked and leaks. Content is the philosopher's stone which turns all it touches into gold; happy is he who has found it. Content is more than a kingdom, it is another word for happiness.

Verse 6. "*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.*" This is a fact as indisputable as it is encouraging, and therefore a heavenly *verily*, or "*surely*" is set as a seal upon it. This sentence may be read, "*only* goodness and mercy," for there shall be unmingled mercy in our history. These twin guardian angels will always be with me at my back and my beck. Just as when great princes go abroad they must not go unattended, so it is with the believer. Goodness and mercy follow him always—"*all the days of his life*"—the black days as well as the bright days, the days of fasting as well as the days of feasting, the dreary days of winter as well as the bright days of summer. Goodness supplies our needs, and mercy blots out our sins. "*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*" "A servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever." While I am here I will be a child at home with my God; the whole world shall be his house to me; and when I ascend into the upper chamber, I shall not change my company, nor even change the house; I shall only go to dwell in the upper storey of the house of the Lord for ever.

May God grant us grace to dwell in the serene atmosphere of this most blessed Psalm!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. David has left no sweeter Psalm than the short twenty-third. It is but a moment's opening of his soul; but, as when one, walking the winter street sees the door opened for some one to enter, and the red light streams a moment forth, and the forms of gay children are running to greet the comer, and genial music sounds, though the door shuts and leaves the night black, yet it cannot shut back again all that the eyes, the ear, the heart, and the imagination have seen—so in this Psalm, though it is but a moment's opening of the soul, are emitted truths of peace and consolation that will never be absent from the world. The twenty-third Psalm is the nightingale of the Psalms. It is small, of a homely feather, singing shyly out of obscurity; but, oh! it has filled the air of the whole world with melodious joy, greater than the heart can conceive. Blessed be the day on which that Psalm was born! What would you say of a pilgrim commissioned of God to travel up and down the earth singing a strange melody, which, when one heard, caused him to forget whatever sorrows he had? And so the singing angel goes on his way through all lands, singing in the language of every nation, driving away trouble by the pulses of the air which his tongue moves with divine power. Behold just such an one! This pilgrim God has sent to speak in every language on the globe. It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has remanded to their dungeon

more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows, than there are sands on the sea-shore. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. Dying soldiers have died easier as it was read to them; ghastly hospitals have been illuminated; it has visited the prisoner, and broken his chains, and, like Peter's angel, led him forth in imagination, and sung him back to his home again. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master, and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind mourning, not so much that he was gone, as because they were left behind, and could not go too. Nor is its work done. It will go singing to your children and my children, and to their children, through all the generations of time; nor will it fold its wings till the last pilgrim is safe, and time ended; and then it shall fly back to the bosom of God, whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all those sounds of celestial joy which make heaven musical for ever. *Henry Ward Beecher, in "Life Thoughts."*

Whole Psalm. This Psalm may well be called David's *bucolicon*, or pastoral, so daintily hath he struck upon the whole string, through the whole hymn. *Est Psalmis honorabilis*, saith Aben-ezra; it is a noble Psalm, written and sung by David, not when he fled into the forest of Hareth (1 Samuel 22:5), as some Hebrews will have it; but when as having overcome all his enemies, and settled his kingdom, he enjoyed great peace and quiet, and had one foot, as it were, upon the battlements of heaven. The Jews at this day use for most part to repeat this Psalm after they are sat down to meat. *John Trapp.*

Whole Psalm. Augustine is said to have beheld, in a dream, the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm rising before him as a tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. This twenty-third may be compared to the fairest flowers that grew around it. The former has even been likened to the sun amidst the stars—surely this is like the richest of the constellations, even the Pleiades themselves! *John Stoughton, in "The Songs of Christ's Flock," 1860.*

Whole Psalm. Some pious souls are troubled because they cannot at all times, or often, use, in its joyous import, the language of this Psalm. Such should remember that David, though he lived long, never wrote but one twenty-third Psalm. Some of his odes do indeed express as lively a faith as this, and faith can walk in darkness. But where else do we find a whole Psalm expressive of personal confidence, joy, and triumph, from beginning to end? God's people have their seasons of darkness and their times of rejoicing. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Let them say that will, "My lands shall keep me, I shall have no want, my merchandise shall be my help, I shall have no want;" let the soldier trust unto his weapons, and the husbandman unto his labour; let the artificer say unto his art, and the tradesman unto his trade, and the scholar unto his books, "These shall maintain me, I shall not want." Let us say with the church, as we both say and sing, "The Lord is my keeper, I shall not want." He that can truly say so, contemns the rest, and he that desires more than God, cannot truly say, the

Lord is his, the Lord is this shepherd, governor and commander, and therefore I shall not want. *John Hull, B.D., in "Lectures on Lamentations," 1617.*

Verse 1. "*The Lord is my shepherd; I want nothing:*" thus it may be equally well rendered, though in our version it is in the future tense. *J. R. Macduff, D.D., in "The Shepherd and his Flock," 1866.*

Verse 1. "*The Lord is my shepherd.*" We may learn in general from the metaphor, that it is the property of a gracious heart to draw some spiritual use or other from his former condition. David himself having sometimes been a shepherd, as himself confesseth when he saith, "he took David from the sheepfold from following the sheep," etc., himself having been a shepherd, he beholds the Lord the same to him. Whatsoever David was to his flock— watchful over them, careful to defend them from the lion and the bear, and whatsoever thing else might annoy them, careful of their pasturage and watering, etc., the same and much more he beholds the Lord to himself. So Paul: "I was a persecutor, and an oppressor: but the Lord had mercy on me." This we may see in good old Jacob: "With this staff," saith he, "I passed over Jordan;" and that now God had blessed him and multiplied him exceedingly. The doctrine is plain; the reasons are, first, because true grace makes no object amiss to gather some gracious instruction: it skills not what the object be, so that the heart be gracious; for that never wants matter to work upon. And secondly, it must needs be so, for such are guided by God's Spirit, and therefore are directed to a spiritual use of all things. *Samuel Smith's "Chiefe Shepheard," 1625.*

Verse 1. "*Shepherd.*" May this sweet title persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem: my meaning is, that those who as yet never knew what it was to be enfolded in the bosom of Jesus, who as yet were never lambs nor ewes in Christ's fold, consider the sweetness of this Shepherd, and come in to him. Satan deals seemingly sweet, that he may draw you into sin, but in the end he will be really bitter to you. Christ, indeed, is seemingly bitter to keep you from sin, hedging up your way with thorns. But he will be really sweet if you come into his flock, even notwithstanding your sins. Thou lookest into Christ's fold, and thou seest it hedged and fenced all about to keep you in from sin, and this keeps thee from entering; but, oh! let it not. Christ, indeed, is unwilling that any of his should wander, and if they be unwilling too, it's well. And if they wander he'll fetch them in, it may be with his shepherd's *dog* (some affliction); but he'll not be, as we say, *dogged* himself. No, he is and will be sweet. It may be, Satan smiles, and is pleasant to you while you sin; but know, he'll be bitter in the end. He that sings syren-like now, will devour lion-like at last. He'll torment you and vex you, and be burning and bitterness to you. O come in therefore to Jesus Christ; let him be now the shepherd of thy soul. And know then, he'll be sweet in endeavouring to keep thee from sin before thou commit it; and he'll be sweet in delivering thee from sin after thou hast committed it. O that this thought—that Jesus Christ is sweet in his carriage unto all his members, unto all his flock, especially the sinning ones, might persuade the hearts of some sinners to come in unto his fold. *John Durant, 1652.*

Verse 1 (*first clause*). *Feedeth me, or is my feeder, my pastor.* The word comprehendeth all duties of a good herd, as together feeding, guiding, governing, and defending his flock. *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 1. "*The Lord is my shepherd.*" Now the reasons of this resemblance I take to be these:—First, one property of a good shepherd is, skill to know and judge aright of his sheep, and hence is it that it is a usual thing to set mark upon sheep, to the end that if they go astray (as of all creatures they are most subject to wander), the shepherd may seek them up and bring them home again. The same thing is affirmed of Christ, or rather indeed Christ affirmeth the same thing of himself, "I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27. Yea, doubtless, he that hath numbered the stars, and calleth them all by their names, yea, the very hairs of our head, taketh special notice of his own children, "the sheep of his pasture," that they may be provided for and protected from all danger. Secondly, a good shepherd must have skill in the pasturing of his sheep, and in bringing them into such fruitful ground, as they may battle and thrive upon: a good shepherd will not suffer his sheep to feed upon rotten soil, but in wholesome pastures . . . Thirdly, a good shepherd, knowing the straying nature of his sheep, is so much the more diligent to watch over them, and if at any time they go astray, he brings them back again. This is the Lord's merciful dealing towards poor wandering souls. . . . Fourthly, a good shepherd must have will to feed his sheep according to his skill: the Lord of all others is most willing to provide for his sheep. How earnest is Christ with Peter, to "feed his sheep," urging him unto it three several times! Fifthly, a good shepherd is provided to defend his flock. . . . The Lord is every way provided for the safety and defence of his sheep, as David confesseth in this Psalm (verse 4), "*Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*" And again, "I took unto me two staves" (saith the Lord), "the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock." Zechariah 11:7. Sixthly, it is the property of a good shepherd, that if any of his sheep be weak and feeble, or his lambs young, for their safety and recovery he will bear them in his arms. The Lord is not wanting to us herein. Isaiah 40:11. And lastly, it is the property of a good shepherd to rejoice when the strayed sheep is brought home. The Lord doth thus rejoice at the conversion of a sinner. Luke 15:7. *Samuel Smith.*

Verse 1. "*The Lord is my shepherd.*" I notice that some of the flock keep near the shepherd, and follow whithersoever he goes without the least hesitation, while others stray about on either side, or loiter far behind; and he often turns round and scolds them in a sharp, stern cry, or sends a stone after them. I saw him lame one just now. Not altogether unlike the good Shepherd. Indeed I never ride over these hills, clothed with flocks, without meditating upon this delightful theme. Our Saviour says that the good shepherd, when he putteth forth his own sheep, goeth before them, and they follow. John 10:4. This is true to the letter. They are so tame and so trained that they *follow* their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or from their houses in the villages, just where he pleases. As there are many flocks in such a place as this, each one takes a different path, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be

taught to follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either side. Any one that thus wanders is sure to get into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice, and follow on; but, if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable, it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly. The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charge, and in this he is very courageous. Many adventures with wild beasts occur, not unlike that recounted by David (1 Samuel 27:34-36), and in these very mountains; for though there are now no lions here, there are wolves in abundance; and leopards and panthers, exceeding fierce, prowl about the wild wadies. They not unfrequently attack the flock in the very presence of the shepherd, and he must be ready to do battle at a moment's warning. I have listened with intense interest to their graphic descriptions of downright and desperate fights with these savage beasts. And when the thief and the robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedawin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending. Some sheep always keep near the shepherd, and are his special favorites. Each of them has a name, to which it answers joyfully, and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such, choice portions which he gathers for that purpose. These are the contented and happy ones. They are in no danger of getting lost or into mischief, nor do wild beasts or thieves come near them. The great body, however, are mere worldlings, intent upon their mere pleasures or selfish interests. They run from bush to bush, searching for variety or delicacies, and only now and then lift their heads to see where the shepherd is, or, rather where the general flock is, lest they get so far away as to occasion a remark in their little community, or rebuke from their keeper. Others, again, are restless and discontented, jumping into everybody's field, climbing into bushes, and even into leaning trees, whence they often fall and break their limbs. These cost the good shepherd incessant trouble. *W. M. Thomson, D.D., in "The Land and the Book."*

Verse 1. "Shepherd." As we sat the silent hillsides around us were in a moment filled with life and sound. The shepherds led their flocks forth from the gates of the city. They were in full view, and we watched them and listened to them with no little interest. Thousands of sheep and goats were there, grouped in dense, confused masses. The shepherds stood together until all came out. Then they separated, each shepherd taking a different path, and uttering as he advanced a shrill peculiar call. The sheep heard them. At first the masses swayed and moved, as if shaken by some internal convulsion; then points struck out in the direction taken by the shepherds; these became longer and

longer until the confused masses were resolved into long, living streams, flowing after their leaders. Such a sight was not new to me, still it had lost none of its interest. It was perhaps one of the most vivid illustrations which human eyes could witness of that beautiful discourse of our Lord recorded by John, "And the sheep hear the shepherd's voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers," chapter 10:3-5. The shepherds themselves had none of that peaceful and placid aspect which is generally associated with pastoral life and habits. They looked more like warriors marching to the battle-field—a long gun slung from the shoulder, a dagger and heavy pistols in the belt, a light battle-axe or ironheaded club in the hand. Such were the equipments; and their fierce flashing eyes and scowling countenances showed but too plainly that they were prepared to use their weapons at any moment. *J. L. Porter, A.M., in "The Giant Cities of Bashan," 1867.*

Verse 1. "I shall not want." You must distinguish 'twixt *absence*, and 'twixt *indigence*. *Absence* is when something is not present; *indigence* or *want*, is when a needful good is not present. If a man were to walk, and had not a staff, here were something absent. If a man were to walk, and had but one leg, here were something whereof he were indigent. It is confessed that there are many good things which are absent from a good person, but no good thing which he wants or is indigent of. If the good be absent and I need it not, this is no want; he that walks without his cloak, walks well enough, for he needs it not. As long as I can walk carefully and cheerfully in my general or particular calling, though I have not such a load of accessories as other men have, yet I *want* nothing, for my little is enough and serves the turn. . . . Our corruptions are still craving, and they are always inordinate, they can find more wants than God needs to supply. As they say of fools, they can propose more questions than twenty wise men need to answer. They in James 4:3, did *ask*, but *received not*; and he gives two reasons for it:—1. This *asking* was but a *lusting*: "ye lust and have not" (verse 4): another, they did *ask to consume it upon their lusts* (verse 3). God will see that his people shall not want; but withal, he will never engage himself to the satisfying of their corruptions, though he doth to the supply of their conditions. It is one thing what the sick man wants, another what his disease wants. Your ignorance, your discontents, your pride, your unthankful hearts, may make you to believe that you dwell in a barren land, far from mercies (as melancholy makes a person to imagine that he is drowning, or killing, etc.); whereas if God did open your eyes as he did Hagar's, you might see fountains and streams, mercies and blessings sufficient; though not many, yet enough, though not so rich, yet proper, and every way convenient for your good and comfort; and thus you have the genuine sense, so far as I can judge of David's assertion, "*I shall not want.*" *Obadiah Sedgwick.*

Verse 1. "I shall not want." Only he that can want does not want; and he that cannot, does. You tell me that a godly man wants these and these things, which the wicked man hath; but I tell you he can

no more be said to "*want*" them than a butcher may be said to want Homer, or such another thing, because his disposition is such, that he makes no use of those things which you usually mean. 'Tis but only necessary things that he cares for, and those are not many. But *one* thing is necessary, and that he hath chosen, namely, *the better part*. And therefore if he have nothing at all of all other things, he does not *want*, neither is there anything *wanting* which might make him rich enough, or by absence whereof, his riches should be said to be deficient. A body is not *maimed* unless it have lost a principal part: only *privative* defects discommend a thing, and not those that are *negative*. When we say, there is nothing *wanting* to such-and-such a creature or thing that a man hath made, we mean that it hath all that belongs necessarily to it. We speak not of such things as may be added for compliments or ornaments or the like, such as are those things usually wherein wicked men excel the godly. Even so it is when we say that a godly man *wanteth nothing*. For though in regard of unnecessary goods he be "as having nothing," yet in regard of others he is as if he possessed all things. He wants nothing that is necessary either for his glorifying of God (being able to do that best in and by his afflictions), or for God's glorifying of him, and making him happy, having God himself for his portion and supply of his wants, who is abundantly sufficient at all times, for all persons, in all conditions. *Zachary Bogan*.

Verse 1. "I shall not want." To be raised above the fear of want by committing ourselves to the care of the Good Shepherd, or by placing our confidence in worldly property, are two distinct and very opposite things. The confidence in the former case, appears to the natural man to be hard and difficult, if not unreasonable and impossible: in the latter it appears to be natural, easy, and consistent. It requires, however, no lengthened argument to prove that he who relies on the promise of God for the supply of his temporal wants, possesses an infinitely greater security than the individual who confides in his accumulated wealth. The ablest financiers admit that there must be appended to their most choice investments, this felt or expressed proviso—"So far as human affairs can be secure." . . . Since then no absolute security against want can be found on earth, it necessarily follows, that he who trusts in God is the most wise and prudent man. Who dare deny that the promise of the living God is an absolute security? *John Stevenson*.

Verse 1. "I shall not want." The sheep of Christ may change their pasture, but they shall never want a pasture. "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Matthew 6:25. If he grant unto us great things, shall we distrust him for small things? He who has given us heavenly beings, will also give us earthly blessings. The great Husbandman never overstocked his own commons. *William Secker*.

Verse 1. "I shall not want." Ever since I heard of your illness, and the Lord's mercy in sustaining and restoring, I have been intending to write, to bless the Lord with my very dear sister, and ask for some words to strengthen my faith, in detail of your cup having run over in the hour of need. Is it not,

indeed, the bleating of Messiah's sheep, "*I shall not want*"? "shall not want," because the Lord is our Shepherd! Our Shepherd the All-sufficient! nothing can unite itself to him; nothing mingle with him; nothing add to his satisfying nature; nothing diminish from his fulness. There is a peace and fulness of expression in this little sentence, known only to the sheep. The remainder of the Psalm is a drawing out of this, "*I shall not want.*" In the unfolding we find repose, refreshment, restoring mercies, guidance, peace in death, triumph, an overflowing of blessings; future confidence, eternal security in life or death, spiritual or temporal, prosperity or adversity, for time or eternity. May we not say, "*The Lord is my Shepherd?*" for we stand on the sure foundation of the twenty-third Psalm. How can we want, when united to him! we have a right to use all his riches. Our wealth is his riches and glory. With him nothing can be withheld. Eternal life *is* ours, with the promise that *all* shall be added; all *he* knows we want. Our Shepherd has learned the wants of his sheep by experience, for he was himself "led as a sheep to the slaughter." Does not this expression, dictated by the Spirit, imply a promise, and a full promise, when connected with his own words, "*I know my sheep,*" by what painful discipline he was instructed in this knowledge, subjected himself to the wants of every sheep, every lamb of his fold, that he might be able to be touched with a feeling of their infirmities? The timid sheep has nothing to fear; fear not want, fear not affliction. fear not pain; "*fear not;*" according to your want shall be your supply, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; *therefore* will I trust in him." *Theodosia A. Howard, Viscountess Powerscourt (1830) in "Letters," etc., edited by Robert Daly, D.D., 1861.*

Verse 1. "I shall not want." One of the poor members of the flock of Christ was reduced to circumstances of the greatest poverty in his old age, and yet he never murmured. "You must be badly off," said a kind-hearted neighbour to him one day as they met upon the road, "you must be badly off; and I don't know how an old man like you can maintain yourself and your wife; yet you are always cheerful!" "Oh no!" he replied, "we are not badly off, I have a rich Father, and he does not suffer me to want." "What! your father not dead yet? he must be very old indeed!" "Oh!" said he, "my Father never dies, and he always takes care of me!" This aged Christian was a daily pensioner on the providence of his God. His struggles and his poverty were known to all; but his own declaration was, that he never wanted what was absolutely necessary. The days of his greatest straits were the days of his most signal and timely deliverances. When old age benumbed the hand of his industry, the Lord extended to him the hand of charity. And often has he gone forth from his scanty breakfast, not knowing from what earthly source his next meal was to be obtained. But yet with David he could rely on his Shepherd's care, and say, "I shall not want;" and as certainly as he trusted in God, so surely, in some unexpected manner was his necessity supplied. *John Stevenson.*

Verse 1. In the tenth chapter of John's gospel, you will find six marks of Christ sheep: 1. They *know their Shepherd*; 2. They *know his voice*; 3. They *hear him* calling them each by name; 4. They *love him*; 5. They *trust him*; 6. They *follow him*. In "*The Shepherd's King,*" by the Authoress of "*The Folded*

Lamb {Mrs. Rogers.}, 1856.

Verses 1-4. Come down to the river; there is something going forward worth seeing. Yon shepherd is about to lead his flock across; and as our Lord says of the good shepherd—you observe that he goes before, and the sheep follow. Not all in the same manner, however. Some enter boldly, and come straight across. These are the loved ones of the flock, who keep hard by the footsteps of the shepherd, whether sauntering through green meadows by the still waters, feeding upon the mountains, or resting at noon, beneath the shadow of great rocks. And now others enter, but in doubt and alarm. Far from their guide, they miss the ford, and are carried down the river, some more, some less; and yet, one by one, they all struggle over and make good their landing. Notice those little lambs. They refuse to enter, and must be driven into the stream by the shepherd's dog, mentioned by Job in his "parable." Poor things! how they leap, and plunge, and bleat in terror! That weak one yonder will be swept quite away, and perish in the sea. But no; the shepherd himself leaps into the stream, lifts it into his bosom, and bears it trembling to the shore. All safely over, how happy they appear! The lambs frisk and gambol about in high spirits, while the older ones gather round their faithful guide, and look up to him in subdued but expressive thankfulness. Now, can you watch such a scene, and not think of that Shepherd who leadeth Joseph like a flock; and of another river, which all his sheep must cross? He, too, goes before, and, as in the case of this flock, they who keep near him "fear no evil." They hear his sweet voice, saying, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." Isaiah 43:2. With eye fastened on him, they scarcely see the stream, or feel its cold and threatening waves. *W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 2. "*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,*" etc. Not only he hath "*green pastures*" to lead me into, which shows his ability, but he *leads me into them*, which shows his goodness. He leads me not into pastures that are withered and dry, that would distaste me before I taste them; but he leads me into "*green pastures,*" as well to please my eye with the verdure as my stomach with the herbage; and inviting me, as it were, to eat by setting out the meat in the best colour. A meat though never so good, yet if it look not handsomely, it dulls the appetite; but when besides the goodness, it hath also a good look, this gives the appetite another edge, and makes a joy before enjoying. But yet the goodness is not altogether in the greenness. Alas! green is but a colour, and colours are but deceitful things; they might be green leaves, or they might be green flags or rushes; and what good were to me in such a greenness? No, my soul; the goodness is in being "*green pastures,*" for now they perform as much as they promise; and as in being *green* they were a comfort to me as soon as I saw them, so in being green "*pastures*" they are a refreshing to me now as soon as I taste them. As they are pleasant to look on, so they are wholesome to feed on: as they are sweet to be tasted, so they are easy to be digested; that I am now, methinks, in a kind of paradise and seem not to want anything, unless perhaps a little water with which now and then to wash my mouth, at most to take

sometimes a sip: for though sheep be not great drinkers, and though their pastures being green, and full of sap, make drink the less needful; yet some drink they must have besides. And now see the great goodness of this Shepherd, and what just cause there is to depend upon his providence; for he lets not his sheep want this neither, but "*he leadeth them besides still waters,*" not waters that roar and make a noise, enough to fright a fearful sheep, but waters "*still*" and quiet; that though they drink but little, yet they may drink that little without fear. And may I not justly say now, "*The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want?*" And yet perhaps there will be *want* for all this; for is it enough that he lead them into green pastures and beside still waters? May he not lead them in, and presently take them out again before their bellies be half full; and so instead of making them happy, make them more miserable? set them in a longing with the sight, and then frustrate them of their expectation? No, my soul; the measure of this Shepherd's goodness is more than so. He not only leadeth them into green pastures, but "*he makes them to lie down*" in them—he leads them not in to post over their meat as if they were to eat a passover, and to take it *in transita*, as dogs drink Nylus; but, "*he makes them to lie down in green pastures,*" that they may eat their fill and feed at leisure; and when they have done, "*lie down*" and take their ease, that their after-reckoning may be as pleasing as their repast. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 2. "He leadeth me." Our guiding must be mild and gentle, else it is not *duxisti*, but *traxisti*—drawing and driving, and no *leading*. *Leni spiritu non durf manu*—rather by an inward sweet influence to be *led*, than by and outward extreme violence to be forced forward . . . Touching what kind of cattle, to very good purpose, Jacob, a skilful shepherd, answereth Esau (who would have had Jacob and his flocks have kept company with him in his *hunting* pace), Nay, not so, sir, said Jacob, it is a tender cattle that is under my hands, and must be softly driven, as they may endure: if one "should over drive them but one day," they would all die or be laid up for many days after. Genesis 33:13. *Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 2. "He leadeth me," etc. In ordinary circumstances the shepherd does not *feed* his flock, except by leading and guiding them where they may gather for themselves; but there are times when it is otherwise. Late in autumn, when the pastures are dried up, and in winter, in places covered with snow, he must furnish them food or they die. In the vast oak woods along the eastern sides of Lebanon, between Baalbek and the cedars, there are there gathered innumerable flocks, and the shepherds are all day long in the bushy trees, cutting down the branches, upon whose green leaves and tender twigs the sheep and goats are entirely supported. The same is true in all mountain districts, and large forests are preserved on purpose. *W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 2. "Lie down"—"leadeth." Sitting Mary and stirring Martha are emblems of contemplation and action, and as they dwell in one house, so must these in one heart. *Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 2. This short but touching epitaph is frequently seen in the catacombs at Rome, "*In Christo, in*

pace"—(In Christ, in peace). Realise the constant presence of the Shepherd of peace. "HE maketh me to lie down!" "HE leadeth me." *J. R. Macduff, D.D.*

Verse 2 (last clause). "*Easily leadeth,*" or "*comfortably guideth me:*" it noteth a soft and gentle leading, with sustaining of infirmity. *H. Ainsworth.*

Verse 2. "*Green pastures.*" Here are many pastures, and every pasture rich so that it can never be eaten bare; here are many streams, and every stream so deep and wide that it can never be drawn dry. The sheep have been eating in these pastures ever since Christ had a church on earth, and yet they are as full of grass as ever. The sheep have been drinking at these streams ever since Adam, and yet they are brim full to this very day, and they will so continue till the sheep are above the use of them in heaven! *Ralph Robinson, 1656.*

Verse 2. "*Green pastures . . . beside the still waters.*" From the top of the mound (of Arban on the Khabour) the eye ranged over a level country bright with flowers, and spotted with black tents, and innumerable flocks of sheep and camels. During our stay at Arban, the color of these great plains was undergoing a continual change. After being for some days of a golden yellow, a new family of flowers would spring up, and it would turn almost in a night to a bright scarlet, which would again as suddenly give way to the deepest blue. Then the meadows would be mottled with various hues, or would put on the emerald green of the most luxuriant of pastures. The glowing descriptions I had so frequently received from the Bedouins of the beauty and fertility of the banks of the Khabour were more than realised. The Arabs boast that its meadows bear three distinct crops of grass during the year, and the wandering tribes look upon its wooded banks and constant greensward as a paradise during the summer months, where man can enjoy a cool shade, and beast can find fresh and tender herbs, whilst all around is yellow, parched, and sapless. *Austin H. Layard, 1853.*

Verse 2. With guidance to "*green pastures,*" the psalmist has, with good reason, associated guardianship beside "*still waters:*" for as we can only appropriate the word through the Spirit, so we shall ordinarily receive the Spirit through the Word; not indeed only by hearing it, not only by reading it, not only by reflecting upon it. The Spirit of God, who is a most free agent, and who is himself the source of liberty, will come into the heart of the believer when he will, and how he will, and as he will. But the effect of his coming will ever be the realisation of some promise, the recognition of some principle, the attainment of some grace, the understanding of some mystery, which is already in the word, and which we shall thus find, with a deeper impression, and with a fuller development, brought home with power to the heart. *Thomas Dale, M.A., in "The Good Shepherd," 1847.*

Verse 2. "*Still waters;*" which are opposed to great rivers, which both affright the sheep with their noise, and expose them to the danger of being carried away by their swift and violent streams, whilst they are drinking at them. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 2. "*Still waters;*" Hebrew, "Waters of rests," *ex quibus diligunt oves bibere*, saith Kimchi, such

as sheep love to drink of, because void of danger, and yielding a refreshing air. Popish clergymen are called the "inhabitants of the sea," Revelation 12:12, because they set abroad gross, troubled, brackish, and sourish doctrine, which rather bringeth barrenness to their hearers, and gnaweth the entrails than quencheth their thirst, or cooleth their heat. The doctrine of the gospel, like the waters of Siloe (Isaiah 8:8), run gently, but taste pleasantly. *John Trapp.*

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul," etc. The subjects experimentally treated in this verse are, first, the believer's liability to fall, or deviate even within the fold of the church, else wherefore should he need to be "restored?" Next, the promptitude of the Good Shepherd to interpose for his rescue. "*He restoreth my soul.*" Then Christ's subsequent care to "*lead him in the paths of righteousness;*" and lastly, the reason assigned wherefore he will do this—resolving all into the spontaneousness, the supremacy, the omnipotence of grace. He will do all "*for his own name's sake.*" *Thomas Dale.*

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul." The same hand which first rescued us from ruin, reclaims us from all our subsequent aberrations. Chastisement itself is blended with tenderness; and the voice which speaks reproof, saying, "They have perverted their way, and they have forsaken the Lord their God," utters the kindest invitation, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Nor is the voice unheard, and the call unanswered or unfelt. "Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God." Jeremiah 3:22. "When thou saidst, Seek my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." *J. Thornton's "Shepherd of Israel,"* 1826.

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul." He restores it to its original purity, that was now grown foul and black with sin; for also, what good were it to have "*green*" pastures and a *black* soul! He "*restores*" it to its natural temper in affections, that was grown distempered with violence of passions; for alas! what good were it to have "*still*" waters and *turbulent* spirits! He "*restores*" it indeed to life, that was grown before in a manner quite dead; and who could "*restore my soul*" to life, but he only that is the Good Shepherd and gave his life for his sheep? *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 3. "He shall convert my soul;" turn me not only from sin and ignorance, but from every false confidence, and every deceitful refuge. "*He shall bring me forth in paths of righteousness;*" in those paths of imputed righteousness which are always adorned with the trees of holiness, are always watered with the fountains of consolation, and always terminate in everlasting rest. Some, perhaps, may ask, why I give this sense to the passage? Why may it not signify the paths of duty, and the way of our own obedience? Because such effects are here mentioned as never have resulted, and never can result, from any duties of our own. These are not "*green pastures,*" but a parched and blasted heath. These are not "*still waters,*" but a troubled and disorderly stream. Neither can these speak peace or administer comfort when we pass through the valley and shadow of death. To yield these blessings, is the exalted office of Christ, and the sole prerogative of his obedience. *James Hervey.*

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul:" Hebrew. "He bringeth it back;" either, 1. From its errors or

wandering; or, 2. Into the body, out of which it was even departing and fainting away. He reviveth or comforteth me. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 3. "*Paths of righteousness.*" Alas! O Lord, these "*paths of righteousness,*" have a long time so little been frequented, that the prints of a *path* are almost clean worn out; that it is a hard matter now, but to find where the *paths* lie, and if we can find them, yet they are so narrow and so full of ruts, that without special assistance it is an impossible thing not to fall or go astray. Even so angels, and those no mean ones, were not able to go right in these "*paths of righteousness,*" but for want of leading, went away and perished. O, therefore, thou the Great Shepherd of my soul, as thou art pleased of thy grace to lead me *into* them, so vouchsafe with thy grace to lead me *in* them; for though in themselves they be "*paths of righteousness,*" yet to me they will be but paths of *error* if thou vouchsafe not, as well to lead me *in* them, as *into* them. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 3. "*Paths.*" In the wilderness and in the desert there are no raised paths, the paths being merely tracks; and sometimes there are six or eight paths running unevenly along side each other. No doubt this is what is figuratively referred to in Psalm 23:3, "*He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness,*" all leading to one point. *John Gadsby.*

Verse 3. "*For his name's sake.*" Seeing he hath taken upon him the *name* of a "*Good Shepherd,*" he will discharge his part, whatever his sheep be. It is not their being *bad sheep* that can make him leave being a "*Good Shepherd,*" but he will be "*good,*" and maintain the credit of "*his name*" in spite of all their badness; and though no benefit come to them of it, yet there shall glory accrue to him by it, and "*his name*" shall nevertheless be magnified and extolled. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4. "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*" To "*fear no evil,*" then, "*in the valley of the shadow of death,*" is a blessed privilege open to every true believer! For death shall be to him no death at all, but a very deliverance from death, from all pains, cares, and sorrows, miseries and wretchedness of this world, and the very entry into rest, and a beginning of everlasting joy: a tasting of heavenly pleasures, so great, that neither tongue is able to express, neither eyes to see, nor ear to hear them, no, nor any earthly man's heart to conceive them. . . . And to comfort all Christian persons herein, holy Scripture calleth this bodily death a sleep, wherein man's senses be, as it were, taken from him for a season, and yet, when he waketh, he is more fresh than when he went to bed! . . . Thus is this bodily death a door or entering into life, and therefore not so much dreadful, if it be rightly considered, as it is comfortable; not a mischief, but a remedy for all mischief; no enemy, but a friend; not a cruel tyrant, but a gentle guide; leading us not to mortality, but to immortality! not to sorrow and pain, but to joy and pleasure, and that to endure for ever! *Homily against the Fear of Death, 1547.*

Verse 4. "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*" Though I were called to such a sight as Ezekiel's vision, a valley full of dead men's bones; though the king of

terrors should ride in awful pomp through the streets, slaying heaps upon heaps, and thousands should fall at my side, and ten thousands at my right hand, I will fear no evil. Though he should level his fatal arrows at the little circle of my associates, and put lover and friend far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness, I will fear no evil. Yea, though I myself should feel his arrow sticking fast in me, the poison drinking up my spirits; though I should in consequence of that fatal seizure, sicken and languish, and have all the symptoms of approaching dissolution, still I will fear no evil. Nature, indeed, may start back and tremble, but I trust that he who knows the flesh to be weak, will pity and pardon these struggles. However I may be afraid of the agonies of dying, I will fear no evil in death. The venom of his sting is taken away. The point of his arrow is blunted, so that it can pierce no deeper than the body. My soul is invulnerable. I can smile at the shaking of his spear; look unmoved on the ravages which the unrelenting destroyer is making on my tabernacle; and long for the happy period when he shall have made a breach wide enough for my heaven-aspiring spirit to fly away and be at rest. *Samuel Lavington.*

Verse 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." "I want to talk to you about heaven," said a dying parent [The late Rev. Hugh Stowell, Rector of Ballaugh, Isle of Man.] to a member of his family. "We may not be spared to each other long. May we meet around the throne of glory, one family in heaven!" Overpowered at the thought, his beloved daughter exclaimed, "Surely you do not think there is any danger?" Calmly and beautifully he replied, "Danger, my darling! Oh, do not use that word! There can be no danger to the Christian, whatever may happen! All is right! All is well! God is love! All is well! Everlastingly well! Everlastingly well!" *John Stevenson.*

Verse 4. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." What not fear then? Why, what friend is it that keeps up your spirits, that bears you company in that black and dismal region? He will soon tell you God was with him, and in those slippery ways he leaned upon his staff, and these were the cordials that kept his heart from fainting. I challenge all the gallants in the world, out of all their merry, jovial clubs, to find such a company of merry, cheerful creatures as the friends of God are. It is not the company of God, but the want of it, that makes sad. Alas! you know not what their comforts be, and strangers intermeddle not with their joy. You think they cannot be merry when their countenance is so grave; but they are sure you cannot be truly merry when you smile with a curse upon your souls. They know that he spoke that sentence which could not be mistaken, "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Proverbs 14:13. Then call your roaring, and your singing, and laughter, mirth; but the Spirit of God calls it madness. Ecclesiastes 2:2. When a carnal man's heart is ready to die within him, and, with Nabal, to become like a stone, how cheerfully then can those look that have God for their friend! Which of the valiant ones of the world can outface death, look joyfully into eternity? Which of them can hug a

faggot, embrace the flames? This the saint can do, and more too; for he can look infinite justice in the face with a cheerful heart; he can hear of hell with joy and thankfulness; he can think of the day of judgment with great delight and comfort. I again challenge all the world to produce one out of all their merry companies, one that can do all this. Come, muster up all your jovial blades together; call for your harps and viols; add what you will to make the concert complete; bring in your richest wines; come, lay your heads together, and study what may still add to your comfort. Well, it is done? Now, come away, sinner, this night thy soul must appear before God. Well now, what say you, man? What! doth your courage fail you? Now call for your merry companions, and let them cheer thy heart. Now call for a cup, a whore; never be daunted, man. Shall one of thy courage quail, that could make a mock at the threatenings of the Almighty God? What, so boon and jolly but now, and now down in the mouth! Here's a sudden change indeed! Where are thy merry companions, I say again? All fled? Where are thy darling pleasures? Have all forsaken thee? Why shouldst thou be dejected; there's a poor man in rags that's smiling? What! art thou quite bereft of all comfort? What's the matter? There's a question with all my heart, to ask a man that must appear before God to-morrow morning. Well, then, it seems your heart misgives you. What then did you mean of talk of joys and pleasures? Are they all come to this? Why, there stands one that now hath his heart as full of comfort as ever it can hold, and the very thoughts of eternity, which do so daunt your soul, raise his! And would you know the reason? He knows he is going to his Friend; nay, his Friend bears him company through that dirty lane. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for God and the soul to dwell together in unity! This it is to have God for a friend. "Oh blessed is the soul that is in such a case; yea, blessed is the soul whose God is the Lord." Psalm 144:15. *James Janeway.*

Verse 4. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." Any darkness is evil, but *darkness and the shadow of death* is the utmost of evils. David put the worst of his case and the best of his faith when he said, "*Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;*" that is, in the greatest evil I will fear no evil. . . . Again, to be under the shadow of a thing, is to be under the power of a thing. . . . Thus to be under the shadow of death, is to be so under the power or reach of death, that death may take a man and seize upon him when it pleaseth. "*Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death,*" that is, though I be so near death, that it seems to others death may catch me every moment, though I be under so many appearances and probabilities of extreme danger, that there appears an impossibility, in sense, to escape death, "*yet I will not fear.*" *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4. "Valley of the shadow of death." A valley is a low place, with mountains on either side. Enemies may be posted on those mountains to shoot their arrows at the traveler, as ever was the case in the East; but he *must* pass through it. The psalmist, however, said he would fear no evil, not even the fiery darts of Satan, for the Lord was with him. The figure is not *primarily*, as is sometimes

supposed, our dying moments, though it will beautifully bear that explanation; but it is the valley beset with enemies, posted on the hills. David was not only protected in that valley, but even in the presence of those enemies, his table was bountifully spread (verse 5). The Bedouin, at the present day often post themselves on the hills to harass travellers, as they pass along the valleys. *John Gadsby*.

Verse 4. "*I will fear no evil.*" It hath been an ancient proverb, when a man had done some great matter, he was said to have "plucked a lion by the beard;" when a lion is dead, even to little children it hath been an easy matter. As boys, when they see a bear, a lion, or a wolf dead in the streets, they will pull off their hair, insult over them, and deal with them as they please; they will trample upon their bodies, and do that unto them being *dead*, which they durst not in the least measure venture upon whilst they are *alive*. Such a thing is *death*, a furious beast, a ramping lion, a devouring wolf, the *helluo generis humani* (eater up of mankind), yet Christ hath laid him at his length, hath been the *death of death*, so that *God's children* triumph over him, such as those refined ones in the ore of the church, those martyrs of the primitive times, who cheerfully offered themselves to the fire, and to the sword, and to all the violence of this hungry beast; and have played upon him, scorned and derided him, by the faith that they had in the life of Christ, who hath subdued him to himself. 1 Corinthians 15. *Martin Day*, 1660.

Verse 4. "*Though art with me.*" Do you know the sweetness, the security, the strength of "*Thou art with me*"? When anticipating the solemn hour of death, when the soul is ready to halt and ask, How shall it then be? can you turn in soul-affection to your God and say, "There is nothing in death to harm me, while thy love is left to me"? Can you say, "O death, where is thy sting"? It is said, when a bee has left its sting in any one, it has no more power to hurt. Death has left its sting in the humanity of Christ, and has no more power to harm his child. Christ's victory over the grave is his people's. "At that moment I am with you," whispers Christ; "the same arm you have proved strong and faithful all the way up through the wilderness, which has never failed, though you have been often forced to lean on it all your weakness." "On this arm," answers the believer, "*I feel at home*; with soul confidence, I repose on my Beloved; for he has supported through so many difficulties, from the contemplation of which I shuddered. He has carried over so many depths, that I know his arm to be the arm of love." How can that be dark, in which God's child is to have the accomplishment of the longing desire of his life? How can it be dark to come in contact with the light of life? It is "*his rod*," "*his staff*;" therefore they "*comfort*." Prove him—prove him now, believer! it is your privilege to do so. It will be precious to him to support your weakness; prove that when weak, then are you strong; that you may be secure, his strength shall be perfected in your perfect weakness. Omnipotent love must fail before one of his sheep can perish; for, says Christ, "none shall pluck my sheep out of my hand." "I and my Father are one;" therefore we may boldly say, "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the*

shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." Viscountess Powerscourt.

Verse 4. "*Thy rod.*" Of the *virga pastoralis* there are three uses: —1. *Numerare oves*—to reckon up or count the sheep; and in this sense they are said "to pass under the rod" (Leviticus 27:32), the shepherd tells them one by one. And even so are the people of God called the rod of his inheritance (Jeremiah 10:16), such as he takes special notice or account of. And take the words in this sense—"Thy rod doth comfort me"—it holds well; *q.d.* "Though I am in such eminent dangers by reason of evil men, yet this is my comfort—I am not neglected of thee; thou dost not suffer me to perish; thou takest notice of me; thou dost take and make an account of me; thy special care looks after me." 2. *Provocare oves*: when the sheep are negligent and remiss in following or driving, the shepherd doth, with his rod, put them on, quicken their pace. And in this sense also David saith well, "*Thy rod doth comfort me;*" for it is a work which doth breed much joy and comfort in the hearts of God's people, when God doth put them out of a lazy, cold, formal walking, and doth, some way or other, cause them to mend their pace, to grow more active and fervent in his service and worship. 3. *Revocare oves*: the sheep sometimes are *petulante divagantes*, idly and inconsiderately straying from the flock, grazing alone, and wandering after other pastures, not considering the dangers which attend them by such a separation and wandering; and, therefore, the shepherd doth with his rod strike and fetch them in again, and so preserve them. In this sense also David might well say, "*Thy rod doth comfort me;*" for it is a great comfort that the Lord will not leave his sheep to the ways of discomfort, but brings them off from sinful errings and wanderings, which always do expose them to their greatest dangers and troubles. So that the words do intimate a singular part of God's gubernation or careful providence of his flock. *Obadiah Sedgwick.*

Verse 4. "*Rod and staff.*" The shepherd invariably carries a staff or rod with him when he goes forth to feed his flock. It is often bent or hooked at one end, which gave rise to the shepherd's crook in the hand of the Christian bishop. With this staff he rules and guides the flock to their green pastures, and defends them from their enemies. With it also he corrects them when disobedient, and brings them back when wandering. This staff is associated as inseparably with the shepherd as the goad is with the ploughman. *W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 4. The psalmist will trust, *even though all be unknown.* We find him doing this in Psalm 23:4: "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*" Here, surely, there is trust the most complete. We dread the unknown far above anything that we can see; a little noise in the dark will terrify, when even great dangers which are visible do not affright: the unknown, with its mystery and uncertainty, often fills the heart with anxiety, if not with foreboding and gloom. Here, the psalmist takes the highest form of the unknown, the aspect which is most terrible to man, and says, that even in the midst of it he will trust. What could be so wholly beyond the reach of human experience or speculation, or even imagination, as "*the valley of the shadow of death,*" with all that

belonged to it? but the psalmist makes no reservation against it; he will trust where he cannot see. How often are we terrified at the unknown; even as the disciples were, "who feared as they entered the cloud;" how often is the uncertainty of the future a harder trial to our faith than the pressure of some present ill! Many dear children of God can trust him in all *known* evils; but why those fears and forebodings, and sinkings of heart, if they trust him equally for the *unknown*? How much, alas! do we fall short of the true character of the children of God, in this matter of the unknown! A child practically acts upon the declaration of Christ that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," we, in this respect far less wise than he, people the unknown with phantoms and speculations, and too often forget our simple trust in God. *Philip Bennet Power.*

Verse 4. "For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Thou shalt prepare a table before me, against them that trouble me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full." Seeing thou art with me, at whose power and will all troubles go and come, I doubt not but to have the victory and upper hand of them, how many and dangerous soever they are; for thy rod chasteneth me when I go astray, and thy staff stayeth me when I should fall—two things most necessary for me, good Lord; the one to call me from my fault and error, and the other to keep me in thy truth and verity. What can be more blessed than to be sustained and kept from falling by the staff and strength of the Most High? And what can be more profitable than to be beaten with his merciful rod when we go astray? For he chasteneth as many as he loveth, and beateth as many as he receiveth into his holy profession. Notwithstanding, while we are here in this life, he feeds us with the sweet pastures of the wholesome herbs of his holy word, until we come to eternal life; and when we put off these bodies, and come into heaven, and know the blessed fruition and riches of his kingdom, then shall we not only be his sheep, but also the guests of his everlasting banquet; which, Lord, thou settest before all them that love thee in this world, and dost so anoint and make glad our minds with thine Holy Spirit, that no adversities nor troubles can make us sorry. In this sixth part, the prophet declares the old saying amongst wise men, "It is no less mastery to keep the thing that is won, than it was to win it." King David perceives right well the same; and, therefore, as before in the Psalm he said, the Lord turned his soul, and led him into the pleasant pastures, where virtue and justice reigned, *for his name's sake*, and not for any righteousness of his own; so saith he now, that being brought into the pastures of truth, and into the favour of the Almighty, and accounted and taken for one of his sheep, it is only God that keeps and maintains him, in the same state, condition, and grace. For he could not pass through the troubles and shadow of death, as he and all God's elect people must do, but only by the assistance of God, and, therefore, he saith, he passes through all peril because he was with him. *John Hooper (martyr), 1495-1555.*

Verse 4. By the way, I note that David amidst his green pastures, where he wanted nothing, and in his greatest ease and highest excellency, recordeth the valley of misery and shade of death which

might ensue, if God so would; and therewithal reckoneth of his safest harbour and firm repose, even in God alone. And this is true wisdom indeed, in fair weather to provide for a tempest; in health to think of sickness; in prosperity, peace, and quietness, to forecast the worst, and with the wise emmet, in summer to lay up for the winter following. The state of man is full of trouble, the condition of the godly man more. Sinners must be corrected, and sons chastised, there is no question. The ark was framed for the waters, the ship for the sea; and happy is the mariner that knoweth where to cast anchor; but, oh! blessed is the man that can take a right sanctuary, and knoweth whereupon to rely, and in whom to trust in the day of his need. "*I will not fear, for thou art with me.*" In this Psalm, I take it, is rather vouched not what the prophet always performed, but what in duty must be performed, and what David's purpose was to endeavour unto for the time to come. For after so many pledges of God's infinite goodness, and by the guidance of his rod and stay of his sheep-hook, God willing, he would not fear, and this is the groundwork of his affiance. Peter in the gospel by our Saviour, in consideration of infirmity through fear denying his Master, is willed after his conversion by that favourable aspect of our Saviour, to confirm his brethren, and to train them in constancy; for verily God requireth settled minds, resolute men, and confirmed brethren. So upon occasions past, David found it true that he should not have been heretofore at any time, and therefore professeth, that for the time to come he would be no marigold-servant of the Lord, to open with the sun and shut with the dew—to serve him in calmer times only, and at a need, to shoot neck out of collar, fearfully and faithlessly to slip aside or shrink away. Good people, in all heartless imperfections, mark, I pray you, that they who fear every mist that ariseth, or cloud that appeareth—who are like the mulberry tree, that never shooteth forth or showeth itself till all hard weather be past—who, like standers-by and lookers on, neuters and internimists—who, like Metius Suffetius, dare not venture upon, nor enter into, nor endeavour any good action of greatest duty to God, prince, or country, till all be sure in one side—are utterly reprov'd by this ensample. *John Prime, 1588.*

Verse 4. The death of those who are under sin, is like a malefactor's execution: when he is panelled and justly convicted, one pulleth the hat doggedly from him, another his band, a third bindeth his hands behind his back; and the poor man, overcome with grief and fear, is dead before he die. But I look for the death of the righteous, and a peaceable end, that it shall be as a going to bed of an honest man: his servants with respect take off his clothes and lay them down in order; a good conscience the playing the page ordereth all, so that it confirmeth and increaseth his peace; it biddeth good night to Faith, Hope, and such other attending graces and gifts in the way—when we are come home to heaven there is no use of them— but it directeth Love, Peace, Joy, and other *home graces*, that as they conveyed us in the way, so they attend at death, and enter into the heavens with us. *William Struther.*

Verse 4. The Lord willeth us in the day of our troubles to call upon him, adding this promise—that he

will deliver us. Whereunto the prophet David did so trust, feeling the comfortable truth thereof at sundry times in many and dangerous perils, that he persuaded himself (all fear set apart), to undergo one painful danger or other whatsoever; yea, if it were to "*walk in the valley of the shadow of death,*" that he should not have cause to fear; comforting himself with this saying (which was God's promise made unto all), "*For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*" Is God's "*staff*" waxen so weak, that we dare not now lean too much thereon, lest it should break? or is he now such a changeling, that he will not be with us in our trouble according to his promise? Will he not give us this "*staff*" to stay us by, and reach us his hand to hold us up, as he hath been wont to do? No doubt but that he will be most ready in all extremity to help, according to his promise. The Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, saith thus; Fear not, for I will defend thee," etc. Isaiah 43. *Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 4. Not long before he died, he blessed God for the assurance of his love, and said, He could now as easily die as shut his eyes; and added, Here am I longing to be silent in the dust, and enjoying Christ in glory. I long to be in the arms of Jesus. It is not worth while to weep for me. Then, remembering how busy the devil had been about him, he was exceedingly thankful to God for his goodness in rebuking him. *Memoir of James Janeway.*

Verse 4. When Mrs. Hervey, the wife of a missionary in Bombay, was dying, a friend said to her, that he hoped the Saviour would be with her as she walked through the dark valley of the shadow of death. "If this," said she, "is the dark valley, it has not a dark spot in it; all is light." She had, during most of her sickness, bright views of the perfections of God. "His awful holiness," she said, "appeared the most lovely of all his attributes." At one time she said she wanted words to express her views of the glory and majesty of Christ. "It seems," said she, "that if all other glory were annihilated and nothing left but his bare self, it would be enough; it would be a universe of glory!"

Verses 4, 5. A readiness of spirit to suffer gives the Christian the true enjoyment of life. . . . The Christian, that hath this preparation of heart, never tastes more sweetness in the enjoyment of this life, than when he dips these morsels in the meditation of death and eternity. It is no more grief to his heart to think of the remove of these, which makes way for those far sweeter enjoyments, than it would be to one at a feast, to have the first course taken off, when he had fed well upon it, that the second course of all rare sweetmeats and banqueting stuff may come on, which it cannot till the other be gone. Holy David, in this place, brings in, as it were, a death's head with his feast. In the same breath almost, he speaks of his dying (verse 4), and of the rich feast he at present sat at through the bounty of God (verse 5), to which he was not so tied by the teeth, but if God, that gave him this cheer, should call him from it, to look death in the face, he could do it, and *fear no evil* when *in the valley of the shadow of it*. And what think you of the blessed apostle Peter? Had not he, think you, the true enjoyment of his life, when he could sleep so sweetly in a prison (no desirable place), fast bound

between two soldiers (no comfortable posture), and this the very night before Herod would have brought him forth, in all probability, to his execution? no likely time, one would think, to get any rest; yet we find him, even there, thus, and then, so sound asleep, that the angel, who was sent to give him his gaol deliverance, smote him on the side to awaken him. Acts 12:6, 7. I question whether Herod himself slept so well that night, as this his prisoner did. And what was the potion that brought this holy man so quietly to rest? No doubt this preparation of the gospel of peace—*he was ready to die*, and that made him able to sleep. Why should that break his rest in this world, which if it had been effected, would have brought him to his eternal rest in the other? *William Gurnall.*

Verses 4, 6. The psalmist expresseth an exceeding confidence in the midst of most inexpressible troubles and pressures. He supposes himself "*walking through the valley of the shadow of death.*" As "*death*" is the worst of evils, and comprehensive of them all, so the "*shadow*" of death is the most dismal and dark representation of those evils into the soul, and the "*valley*" of that shadow the most dreadful bottom and depth of that representation. This, then, the prophet supposed that he might be brought into. A condition wherein he may be overwhelmed with sad apprehensions of the coming of a confluence of all manner of evils upon him—and that not for a short season, but he may be necessitated to "*walk*" in them, which denotes a state of some continuance, a conflicting with most dismal evils, and in their own nature tending to death—is in the supposal. What, then, would he do if he should be brought into this estate? Saith he, "Even in that condition, in such distress, wherein I am, to my own and the eyes of others, hopeless, helpless, gone, and lost, 'I will fear no evil.'" A noble resolution, if there be a sufficient bottom and foundation for it, that it may not be accounted rashness and groundless confidence, but true spiritual courage and holy resolution. Saith he, "It is because the Lord is with me." But alas! what if the Lord should now forsake thee in this condition, and give thee up to the power of thine enemies, and suffer thee, by the strength of thy temptations, wherewith thou art beset, to fall utterly from him? Surely then thou wouldst be swallowed up for ever: the waters would go over thy soul, and thou must for ever lie down in the shades of death. "Yea," saith he, "but I have an assurance to the contrary; '*Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.*'" *John Owen.*

Verse 5. "*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.*" God doth not at all depend upon wicked men in the benediction of his servant; they concur not with him, neither *per modum principii*, for he alone is the cause; nor *per modum auxilii*, for he without them can bless his all: their malicious renitency of spirit, or attempt against God's blessing of his people, is too impotent to frustrate God's intention and pleasure. An effectual impediment must not only have contrariety in it, but superiority: a drop of water cannot put out the fire, for though it hath a contrary nature, yet it hath not greater power. Now the malice and contrivances of evil men are too short and weak for the divine intention of blessing, which is accompanied with an almighty arm. Evil men are but men, and God is a

God; and being but men, they can do no more than men. The Lord will clear it to all the world, that he rules the earth, and that "his counsel shall stand;" and where he blesseth, that man shall be blessed; and whom he curseth, that man shall be cursed; that the creatures can do neither good nor evil; that his people are the generation of his care and love, though living in the midst of deadly enemies.

Condensed from Obadiah Sedgwick.

Verse 5. "In the presence of mine enemies:" they seeing and envying and fretting at it, but not being able to hinder it. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." In the East the people frequently anoint their visitors with some very fragrant perfume; and give them a cup or glass of some choice wine, which they are careful to fill till it runs over. The first was designed to show their love and respect; the latter to imply that while they remained there, they should have an abundance of everything. To something of this kind the psalmist probably alludes in this passage. *Samuel Burder.*

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." Anointing the head with oil is a great refreshment. There are three qualities of oil—*lævor, nitor, odor*, a smoothness to the touch, brightness to the sight, fragranciness to the smell, and so, gratifying the senses, it must needs cause delight to those anointed with it. To this Solomon alludes when persuading to a cheerful life, he saith, "Let thy head lack no ointment." How fully doth this represent the Spirit's unction which alone rejoices and exhilarates the soul! It is called the "oil of gladness," and the "joy of the Holy Ghost." *Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." It is an act of great respect to pour perfumed oil on the head of a distinguished guest; the woman in the gospel thus manifested her respect for the Saviour by pouring "precious ointment" on his head. An English lady went on board an Arabian ship which touched at Trincomalee, for the purpose of seeing the equipment of the vessel, and to make some little purchases. After she had been seated some time in the cabin, an Arabian female came and poured perfumed oil on her head. *Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." In the East no entertainment could be without this, and it served, as elsewhere a bath does, for (bodily) refreshment. Here, however, it is naturally to be understood of the spiritual oil of gladness. *T. C. Barth.*

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." Thou hast not confined thy bounty merely to the necessaries of life, but thou hast supplied me also with its luxuries. *In "A plain Explanation of Difficult Passages in the Psalms," 1831.*

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." The unguents of Egypt may preserve our bodies from corruption, ensuring them a long duration in the dreary shades of the sepulchre, but, O Lord, the precious perfumed oil of thy grace which thou dost mysteriously pour upon our souls, purifies them, adorns them, strengthens them, sows in them the germs of immortality, and thus it not only secures them from a transitory corruption, but uplifts them from this house of bondage into eternal

blessedness in thy bosom. *Jean Baptiste Massillon, 1663-1742.*

Verse 5. "*My cup runneth over.*" He had not only a fulness of *abundance*, but of *redundance*. Those that have this happiness must carry their cup upright, and see that it overflows into their poor brethren's emptier vessels. *John Trapp.*

Verse 5. "*My cup runneth over.*" Wherefore doth the Lord make you cup run over, but that other men's lips might taste the liquor? The showers that fall upon the highest mountains, should glide into the lowest valleys. "Give, and it shall be given you," is a maxim little believed. Luke 6:38. *William Secker.*

Verse 5. "*My cup runneth over.*" Or as it is in the Vulgate: *And my inebriating chalice, how excellent it is!* With this cup were the martyrs inebriated, when, going forth to their passion, they recognised not those that belonged to them; not their weeping wife, not their children, not their relations; while they gave thanks and said, "I will take the cup of salvation!" *Augustine.*

Verse 6. "*I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*" A wicked man, it may be, will turn into God's house, and say a prayer, etc., but the prophet would (and so all godly men must) *dwell there for ever*; his soul lieth always at the throne of grace, begging for grace. A wicked man prayeth as the cock croweth; the cock crows and ceaseth, and crows again, and ceaseth again, and thinks not of crowing till he crows again: so a wicked man prays and ceaseth, prays and ceaseth again; his mind is never busied to think whether his prayers speed or no; he thinks it is good religion for him to pray, and therefore he takes for granted that his prayers speed, though in very deed God never hears his prayers, nor no more respects them than he respects the lowing of oxen, or the grunting of hogs. *William Fenner, B.D. (1600-1640), in "The Sacrifice of the Faithful."*

Verse 6. "*I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*" This should be at once the crown of all our hopes for the future, and the one great lesson taught us by all the vicissitudes of life. The sorrows and the joys, the journeying and the rest, the temporary repose and the frequent struggles, all these should make us sure that there is an end which will interpret them all, to which they all point, for which they all prepare. We get the table in the wilderness here. It is as when the son of some great king comes back from foreign soil to his father's dominions, and is welcomed at every stage in his journey to the capital with pomp of festival and messengers from the throne, until at last he enters his palace home, where the travel-stained robe is laid aside, and he sits down with his father at his table. *Alexander Maclaren, 1863.*

Verse 6. Mark David's resolute persuasion, and consider how he came unto it, namely, by experience of God's favour at sundry times, and after sundry manners. For before he set down this resolution, he numbered up divers benefits received of the Lord; that *he fed him in green pastures, and led him by the refreshing waters* of God's word; that he *restores him and leads him in the paths of righteousness*; that he strengthened him in great dangers, even of death, and preserveth him; that in

despite of his enemies, he enricheth him with many benefits. By means of all the mercies of God bestowed on him, he came to be persuaded of the continuance of the favour of God towards him.

William Perkins.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Work out the similitude of a shepherd and his sheep. He rules, guides, feeds, and protects them; and they follow, obey, love and trust him. Examine as to whether we are sheep; show the lot of the goats who feed side by side with the sheep.

Verse 1. (second clause). The man who is beyond the reach of want for time and eternity.

Verse 2. (first clause). Believing rest.

I. Comes from God—"*He maketh.*"

II. Is deep and profound—"*lie down.*"

III. Has solid sustenance—"*in green pastures.*"

IV. Is subject for constant praise.

Verse 2. The contemplative and the active element provided for.

Verse 2. The freshness and richness of Holy Scripture.

Verse 2. (second clause). Onward. The Leader, the way, the comforts of the road, and the traveller in it.

Verse 3. Gracious restoration, holy guidance, and divine motives.

Verse 4. The soft silence of the Spirit's work.

Verse 4. God's presence the only sure support in death.

Verse 4. Life in death and light in darkness.

Verse 4. (second clause). The calm and quiet of the good man's end.

Verse 4. (last clause). The tokens of divine government—the consolation of the obedient.

Verse 5. The warrior feasted, the priest anointed, the guest satisfied.

Verse 5. (last clause). The means and uses of the continual anointings of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 5. Providential super-aboundings, and what is our duty concerning them.

Verse 6. (first clause). The blessedness of content.

Verse 6. On the road and at home, or heavenly attendants and heavenly mansions.

WORKS UPON THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

Certain Comfortable Expositions of the Constant Martyrs of Christ. JOHN HOOPER, Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, 1555, written in the time of his Tribulation and Imprisonment, upon the Twenty-third, Sixty-second, Seventy-third, and Seventy-seventh Psalm of the prophet David. {In Parker Society's publications, and also in the "British Reformers" series of the Religious Tract

Society.}

The Chiefe Shepheard; or an Exposition upon ye Twenty-third Psalm. . . . BY SAMUEL SMITH, Minister of ye Word of God, at Prittlewell, in Essex. 1625. 8vo.

Meditations and Disquisitions upon Seven Consolatorie Psalmes of David. By Sir RICHARD BAKER. 1640. {see "WORKS," p. 10.}

The Shepherd of Israel; or, God's pastoral care over his people. Delivered in divers Sermons on the whole Twenty-third Psalm. . . . By that Reverend and Faithful Minister of the Gospel, Mr. OBADIAH SEDGWICK, B.D. 1658. 4to.

The Shepherd of Israel: a practical Exposition and Improvement of the Twenty-third Psalm. By J. THORNTON. 1826. 12mo.

The Lord our Shepherd: an Exposition of the Twenty-third Psalm. By the Rev, JOHN STEVENSON, perpetual Curate of Cury and Gunwalloe, Cornwall. 1845. 8vo.

The Good Shepherd and the Chosen Flock: shewing the progress of the sheep of Christ through the wilderness of this world to the pastures of the Heavenly Zion. An Exposition of the Twenty-third Psalm. By THOMAS DALE, M.A., Canon Residentiary of St, Paul's, London. 1847. 12mo.

The Shepherd King; or Jesus seen in the Life of David. Designed for the Young. By the Authoress of "The Folded Lamb." {Mrs. Rogers.} 1856. 12mo.

The Song of Christ's Flock in the Twenty-third Psalm. By JOHN STOUGHTON. 1860. 12m0.

Psalm 24

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Work

Title. A Psalm of David. *From the title we learn nothing but the authorship: but this is interesting and leads us to observe the wondrous operations of the Spirit upon the mind of Israel's sweet singer, enabling him to touch the mournful string in Psalm twenty-two, to pour forth gentle notes of peace in Psalm twenty-three, and here to utter majestic and triumphant strains. We can do or sing all things when the Lord strengtheneth us.*

This sacred hymn was probably written to be sung when the ark of the covenant was taken up from the house of Obed-edom, to remain within curtains upon the hill of Zion. The words are not unsuitable for the sacred dance of joy in which David led the way upon that joyful occasion. The eye of the psalmist looked, however, beyond the typical upgoing of the ark to the sublime ascension of the King of glory. We will call it The Song of the Ascension.

Division. *The Psalm makes a pair with the fifteenth Psalm. It consists of three parts. The first glorifies the true God, and sings of his universal dominion; the second describes the true Israel, who are able to commune with him; and the third pictures the ascent of the true Redeemer, who has opened heaven's gates for the entrance of his elect.*

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. How very different is this from the ignorant Jewish notion of God which prevailed in our Saviour's day? The Jews said, "The holy land is God's, and the seed of Abraham are his only people;" but their great Monarch had long before instructed them,—"*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.*" The whole round world is claimed for Jehovah, "*and they that dwell therein*" are declared to be his subjects. When we consider the bigotry of the Jewish people at the time of Christ, and how angry they were with our Lord for saying that many widows were in Israel, but unto none of them was the prophet sent, save only to the widow of Sarepta, and that there were many lepers in Israel, but none of them was healed except Naaman the Syrian,—when we recollect, too, how angry they were at the mention of Paul's being sent to the Gentiles, we are amazed that they should have remained in such blindness, and yet have sung this psalm, which shows so clearly that God is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. What a rebuke is this to those wiseacres who speak of the negro and other despised races as though they were not cared for by the God of heaven! If a man be but a man the Lord claims him, and who dares to brand him as a mere piece of merchandise! The meanest of men is a dweller in the world, and therefore belongs to Jehovah. Jesus Christ had made an end of the exclusiveness of nationalities. There is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but we all are one in Christ Jesus.

Man lives upon "*the earth,*" and parcels out its soil among his mimic kings and autocrats; but the earth is not man's. He is but a tenant at will, a leaseholder upon the most precarious tenure, liable to instantaneous ejection. The great Landowner and true Proprietor holds his court above the clouds, and laughs at the title-deeds of worms of the dust. The fee-simple is not with the lord of the manor nor the freeholder, but with the Creator. The "*fulness*" of the earth may mean its harvests, its wealth, its life, or its worship; in all these senses the Most High God is Possessor of all. The earth is full of God; he made it full and he keeps it full, notwithstanding all the demands which living creatures make upon its stores. The sea is full, despite all the clouds which rise from it; the air is full, notwithstanding all the lives which breathe it; the soil is full, though millions of plants derive their nourishment from it. Under man's tutored hand the world is coming to a greater fulness than ever, but it is all the Lord's; the field and the fruit, the earth and all earth's wonders are Jehovah's. We look also for a sublimer fulness when the true ideal of a world for God shall have been reached in millennial glories, and then most clearly the earth will be the Lord's and the fulness thereof. These words are now upon London's

Royal Exchange, they shall one day be written in letters of light across the sky.

The term "*world*" indicates the habitable regions, wherein Jehovah is especially to be acknowledged as Sovereign. He who rules the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air should not be disobeyed by man, his noblest creature. Jehovah is the Universal King, all nations are beneath his sway: true Autocrat of all the nations, emperors and czars are but his slaves. Men are not their own, nor may they call their lips, their hearts, or their substance their own; they are Jehovah's rightful servants. This claim especially applies to us who are born from heaven. We do not belong to the world or to Satan, but by creation and redemption we are the peculiar portion of the Lord.

Paul uses this verse twice, to show that no food is unclean, and that nothing is really the property of false gods. All things are God's; no ban is on the face of nature, nothing is common or unclean. The world is all God's world, and the food which is sold in the shambles is sanctified by being my Father's, and I need not scruple to eat thereof.

Verse 2. In the second verse we have the reason why the world belongs to God, namely, because he has created it, which is a title beyond all dispute. "*For he hath founded it upon the seas.*" It is God who lifts up the earth from out of the sea, so that the dry land, which otherwise might in a moment be submerged, as in the days of Noah, is kept from the floods. The hungry jaws of ocean would devour the dry land if a constant fiat of Omnipotence did not protect it. "*He hath established it upon the floods.*" The world is Jehovah's, because from generation to generation he preserves and upholds it, having settled its foundations. Providence and Creation are the two legal seals upon the title-deeds of the great Owner of all things. He who built the house and bears up its foundations has surely a first claim upon it. Let it be noted, however, upon what insecure foundations all terrestrial things are founded. Founded on the seas! Established on the floods! Blessed be God the Christian has another world to look forward to, and rests his hopes upon a more stable foundation than this poor world affords. They who trust in worldly things build upon the sea; but we have laid our hopes, by God's grace, upon the Rock of Ages; we are resting upon the promise of an immutable God, we are depending upon the constancy of a faithful Redeemer. Oh! ye worldlings, who have built your castles of confidence, your palaces of wealth, and your bowers of pleasure upon the seas, and established them upon the floods; how soon will your baseless fabrics melt, like foam upon the waters! Sand is treacherous enough, but what shall be said of the yet more unstable sea?

Verses 3-6. Here we have the true Israel described. The men who shall stand as courtiers in the palace of the living God are not distinguished by race, but by character; they are not Jews only, nor Gentiles only, nor any one branch of mankind peculiarly, but a people purified and made meet to dwell in the holy hill of the Lord.

Verse 3. "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?*" It is uphill work for the creature to reach the Creator. Where is the mighty climber who can scale the towering heights? Nor is it height alone; it is

glory too. Whose eye shall see the King in his beauty and dwell in his palace? In heaven he reigns most gloriously, who shall be permitted to enter into his royal presence? God has made all, but he will not save all; there is a chosen company who shall have the singular honour of dwelling with him in his high abode. These choice spirits desire to commune with God, and their wish shall be granted them. The solemn enquiry of the text is repeated in another form. Who shall be able to "*stand*" or continue there? He casteth away the wicked, who then can abide in his house? Who is he that can gaze upon the Holy One, and can abide in the blaze of his glory? Certainly none may venture to commune with God upon the footing of the law, but grace can make us meet to behold the vision of the divine presence. The question before us is one which all should ask for themselves, and none should be at ease till they have received an answer of peace. With careful self-examination let us enquire, "Lord, is it I."

Verse 4. "*He that hath clean hands.*" Outward, practical holiness is a very precious mark of grace. To wash in water with Pilate is nothing, but to wash in innocency is all-important. It is to be feared that many professors have perverted the doctrine of justification by faith in such a way as to treat good works with contempt; if so, they will receive everlasting contempt at the last great day. It is vain to prate of inward experience unless the daily life is free from impurity, dishonesty, violence, and oppression. Those who draw near to God must have "*clean hands.*" What monarch would have servants with filthy hands to wait at his table? They who were ceremonially unclean could not enter into the Lord's house which was made with hands, much less shall the morally defiled be allowed to enjoy spiritual fellowship with a holy God. If our hands are now unclean, let us wash them in Jesu's precious blood, and so let us pray unto God, lifting up pure hands. But "*clean hands*" would not suffice, unless they were connected with "*a pure heart.*" True religion is heart-work. We may wash the outside of the cup and the platter as long as we please; but if the inward parts be filthy, we are filthy altogether in the sight of God, for our hearts are more truly ourselves than our hands are. We may lose our hands and yet live, but we could not lose our heart and still live; the very life of our being lies in the inner nature, and hence the imperative need of purity within. There must be a work of grace in the core of the heart as well as in the palm of the hand, or our religion is a delusion. May God grant that our inward powers may be cleansed by the sanctifying Spirit, so that we may love holiness and abhor all sin. The pure in heart shall see God, all others are but blind bats; stone-blindness in the eyes arises from stone in the heart. Dirt in the heart throws dust in the eyes.

The soul must be delivered from delighting in the grovelling toys of earth; the man who is born for heaven "*hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity.*" All men have their joys, by which their souls are lifted up; the worldling lifts up his soul in carnal delights, which are mere empty vanities; but the saint loves more substantial things; like Jehoshaphat, he is lifted up in the ways of the Lord. He who is content with the husks will be reckoned with the swine. If we suck our consolation from the breasts of the

world, we prove ourselves to be its home-born children. Does the world satisfy thee? Then thou hast thy reward and thy portion in this life; make much of it, for thou shalt know no other joy.

"Nor sworn deceitfully." The saints are men of honour still. The Christian man's word is his only oath; but that is as good as twenty oaths of other men. False speaking will shut any man out of heaven, for a liar shall not enter into God's house, whatever may be his professions or doings. God will have nothing to do with liars, except to cast them into the lake of fire. Every liar is a child of the devil, and will be sent home to his father. A false declaration, a fraudulent statement, a cooked account, a slander, a lie—all these may suit the assembly of the ungodly, but are detested among true saints: how could they have fellowship with the God of truth, if they did not hate every false way? Verse 5. It must not be supposed that the persons who are thus described by their inward and outward holiness are saved by the merits of their works; but their works are the evidences by which they are known. The present verse shows that in the saints grace reigns and grace alone. Such men wear the holy livery of the Great King because he has of his own free love clothed them therewith. The true saint wears the wedding garment, but he owns that the Lord of the feast provided it for him, without money and without price. *"He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."* So that the saints need salvation; they receive righteousness, and *"the blessing"* is a boon from God their Saviour. They do not ascend the hill of the Lord as givers but as receivers, and they do not wear their own merits, but a righteousness which they have received. Holy living ensures a blessing as its reward from the thrice Holy God, but it is itself a blessing of the New Covenant and a delightful fruit of the Spirit. God first gives us good works, and then rewards us for them. Grace is not obscured by God's demand for holiness, but is highly exalted as we see it decking the saint with jewels, and clothing him in fair white linen; all this sumptuous array being a free gift of mercy.

Verse 6. *"This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob."* These are the regeneration, these are in the line of grace; these are the legitimate seed. Yet they are only seekers; hence learn that true seekers are very dear in God's esteem, and are entered upon his register. Even *seeking* has a sanctifying influence; what a consecrating power must lie in finding and enjoying the Lord's face and favour! To desire communion with God is a purifying thing. Oh to hunger and thirst more and more after a clear vision of the face of God; this will lead us to purge ourselves from all filthiness, and to walk with heavenly circumspection. He who longs to see his friend when he passes takes care to clear the mist from the window, lest by any means his friend should go by unobserved. Really awakened souls seek the Lord above everything, and as this is not the usual desire of mankind, they constitute a generation by themselves; a people despised of men but beloved of God. The expression *"O Jacob"* is a very difficult one, unless it be indeed true that the God of Jacob here condescendeth to be called Jacob, and takes upon himself the name of his chosen people.

The preceding verses correct the inordinate boastings of those Jews who vaunted themselves as the favourites of heaven; they are told that their God is the God of all the earth, and that he is holy, and will admit none but holy ones into his presence. Let the mere professor as he reads these verses listen to the voice which saith, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

"*Selah.*" Lift up the harp and voice, for a nobler song is coming; a song of our Well-beloved.

Verse 7. These last verses reveal to us the great representative man, who answered to the full character laid down, and therefore by his own right ascended the holy hill of Zion. Our Lord Jesus Christ could ascend into the hill of the Lord because his hands were clean and his heart was pure, and if we by faith in him are conformed to his image we shall enter too. We have here a picture of our Lord's glorious ascent. We see him rising from amidst the little group upon Olivet, and as the cloud receives him, angels reverently escort him to the gates of heaven.

The ancient gates of the eternal temple are personified and addressed in song by the attending cohorts of rejoicing spirits.

"Lo his triumphal chariot waits,

And angels chant the solemn lay.

'Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates;

Ye everlasting doors, give way."

They are called upon "*to lift up their heads,*" as though with all their glory they were not great enough for the Allglorious King. Let all things do their utmost to honour so great a Prince; let the highest heaven put on unusual loftiness in honour of "*the King of Glory.*" He who, fresh from the cross and the tomb, now rides through the gates of the New Jerusalem is higher than the heavens; great and everlasting as they are, those gates of pearl are all unworthy of him before whom the heavens are not pure, and who chargeth his angels with folly. "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates.*"

Verse 8. The watchers at the gate hearing the song look over the battlements and ask, "*Who is this King of glory?*" A question full of meaning and worthy of the meditations of eternity. Who is he in person, nature, character, office and work? What is his pedigree? What his rank and what his race? The answer given in a mighty wave of music is, "*The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*" We know the might of Jesus by the battles which he has fought, the victories which he has won over sin, and death, and hell, and we clap our hands as we see him leading captivity captive in the majesty of his strength. Oh for a heart to sing his praises! Mighty hero, be thou crowned for ever King of kings and Lord of lords.

Verse 9. "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*" The words are repeated with a pleasing variation. There are times of deep earnest feeling when repetitions are not vain but full of force. Doors were often taken from their hinges when

Easterns would show welcome to a guest, and some doors were drawn up and down like a portcullis, and may possibly have protruded from the top; thus literally lifting up their heads. The picture is highly poetical, and shows how wide heaven's gate is set by the ascension of our Lord. Blessed be God, the gates have never been shut since. The opened gates of heaven invite the weakest believer to enter.

Dear reader, it is possible that you are saying, "I shall never enter into the heaven of God, for I have neither clean hands nor a pure heart." Look then to Christ, who has already climbed the holy hill. He has entered as the forerunner of those who trust him. Follow in his footsteps, and repose upon his merit. He rides triumphantly into heaven, and you shall ride there too if you trust him. "But how can I get the character described?" say you. The Spirit of God will give you that. He will create in you a new heart and a right spirit. Faith in Jesus is the work of the Holy Spirit, and has all virtues wrapped up in it. Faith stands by the fountain filled with blood, and as she washes therein, clean hands and a pure heart, a holy soul and a truthful tongue are given to her.

Verse 10. The closing note is inexpressibly grand. Jehovah of hosts, Lord of men and angels, Lord of the universe, Lord of the worlds, is the King of glory. All true glory is concentrated upon the true God, for all other glory is but a passing pageant, the painted pomp of an hour. The ascended Saviour is here declared to be the Head and Crown of the universe, the King of Glory. Our Immanuel is hymned in sublimest strains. Jesus of Nazareth is Jehovah Sabaoth.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. It will be seen that this Psalm was written to be chanted in responsive parts, with two choruses. To comprehend it fully, it should be understood that Jerusalem, as the city of God, was by the Jews regarded as a type of heaven. It so occurs in the Apocalypse, whence we have adopted it in our poetical and devotional aspirations. The court of the tabernacle was the scene of the Lord's more immediate residence—the tabernacle his palace, and the ark his throne. With this leading idea in his mind, the most cursory reader—if there be cursory readers of the Bible—cannot fail to be struck with the beauty and sublimity of this composition, and its exquisite suitableness to the occasion. The chief musician, who was probably in this case the king himself, appears to have begun the sacred lay with a solemn and sonorous recital of these sentences:—

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;

The world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas,

And established it upon the floods."

The chorus of vocal music appears to have then taken up the song, and sung the same words in a more tuneful and elaborate harmony; and the instruments and the whole chorus of the people fell in

with them, raising the mighty declaration to heaven. There is much reason to think that the people, or a large body of them, were qualified or instructed to take their part in this great ceremonial. The historical text says, "David, and *all the house of Israel played before the Lord*, upon all manner of instruments," etc. We may presume that the chorus then divided, each singing in their turns, and both joining at the close—

"For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods."

This part of the music may be supposed to have lasted until the procession reached the foot of Zion, or came in view of it, which from the nature of the enclosed site, cannot be till one comes quite near to it. Then the king must be supposed to have stepped forth, and begun again, in a solemn and earnest tone—

"Who shall ascend into the holy hill of the Lord?
Or who shall stand in his holy place?"

To which the first chorus responds—

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

And then the second chorus—

"He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation."

This part of the sacred song may, in like manner, be supposed to have lasted till they reached the gate of the city, when the king began again in this grand and exalted strain:—

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,
And the King of glory shall come in."

repeated then, in the same way as before, by the general chorus.

The persons having charge of the gates on this high occasion ask—

"Who is the King of glory?"

To which the first chorus answers—

"It is Jehovah, strong and mighty—

Jehovah mighty in battle."

which the second chorus then repeats in like manner as before, closing it with the grand universal chorus,

"He is the King of glory! He is the King of glory!"

We must now suppose the instruments to take up the same notes, and continue them to the entrance to the court of the tabernacle. There the king again begins—

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in."

This is followed and answered as before—all closing, the instruments sounding, the chorus singing, the people shouting—

"He is the King of glory."

John Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations."

Whole Psalm. The coming of the Lord of glory, the high demands upon his people proceeding from this, the absolute necessity to prepare worthily for his arrival, form the subject-matter of this Psalm. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Whole Psalm. We learn from the rabbins, that this was one of certain Psalms which were sung in the performance of Jewish worship on each day in the week:—

The 24th Psalm on the 1st, the Lord's-day, our Sunday.

| | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------|---|
| 48th | " | 2nd | " |
| 82nd | " | 3rd | " |
| 94th | " | 4th | " |
| 81st | " | 5th | " |
| 93rd | " | 6th | " |
| 92nd | " | 7th, the Jewish Sabbath. | |

This Psalm, then, appropriated to the Lord's-day, our Sunday, was intended to celebrate the resurrection of Messiah, and his ascension into heaven, there to sit as priest upon God's throne, and from thence to come down bringing blessings and mercies to his people. *R. H. Ryland.*

Whole Psalm. Anthem of praise, performed when the heads of the gates of Jerusalem were lifted up to receive the ark; and those of the Israelites who were ceremoniously clean, were alone permitted to accompany it into the court of the tabernacle. A Psalm of David. Verses 1, 2, chorus. 3. First voice. 4,

5. Second voice. 6. Chorus. 7. Semi-chorus accompanying the ark. 8. Voice from within the gates. 8. Chorus of priests accompanying the ark. 9. Chorus of priests and people with the ark. 10. Voice within the gates. 10. Grand chorus. *From "The Psalms, with Prefatory Titles, etc., from the Port Royal Authors," by Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck, 1825.*

Whole Psalm. How others may think upon this point, I cannot say, nor pretend to describe, but for my own part, I have no notion of hearing, or of any man's ever having seen or heard, anything so great, so solemn, so celestial, on this side the gates of heaven. *Patrick Delany, D.D., 1686-1768.*

Verse 1. "The earth is the Lord's," that is, Christ's, who is the "Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16); for the whole world and all the things therein are his by a twofold title. First, by donation of God his Father, having "all power given unto him in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18), even whatsoever things the Father hath are his (John 16:15); and so consequently "made heir of all things." Hebrews 1:2. Secondly, the earth is Christ's and all that therein is, by right of creation, for "*he founded it,*" saith our prophet, and that after a wonderful manner, "*upon the seas and floods.*" . . . All things then are Christ's, in respect of *creation*, by whom all things were made" (John 1:3); in respect of *sustentation*, as upholding all things by his mighty word (Hebrews 1:3); in respect of *administration*, as reaching from one end to another, and ordering all things sweetly (Wisdom 8:1): in one word—"Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." Romans 11:36. From hence we may learn (1), That Christ is "the King of glory," "Lord of Hosts," even Almighty God. For he that made all, is "Lord over all;" he that is the Creator of heaven and earth is Almighty (saith our Creed); able to do whatsoever he will, and more than he will too—more by his absolute power, than he will by his actual—"able to raise up children unto Abraham" out of the very stones of the street, though he doth not actually produce such a generation. His almightiness evidently proves him to be God, and his *founding of the world* his almightiness; for "The gods that have not made the heaven and earth shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." Jeremiah 10:11. (2.) Seeing the compass of the world and all they that dwell therein are the Lord's, it is plain that the church is not confined within the limits of one region, or glued, as it were, to one seat only. The Donatists in old time, would tie the church only to Cartenna in Africa, the Papists in our time to Rome in Italy; but the Scriptures plainly affirm that the golden candlesticks are removed from one place to another, and that the kingdom of God is taken away from one nation and given unto another country that brings forth the fruit thereof; in every region he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. Acts 10:35. *John Boys.*

Verse 1. "The earth is Jehovah's." The object of the beginning of the Psalm is to show that the Jews had nothing of themselves which could entitle them to approach nearer or more familiarly to God than the Gentiles. As God by his providence preserves the world, the power of his government is alike extended to all, so that he ought to be worshipped by all, even as he also shows to all men, without exception, the fatherly care he has about them. *J. Calvin.*

Verse 1. *"The earth is the Lord's."* It is Christ's, by creation (verse 2; John 1:1, 2), and it is his by resurrection (Matthew 28:18), and by his glorious ascension into heaven, where he is enthroned King of the world in his human nature. This Psalm takes up the language of the first Ascension Psalm (Psalm 8.) *Christopher Wordsworth, D.D., in loc.*

Verse 1. St. Chrysostom, suffering under the Empress Eudoxia, tells his friend Cyriacus how he armed himself before hand: *ei me ' bouletai n basilissa e xorisai me*, etc. "I thought, will she banish me? *'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.'* Take away my goods? *'Naked came I into the world, and naked must I return.'* Will she stone me? I remembered Stephen. Behead me? John Baptist came into my mind," etc. Thus it should be with every one that intends to live and die comfortably: they must, as we say, lay up something for a rainy day; they must stock themselves with graces, store up promises, and furnish themselves with experiences of God's lovingkindness to others and themselves too, that so when the evil day comes, they may have much good coming thereby. *John Spencer.*

Verse 1. *"The earth is the Lord's."* As David, in his youthful days, was tending his flocks on Bethlehem's fertile plains, the spirit of the Lord descended upon him, and his senses were opened, and his understanding enlightened, so that he could understand the songs of the night. The heavens proclaimed the glory of God, and glittering stars formed the general chorus, their harmonious melody resounded upon earth, and the sweet fulness of their voices vibrated to it utmost bounds.

Light is the countenance of the Eternal," sung the setting sun: "I am the hem of his garment," responded the soft and rosy twilight. The clouds gathered themselves together and said, "We are his nocturnal tent." And the waters in the clouds, and the hollow voices of the thunders, joined in the lofty chorus, "The voice of the Eternal is upon the waters, the God of glory thundereth in the heavens, the Lord is upon many waters."

"He flieth upon my wings," whispered the winds, and the gentle air added, "I am the breath of God, the aspirations of his benign presence." "We hear the songs of praise," said the parched earth; "all around is praise; I alone am sad and silent." Then the falling dew replied, "I will nourish thee, so that thou shalt be refreshed and rejoice, and thy infants shall bloom like the young rose." "Joyfully we bloom," sang the refreshed meads; the full ears of corn waved as they sang, "We are the blessing of God, the hosts of God against famine."

"We bless thee from above," said the gentle moon; "We, too, bless thee," responded the stars; and the lightsome grasshopper chirped, "Me, too, he blesses in the pearly dew-drop." "He quenched my thirst," said the roe; "And refreshed me," continued the stag; "And grants us our food," said the beasts of the forest; "And clothes my lambs," gratefully added the sheep.

"He heard me," croaked the raven, "when I was forsaken and alone;" "He heard me," said the wild goat of the rocks, "when my time came, and I brought forth." And the turtle-dove cooed, and the

swallow and other birds joined the song, "We have found our nests, our houses, we dwell upon the altar of the Lord, and sleep under the shadow of his wing in tranquillity and peace." "And peace," replied the night, and echo prolonged the sound, when chanticleer awoke the dawn, and crowed with joy, "Open the portals, set wide the gates of the world! The King of glory approaches. Awake! Arise, ye sons of men, give praises and thanks unto the Lord, for the King of glory approaches."

The sun arose, and David awoke from his melodious rapture. But as long as he lived the strains of creation's harmony remained in his soul, and daily he recalled them from the strings of his harp. *From the "Legend of the Songs of the Night," in the Talmud, quoted in "Biblical Antiquities." By F. A. Cox, D.D., LL.D., 1852.*

Verse 1. The pious mind views all things in God,, and God in all things. *Ingram Cobbin, 1839.*

Verse 2. "He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." This founding the land upon the seas, and preparing it upon the floods, is so wonderfully wonderful, that Almighty God asked his servant Job, "Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?" Job 38:6. Xerxes commanded his soldiers to fetter the waters of Hellispontus; and so God bindeth, as it were, the floods in fetters, at St. Basil plainly, *Ligatum est mare præcepto Creatoris quasi compedibus*; he saith unto the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, there shall it stay thy proud waves." "He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap; he layeth up the depth in storehouses" (Job 38:11; Psalm 33:7); so that without his leave not so much as one drop can overflow the land. *John Boys.*

Verse 2. (New translation.) "For he hath founded it upon the seas, and upon streams doth he make it fast." The reference is no doubt to the account of the Creation, in Genesis, the dry land having emerged from the water, and seeming to rest upon it. (Comp. 136:6; Proverbs 8:29.) It would, however, be quite out of place to suppose that in such language we have the expression of any theory, whether popular or scientific, as to the structure of the earth's surface: Job says (26:7), "He hangeth the earth upon nothing." Such expressions are manifestly poetical. See Job 38:6. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 2. "Upon the seas:" that is, upon the great abyss of water which is under the earth, enclosed in great hollow places, whence the heads of rivers do spring, and other waters bubble out upon the earth. *John Diodati.*

Verse 2. "Above the floods he hath established it." Both the words (Heb.) (Al) in the two clauses of this verse mean either "above" as we have rendered it, and refer to Genesis 1:9, 10, denoting that Jehovah hath called forth dry land from the midst of the seas, and established it above the floods, and hath set a boundary to the latter never to turn and overflow it (see Job 38:8; Psalm 104. chronologically Psalm 7:9); or "by, or at," as they often denote, and refer to the same subject of the omnipotence of God in relation to the same quoted passages, *i.e.*, that though our globe is situated at

or by the floods—is surrounded with mighty waters whose single wave could bury it for ever, still the Lord has so established it that this never can happen. This is a mighty reason why the earth and all its fulness and inhabitants belong to Jehovah. *Benjamin Weiss.*

Verse 2. Hereby is mystically meant, that he hath set his church above the waters of adversities, so that how high soever they arise, it is kept still above them in safety, and so shall be for evermore; or it may agree thus—he will take in all nations to be in his grace, because all be his creatures; he made them so admirable an habitation at the first, and upholds it still, showing hereby how much he regards them; therefore he will now extend his favour further towards them, by taking them in to be his people. *Augustine, quoted by Mayer.*

Verse 3. "Who shall ascend?" Indeed, if none must ascend but he that is clean and pure, and without vanity and deceit, the question is quickly answered, None shall, for there is none so: dust is our matter, so not clean; defiled is our nature, so not pure; lighter, the heaviest of us, than vanity, and deceitful upon the balance the best of us; so no ascending so high for any of us. Yet there is One we hear of, or might have heard of to-day, that rose and ascended up on high, was thus qualified as the psalmist speaks of, all clean and pure, no chaff at all, no guile found in his mouth. 1 Peter 2:22. Yes, but it was but One that was so; what's that to all the rest? Yes, somewhat 'tis. *He was our Head,* and if the Head be once risen and ascended, the members will all follow after in their time. *Mark Frank.*

Verse 3. "The hill of the Lord," can be no other than a hill of glory. His holy place is no less than the very place and seat of glory. And being such, you cannot imagine it but *hard to come by*, the very petty glories of the world are so. This is a *hill* of glory, hard to climb, difficult to ascend, craggy to pass up, steep to clamber, no plain campagnia to it, the broad easy way leads some whither else (Matthew 7:13); the way to this is narrow (verse 14); 'tis rough and troublesome. To be of the number of Christ's true faithful servants is no slight work; 'tis a fight, 'tis a race, 'tis a continual warfare; fastings and watchings, and cold and nakedness, and hunger and thirst, bonds, imprisonments, dangers and distresses, ignominy and reproach, afflictions and persecutions, the world's hatred and our friend's neglect, all that we call hard or difficult is to be found in the way we are to go. A man cannot leave a lust, shake off bad company, quit a course of sin, enter upon a way of virtue, profess his religion, or stand to it, cannot ascend the spiritual *hill*, but he will meet some or other of these to contest and strive with. But not only to ascend, but to *stand* there, as the word signifies; to continue at so high a pitch, to be constant in truth and piety, that will be hard indeed, and bring more difficulties to contest with. *Mark Frank.*

Verses 3, 4. The Psalm begins with a solicitous enquiry, subjoins a satisfactory answer, and closes with a most pertinent but rapturous apostrophe. This is the enquiry, "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?*" This is the answer, "*He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;*" "*he shall receive the blessing*" of plenary remission "*from the Lord, and righteousness*

also from the God of his salvation:" even that perfect righteousness which is not acquired by man, but bestowed by Jehovah; which is not performed by the saint, but received by the sinner; which is the only solid basis to support our hopes of happiness, the only valid plea for an admission into the mansions of joy. Then follows the apostrophe: the prophet foresees the ascension of Christ and his saints into the kingdom of heaven. He sees his Lord marching at the head of the redeemed world, and conducting them into regions of honour and joy. Suitably to such a view, and in a most beautiful strain of poetry, he addresses himself to the heavenly portals. "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory,*" with all the heirs of his grace and righteousness, shall make their triumphant entry; "*shall enter in,*" and go out no more. *James Hervey.* Verses 3, 4. It is not he who sings so well or so many Psalms, nor he who fasts or watches so many days, nor he who divides his own among the poor, nor he who preaches to others, nor he who lives quietly, kindly, and friendly; nor, in fine, is it he who knows all sciences and languages, nor he who works all virtuous and all good works that ever any man spoke or read of, but it is he alone, who is pure within and without. *Martin Luther.*

Verse 4. "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart." Shall I tell you, then, who is a moral man in the sight of God? It is he that bows to the divine law as the supreme rule of right; he that is influenced by a governing regard to God in all his actions; he that obeys other commands spontaneously, because he has obeyed the first and great command, "Give me thy *heart.*" His conduct is not conformed to custom or expediency, but to one consistent, immutable standard of duty. Take this man into a court of justice, and call on him to testify, and he will not bear false witness. Give him the charge of untold treasures, he will not steal. Trust him with the dearest interests of yourself or family, you are safe, because he has a living principle of truth and integrity in his bosom. He is as worthy of confidence in the dark as at noonday; for he is a moral man, not because reputation or interest demands it, not because the eye of public observation is fixed upon him, but because the love and fear of God have predominant ascendancy in his heart. *Ebenezer Porter, D.D., 1834.*

Verse 4. Conditions that suit none but Christ. (Bellarmine.) "He that hath clean hands;" "the clean of hands," Margin:—those hands from which went forth virtue and healing; hands ever lifted up in prayer to God, or in blessing to man; hands stretched forth on the cross for the cleansing of the whole world. *Isaac Williams, in loc.*

Verse 4. "Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity," is read by Arius Montanus, "He that hath not received his soul in vain." Oh! how many receive their souls in vain, making no more use of them than the swine, of whom the philosopher observes, *cujus anima pro sale,* their souls are only for salt to keep their bodies from stinking. Who would not grieve to think that so choice a piece should be employed about so vain a use! *George Swinnoek.*

Verse 4. "Nor sworn deceitfully;" or inured his tongue to any other kind of language of hell's rotten

communication, to the dishonouring of God, or deceiving of others. Perjury is here instanced for the rest, as one of the most heinous. But Peraldus reckoneth up four-and-twenty several sins of the tongue, all which every burgess of the New Jerusalem is careful to avoid, as the devil's drivel, no way becoming his pure lip. *John Trapp.*

Verse 4. Now we come to the four conditions requisite to render such an ascent possible. 1. Abstinence from evil doing: "*He that hath clean hands.*" 2. Abstinence from evil thought: "*and a pure heart.*" 3. Who does that duty which he is sent into the world to do: "*That hath not lifted up his mind unto vanity;*" or, as it is in the Vulgate, "*Who hath no received his soul in vain.*" And, 4. Remembers the vows by which he is bound to God: "*nor sworn to deceive.*" And in the fullest sense, there was but One in whom all these things were fulfilled; so that in reply to the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" He might well answer, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." John 3:13. "Therefore it is well-written," says St. Bernard, "that such a High Priest became us, because he knows the difficulty of that ascent to the celestial mountain, he knows the weakness of us that have to ascend." *Lorinus and Bernard, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 4. Heaven is not won with good words and a fair profession. The doing Christian is the man that shall stand, when the empty boaster of his faith shall fall. The great talkers of religion are often the least doers. His religion is in vain whose profession brings not letters testimonial from a holy life. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 5. "*He shall receive the blessing;*" as before, "Thou shalt set him to be a blessing." Psalm 21:6. His name is never without blessing. In him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. On the mount of his beatitudes, on the heavenly Mount Sion, crowned as "the Son of the Blessed." "*From the Lord;*" even "the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 1:3. *Isaac Williams.*

Verse 5. "*He shall receive . . . righteousness.*" As for our own righteousness which we have without him, Esay telleth us, "it is a defiled cloth;" and St. Paul, that it is but "dung." Two very homely comparisons, but they be the Holy Ghost's own; yet nothing so homely as in the original, where they be so odious, as what manner of defiled cloth, or what kind of dung, we have not dared to translate. Our own then being no better, we are driven to seek for it elsewhere. "*He shall receive his righteousness,*" saith the prophet; and "*the gift of righteousness,*" saith the apostle. Philippians 3:8, 9; Romans 5:17. It is then another, to be *given us*, and to be *received by us*, which we must seek for. And whither shall we go for it? Job alone dispatcheth this point (chapter 15:15; 4:18; 25:5.) Not to *the heavens* or *stars*, they are *unclean in his sight*. Not to the *saints*, for in them *he found folly*. Not to the *angels*, for neither in them found he *steadfastness*. Now, if none of these will serve, we see a necessary reason why Jehovah must be a part of this name, "the LORD our righteousness." Jeremiah 23:6. *Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 6. *"This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face."* Christians must be seekers. This is *the generation of seekers*. All mankind, if ever they will come to heaven, they must be a generation of seekers. Heaven is a generation of finders, of possessors, of enjoyers, seekers of God. But here we are a generation of seekers. We want somewhat that we must seek. When we are at best, we want the accomplishment of our happiness. It is a state of seeking here, because it is a state of want; we want something alway. But to come more particularly to this *seeking the face of God*, or the presence of God. . . . The presence of God meant here is, that presence that he shows *in the time of need, and in his ordinances*. He shows a presence in need and necessity, that is, a gracious presence to his children, a gracious face. As in want of direction, he shows his presence of light to direct them; in weakness he shows his strength; in trouble and perplexity he will show his gracious and comfortable presence to comfort them. In perplexity he shows his presence to set the heart at large, answerable to the necessity. So in need God is present with his children, to direct them, to comfort them, to strengthen them, if they need that. *Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 6. *"This is the generation."* By the demonstrative pronoun *"this,"* the psalmist erases from the catalogue of the servants of God all counterfeit Israelites, who, trusting only to their circumcision and the sacrifice of beasts, have no concern about offering themselves to God; and yet, at the same time, they rashly thrust themselves into the church. *John Calvin*.

Verse 6. *"That seek thy face, O Jacob."* In Proverbs 7:15, and 29:26, we have *"seeking the face of"* in the sense of seeking the favour of, or showing delight in. Their delight is not in Esau, who got "the fatness of earth" (Genesis 27:39) as his portion. And those writers may be right, who consider Jacob as a name for Messiah, to whom belong the true birthright and blessing. *Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verse 6. *"That seek thy face, O Jacob."* He is "the seed of Jacob;" he is "the Holy One of Israel;" "the face of thine Anointed" is the face of him who is both God and man; for "we shall see him as he is." *Isaac Williams*.

Verse 6. *"O Jacob,"* or O God of Jacob. As the church is called *Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12), so God is here called *"Jacob;"* such a near union there is betwixt him and his people. Or, *this is Jacob*. So the true *seekers* are fitly called, first because Israelites indeed (John 1:47; Romans 9:6); secondly, because they see God face to face, as Jacob did at Peniel (Genesis 32:24-30); thirdly, because they also, as he, do bear away a blessing (Hosea 12:4), even "righteousness from the God of their salvation," as in the verse aforegoing. *John Trapp*.

Verse 7. *"Lift up your heads, O ye gates."* The gates of the temple were indeed as described, very lofty and magnificent, in proportion to the gigantic dimensions of that extraordinary edifice. But the phrase, *"Lift up your heads,"* refers not so much to their loftiness, as to the upper part being formed so as to be lifted up; while the under portion opened in folding doors. *Robert Jamieson, in "Paxton's Illustrations of Scriptures."*

Verse 7. "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates.*" At the castle of Banias, in Syria, are the remains of an ancient gate which was drawn up, like a blind, the gate fitting in grooves. This will fully explain the term. *John Gadsby.*

Verse 7. "*Lift up.*" A phrase or term taken from triumphal arches, or great porticoes, set up, or beautified and adorned for the coming in of great, victorious, and triumphant captains. *John Diodati.*

Verse 7. "*Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*" Some interpret this of the doors of our heart, according to that (Revelation 3:20), "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him," etc. In the gospel history, we find that Christ had a fourfold entertainment among men. Some received him into house, not into heart, as Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:44), who gave him no kiss nor water to his feet; some into heart, but not into house, as the faithful centurion (Matthew 8:8), esteeming himself unworthy that Christ should come under his roof; some neither into house nor heart, as the graceless Gergesites (Matthew 8:34); some both into house and heart, as Lazarus, Mary, Martha. John 3:15; Luke 10:38. Now that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and that our bodies may be temples of his Holy Spirit, we must as our prophet exhorts here, *lift up our souls*, that is, in the words of St. Paul (Colossians 3:2), our affections must be set on things which are above, and not on things which are on earth: if we desire to lift up our hearts unto Christ's verity, we may not lift them up unto the world's vanity; that is, we must not fasten our love too much upon the things of this life, but on those pleasures at God's right hand which are evermore; that as we have borne the image of the first Adam, who was earthly, so we should bear the image of the second Adam, which is heavenly. 1 Corinthians 15:49. The prophane worldling sings a *Nunc dimittis* unto Christ, and saith as the devils, "Ah! what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" (Mark 1:24); and as Job reports his words, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Job 21:14. On the contrary, the religious soul, enjoying the possession of the Saviour, chanteth a merry *Magnificat*, and a pleasant *Te Deum*: she saith unto Christ, as Ruth unto Naomi (Ruth 1:16), "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee." Nay, death itself shall not part us, for when I am loosed out of my body's prison, I hope to be with Christ; as Ittai then unto David, I say unto Jesus, "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death, or life, even there also will thy servant be." 2 Samuel 15:21. O Lord, which art the God of my salvation, I lift my heart to thee, desirous to seek thee, both in the right *ubi*—where thou mayest be found, and in the right *quando*—while thou mayest be found. Psalm 18:47; 25:1. Open my dull ears and hard heart, that thy Son my Saviour may come in and dwell with me. Grant me grace that I may still hear while he calleth, open while he knocketh, and hold him also when I have him; that I may both *ascend thine hill*, and *stand in thy holy place*; that I may not only sojourn in thy tabernacle, but also rest and dwell upon the mountain of thine holiness. *John Boys.*

Verse 7. "Everlasting doors." Heaven's gates are called "everlasting," because they shall endure for ever, or because they be the doors unto the life which is everlasting. *John Boys*.

Verse 7. Whatever we may think of these things, David thought it high time for him to bid such a messenger welcome, and to open his heart for the receiving of his God. Hear what he saith to his own heart and others: "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*" And because the door of men's hearts is locked, and barred, and bolted, and men are in a deep sleep, and will not hear the knocking that is at the gate, though it be loud, though it be a king; therefore David knocks again, "*Lift up, ye everlasting doors.*" Why, what haste, saith the sinner? What haste? Why, here's the King at your gates; and that not an ordinary king neither; he is a glorious King, that will honour you so far, if you open quickly, as to lodge within, to take up his abode in your house, to dwell with you. But the soul for all this doth not yet open, but stands still questioning, as if it were an enemy rather than a friend that stood there, and asks, "*Who is this King of glory?*" Who? He answers again, "*It is the Lord of Hosts;*" he, that if you will not open quickly and thankfully too, can easily pull your house down about your ears; he is the Lord of hosts, that King who hath a mighty army always at his command, who stand ready to their commission, and then you should know who it is you might have had for your friend; "Lift up, therefore, your heads, O ye gates." Open quickly, ye that had rather have God for your friend, than for your enemy. Oh, why should not the soul of every sinner cry out, Lord, the door is locked, and thou hast the key; I have been trying what I can do, but the wards are so rusty that I cannot possibly turn the key? But, Lord, throw the door off the hinges, anything in the world, so thou wilt but come in and dwell here. Come, O mighty God, break through doors of iron, and bars of brass, and make way for thyself by thy love and power. Come, Lord, and make thyself welcome; all that I have is at thy service; O fit my soul to entertain thee! *James Janeway*.

Verse 7. He hath left with us the earnest if the Spirit, and taken from us the earnest of our flesh, which he hath carried into heaven as a pledge that the whole shall follow after. *Tertullian*.

Verse 7. Christ is gone to heaven as a victor; leading sin, Satan, death, hell, and all his enemies, in triumph at his chariot wheels. He has not only overcome his enemies for himself, but for all his people, whom he will make conquerors, yea, "more than conquerors." As he has overcome, so shall they also overcome; and as he has gone to heaven a victor, they shall follow in triumph. He is in heaven as a Saviour. When he came from heaven it was in the character of a Saviour; when on earth he obtained eternal salvation; in heaven he lives as a Saviour; when he comes again from heaven he will come as a Saviour; and when he will return, he will return as a Saviour. He is also gone to heaven as the rightful heir. He is not gone to heaven as a sojourner, but as "the heir of all things." He is the heir of heavenly glory and happiness, and believers are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." *Henry Pendlebury, 1626-1695*.

Verse 7. O clap your hands together, all ye people; sing unto God with the voice of melody. God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trump." Psalm 47: 1, 5. This Ark, which has saved the world from destruction, after floating on a deluge of blood, rests at length on the mountain. This innocent Joseph, whose virtue has been oppressed by the synagogue, is brought out of the dungeon to receive a crown. This invincible Samson has carried away the gates of hell, and goes in triumph to the everlasting hills. This victorious Joshua has passed over Jordan with the ark of the covenant, and taken possession of the land of the living. This Sun of righteousness, which had gone down ten degrees, returns backward to the place which it had left. He who was "a worm" at his birth, a Lamb in his passion, and a Lion in his resurrection, now ascends as an Eagle to heaven, and encourages us to follow him thither. This day heaven learns to endure man's presence, and men to walk above the stars; the heavenly Jerusalem receives its rightful King, the church its High Priest, the house of God its Heritor, the whole world its Ruler. "O sing praises, sing praises unto our God: O sing praises, sing praises unto our King." Psalm 47:6-8. "God reigneth over the heathen, God sitteth upon his holy seat." "The princes of the people are joined unto" him; "he is very highly exalted" above them. *From "The Life of Jesus Christ in Glory," translated from the French of James Nouet.*

Verses 7, 8. Christ being now arrived at heaven's doors, those heavenly spirits that accompanied him began to say, "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in!*" to whom some of the angels that were within, not ignorant of his person, but admiring his majesty and glory, said again, "*Who is the King of glory?*" and then they answered "*The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle,*" and thereupon those twelve gates of the holy city, of New Jerusalem, opened of their own accord, and Jesus Christ with all his ministering spirits entered in. O my soul, how should this heighten thy joy and enlarge thy comforts, in that Christ is now received up into glory? Every sight of Christ is glorious, and in every sight thou shouldst wait on the Lord Jesus Christ for some glorious manifestations of himself. Come, live up to the rate of this great mystery; view Christ as entering into glory, and thou wilt find the same sparkle of glory on thy heart. O! this sight is a transforming sight: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. *Isaac Ambrose.*

Verses 7, 8. Ye that are thus the living temples of the Lord, and have already entertained his sanctifying Spirit into you, do you lift up your hearts in the use of holy ordinances through faith, in joyful desires and assured expectation of him; yea, be you abundantly lift up by faith in the use of holy means who are the everlasting habitation of an everlasting God, with a joyful and assured welcome of him; for so shall you invite and undoubtedly entertain the high and mighty Potentate the Lord Christ into your souls, with the glorious manifestation and ravishing operation of his love, benefits, and graces. And know, O all ye faithful and obedient ones, for your courage and comfort, who, and of

what quality this glorious King, the Lord Jesus is, whom the world despises but you honour. Why, he is the Almighty God, of power all-sufficient to preserve and defend his people and church, that in trust of him do love and serve him, against all the strength and power of men and devils that do or shall malign or oppose themselves against them, and to put them to the foil, as we his Israel in the letter have found by experience for your instruction and corroboration that are his people in spirit. *George Abbot, in "Brief notes upon the whole Book of Psalms," 1651.*

Verses 7-10. Oh, what tongue of the highest archangel of heaven can express the welcome of thee, the King of glory, into these blessed regions of immortality? Surely the empyreal heaven never resounded with so much joy: God ascended with jubilation and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet. It is not for us, weak and finite creatures, to wish to conceive those incomprehensible, spiritual, divine gratulations, that the glorious Trinity gave to the victorious and now glorified human nature. Certainly if, when he brought his only-begotten Son into the world, he said, "Let all the angels worship him;" much more now that he, "ascendeth on high, and hath led captivity captive, hath he given him a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus all knees should bow." And if the holy angels did so carol at his birth, in the very entrance into that state of humiliation and infirmity, with what triumph did they receive him now returning from the perfect achievement of man's redemption? and if, when his type had vanquished Goliath, and carried his head into Jerusalem, the damsels came forth to meet him with dances and timbrels, how shall we think those angelic spirits triumphed, in meeting of the great Conqueror of hell and death? How did they sing, *"Lift up your heads, ye gates! and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."* Surely, as he shall come, so he went; and, "Behold, he shall come with thousands of his holy ones; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand thousands stood before him;" from all whom, methinks I hear that blessed applause, "Worthy is the Lamb that was killed, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and praise: praise and honour, and glory, and power, be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore." And why dost not thou, O my soul, help to bear thy part with that happy choir of heaven? Why art not thou rapt out of my bosom, with an ecstasy of joy, to see this human nature of ours exalted above all the powers of heaven, adored of angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, and all those mighty and glorious spirits, and sitting there crowned with infinite glory and majesty? *Joseph Hall.*

Verses 7-10. In the twenty-fourth Psalm, we have an account of the actual entrance of Christ into heaven. When the King of England wishes to enter the city of London through Temple Bar, the gate being closed against him, the herald demands entrance. "Open the gate." From within a voice is heard, "Who is there?" The herald answers, "The King of England!" The gate is at once opened, and the king passes, amidst the joyful acclamations of his people. This is an ancient custom, and the allusion is to it in this Psalm. "The Lord ascended with a shout;" he approached the heavenly

portal—the herald in his escort demanded an entrance, *"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."* The celestial watchers within ask, *"Who is the King of glory?"* The heralds answer, *"The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."* The question and answer being repeated once more, the gates lift up their heads, and the everlasting doors are lifted up. The Prince enters his Father's palace, greeted with the acclamations of heaven, all whose inhabitants unite in one shout of joy ineffable: *"The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of glory!"* *Christmas Evans.*

Verses 7-10. If we follow our Redeemer in his ascension and session at the right hand of God, where he is constituted Lord of all, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject to him, and where he sits till his enemies are made his footstool, we shall observe the tide of celestial blessedness rise higher and higher still. The return of a great and beloved prince, who should by only hazarding his life, have saved his country, would fill a nation with ecstasy. Their conversation in every company would turn upon him, and all their thoughts and joys concentrate in him. See then the King of kings, after having by death abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light; after spoiling the powers of darkness, and ruining all their schemes; see him return in triumph! There was something like triumph when he entered into Jerusalem. All the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" And the multitude answered, It is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth; and the very children sung, Hosannah to the Son of David: blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosannah in the highest! How much greater then must be the triumph of his entry into the heavenly Jerusalem! Would not all the city be "moved" in this case, saying, *"Who is this?"* See thousands of angels attending him, and ten thousand times ten thousand come forth to meet him! The entrance of the ark into the city of David was but a shadow of this, and the responsive strains which were sung on that occasion would on this be much more applicable. *Andrew Fuller.*

Verses 7-10. Why is the song repeated? Why are the everlasting gates invited to lift up their heads a second time? We may not pretend here, or in any place, to know all the meaning of the divine Psalms. But what if the repetition of the verse was meant to put us in mind that our Saviour's ascension will be repeated also? He will not indeed die any more; death can no more have any dominion over him; "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Neither of course can he rise again any more. But as he will come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead, so after that descent he will have to ascend again. And I say, this second ascension may be signified by the psalmist, calling on the everlasting doors to lift up their heads a second time, and make way for the King of glory. Now observe the answer made this second time, *"Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."* Before it was, *"the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle;"* now it is

"*The Lord of hosts.*" Christ ascending the first time, to intercede for us at his Father's right hand, is called "*The Lord mighty in battle.*" But Christ, ascending the second time, after the world hath been judged, and the good and bad separated for ever, is called "*the Lord of hosts.*" Why this difference in his divine titles? We may reverently take it, that it signifies to us the difference between his first and second coming down to earth, his first and second ascension into heaven. As in other respects his first coming was with great humility, so in this, that he came, in all appearance, alone. The angels were indeed waiting round him, but not visibly, not in glory. "He trode the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him." He wrestled with death, hell, and Satan, alone. Alone he rose from the dead: alone, as far as man could see, he went up to heaven. Thus he showed himself "the Lord mighty in battle," mighty in that single combat which he, as our champion, our David, victoriously maintained against our great enemy. But when he shall come down and go up the second time, he will show himself "the Lord of hosts." Instead of coming down alone in mysterious silence, as in his wonderful incarnation, he will be followed by all the armies of heaven. "The Lord my God will come, and all his saints with him." "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints." "The Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels with him." "Thousand thousands will stand around him, and ten thousand times ten thousand will minister unto him." Instead of the silence of that quiet chamber at Nazareth, and of the holy Virgin's womb, there will be the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God accompanying him. Thus he will come down as the Lord of hosts, and as the Lord of hosts, he will ascend again to his Father. After the judgment, he will pass again through the everlasting doors, with a greater company than before; for he will lead along with him, into the heavenly habitation, all those who shall have been raised from their graves and found worthy. Hear how the awful sight is described by one who will doubtless have a high place in that day near the Judge. The great apostle and prophet St. Paul, says, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." *John Keble, M.A.*

Verses 7-10.—

In this blessed life
I see the path, and in his death the price,
And in his great ascent the proof supreme
Of immortality. And did he rise?
Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!
He rose! He rose! He burst the bars of death.
Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the King of glory to come in.

Who is the King of glory? He who left
His throne of glory for the pangs of death.
Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the King of glory to come in.
Who is the King of glory? He who slew
The ravenous foe that gorged all human race.
The King of glory, he whose glory filled
Heaven with amazement at his love to man,
And with divine complacency beheld
Powers most illumined 'wildered in the theme.

Edward Young.

Verses 7-10.—

Lift up your heads, ye gates, and, O prepare,
Ye living orbs, your everlasting doors,
The King of glory comes!
What King of glory? He whose puissant might
Subdued Abaddon, and the infernal powers
Of darkness bound in adamantine chains:
Who, wrapp'd in glory, with the Father reigns,
Omnipotent, immortal, infinite!

James Scott.

Verse 8. "Who is the King of glory?" Christ in two respects is "*the King of glory.*" 1. For that all honour and glory belongs properly to him —his is "the kingdom, the power, and the glory" (Matthew 6:13), called in this regard, "The Lord of glory." 1 Corinthians 2:8. 2. For that Christ maketh us partakers of his glory, termed in this respect our glorious Lord Jesus. James 2:1. If the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty in battle, be the King of glory, then Christ (having conquered all his enemies, and made them his footstool, triumphing over death, and the devil which is the founder of death, and sin which is the sting of death, and the grave which is the prison of death, and hell itself which is the proper dominion of the devil and death) is doubtless in himself, "*the King of glory.*" And for as much as he died for our sins, and is risen again for our justification, and is ascended on high to give gifts unto men—in this life grace, in the next glory—what is he less than a "*King of glory*" towards us, of whom and through whom alone we find that fight his battles are delivered from the hands of all that hate us, and so made victors (1 Corinthians 15:57), yea, "more than conquerors." Romans 8:37. *John Boys.*

Verse 8. *"The Lord strong and mighty."* *"Strong and mighty"* in subduing all adversaries; and overcoming death and the devil who had the power of death. *Ludolphus, quoted by Isaac Williams.*

Verse 10. *"Jehovah of hosts,"* or, as the Hebrew is, *Jehovah Tsebaoth,* for so the word is used by the apostles, untranslated in the Greek, *Sabaoth.* Romans 9:29. It signifieth *hosts* or *armies* standing ready in martial order, and in battle array, and comprehendeth all creatures in heaven and in earth, which are pressed to do the will of God. *Henry Ainsworth.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The great Proprietor, his estates and his servants, his rights and wrongs.

Verse 1. *"The earth is the Lord's."*

- I. *Mention other claimants—idols: pope, man, devil, etc.,*
- II. *Try the suit.*
- III. *Carry out the verdict.* Use our substance, preach everywhere, claim all things for God.
- IV. *See how glorious the earth looks when she bears her Master's name.*

Verse 1 (*last clause*). All men belong to God. His sons or his subjects, his servants or his serfs, his sheep or his goats, etc.

Verse 2. Divine purposes accomplished by singular means.

Verse 2. *Founded on the seas.* Instability of terrestrial things.

Verse 3. The all-important question.

Verse 4 (*first clause*). Connection between outward morality and inward purity.

Verse 4 (*second clause*). Men judged by their delights.

Verse 4. *"Clean hands."*

- I. How to get them clean.
- II. How to keep them clean.
- III. How to defile them
- IV. How to get them clean again.

Verses 4, 5. Character manifested and favour received.

Verse 5 (*second clause*). The good man receiving righteousness and needing salvation, or the evangelical meaning of apparently legal passages.

Verse 6. Those who truly seek fellowship with God. Verse 7. Accommodate the text to the entrance of Jesus Christ into our hearts.

- I. There are obstacles, *"gates," "doors."*
- II. We must will to remove them: *"lift up."*
- III. Grace must enable us: *"be ye lift up."*
- IV. Our Lord will enter.

V. He enters as "*King*," and "*King of glory*."

Verse 7. The ascension and its teachings. Verses 7-10.—

I. His title—the Lord of hosts.

II. His victories, implied in the expression. The Lord strong and mighty in battle.

III. His mediatorial title, The King of glory.

IV. His authoritative entrance into the holy place.

John Newton's "Messiah."

Verse 8. The mighty Hero. His pedigree, his power, his battles, his victories.

Verse 10. The sovereignty and glory of God in Christ.

WORK UPON THE TWENTY-FOURTH PSALM

In the "Works" of John Boys, 1626, folio, pp. 908-913, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

Psalm 25

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. A Psalm of David. David is pictured in this Psalm as in a faithful miniature. His holy trust, his many conflicts, his great transgression, his bitter repentance, and his deep distresses are all here; so that we see the very heart of "the man after God's own heart." It is evidently a composition of David's later days, for he mentions the sins of his youth, and from its painful references to the craft and cruelty of his many foes, it will not be too speculative a theory to refer it to the period when Absalom was heading the great rebellion against him. This has been styled the second of the seven Penitential Psalms. It is the mark of a true saint that his sorrows remind him of his sins, and his sorrow for sin drives him to his God.

SUBJECT AND DIVISION. The twenty-two verses of this Psalm begin in the original with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their proper order. It is the first instance we have of an inspired acrostic or alphabetical song. This method may have been adopted by the writer to assist the memory; and the Holy Spirit may have employed it to show us that the graces of style and the arts of poetry may lawfully be used in his service. Why should not all the wit and ingenuity of man be sanctified to noblest ends by being laid upon the altar of God? From the singularity of the structure of the Psalm, it is not easy to discover any marked divisions; there are great changes of thought, but there is no variation of subject; the moods of the writer's mind are twofold—prayer and meditation; and as these

appear in turns, we should thus divide the verses. Prayer from Ps 25:1-7; meditation, Ps 25:8-10; prayer, Ps 25:11; meditation, Ps 25:12-15; prayer, Ps 25:16-22.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Unto thee, O Lord.* See how the holy soul flies to its God like a dove to its cote. When the storm winds are out, the Lord's vessels put about and make for their well remembered harbour of refuge. What a mercy that the Lord will condescend to hear our cries in time of trouble, although we may have almost forgotten him in our hours of fancied prosperity. *Unto thee, O Jehovah, do I lift up my soul.* It is but a mockery to uplift the hands and the eyes unless we also bring our souls into our devotions. True prayer may be described as the soul rising from earth to have fellowship with heaven; it is taking a journey upon Jacob's ladder, leaving our cares and fears at the foot, and meeting with a covenant God at the top. Very often the soul cannot rise, she has lost her wings, and is heavy and earth bound; more like a burrowing mole than a soaring eagle. At such dull seasons we must not give over prayer, but must, by God's assistance, exert all our powers to lift up our hearts. Let faith be the lever and grace be the arm, and the dead lump will yet be stirred. But what a lift it has sometimes proved! With all our tugging and straining we have been utterly defeated, until the heavenly loadstone of our Saviour's love has displayed its omnipotent attractions, and then our hearts have gone up to our Beloved like mounting flames of fire.

Verse 2. *O my God.* This title is more dear than the name Jehovah, which is used in the first sentence. Already the sweet singer has drawn nearer to his heavenly helper, for he makes bold to grasp him with the hand of assured possession, calling him, my God. Oh the more than celestial music of that word—*"My God!"* It is to be observed that the psalmist does not deny expression to those gracious feelings with which God had favoured him; he does not fall into loathsome mock modesty, but finding in his soul a desire to seek the Lord he avows it; believing that he had a rightful interest in Jehovah he declares it, and knowing that he had confidence in his God he professes it; *O my God, I trust in thee.* Faith is the cable which binds our boat to the shore, and by pulling at it we draw ourselves to the land; faith unites us to God, and then draws us near to him. As long as the anchor of faith holds there is no fear in the worst tempest; if that should fail us there would be no hope left. We must see to it that our faith is sound and strong, for otherwise prayer cannot prevail with God. Woe to the warrior who throws away his shield; what defence can be found for him who finds no defence in his God? *Let me not be ashamed.* Let no my disappointed hopes make me feel ashamed of my former testimonies of thy faithfulness. Many were on the watch for this. The best of men have their enemies, and should pray against them that they may not see their wicked desires accomplished. *Let not mine enemies triumph over me.* Suffer no wicked mouth to make blasphemous mirth out of my distresses by asking, "Where is thy God?" There is a great jealousy in believers for

the honour of God, and they cannot endure that unbelievers should taunt them with the failure of their expectations from the God of their salvation. All other trusts will end in disappointment and eternal shame, but our confidence shall never be confounded.

Verse 3. *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.* Suffering enlarges the heart by creating the power to sympathize. If we pray eagerly for ourselves, we shall not long be able to forget our fellow sufferers. None pity the poor like those who have been or are still poor, none have such tenderness for the sick as those who have been long in ill health themselves. We ought to be grateful for occasional griefs if they preserve us from chronic hardheartedness; for of all afflictions, an unkind heart is the worst, it is a plague to its possessor, and a torment to those around him. Prayer when it is of the Holy Ghost's teaching is never selfish; the believer does not sue for monopolies for himself, but would have all in like case to partake of divine mercy with him. The prayer may be viewed as a promise; our Heavenly Father will never let his trustful children find him untrue or unkind. He will ever be mindful of his covenant. *Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.* David had given his enemies no provocation; their hatred was wanton. Sinners have no justifiable reason or valid excuse for transgressing; they benefit no one, not even themselves by their sins; the law against which they transgress is not harsh or unjust; God is not a tyrannical ruler, providence is not a bondage: men sin because they will sin, not because it is either profitable or reasonable to do so. Hence shame is their fitting reward. May they blush with penitential shame now, or else they will not be able to escape the everlasting contempt and the bitter shame which is the portion of fools in the world to come.

Verse 4. *Shew me thy ways, O Lord.* Unsanctified natures clamour for their own way, but gracious spirits cry, "Not my will, but thine be done." We cannot at all times discern the path of duty, and at such times it is our wisdom to apply to the Lord himself. Frequently the dealings of God with us are mysterious, and then also we may appeal to him as his own interpreter, and in due time he will make all things plain. Moral, providential and mental forms of guidance are all precious gifts of a gracious God to a teachable people. The second petition, *teach me thy paths*, appears to mean more than the first, and may be illustrated by the case of a little child who should say to his father, "Father, first tell me which is the way, and then teach my little trembling feet to walk in it." What weak dependent creatures we are! How constantly should we cry to the Strong for strength!

Verse 5. *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.* The same request as in the last verse. The little child having begun to walk, asks to be still led onward by its parent's helping hand, and to be further instructed in the alphabet of truth. Experimental teaching is the burden of this prayer. Lead me according to thy truth, and prove thyself faithful; lead me into truth that I may know its preciousness, lead me by the way of truth that I may manifest its spirit. David knew much, but he felt his ignorance and desired to be still in the Lord's school; four times over in these two verses he applies for a

scholarship in the college of grace. It were well for many professors if instead of following their own devices, and cutting out new paths of thought for themselves, they would enquire for the good old ways of God's own truth, and beseech the Holy Ghost to give them sanctified understandings and teachable spirits. *For thou art the God of my salvation.* The Three One Jehovah is the Author and Perfector of salvation to his people. Reader, is he the God of *your* salvation? Do you find in the Father's election, in the Son's atonement, and in the Spirit's quickening all the grounds of your eternal hopes? If so, you may use this as an argument for obtaining further blessings; if the Lord has ordained to save you, surely he will not refuse to instruct you in his ways. It is a happy thing when we can address the Lord with the confidence which David here manifests, it gives us great power in prayer, and comfort in trial. *On thee do I wait all the day.* Patience is the fair handmaid and daughter of faith; we cheerfully wait when we are certain that we shall not wait in vain. It is our duty and our privilege to wait upon the Lord in service, in worship, in expectancy, in trust all the days of our life. Our faith will be tried faith, and if it be of the true kind, it will bear continued trial without yielding. We shall not grow weary of waiting upon God if we remember how long and how graciously he once waited for us.

Verse 6. *Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses.* We are usually tempted in seasons of affliction to fear that our God has forgotten us, or forgotten his usual kindness towards us; hence the soul doth as it were put the Lord in remembrance, and beseech him to recollect those deeds of love which once he wrought towards it. There is a holy boldness which ventures thus to deal with the Most High, let us cultivate it; but there is also an unholy unbelief which suggests our fears, let us strive against it with all our might. What gems are those two expressions, "*tender mercies and lovingkindnesses!*" They are the virgin honey of language; for sweetness no words can excel them; but as for the gracious favours which are intended by them, language fails to describe them.

"When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I am lost
In wonder, love and praise."

If the Lord will only do unto us in the future as in the past, we shall be well content. We seek no change in the divine action, we only crave that the river of grace may never cease to flow. *For they have been ever of old.* A more correct translation would be "from eternity." David was a sound believer in the doctrine of God's eternal love. The Lord's lovingkindnesses are no novelties. When we plead with him to bestow them upon us, we can urge use and custom of the most ancient kind. In courts of law men make much of precedents, and we may plead them at the throne of grace. "Faith," saith Dickson, "must make use of experiences and read them over unto God, out of the register of a sanctified memory, as a recorder to him who cannot forget." With a unchangeable God it is a most

effectual argument to remind him of his ancient mercies and his eternal love. By tracing all that we enjoy to the fountain head of everlasting love we shall greatly cheer our hearts, and those do us but sorry service who try to dissuade us from meditating upon election and its kindred topics.

Verse 7. *Remember not the sins of my youth.* Sin is *the* stumbling block. This is the thing to be removed. Lord, pass an act of oblivion for all my sins, and especially for the hot blooded wanton follies of my younger years. Those offences which we remember with repentance God forgets, but if we forget them, justice will bring them forth to punishment. The world winks at the sins of younger men, and yet they are none so little after all; the bones of our youthful feasting at Satan's table will stick painfully in our throats when we are old men. He who presumes upon his youth is poisoning his old age. How large a tear may wet this page as some of us reflect upon the past! *Nor my transgressions.* Another word for the same evils. Sincere penitents cannot get through their confessions at a gallop; they are constrained to use many bemoanings, for their swarming sins smite them with so innumerable griefs. A painful sense of any one sin provokes the believer to repentance for the whole mass of his iniquities. Nothing but the fullest and clearest pardon will satisfy a thoroughly awakened conscience. David would have his sins not only forgiven, but forgotten. *According to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.* David and the dying thief breathe the same prayer, and doubtless they grounded it upon the same plea, viz., the free grace and unmerited goodness of Jehovah. We dare not ask to have our portion measured from the balances of justice, but we pray to be dealt with by the hand of mercy.

Verses 8-10. These three verses are a meditation upon the attributes and acts of the Lord. He who toils in the harvest field of prayer should occasionally pause awhile and refresh himself with a meal of meditation.

Verse 8. *Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.* Here the goodness and rectitude of the divine character are beheld in friendly union; he who would see them thus united in bonds of perfect amity must stand at the foot of the cross and view them blended in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. It is no less true than wonderful that through the atonement the justice of God pleads as strongly as his grace for the salvation of the sinners whom Jesus died to save. Moreover, as a good man naturally endeavours to make others like himself, so will the Lord our God in his compassion bring sinners into the way of holiness and conform them to his own image; thus the goodness of our God leads us to expect the reclaiming of sinful men. We may not conclude from God's goodness that he will save those sinners who continue to wander in their own ways, but we may be assured that he will renew transgressors' hearts and guide them into the way of holiness. Let those who desire to be delivered from sin take comfort from this. God himself will condescend to be the teacher of sinners. What a ragged school is this for God to teach in! God's teaching is practical; he teaches sinners not only the doctrine but *the way*.

Verse 9. *The meek will he guide in judgment.* Meek spirits are in high favour with the Father of the meek and lowly Jesus, for he sees in them the image of his only begotten Son. They know their need of guidance, and are willing to submit their own understandings to the divine will, and therefore the Lord condescends to be their guide. Humble spirits are in this verse endowed with a rich inheritance; let them be of good cheer. Trouble puts gentle spirits to their wit's ends, and drives them to act without discretion, but grace comes to the rescue, enlightens their minds to follow that which is just, and helps them to discern the way in which the Lord would have them to go. Proud of their own wisdom fools will not learn, and therefore miss their road to heaven, but lowly hearts sit at Jesu's feet, and find the gate of glory, for *the meek will he teach his way.* Blessed teacher! Favoured scholar! Divine lesson! My soul, be thou familiar with the whole.

Verse 10. This is a rule without exception. God is good to those that be good. Mercy and faithfulness shall abound towards those who through mercy are made faithful. Whatever outward appearances may threaten we should settle it steadfastly in our minds that while grace enables us to obey the Lord's will we need not fear that Providence will cause us any real loss. There shall be mercy in every unsavoury morsel, and faithfulness in every bitter drop; let not our hearts be troubled, but let us rest by faith in the immutable covenant of Jehovah, which is ordered in all things and sure. Yet this is not a general truth to be trampled upon by swine, it is a pearl for a child's neck. Gracious souls, by faith resting upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus, *keep the covenant* of the Lord, and, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, they walk in *his testimonies*; these will find all things working together for their good, but to the sinner there is no such promise. Keepers of the covenant shall be kept by the covenant; those who follow the Lord's commandments shall find the Lord's mercy following them.

Verse 11. This sentence of prayer would seem out of place were it not that prayer is always in its place, whether in season or out of season. Meditation having refreshed the Psalmist, he falls to his weighty work again, and wrestles with God for the remission of his sin. *For thy name's sake, O Lord.* Here is a blessed, never failing plea. Not for our sakes or our merit's sake, but to glorify thy mercy, and to show forth the glory of thy divine attributes. *Pardon mine iniquity.* It is confessed, it is abhorred, it is consuming my heart with grief; Lord forgive it; let thine own lips pronounce my absolution. *For it is great.* It weighs so heavily upon me that I pray thee remove it. Its greatness is no difficulty with thee, for thou art a great God, but the misery which it causes to me is my argument with thee for speedy pardon. Lord, the patient is sore sick, therefore heal him. To pardon a great sinner will bring thee great glory, therefore for thy name's sake pardon me. Observe how this verse illustrates the logic of faith, which is clean contrary to that of a legal spirit; faith looks not for merit in the creature, but hath regard to the goodness of the Creator; and instead of being staggered by the demerits of sin it looks to the precious blood, and pleads all the more vigorously because of the urgency of the case.

Verse 12. *What man is he that feareth the Lord?* Let the question provoke self examination. Gospel privileges are not for every pretender. Art thou of the seed royal or no? *Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.* Those whose hearts are right shall not err for want of heavenly direction. Where God sanctifies the heart he enlightens the head. We all wish to choose our way; but what a mercy is it when the Lord directs that choice, and makes free will to be goodwill! If we make our will God's will, God will let us have our will. God does not violate our will, but leaves much to our choice; nevertheless, he instructs our wills, and so we choose that which is well pleasing in his sight. The will should be subject to law; there is a way which we should choose, but so ignorant are we that we need to be taught, and so wilful that none but God himself can teach us effectually.

Verse 13. He who fears God has nothing else to fear. *His soul shall dwell at ease.* He shall lodge in the chamber of content. One may sleep as soundly in the little bed in the corner as in the Great Bed of Ware; it is not abundance but content that gives true ease. Even here, having learned by grace both to abound and be empty, the believer dwells at ease; but how profound will be the ease of his soul for ever! There he will enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*; ease and glory shall go together. Like a warrior whose battles are over, or a husbandman whose barns are full, his soul shall take its ease, and be merry for ever. *His seed shall inherit the earth.* God remembers Isaac for the sake of Abraham, and Jacob for the sake of Isaac. Good men's sons have a goodly portion to begin the world with, but many of them, alas! turn a father's blessing into a curse. The promise is not broken because in some instances men wilfully refuse to receive it; moreover, it is in its spiritual meaning that it now holds good; our spiritual seed do inherit all that was meant by "*the earth*," or Canaan; they receive the blessing of the new covenant. May the Lord make us the joyful parents of many spiritual children, and we shall have no fears about their maintenance, for the Lord will make each one of them princes in all the earth.

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* Some read it "the friendship:" it signifies familiar intercourse, confidential intimacy, and select fellowship. This is a great secret. Carnal minds cannot guess what is intended by it, and even believers cannot explain it in words, for it must be felt to be known. The higher spiritual life is necessarily a path which the eagle's eye hath not known, and which the lion's whelp has not travelled; neither natural wisdom nor strength can force a door into this inner chamber. Saints have the key of heaven's hieroglyphics; they can unriddle celestial enigmas. They are initiated into the fellowship of the skies; they have heard words which it is not possible for them to repeat to their fellows. *And he will shew them his covenant.* Its antiquity, security, righteousness, fulness, graciousness and excellence, shall be revealed to their hearts and understandings, and above all, their own part in it shall be sealed to their souls by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The designs of love which the Lord has to his people in the covenant of grace, he has been pleased to show to believers in the Book of Inspiration, and by his Spirit he leads us into the

mystery, even the hidden mystery of redemption. He who does not know the meaning of this verse, will never learn it from a commentary; let him look to the cross, for the secret lies there.

Verse 15. *Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.* The writer claims to be fixed in his trust, and constant in his expectation; he looks in confidence, and waits in hope. We may add to this look of faith and hope the obedient look of service, the humble look of reverence, the admiring look of wonder, the studious look of meditation, and the tender look of affection. Happy are those whose eyes are never removed from their God. "The eye," says Solomon, "is never satisfied with seeing," but this sight is the most satisfying in the world. *For he shall pluck my feet out of the net.* Observe the conflicting condition in which a gracious soul may be placed, his eyes are in heaven and yet his feet are sometimes in a net; his nobler nature ceases not to behold the glories of God, while his baser parts are enduring the miseries of the world. A net is the common metaphor for temptation. The Lord often keeps his people from falling into it, and if they have fallen he rescues them. The word "*pluck*" is a rough word, and saints who have fallen into sin find that the means of their restoration are not always easy to the flesh; the Lord plucks at us sharply to let us feel that sin is an exceeding bitter thing. But what a mercy is here: Believer, be very grateful for it. The Lord will deliver us from the cunning devices of our cruel enemy, and even if through infirmity we have fallen into sin, he will not leave us to be utterly destroyed but will pluck us out of our dangerous state; though our feet are in the net, if our eyes are up unto God, mercy certainly will interpose.

Verse 16. His own eyes were fixed upon God, but he feared that the Lord had averted his face from him in anger. Oftentimes unbelief suggests that God has turned his back upon us. If we know that we turn to God we need not fear that he will turn from us, but may boldly cry, *Turn thee unto me.* The ground of quarrel is always in ourselves, and when that is removed there is nothing to prevent our full enjoyment of communion with God. *Have mercy upon me.* Saints still must stand upon the footing of mercy; notwithstanding all their experience they cannot get beyond the publican's prayer, "Have mercy upon me." *For I am desolate and afflicted.* He was lonely and bowed down. Jesus was in the days of his flesh in just such a condition; none could enter into the secret depths of his sorrows, he trod the winepress alone, and hence he is able to succour in the fullest sense those who tread the solitary path.

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than he went through before; He that into God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door."

Verse 17. *The troubles of my heart are enlarged.* When trouble penetrates the heart it is trouble indeed. In the case before us, the heart was swollen with grief like a lake surcharged with water by enormous floods; this is used as an argument for deliverance, and it is a potent one. When the darkest hour of the night arrives we may expect the dawn; when the sea is at its lowest ebb the tide

must surely turn; and when our troubles are enlarged to the greatest degree, then we may hopefully pray, *O bring thou me out of my distresses.*

Verse 18. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain.* Note the many trials of the saints; here we have no less than six words all descriptive of woe. "Desolate, and afflicted, troubles enlarged, distresses, affliction, and pain." But note yet more the submissive and believing spirit of a true saint; all he asks for is, "Lord, look upon my evil plight; "he does not dictate, or even express a complaint; a look from God will content him, and that being granted he asks no more. Even more noteworthy is the way in which the believer under affliction discovers the true source of all the mischief, and lays the axe at the root of it. *Forgive all my sins,* is the cry of a soul that is more sick of sin than of pain, and would sooner be forgiven than healed. Blessed is the man to whom sin is more unbearable than disease, he shall not be long before the Lord shall both forgive his iniquity and heal his diseases. Men are slow to see the intimate connection between sin and sorrow, a grace taught heart alone feels it.

Verse 19. *Consider mine enemies.* Watch them, weigh them, check them, defeat them. *For they are many.* They need the eyes of Argus to watch them, and the arms of Hercules to match them, but the Lord is more than sufficient to defeat them. The devils of hell and the evils of earth are all vanquished when the Lord makes bare his arm. *They hate me with cruel hatred.* It is the breath of the serpent's seed to hate; their progenitor was a hater, and they themselves must needs imitate him. No hate so cruel as that which is unreasonable and unjust. A man can forgive one who had injured him, but one whom he has injured he hates implacably. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," is still our Master's word to us.

Verse 20. *O keep my soul out of evil, and deliver me* when I fall into it. This is another version of the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." *Let me not be ashamed.* This is the one fear which like a ghost haunted the psalmist's mind. He trembled lest his faith should become the subject of ridicule through the extremity of his affliction. Noble hearts can brook anything but shame. David was of such a chivalrous spirit, that he could endure any torment rather than be put to dishonour. *For I put my trust in thee.* And therefore the name of God would be compromised if his servants were deserted; this the believing heart can by no means endure.

Verse 21. *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.* What better practical safeguards can a man require? If we do not prosper with these as our guides, it is better for us to suffer adversity. Even the ungodly world admits that "honesty is the best policy." The heir of heaven makes assurance doubly sure, for apart from the rectitude of his public life, he enlists the guardian care of heaven in secret prayer: *for I wait on thee.* To pretend to wait on God without holiness of life is religious hypocrisy, and to trust to our own integrity without calling upon God is presumptuous atheism. Perhaps the integrity and uprightness referred to are those righteous attributes of God, which faith rests upon as a guarantee that the Lord will not forfeit his word.

Verse 22. *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.* This is a very comprehensive prayer, including all the faithful and all their trials. Sorrow had taught the psalmist sympathy, and given him communion with the tried people of God; he therefore remembers them in his prayers. *Israel*, the tried, the wrestling, the conquering hero, fit representative of all the saints. Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, in wars with Canaanites, in captivity, fit type of the church militant on earth. Jesus is the Redeemer from trouble as well as sin, he is a complete Redeemer, and from every evil he will rescue every saint. Redemption by blood is finished: O God, send us redemption by power. Amen and Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. This is the first of the seven alphabetical Psalms, the others being the 34th, 37th, 111th, 112th, 119th, and 145th. They are specimens of that acrostic mode of writing which seems to have been once so fashionable among the Jews, as is testified by numerous instances of such composition, which are to be met with in their works. Other poetic artifices were likewise adopted. We find many instances of poems being so constructed, that a proper name, or some particular sentiment, would not infrequently be expressed by the initial letters of the verses. See Bartolucci's "Bibliotheca Rabbinica," vol. 2 pg 260, where examples of such artifices are cited. *George Phillips, B.D., in "The Psalms in Hebrew, with a Commentary." 1846*

Whole Psalm. This is the first fully *alphabetic* Psalm...The only lesson which the use of the *alphabetic* form may teach is this:—that the Holy Spirit was willing to throw his words into all the moulds of human thought and speech; and whatever ingenuity man may exhibit in intellectual efforts, he should consecrate these to his Lord, making him the "*Alpha and Omega*" of his pursuits. *Andrew A. Bonar.*

Whole Psalm. Saving grace is a secret that no man knows but the elect, and the elect cannot know it neither without special illumination:—1. Special showing—*Shew me thy ways, O Lord*, saith David. 2. Barely showing will not serve the turn, but there must be a special teaching—*Teach me thy paths*, Ps 25:4. 3. Bare teaching will not avail neither, but there must be a special inculcative teaching—*Teach me in thy ways*, to Ps 25:8. 4. Inculcative teaching will not do the deed neither, but there must be a special directive teaching—*Guide in judgment and teach*, Ps 25:9. 5. Directive teaching will not be sufficient neither, but there must be a special manuductive teaching—*Lead me forth in thy truth, and teach me*, Ps 25:5. 6. Manuductive teaching will not be effectual, but there must be also a special, choice teaching, a determining of the very will, an elective teaching—*Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose*, Ps 25:12. And what secret is this? not common grace, for that is not the secret of the elect, but special and peculiar grace. 1. The special grace of prayer—*Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul* Ps 25:1. 2. A special grace of faith—*My God, I trust in thee*, Ps 25:2. 3. A special grace

of repentance—*Remember not the sins of my youth, etc.*, Ps 25:7. 4. A special grace of hope—*My hope is in thee*, Ps 25:21. 5. A special grace of continual living in God's sight, and dependence upon God—*Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord*, Ps 25:15. 6. Which is the root of all God's special and eternal favour and mercy—*Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old*, Ps 25:6; even God's special mercy to him in particular, Ps 25:11. *William Fenner, in "Hidden Manna," 1626.*

Whole Psalm. In these four Psalms which immediately follow one another, we may find the soul of David presented in all the several postures of piety—*lying, standing, sitting, kneeling*. In the twenty-second Psalm, he is lying all along, falling flat on his face, low grovelling on the ground, even almost entering into a degree of despair. Speaking of himself in the history of Christ in the mystery, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the twenty-third Psalm, he is *standing*, and through God's favour, in despite of his foes, trampling and triumphing over all opposition; "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing." In the twenty-fourth Psalm he is *sitting*, like a doctor in his chair, or a professor in his place, reading a lecture of divinity, and describing the character of that man—how he must be accomplished—"who shall ascend into thy holy hill, "and hereafter be partaker of happiness. In this twenty-fifth Psalm, he is *kneeling*, with hands and voice lifted up to God, and on these two hinges the whole Psalm turneth; the one is a hearty beseeching of God's mercy, the other a humble bemoaning of his own misery. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.* The lifting up of the heart presupposes a former dejection of his soul. The soul of man is pressed down with sin and with the cares of this world, which, as lead doth the net, draweth is so down, that it cannot mount above till God send spiritual prayers, as cork to the net, to exalt it; which arise out of faith, as the flame doth out of the fire, and which must be free of secular cares, and all things pressing down, which showeth unto us that worldlings can no more pray than a mole is able to fly. But Christians are as eagles which mount upward. Seeing then the heart of man by nature is fixed to the earth, and of itself is no more able to rise therefrom than a stone which is fixed to the ground, till God raises it by his power, word, and workmen; it should be our principal petition to the Lord that it would please him to draw us, that we might run after him; that he would exalt and lift up our hearts to heaven, that they may not lie still in the puddle of this earth. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.* A godly man prays as a builder builds. Now a builder first layeth a foundation, and because he cannot finish in one day, he comes the second day, and finds the frame standing that he made the first day, and then he adds a second day's work; and then he comes a third day and finds his two former day's work standing; then he proceeds to a third day's work, and makes walls to it, and so he goes on till his building be finished. So prayer is the building of the soul till it reach up to heaven; therefore a godly heart prays, and reacheth higher and higher in

prayer, till at last his prayers reach up to God. *William Fenner.*

Verse 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul: unto thee* in the fulness of thy merits, *unto thee* in the riches of thy grace; *unto thee* in the embraces of thy love and comforts of thy Spirit; *unto thee*, that thy thorns may be my crown, thy blood my balsam, thy curse my blessing, thy death my life, thy cross my triumph. Thus is my "life hid with Christ in God; "and if so, then where should be my soul, but where is my life? And, therefore, *unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. ...O make good thy name of Lord unto me; as Lord, rebuke Satan and restrain all earthly and carnal affections, that they do not once dare to whisper a temptation to my soul, a distraction to my thoughts, whilst I am in communion with thee, in prayer at thy holy ordinance. Do thou as Lord, rule me by thy grace, govern me by thy Spirit, defend me by thy power, and crown me with thy salvation. Thou, Lord, the preserver of heaven and earth, "thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Ps 145:16. O open now thine hand, thy bosom, thy bounty, thy love, and satisfy the desires of my longing soul, which I here "lift up unto thee." Robert Mossom, 1657.*

Verse 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.* Cyprian saith, that in the primitive times the minister was wont to prepare the people's minds to pray, by prefacing, *Sursum corda*, lift up your hearts. The Jews at this day write upon the walls of their synagogues these words, *Tephillah belo cavannah ceguph belo neshamah*; that is, A prayer without the intention of the affection is like a body without a soul. And yet their devotion is a mere outside, saith one—a brainless head and a soulless body: "This people draw nigh to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Isa 29:13. A carnal man can as little *lift up his heart* in prayer, as a mole can fly. A David finds it a hard task; since the best heart is lumpish, and naturally beareth downwards, as the poise of a clock, as the lead of a net. Let us therefore "lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us; "and pray to God to draw us up to himself, as the lodestone doth the iron. *John Trapp.*

Verse 1. *Unto thee, I lift up my soul.* This follows by a natural consequence after the sublime appeal in the foregoing Psalm to the gates of heaven to *lift up* their heads to receive Christ, the Lord of hosts and the King of glory, ascending into heaven. As the Collect for Ascension day expresses it, "Grant O Lord, that like as we do believe thy only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also, in *heart* and *mind* thither *ascend*;" and for the Sunday after Ascension, "O God, who hast *exalted* thine only Son with great triumph to thy kingdom in heaven, send thy Holy Ghost to comfort us, and *exalt us* to the same place, whither our Saviour Christ is gone before." *Christopher Wordsworth, in loc.*

Verse 1. *I lift up my soul*, alluding to the sacrifices, which were wont to be *lifted up*. Hence prayers not answered, not accepted, are said to be stopped from ascending. La 3:44. When you meet with such expressions in the Old Testament concerning prayer, you must still understand them to be allusions to the sacrifices, because the sacrifices were *lifted up* and did ascend. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 1. *My soul.* But how shall I call it mine, seeing it is thine, thine by purchase, thine, having bought it with thy blood? Yea, is it not thy spouse, whom thou hast wedded to thyself by the Spirit through faith? And is not this holy sacrament the marriage feast? If so, sure then, my Jesus, I was lost in myself, till found in thee; and therefore my soul is now, and not till now, truly mine, in being wholly thine; so that I can say with confidence, "*I lift up my soul unto thee.*" Robert Mossom.

Verses 2-3. When David had prayed, *O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed!* In the next verse, as if conscious to himself that his prayers were too restrictive, narrow, and niggardly, he enlargeth the bounds thereof, and builds them on a broader bottom, "*Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.*" Thus it is that charity in the midst of our religious devotions must have *rehoboth* (room enough to expatiate in). Our petitions must not be pent or confined to our own private good, but extended to the benefit of all God's servants, in what condition soever. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3. *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.* To wit, neither by their own disappointments, nor mine. For this last some add because if he should fail of his hopes, he knew this would be a great discouragement to others. Arthur Jackson, M.A., 1593-1666.

Verse 3. *Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.* All persons who transgress, do it, in some sense, without cause; since they cannot excuse or justify their conduct. God is so amiable and excellent in every part of his great name, that he deserves our constant reverence and love. His law is so holy, just, and good, and all his precepts concerning all things so righteous and calculated to make us happy, that the mouth of every transgressor must be stopped. Hence we must all be covered with shame, if dealt with according to our deserts, for all have sinned. But since God has promised to be merciful to those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel, shame will be the portion of those only who wilfully persist in their wickedness, and refuse to return to God by Jesus Christ. These then are the persons whom the psalmist speaks of as transgressing without cause, and doubtless these have no cloak for their sin. William Richardson, 1825.

Verse 3. *Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.* Let shame be sent to the right owner, even to those that deal disloyally, unprovoked on my part. And so it was; for Achitophel hanged himself; Absalom was trussed up by the hand of God, and dispatched by Joab; the people that conspired with him, partly perished by the sword, and partly fled home, much ashamed of their enterprise. Oh, the power of prayer! What may not the saints have for asking? John Trapp.

Verse 4. *Shew me thy ways, O Lord,* etc. There are the "*ways*" of men, and the "*ways*" of God; the "*paths*" of sin, and the "*paths*" of righteousness: there are "*thy ways*," and there are "*my ways*"; *thine* the ways of truth, *mine* the ways of error; *thine* which are good in thine eyes, and *mine* which are good in mine eyes; *thine* which lead to heaven, *mine* which lead to hell. Wherefore, *Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths,* lest I mistake mine own ways for thine; yea, lead me in the truth, and teach me, lest I turn out of thy ways into mine own: *shew me thy ways,* by the ministry of thy

word; *teach me thy paths*, in the guidance of thy Spirit, "*lead me in thy truth*", "by the assistance of thy grace. Robert Mossom.

Verses 4-5, 9. Do what you know, and God will teach you what to do. Do what you know to be your *present* duty, and God will acquaint you with your *future* duty as it comes to be *present*. Make it your business to avoid *known omissions*, and God will keep you from feared commissions. This rule is of great moment, and therefore I will charge it upon you by express Scripture. *Shew me thy ways, O Lord*, i.e., those ways wherein I cannot err. *Teach me thy paths*, i.e., that narrow path which is too commonly unknown, those commands that are most strict and difficult, *Verse 5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me*, i.e., teach me evidently, that I may not be deceived; so teach me, that I may not only know thy will, but do it. Here's his prayer, but what grounds hath he to expect audience? *For thou art the God of my salvation*, q.d., thou Lord, wilt save me, and therefore do not refuse to teach me. *On thee do I wait all the day*, i.e., the whole day, and every day. Other arguments are couched in the following verses, but *what* answer? *Verse 9. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way*, i.e., those that submit their neck to his yoke, those that are not conceited that they can guide themselves; in necessary, great and weighty matters they shall not err. Samuel Annesley, D.D. (1620-1696), in "*Morning Exercises at Cripplegate*."

Verse 5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me. The soul that is unsatiable in prayer, he proceeds, he gets near to God, he gains something, he winds up his heart higher. As a child that seeth the mother have an apple in her hand, and it would fain have it, it will come and pull at the mother's hand for it; now she lets go one finger, and yet she holds it, and then he pulls again; and then she lets go another finger, and yet she keeps it, and then the child pulls again, and will never leave pulling and crying till it hath got it from its mother. So a child of God, seeing all graces to be in God, he draws near to the throne of grace begging for it, and by his earnest and faithful prayers he opens the hands of God to him; God dealing as parents to their children, holds them off for awhile; not that he is unwilling to give, but to make them more earnest with God; to draw them the nearer to himself. William Fenner.

Verse 5. *On thee do I wait all the day.* We must *wait all the day*. 1. Though it be a *long* day, though we be kept waiting a great while, quite beyond our own reckoning; though when we have waited long, we are still put to wait longer, and are bid, with the prophet's servant, to go yet seven times 1Ki 18:43, before we perceive the least sign of mercy coming...2. Though it be a *dark* day, yet let us wait upon God *all the day*. Though while we are kept waiting for what God will do, we are kept in the dark concerning what he is doing, and what is best for us to do, yet let us be content to wait in the dark. Though we see not our signs, though there is none to tell us how long, yet let us resolve to wait, how long soever it may be; for though what God doth we know not now, yet we shall know hereafter when the mystery of God shall be finished...3. Though it be a *stormy* day, yet we must wait upon God *all the day*. Though we are not only becalmed, and do not get forward, but though the wind be contrary, and

drive us back; nay, though it be boisterous, and the church be tossed with tempests, and ready to sink, yet we must hope the best, yet we must wait, and weather the storm by patience. It is some comfort that Christ is in the ship; the church's cause is Christ's own cause, he has espoused it, and he will own it; he is embarked in the same bottom with his people, and therefore why are you fearful? ... *To wait on God*, is—1. To live a life of desire towards God; to wait on him as the beggar waits on his benefactor, with earnest desire to receive supplies from him, as the sick and sore at Bethesda's pool waited for the stirring of the water, and attended in the porches with desire to be helped in and healed... 2. It is to live a life of delight in God, as the lover waits on his beloved. Desire is love in motion, as a bird upon the wing; delight is love at rest, as a bird upon the nest; now, though our desire must still be so towards God, as that we must be wishing for more of God, yet our delight must be so in God, as that we must never wish for more than God...3. It is to live of dependence on God, as the child waits on his father, whom he has confidence in, and on whom he casts all his care. To wait on God is to expect all good to come to us from him, as the worker of all good for us and in us, the giver of all good to us, and the protector of us from all evil. Thus David explains himself Ps 62:5, "My soul, wait thou only upon God, " and continue still to do so, for "my expectation is from him." ... 4. It is to live a life of devotedness to God, as the servant waits on his master, ready to observe his will, and to do his work, and in everything to consult his honour and interest. To wait on God is entirely and unreservedly to refer ourselves to his wise and holy directions and disposals, and cheerfully to acquiesce in them, and comply with them. The servant that waits on his master, chooseth not his own way, but follows his master step by step. Thus must we wait on God, as those that have no will of our own but what is wholly resolved into his, and must therefore study to accommodate ourselves to his. *Condensed from Matthew Henry, on "Communion with God."*

Verse 5. *On thee do I wait all the day.* On thee, whose hand of bounty, whose bosom of love, yea, whose bowels of mercy are not only opened, but enlarged to all humble penitents. *On thee do I wait, wait* to hear the secret voice of thy Spirit, speaking peace unto my conscience, *wait* to feel the reviving vigour of thy grace, quickening mine obedience; *wait* to see the subduing power of the Holy Spirit quelling my rebellious sin; *wait* to feel the cheering virtue of thy heavenly comforts, refreshing my fainting soul; for all these thy blessings, *O thou God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day.* "All the day:" being never so satisfied with thy goodness, as not more eagerly to long after thy heavenly fulness; wherefore now refresh my faintings, quench not my desires; but the more freely thou givest, let me the more eagerly covet; the more sweet is thy mercy, let be the more eager my longings, that so my whole life on earth may be a continual breathing after that eternal fellowship and communion with thee in heaven; thus, thus, *let me wait*, even all my life, *all the day.* *Robert Mossom.*

Verse 6. *Thy tender mercies.* O how does one deep call upon another! The depths of my multiplied miseries, calls, loudly calls, upon the depth of thy manifold mercies; even *that mercy* whereby thou

dost pardon my sin and help mine infirmities; *that mercy* whereby thou dost sanctify me by thy grace, and comfort me by thy Spirit; *that mercy* whereby thou dost deliver me from hell, and possess me of heaven. *Remember, O Lord, all those thy mercies, thy tender mercies, which have been of old unto thy saints. Robert Mossom.*

Verse 6. *Thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses...have been ever of old.* Let the ancientness of divine love draw up our hearts to a very dear and honourable esteem of it. Pieces of antiquity, though of base metal, and otherwise of little use or value, how venerable are they with learned men! and ancient charters, how careful are men to preserve them; although they contain but temporary privileges, and sometimes but of trivial moment! How then should the great charter of heaven, so much older than the world, be had in everlasting remembrance, and the thoughts thereof be very precious to us; lying down, rising up, and all the day long accompanying of us! ...That which is from everlasting shall be to everlasting; if the root be eternal, so are the branches ...Divine love is an eternal fountain that never leaves running while a vessel is empty or capable of holding more; and it stands open to all comers: therefore, come; and if ye have not sufficient of your own, go and borrow vessels, empty vessels, not a few; "pay your debts out of it, and live on the rest" 2Ki 4:7, to eternity. *Elisha Coles on "God's Sovereignty", 1678.*

Verse 7. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my *transgressions*. In the first place, considering that he had not begun only of late to commit sin, but that he had for a long time heaped up sin upon sin, he bows himself, if we may so speak, under the accumulated load; and, in the second place, he intimates, that if God should deal with him according to the rigour of the law, not only the sins of yesterday, or of a few days, would come into judgment against him, but all instances in which he had offended, even from his infancy, might now with justice be laid to his charge. As often, therefore, as God terrifies us by his judgments and the tokens of his wrath, let us call to our remembrance, not only the sins which we have lately committed, but also all the transgressions of our past life, proving to us the ground of renewed shame and renewed lamentation. *John Calvin.*

Verse 7. *Remember not the sins of my youth.* This may seem but a superfluous prayer of David; for whereas in charity it may and must be presumed that David long since had begged pardon for his youthful sins, that upon his begging God hath granted it, that upon his granting God never revoked it. What need now had David to prefer this petition for pardon of antiquated sin, time out of mind committed by him, time out of mind remitted by God? To this objection I shape a fourfold answer. *First*, though David no doubt long since had been truly sorrowful for his youthful sins, yet he was sensible in himself that if God would be extreme to mark what was done amiss, though he had repented of those sins, yet he had sinned in that his repentance. *Secondly*, though God had forgiven David's sins so far forth as to pardon him eternal damnation, yet he had not remitted unto him temporal afflictions which perchance pressing upon him at this present, he prayeth in this Psalm for

the removing or mitigating of them. So then the sense of his words sound thus, *Remember not, Lord, the sins of my youth*, that is, Lord, lighten and lessen the afflictions which lie upon me in this mine old age, justly inflicted on me for my youthful sins. *Thirdly*, God's pardon for sins past, is ever granted with this condition, that the party so pardoned is bound to his good behaviour for the time to come, which if he breaks, he deserves in the strictness of justice for forfeit the benefit of his pardon. Now David was guilty afterward in that grand transgression of Bathsheba and Uriah, which might in the extremity of justice have made all his youthful sins to be punished afresh upon him. *Lastly*, grant David certainly assured of the pardon of his youthful sins, yet God's servants may pray for those blessings they have in possession, not for the obtaining of that they have—that is needless—but for the keeping of what they have obtained, that is necessary. Yea, God is well pleased with such prayers of his saints, and interprets them to be praises unto him, and then these words, *Remember not the sins of my youth*, amount to this effect: blessed be thy gracious goodness, who hast forgiven me the sins of my youth. *Thomas Fuller*.

Verse 7. *Remember not the sins of my youth.* David, after he was called by the power of the word, cries out, "*Lord, remember not,*" etc., that gravelled and galled his conscience, the *sins* of his *youth* before his call. O beloved, the sins of your youth, though you should be Jobs converted, yet they will bring great disquietness and great horror when you come to age. The lusts of youth, and the vanities of youth, and the sensual pleasures of your youthful days, they will lay a foundation of sorrow when you come to gray hairs to be near your graves. So Job 20:11. *Christopher Love, 1654.*

Verse 7. *Remember not the sins of my youth;* let them not move thee to punish or be avenged on me for them; as men, when they remember injuries, seek to be avenged on those who have done them. *William Greenhill.*

Verse 7. *Remember not the sins of my youth.* It is not safe to be at odds with the "Ancient of days." *John Trapp.*

Verse 7. *The sins of my youth.* Before we come to the principal point we must first clear the text from the incumbrance of a double objection. The first is this:—It may seem (some may say) very improbable that David should have any sins of his youth, if we consider the principals whereupon his youth was past. The first was *poverty*. We read that his father Jesse passed for an *old* man, we read not that he passed for a *rich* man; and probably his seven sons were the principal part of his wealth. Secondly, *painfulness*. David, though the youngest, was not made a darling, but a drudge; sent by his father to follow the ewes big with young; where he may seem to have learned innocence and simplicity from the sheep he kept. Thirdly, *piety* Ps 71:5, "For thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth." And again in the seventeenth verse of the same Psalm, "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth:" David began to be good betimes, a *young saint*, and yet crossed that pestilent proverb, was no *old devil*. And what is more still, he was constantly in the furnace of

affliction. Ps 88:15. "Even from my youth up, thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind." The question then will be this, How could that water be corrupted which was daily clarified? How could that steel gather rust which was duly filed? How could David's soul in his *youth* be sooty with sin, which was constantly scoured with suffering? But the answer is easy; for though David for the main were a man after God's own heart (the best transcript of the best copy), yet he, especially in his youth, had his faults and infirmities, yea, his sins and transgressions. Though the Scripture maketh mention of no eminent sin in his youth, the business with Bathsheba being justly to be referred to David's reduced and elder age. I will not conclude that David was of a wanton constitution because of a ruddy complexion. It is as injurious an inference to conclude all bad which are beautiful, as it is a false and flattering consequence to say all are honest who are deformed. Rather we may collect David's youth guilty of wantonness from his having so many wives and concubines. But what go I about to do? Expect not that I should tell you the particular sins, when he could not tell his own. Psalm 19. "Who can tell how oft he offends?" Or, how can David's sins be known to me, which he confesseth were unknown to himself, which made him say, "O Lord, cleanse me from secret sins"? But to silence our curiosity, that our conscience may speak:—If David's youth, which was poor, painful, and pious, was guilty of sins, what shall we say, of such whose education hath been wealthy, wanton, and wicked? And I report the rest to be acted with shame, sorrow, and silence in every man's conscience. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 7. *The sins of my youth.* Two aged disciples, one eighty-seven years old, one day met. "Well," enquired the younger, of his fellow pilgrim, "how long have you been interested in religion?" "Fifty years," was the old man's reply. "Well, have you ever regretted that you began when young to devote yourself to religion?" "Oh no!" said he, and the tears trickled down his furrowed cheeks; "I weep when I think of the sins of my youth; it is this which makes me weep now." *From K. Arvine's "Cyclopaedia of Moral and Religious Anecdotes," 1859.*

Verse 7. *According to THY mercy, not mine;* for I have forsaken those *mercies* thou madest *mine own* Jon 2:8 Ps 59:10,17, in being cruel to myself by my sin, through distrust of thy promise, and upon presumption in thy mercy; yea, let it be, *for THY goodness' sake, not mine,* for in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no manner of thing that is good. Let thy goodness, then, be the motive, thy mercy the rule of all that grace, and of all those blessings you vouchsafe unto my soul. *Robert Mossom.*

Verse 7. *According to thy mercy.* Moses was the first that brought up this happy expression, *According to thy mercy* (I know not where it is used by any other man), that is, according to the infinite mercy that is in thy heart and nature. David did next use it (Psalm 25), and in the great case of his sin and adultery Ps 51:1, "that he would be merciful to him, according to the multitude of his mercies." And as he needed all the mercies in God, so he confessed the sin of his nature, and hath recourse to the mercies in God's nature. But it is Ps 25:7, I pitch on; there he doth not content himself only with

this expression, *According to thy mercy*, but he adds another phrase, "For thy mercy's sake, "and goodness sake. Muis observes in this coherence, "*Good and upright is the Lord*" Ps 25:8, that he centres in his nature. Thou hast a merciful nature; deal with me according to that, and for the sake of that, "according to thy mercy, "for thy goodness sake." The mediation of that attribute was the foundation of his faith and prayer herein. When he has done, he refers himself to Moses: Ps 25:11, *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great*. He refers to that name proclaimed before Moses. Ex 34:6,7. But you will say, how do these expressions, "for thy name's sake, "for thy goodness sake, "for thy mercy's sake, "imply the same as "for himself, "for his own sake"? how do they involve the Godhead? Look to Isa 43:25, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, "that is, for myself. Isa 48:11. "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it." You have it twice in one verse; and that which is "for mercy's sake" in one place, is "for mine own sake" in another, "and behold it is I, I am he, as I am God, who doth it. What is this, but Jehovah, Jehovah, God merciful"? *Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 8. *Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way*. As election is the effect of God's sovereignty, our pardon the fruit of his mercy, our knowledge a stream from his wisdom, our strength an impression of his power; so our purity is a beam from his holiness. As the rectitude of the creature at the first creation was the effect of his holiness, so the purity of the creature by a new creation, is a draught of the same perfection. He is called the Holy One of Israel more in Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, in erecting Zion, and forming a people for himself, than in the whole Scripture besides. *Stephen Charnock*.

Verse 8. *Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way*. Will not the Lord, who is good, be as gracious to his enemies as he requires us to be to ours? It is his own law, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again." Ex 23:4. Now God meets us sinners, and all sinners as such are his enemies; he meets us straying like the beast without understanding; and what? will he not bring us again unto himself, the sole proprietary, by that first right of creation, and that more firm right of redemption? *Robert Mossom*.

Verse 9. *The meek will he guide in judgment; or the poor* (namely, in spirit), will he make to tread in judgment, to foot it aright, to walk judiciously, to behave themselves wisely, as David did 1Sa 24:1-22, so that Saul feared him. Natural conscience cannot but stoop to the image of God, shining in the hearts and lives of the really religious. *John Trapp*.

Verse 9. *The meek will he guide in judgment*. They have been made meek i.e., desirous of being taught, and praying to be so; but, being now sensible of unworthiness, they are afraid that God will not teach them. This may be done to other sinners but not to them. Therefore they are told who may expect teaching, even they who desire and pray for teaching. *John Berridge, 1716-1793*.

Verse 9. *He will guide the poor in judgment*. Never will this docility be found in any man, until the

heart, which is naturally elated and filled with pride, has been humbled and subdued. As the Hebrew word denotes the *poor* or *afflicted*, and is employed in a metaphorical sense, to denote *the meek and humble*, it is probable that David, under this term, includes the afflictions which serve to restrain and subdue the forwardness of the flesh, as well as the grace of humility itself; as if he had said, When God has first humbled them, then he kindly stretches forth his hand to them, and leads and guides them throughout the whole course of their life. *John Calvin*.

Verse 9. *The meek*, etc. Pride and anger have no place in the school of Christ. The Master himself is "meek and lowly of heart;" much more, surely, ought the scholars to be so. He who hath no sense of his ignorance, can have no desire, or capability of knowledge, human or divine. *George Horne*.

Verse 9 (*last clause*). The Lord will teach the humble his secrets, he will not teach proud scholars. *Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 9 (*last clause*). Such as lie at his feet and say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," such whose hearts are *supple* and *soluble*, tractable, and teachable, so that a *little child* may lead them. Isa 11:6. Austin was such an one. Saith he, "I am here an old man ready to learn of a young man, my coadjutor in the ministry, who hath scarce been one year in the service." *John Trapp*.

Verse 10. *All the paths of the Lord*, (*twxra*) *orchoth* signifies the tracks or ruts made by the wheels of wagons by often passing over the same ground. Mercy and truth are the paths in which God constantly walks in reference to the children of men; and so frequently does he show them mercy, and so frequently does he fulfil his truth, that his paths are easily discerned. How frequent, how deeply indented, and how multiplied are those tracks to every family and individual! Wherever we go, we see that God's mercy and truth have been there by the deep tracks they have left behind them. But he is more abundantly merciful to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies; *i.e.*, those who are conformed, not only to the letter, but to the spirit of his pure religion. *Adam Clarke*.

Verse 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth*. As his *nature* is *love and truth*, so all his ways are *mercy and truth*. They are "*mercy*" in respect of aiming at our good, and "*truth*" in respect of fulfilling his promises and faithful carriage to us; therefore, whatsoever befalls thee, though it be clean contrary to thy expectation, interpret it in love. Many actions of men are such as a good interpretation cannot be put upon them, nor a good construction made of them; therefore interpreters restrain those sayings of love, that it believes all, etc.; that is, *credibilia*, all things believable, otherwise to put all upon charity, will eat out charity. But none of God's ways are such, but love and faith may pick a good meaning out of these. A bono Deo nil nisi bonum, from a good God there comes nothing but what is good; and therefore says Job, "Though he kill me, I will trust in him." Endeavour to spy out some end of his for good at the present, and if none ariseth to thy conjecture, resolve it into faith, and make the best of it. *Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 10. "*Unto such as keep*, "etc.: he is never out of the road of mercy unto them. *Thomas*

Goodwin.

Verse 11. *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.* I cannot do better than quote one of those beautiful passages of the great Vieyra, which gave him the character of the first preacher of his age:—"I confess, my God, that it is so; that we are all sinners in the highest degree." He is preaching on a fast on occasion of the threatened destruction of the Portuguese dominion in Brazil by the Dutch. But so far am I from considering this any reason why I should cease from my petition, that I behold in it a new and convincing argument which may influence thy goodness. All that I have said before is based on no other foundation than the glory and honour of thy most holy Name. *Propter nomen tuum.* And what motive can I offer more glorious to that same Name, than that our sins are many and great? *For thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.* I ask thee, saith David, to pardon, not everyday sins, but numerous sins, but great sins: *multum est enim.* O motive worthy of the breast of God! Oh, consequence which can have force only when it bears on supreme goodness! So that in order to obtain remission of his sins, the sinner alleges to God that they are many and great. Verily so; and that not for love of the sinner nor for the love of sin, but for the love of the honour and glory of God; which glory, by how much the sins he forgives are greater and more numerous, by so much the more ennobles and exalts itself. The same David distinguishes in the mercy of God greatness and multitude: greatness, *secundum magnam misericordiam tuam*; multitude, *et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum.* And as the greatness of the divine mercy is immense, and the multitude of his lovingkindnesses infinite; and forasmuch as the immense cannot be measured, nor the infinite counted, in order that the one and the other may in a certain manner have a proportionate material of glory, it is necessary to the very greatness of mercy that the sins to be pardoned should be great, and necessary to the very multitude of lovingkindnesses that they should be many. *Multum est enim.* Reason have I then, O Lord, not to be dismayed because our sins are many and great. Reason have I also to demand the reason from thee, why thou dost not make haste to pardon them?—*Vieyra, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 11. *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity.* It is a very usual notion by "*name*" to understand honour and glory. When God saith to David, "I have made thee a name like the name of men that are in the earth; "when the church saith to God, "Thou didst get thee a name as it is this day; "it is manifest that by name glory is intended. Suitable to this it is that famous men are called by the Hebrews, (*Mvhyvna*) Ge 6:4, and by the Latins, *virii nominum*, men of name, in which the poet adorneth it with these epithets—*Magnum et memorabile nomen*, or, great and memorable. Thus, when God forgiveth sin, he doth it *for his name's sake*, that is, for his own honour and glory. Indeed, God's own glory is the ultimate end of all his actions. As he is the first, so is he the last, the efficient, and the final cause; nor is there anything done by him which is not for him. The end of our actions must be in his glory, because both our being and working are from him; but the end of his work is his

own glory, because his being and acting are of and from himself. Among all divine works, there is none which more setteth forth his glory than this of remission. Sin, by committing it, brings God a great deal of dishonour, and yet, by forgiving it, God raiseth to himself a great deal of honour. "It is the glory of a man, "and much more of God, "to pass by an offence; "as acts of power, so acts of grace, are exceeding honourable. The attributes of God's grace, mercy, goodness, clemency, shine forth in nothing so much as in pardoning sins. Paul speaks of riches of goodness which attend God's forbearance; how much greater riches must there needs be in forgiveness? Nay, indeed, God hath so ordered the way of pardon, that not only the glory of his mercy, but justice, yea, of his wisdom in the wonderful contemperation of both these, is very illustrious. *Nomen quasi notamen, quia notificat*, the name is that which maketh one known; and by remission of sins, God maketh known his choice and glorious attributes; and for this end it is that he vouchsafes it. It is a consideration that may be our consolation. Since God forgiveth sins *for his name's sake*, he will be ready to forgive many sins as well as few, great as small; indeed, the more and greater our sins are, the greater is the forgiveness, and, consequently, the greater is God's glory; and therefore David, upon this consideration of God's name and glory, maketh the *greatness of his iniquity* a motive of forgiveness. Indeed, to run into gross sins, that God may glorify himself by forgiving them, is an odious presumption, but to hope that those gross sins we have run into may, and will, be forgiven by God to us, being truly penitent, *for his name's sake*, is a well grounded expectation, and such as may support our spirits against the strongest temptations to despair. *Nathanael Hardy*.

Verse 11. *Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.* He pleads the greatness of his sin, and not the smallness of it: he enforces his prayer with this consideration, that his sins are very heinous. But how could he make this a plea for pardon? I answer, Because the greater his iniquity was, the more *need* he had of pardon. It is as much as if he had said, Pardon mine iniquity, for it is so great that I cannot bear the punishment; my sin is so great that I am in necessity of pardon; my case will be exceedingly miserable, unless thou be pleased to pardon me. He makes use of the greatness of his sin, to enforce his plea for pardon, as a man would make use of the greatness of calamity in begging for relief. When a beggar begs for bread, he will plead the greatness of his poverty and necessity. When a man in distress cries for pity, what more suitable plea can be urged than the extremity of his case? And God allows such a plea as this: for he is moved to mercy towards us by nothing in us, but the miserableness of our case. He doth not pity sinners because they are worthy, but because they need his pity...Herein doth the *glory of grace* by the redemption of Christ much consist; namely, in its sufficiency for the pardon of the *greatest* sinners. The whole contrivance of the way of salvation is for this end, to glorify the free grace of God. God had it on his heart from all eternity to glorify this attribute; and therefore it is, that the device of saving sinners by Christ was conceived. The greatness of divine grace appears very much in this, that God by Christ saves the *greatest* offenders. The

greater the guilt of any sinner is, the more glorious and wonderful is the grace manifested in his pardon. Ro 5:20: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The apostle, when telling how great a sinner he had been, takes notice of the abounding of grace in his pardon, of which his great guilt was the occasion. 1Ti 1:13-14. "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The Redeemer is glorified, in that he proves sufficient to redeem those who are exceeding sinful, in that his blood proves sufficient to wash away the greatest guilt, in that he is able to save men to the uttermost, and in that he redeems even from the greatest misery. It is the honour of Christ to save the greatest sinners, when they come to him, as it is the honour of a physician that he cures the most desperate diseases or wounds. Therefore, no doubt, Christ will be willing to save the greatest sinners, if they come to him; for he will not be backward to glorify himself, and to commend the value and virtue of his own blood. Seeing he hath so laid out himself to redeem sinners, he will not be unwilling to show he is able to redeem to the uttermost. *Jonathan Edwards*.

Verse 11. *Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.* Is any man miserable are his miseries great, are they spiritual, are they temporal? Undoubtedly, if he be humbled in the sense of them, and see himself unworthy of any mercy, he may still be assured of mercy. Though there be spiritual evils, yet if a man see himself wretched, and miserable, the more heavy he finds his iniquity to be, the more hope of mercy there is for him: the Lord's mercy is over all his works, therefore is he much more merciful to such. If a man hath a feeling of his miseries and unworthiness, then he may use this argument for mercy, *my miseries are great:* even as David did, "O Lord, be merciful to me, and pardon my iniquity, for it is great." And the more miserable man are under their own sense, the fitter objects they are for God to show mercy unto. Thus it was with the publican, and so with the prodigal; therefore never doubt, though thy iniquities be never so great, there is a sea of mercy in God. Bernard well observes the difference between justice and mercy; justice requires that there should be desert, but mercy looks upon them that are miserable; and, saith the father, true mercy doth affect misery; mercy doth not stand upon inquisition, but it is glad to find occasion of exercising itself. *Richard Stock*.

Verse 11. *Mine iniquity...is great.* Such who come to God to have their sins pardoned, they look upon them as great sins. *Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.* The original word as well signifies *many* as *great*—"My sins are great and many, " many great sins lie upon me, pardon, oh! pardon them, O Lord, etc... In the opening of this point, I would show *why* such as come in a right way for pardon do look upon their sins as *great* sins. 1. Sinners that come to God for pardon and find it, do look upon their sins as *great* sins, because against a *great* God, great in power, great in justice, great in holiness. I am a *worm*, and yet sin, and that boldly against a God so *great*; for a worm to lift up himself against a great and infinite God; oh! this makes every little sin *great*, and calls for *great*

vengeance from so *great* a God. 2. Because *they have sinned against great patience*, despising the goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of God, which is called, "treasuring up wrath." Ro 2:4-5 ...3. Sins do appear *great* because *against great mercies*. Oh! against how many mercies and kindnesses do sinners sin, and turn all the mercies of God into sin! ... 4. That which *increases* sin in the eyes of poor sinners that cry for pardon, is, that *they have sinned against great light*—light in the conscience; this heightens sin exceedingly, especially to such as are under gospel means; and is indeed the sin of all in this nation; there's nothing more abases a soul than this, nothing makes it more difficult to believe pardon, when humbled for it...5. *Continuance in sin* much *increases* sin to a poor soul that is after pardon; especially such as are not very early converted. Ps 68:21. Oh! I added sin unto sin, saith a poor soul, spending the choice time of my youth in sin, when I might have been getting the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and honouring of God. This lay close upon David's spirit as appears from the seventh verse: "Oh! remember not the sins of my youth." Yet we do not find that David's youth was notoriously sinful; but inasmuch as he spent not his youth to get knowledge, and to serve the Lord fully, it was his burden and complaint before the Lord; much more such whose youth was spent in nothing but vanity, profaneness, lying, swearing, profaning of the Sabbath, sports, pastimes, excess of riot, and the like, when God lays it in upon their consciences, must be grievous and abominable to their souls...6. *Multitudes of sins* do make sin appear great; this made David cry out for "multitudes of mercies." Ps 51:1-19 40:12 ...7. Another thing that *increases* sin is, that it was *against purpose and resolutions of forsaking such and such sins*; and yet all broken, sometimes against solemn vows, against prayers...8. Sin appears *great* when seen by a poor soul, because it was *reigning* sin. Ro 5:6. "Sin reigned unto death," etc. Oh! saith a poor humbled sinner, I did not only *commit* sin, but I was the *servant* and *slave* of sin...9. Sin *in the fountain makes it great*. As it may be said, there is more water in the fountain than in the pools and streams it makes...So in the nature, in the heart, is there, as in the fountain, and therefore 'tis more there than in the breakings forth of it in the outward man...10. A sinner drawing nigh to God for pardon sees his sin as *great*, because thereby he was *led captive by the devil* at his will...11. Sin appears *great* because *great is the wrath of God against sin*. Ro 2:12. The way of any sinner's deliverance from such wrath shows sin to be exceeding great *in the price and ransom that is paid for the salvation of him from his sins*—the price of the blood of the eternal Son of God... 13. Lastly, this consideration also *increases* sin, inasmuch as a poor creature *hath drawn and tempted others* to sin with him, especially such as have lived more vainly and loosely, and it lies hard upon many a poor soul after thorough conviction. *Anthony Palmer* (—1678), in "*The Gospel New Creature*."

Verse 11. I plead not, Lord, my merits, who am less than the least of thy mercies; and as I look not upon my merit, so nor do thou look upon my demerit; as I do not view my worthiness, so nor do thou view my unworthiness; but thou who art called *the God of mercy* be unto me what thou art called;

make good the glory of thine own name in being merciful unto my sin, of which I cannot say as Lot of Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" No, it is *great*, for that it is against thee so great a God and so good to me: *great*, for that my place, my calling, my office is great. The sun the higher it is, the less it seems; but my sins, the higher I am the greater they are, even in thine and other's eyes. *Robert Mossom*.

Verse 11. Plead we the greatness of our sins not to keep us from mercy, but to prevail for it: *Pardon mine iniquity; why so? for it is great.* "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee," Ps 41:4. "Do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee." Jer 14:7. This is a strong plea, when sincerely urged by an humble and contrite spirit. It glorifieth God as one that is abundant in goodness, rich in mercy, and one with whom are forgivenesses and plenteous redemption; and it honoureth Christ as infinite in mercy. Hence also the Lord himself, when he would stir up himself to choice acts of mercy to his poor people, he first aggravates their sin against him to the highest, and then he expresses his royal act of grace to them. So Isa 43:22-25. "Thou hast not called upon me O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel; thou hast not honoured me with thy sacrifices, but thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." *Thomas Cobbet*, 1608-1686.

Verse 11. "Oh," says Pharaoh, "take away these filthy frogs, this dreadful thunder!" But what says holy David? "Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant!" The one would be freed from punishment, the effect of sin; the other from sin, the cause of punishment. And it is most true that a true Christian man is more troubled at sin than at frogs and thunder; he sees more filthiness in sin than in frogs and toads, more horror than in thunder and lightning. *Jeremiah Dyke's "Worthy Communicant,"* 1645.

Verse 11. Pharaoh more lamented the hard strokes that were upon him, than the hard heart which was within him. Esau mourned not because he sold the birthright, which was his sin, but because he lost the blessing, which was his punishment. This is like weeping with an onion; the eye sheds tears because it smarts. A mariner casts overboard that cargo in a tempest, which he courts the return of when the winds are silenced. Many complain more of the sorrows to which they are born, than of the sins with which they were born; they tremble more at the vengeance of sin, than at the venom of sin; one delights them, the other scares them. *William Secker*.

Verse 12. *What man is he that feareth the Lord?* Blessed shall he be—1. In the sacred knowledge of Christ's will; *Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.* 2. Blessed shall he be in the quiet peace of a good conscience; *"His soul shall dwell at ease."* 3. Blessed he shall be in the present comfort of a hopeful progeny; *"His seed shall inherit the earth."* *Robert Mossom*.

Verse 12. *What man is he that feareth the Lord?* There is nothing so effectual to obtain grace, to retain grace, as always to be found before God not over wise, but *to fear*: happy art thou, if thy heart be replenished with three fears; a fear for received grace, a greater fear for lost grace, a greatest fear to recover grace. *Bernard*.

Verse 12. *He that feareth the Lord.* Present fear begetteth eternal security: fear God, which is above all, and no need to fear man at all. *Augustine.*

Verse 12. *Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose,* i.e., that the good man shall pitch upon. God will direct him in all dealings to make a good choice, and will give good success. This is not in a man's own power to do. Jer 10:23. *John Trapp.*

Verse 13. *His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.* The holy fear of God shall destroy all sinful fears of men, even as Moses' serpent devoured all those serpents of the magicians. The fear of God hath this good effect, that it makes other things not to be feared; so that the soul of him that feareth the Lord doth dwell, as *in rest*, so in goodness; as *in peace*, so in patience, till this moment of time be swallowed up in the fulness of eternity, and he change his earthly dwelling for an heavenly mansion, and his spiritual peace for an everlasting blessedness. *Robert Mossom.*

Verse 13. *His soul shall dwell at ease. Shall tarry in good things,* as it is in the Vulgate. Unlike the soul of Adam, who, being put into possession of the delights of paradise, tarried there but a few days or hours. *Gerhohus, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 13. *His soul shall dwell at ease.* He expresses with great sweetness spiritual delectation, when he says, "*His soul shall tarry in good things.*" For whatever is carnally sweet yields without doubt a delectation for the time to such as enjoy it, but cannot tarry long with them; because, while by its taste it provokes appetite, by its transit it cheats desire. But spiritual delights, which neither pass away as they are tasted, nor decrease while they refresh, nor cloy while they satiate, can tarry for ever with their possessors. *Hugo Victorinus (1130), quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 13 (first clause). In the reception of the gifts of God, they do not devour them without feeling a sense of their sweetness, but really relish them, so that the smallest competency is of more avail to satisfy them than the greatest abundance is to satisfy the ungodly. Thus, according as every man is contented with his condition, and cheerfully cherishes a spirit of patience and tranquillity, his soul is said to dwell in good. *John Calvin.*

Verse 13. "*The earth, "or the land,* to wit Canaan; which was promised and given, as an earnest of the whole covenant of grace, and all its promises, and therefore it is synecdochically put for all of them. The sense is, his seed shall be blessed. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,* etc. It is the righteous that is God's friend, it is to him that God is joined in a loving familiarity, it is to him that God revealeth his secret, telling him what misery and torments he hath reserved for them who by wickedness flourish in this world. And indeed the Lord doth not more hate the wicked than he loves the godly: if he keeps far from the froward, as being an abomination unto him, his very secret shall be with the righteous, as with his dearest friend. It is an honour to him to whom a secret is committed by another, a greater honour to him to whom the king shall commit his own secret; but how is he honoured to whom God committed

his secret? for where the secret of God is, there is his heart and there is himself. Thus was his secret with St. John, of whom St. Bernard saith, by occasion of the beginning of his gospel, "Doth he not seem unto thee to have dived into the bowels of the divine Word, and from the secrets of his breast, to have drawn a sacred pith of concealed wisdom?" Thus was his secret with St. Paul, who saith, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew." 1Co 2:7-8. St. Gregory reads, for the secret of God, as the Vulgar Latin doth, *sermocinatio Dei*, the communication of God is with the righteous; but then addeth, *Dei sermocinari est per illustrationem suae praesentiae humanis mentibus arcana revelare*, God's communication is, by the illustration of his presence, to reveal secrets to the minds of men. But to consider the words somewhat more generally. There is no less a secret of godliness, than there is of any other trade or profession. Many profess an art or a trade, but thrive not by it, because they have not the secret and mystery of it; and many profess godliness, but are little the better for it, because they have not the true secret of it: he hath that, with whom God is in secret in his heart; and he that is righteous in secret, where no man sees him, he is the righteous man with whom the secret of the Lord is. *Michael Jermin, D.D., 1591-1659.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, etc. There is a vital sense in which "the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God; "and in which all the realities of Christian experience are utterly hid from his perceptions. To speak to him of communion with God, of the sense of pardon, of the lively expectation of heaven, of the witness of the Holy Ghost, of the struggles of the spiritual life, would be like reasoning with a blind man about colours, or with one deaf about musical harmony. *John Morison.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, etc. Albeit the Lord's covenant with the visible church be open, and plain in itself to all men in all the articles thereof, yet it is a mystery to know the inward sweet fellowship which a soul may have with God by virtue of this covenant; and a man fearing God shall know this mystery, when such as are covenanters only in the letter do remain ignorant thereof; for to *the fearers of God* only is this promise made—that to *them* the Lord *will show his covenant.* *David Dickson.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* The gospel, though published to all the world, yet it is entitled a mystery, and a mystery hid, for none know it but the saints, who are taught of God, and are his scholars. Joh 6:45. That place shows that there must be a secret teaching by God, and a secret learning. "If they have heard, and been taught of God." Now God teacheth none but saints, for all that are so taught come unto him: "Every one who hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Aye, but you will say, Do not many carnal men know the gospel, and discourse of things in it, through strength of learning, etc? I answer out of the text Col 1:26-27, that though they may know the things which the gospel reveals, yet not the riches and glory of them, that

same rich knowledge spoken of in the word, they want, and therefore know them not; as a child and a jeweller looking upon a pearl, both look upon it, and call it by the same name; but the child yet knows it not as a pearl in the worth and riches of it as the jeweller doth, and therefore cannot be said to know it. Now in Mt 13:45, a Christian only is likened to a merchantman, that finds a pearl of great price, that is, discovered to be so, and sells all he hath for it, for he knows the worth of it. But you will say, Do not carnal men know the worth of the things in the gospel, and can they not discourse of the rich grace of Christ, and of his worth? I answer, yes, as a man who hath gotten an inventory by heart, and the prices also, and so may know it; yet never was he led into the exchequer and treasury, to see all the jewels themselves, the wardrobe of grace, and Christ's righteousness, to see the glory of them; for these are all "spiritually discerned," as the apostle says expressly, 1Co 2:14. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* The truth and sincerity of God to his people appears in the openness and plainness of his heart to them. A friend that is close and reserved, deservedly comes under a cloud in the thoughts of his friends; but he who carries, as it were, a window of crystal in his breast, through which his friend may read what thoughts are writ in his very heart, delivers himself from the least suspicion of unfaithfulness. Truly, thus open hearted is God to his saints: "*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.*" He gives us his key, that will let us into his very heart, and acquaint us what his thoughts are, yea, were, towards us, before a stone was laid in the world's foundation; and this is no other than his Spirit 1Co 2:10-11, "One who knows the deep things of God; "for he was at the council table in heaven, where all was transacted. This, his Spirit, he employed to put forth and publish in the Scriptures, indited by him, the substance of those counsels of love which had passed between the Trinity of Persons for our salvation; and that nothing may be wanting for our satisfaction, he hath appointed the same Holy Spirit to abide in his saints, that as Christ in heaven presents our desires to him, so he may interpret his mind out of his word to us; which word answers the heart of God, as face answers face in the glass. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord.* This "*secret*" is called a *secret* three ways. 1. *Secret* to the eye of sole nature, and thus it is not meant; for so the grace of Christ is a *secret* only to heathens and such as are blind as they, for common Christians know it—the rind of it. 2. *Secret* to the eye of taught nature, nor thus is it meant; for so the grace of Christ is a *secret* only to the ignorant sort of Christians; many carnal gospellers that sit under a good ministry know it and the bark of it. 3. *Secret* to the eye of enlightened nature, and thus it is meant; for so the grace of Christ is a *secret* to all unsanctified professors, whether learned or unlearned, namely, the pith of it; for though great doctors and profound clerks, and deep studied divines unconverted, know the doctrine of grace, and the truth of grace; though they can dispute of grace and talk of the glory of grace, yea, and taste a little the good word of grace, yea, and understand it generally, it may be as well as St. Paul and St. Peter, as Judas did, yet the special and the spiritual knowledge thereof, for all their dogmatical illumination, is a

secret unto them. *William Fenner.*

Verse 14. *The secret.* Arminius and his company ransack all God's secrets, divulge and communicate them to the seed of the woman, and of the serpent all alike; they make God's eternal love of election no secret, but a vulgar idea; they make the mystery of Christ, and him crucified, no secret, but like an apothecary's drug, catholical; they make the especial grace of God no secret, but a common quality; faith no secret, but a general virtue; repentance and the new creature no secret, but an universal gift; no secret favour to St. Peter, but make God a party *ante*, not to love St. Peter more than Judas; no secret intent to any one person more than another; but that Christ might have died for all him, and never a man saved; no secret working of the Lord in any more than other; but for anything that either God the Father hath done by creating, God the Son by redeeming, or God the Holy Ghost by sanctifying, all the world were left to their scrambling—take it if you will, if you will not, refuse. They say God would have men to be saved, but that he will not work it for his own part, rather for this man or that man determinatively that he be saved. *William Fenner.*

Verse 14. *He will shew them his covenant, or and he will make them to know* (for the infinitive is here thought to be put for the future tense of the indicative, as it is in Ec 3:14-15,18 Ho 9:13 12:3, *his covenant, i.e.,*) he will make them clearly understand it, both its duties or conditions, and its blessings or privileges; neither of which ungodly men rightly understand. Or, he will make them to know it by experience, or by God's making it good to them; as, on the contrary, God threatens to make ungodly men to *know his breach of promise.* Nu 14:34. Or, as it is in the margins of our Bibles, *and his covenant,* (is *i.e.,* he hath engaged himself by his promise or covenant) *to make them know* it, to wit, his secret, *i.e.,* that he will manifest either his word or his favour to them. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 14. It is neither learning nor labour than can give insight into God's secrets, those *Arcana imperii*, "The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Mt 13:11. "The mind of Christ." 1Co 2:16. These things come by revelation rather than by discourse of reason, and must therefore be obtained by prayer. Those that diligently seek him shall be of his *Cabinet Council*, shall know his soul secrets, and be admitted into a gracious familiarity and friendship. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Joh 15:15. *John Trapp.*

Verse 14. Walking with God is the best way to know the mind of God; friends who walk together impart their secrets one to another: "*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.*" Noah walked with God, and the Lord revealed a great secret to him, of destroying the old world, and having him in the ark. Abraham walked with God, and God made him one of his privy council: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Ge 24:40 18:17. God doth sometimes sweetly unbosom himself to the soul in prayer, and in the holy supper, as Christ made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread. Lu 24:35. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 15. *Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.* Though we cannot see him by reason of our present distance and darkness, yet we must look towards him, towards the place where his honour dwells, as those that desire the knowledge of him and his will, and direct all to his honour as the mark we aim at, labouring in this, that "whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 15. *Mine eyes.* As the sense of sight is very quick, and exercises an entire influence over the whole frame, it is no uncommon thing to find all the affections denoted by the term "eyes." *John Calvin.*

Verse 15. *He shall pluck my feet out of the net.* An unfortunate dove, whose feet are taken in the snare of the fowler, is a fine emblem of the soul, entangled in the cares or pleasures of the world; from which she desires, through the power of grace, to fly away, and to be at rest, with her glorified Redeemer. *George Horne.*

Verse 17. *The troubles of my heart are enlarged.* Let no good man be surprised that his affliction is great, and to him of an unaccountable character. It has always been so with God's people. The road to heaven is soaked with the tears and blood of the saints. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 17. *O bring thou me out of my distresses.* We may not complain of God, but we may complain to God. With submission to his holy will we may earnestly cry for help and deliverance. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 17. Special seasons of trouble and special resort to prayer for special deliverance.

Verse 18. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all *my sins.* We may observe here, that *sickness and weakness of the body come from sin, and is a fruit of sin.* Some are weak, and some are sick, "for this cause." I shall not need to be long in the proof of that, which you have whole chapters for, as De 28:27, *seq;* and many Psalms, 107, and others. It is for the sickness of the soul that God visits with the sickness of the body. He aims at the cure of the soul in the touch of the body. And therefore in this case, when God visits with sickness, we should think our work is more in heaven with God than with men or physic. Begin first with the soul. So David Ps 32:5, till he dealt roundly with God, without all kind of guile, and confessed his sins, he roared; his moisture was turned into the drought of summer. But when he dealt directly and plainly with God, and confessed his sins, then God forgave him them, and healed his body too. And therefore the best method, when God visits us in this kind, is to think that we are to deal with God. Begin the cure there with the soul. When he visits the body, it is for the soul's sake: "Many are weak and sickly among you." *Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 18. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain.* In sickness of body trust to Jesus, he is as powerful and as willing to help us now as he was to help others in the days of his flesh. All things are possible to us if we believe. It is but a word from him to rebuke all storms and tempests whatsoever. Let us not do like Asa, trust only in the physician, or in subordinate means, but know that all physic is but dead means without him. 2Ch 16:12. Therefore, with the means, run to Christ, that he may work with them,

and know that virtue and strength comes from him to bless or curse all sorts of means. *Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 19. *Consider mine enemies*, etc. Or *look* upon them; but with another kind of look; so as he looked through the pillar of fire upon the Egyptians, and troubled them Ex 14:24, with a look of wrath and vengeance. The arguments he uses are taken both from the quantity and quality of his enemies, their number and their nature, *For they are many*; the hearts of the people of Israel, in general, being after Absalom 2Sa 15:12-13; and so the spiritual enemies of the Lord's people are many; their sins and corruptions, Satan, and his principalities and powers, and the men of this world. *And they hate me with cruel hatred*; like that of Simeon and Levi Ge 44:7; their hatred broke out in a cruel manner, in acts of force and cruelty; and it was the more cruel, inasmuch as it was without cause; and such is the hatred of Satan and his emissaries against the followers of Christ; who breathe out cruelty, thirst after their blood, and make themselves drunk with it; even their tender mercies are cruel, and much more their hatred. *John Gill*.

Verse 19. *Consider mine enemies*. God needeth not hound out many creatures to punish man, he doeth that on himself. There is no kind of creature so hurtful to itself as he. Some hurt other kinds and spare their own, but mankind in all sorts of injuries destroyeth itself. Man to man is more crafty than a fox, more cruel than the tiger, and more fierce than a lion, and in a word, if he be left to himself man unto man is a devil. *William Struther's "Christian Observations," 1629*.

Verses 19-20.—*Consider mine enemies...O keep my soul and deliver me*. We may say of original concupiscence, strengthened and heightened by customary transgressions, its name is legion, for it is many. Hydra like, it is a body with many heads; and when we cut off one head, one enormous impiety, there presently sprouts up another of like monstrous nature, like venomous guilt. From the womb then it is of original sin and sinful custom, as from the belly of the Trojan horse, there does issue forth a whole army of unclean lusts, to surround the soul in all its faculties, and the body too in all its members. *Robert Mossom*.

Verses 19-20.—*Consider mine enemies...O keep my soul and deliver me*. See *Psalms* on "*Ps 25:19*" for further information.

Verse 20. *Let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee*. When David reaches verse 20, we are reminded of Coriolanus betaking himself to the hall of Attius Tullus, and sitting as a helpless stranger there, claiming the king's hospitality, though aware of his having deserved to die at his hands. The psalmist throws himself on the compassion of an injured God with similar feelings; "*I trust in thee!*" *Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verse 21. "*For I trust in, or wait on thee.*" As preservation is a continued creation, so is *waiting* a continued trusting; for, what trust believes by faith, it *waits for* by hope; and thus is trust a compound of both. *Robert Mossom*.

Verse 22. *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.* If thou wilt not pity and help me, yet spare thy people, who suffer for my sake, and in my sufferings. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 22. *Redeem Israel, etc.* In *vita vel post mortem meam*, (Rabbi David), either whiles I live, or after my death. This is every good man's care and prayer. None is in case to pray for the church, that hath not first made his own peace with God. *John Trapp.*

Verse 22. This most beautiful of "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" closes with a sweet petition—such an one, as every one of the true Israel of God would wish to depart with on his lips. "*Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*" It breathes the same holy aspiration as the aged Simeon's "Lord! now lettest thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." *Barton Bouchier.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Heavenly machinery for uplifting an earthbound soul.

Verse 1. Genuine devotion described and commended.

Verse 2. The soul at anchor, and the two rocks from which it would be delivered.

Verse 3. Shame out of place and in place.

Verse 4. Practical divinity the best study; God the best teacher; Prayer the mode of entrance into the school.

Verses 4-5. *Shew. Teach. Lead.* Three classes in the school of grace.

Verses 4-5. *Shew. Teach. Lead.* Three classes in the school of grace.

Verse 5. 1. Sanctification desired.

2. Knowledge sought.

3. Assurance enjoyed.

4. Patience exercised.

Verse 5. *Thou art the God of my salvation.* A rich and overflowing text.

Verse 5 (*last clause*). How to spend the day with God. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 6. The antiquity of mercy.

Verses 6-7. The Three Remembers.

Verse 7 (*first clause*). The best Act of Oblivion. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 7. Oblivion desired and remembrance entreated. Note "*my*", and "*thy*."

Verse 8. Opposing attributes working together. God teaching sinners—a great wonder.

Verse 9. The meek. Who are they? What are their privileges? How to be like them?

Verse 9 (*first clause*). Moral purity needful to a well balanced judgment.

Verse 10. God's mercy and faithfulness in providence, and the persons who may derive comfort

therefrom.

Verse 11. A model prayer. Confession, argument, entreaty, etc.

Verse 11. Great guilt no obstacle to the pardon of the returning sinner. *Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 12. Holiness the best security for a well ordered life. Free will at school, questioned and instructed.

Verse 13. A man at ease for time and eternity.

Verse 14. 1. A secret, and who know it.

2. A wonder, and who see it.

Verse 15. 1. What we are like. A silly bird.

2. What is our danger? "Net."

3. Who is our friend? "The Lord."

4. What is our wisdom? "Mine eyes," etc.

Verse 16. A desolate soul seeking heavenly company, and an afflicted spirit crying for divine mercy. Our God the balm of all our wounds.

Verses 16-18. David is a petitioner as well as a sufferer; and those sorrows will never injure us that bring us near to God. Three things he prays for:—1. *Deliverance.* This we are called to desire, consistently with resignation to the divine will.

2. *Notice.* A kind look from God is desirable at any time in any circumstances; but in affliction and pain, it is like life from the dead.

3. *Pardon.* Trials are apt to revive a sense of guilt. *William Jay.*

Verse 18. Two things are here taught us:—1. That a kind look from God is very desirable in affliction: (a) It is a look of special observation; (b) It is a look of tender compassion; (c) It is a look of support and assistance (with God, power and compassion go together).

2. The sweetest cordial under trouble would be an assurance of divine forgiveness: (a) Because trouble is very apt to bring our sins to remembrance; (b) Because a sense of pardon will in great measure remove all distressing fears of death and judgment.

Improvement 1. Let us adore the goodness of God, that one so great and glorious should bestow a favourable look upon any of our sinful race.

2. Let the benefit we have received from the Lord's looking upon us in *former* afflictions, engage us to *pray*, and encourage us to *hope*, that he will now look upon us again.

3. If a kind look from God be so comfortable, what must *heaven* be! *Samuel Lavington.*

Verse 18. 1. It is well when our sorrows remind us of our sins.

2. When we are as earnest to be forgiven as to be delivered.

3. When we bring both to the right place in prayer.

4. When we are submissive about our sorrows—"Look, "etc.—but very explicit about our

sins—"forgive," etc.

Verse 19. The spiritual enemies of the saint. Their number, malice, craft, power, etc.

Verse 20. Soul preservation. 1. Its twofold character, "Keep, "and "deliver."

2. Its dreadful alternative, "Let me not be ashamed."

3. Its effectual guarantee, "I put my trust in thee."

Verse 20. A superhuman keeping, a natural fear, a spiritual trust.

Verse 21. The open way of safety in action, and the secret way of safety in devotion.

Verse 22. Jacob's life, as typical of ours, may illustrate this prayer.

Verse 22. A prayer for the church militant.

WORKS UPON THE TWENTY-FIFTH PSALM

A Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Twenty-fifth Psalm, the second of the Penitentials; (in "A Sacred Septenarie.") By ARCHIBALD SYMSON. 1638. (See page 74.)

The Preacher's Tripartie, in Three Books. The First, to raise Devotion in Divine Meditations upon Psalm XXV. By R. MOSSOM, Preacher of God's Word, late at St. Peter's, Paul's Wharf, London, 1657. Folio.

Six Sermons in "Expository Discourses," by the late Rev. WILLIAM RICHARDSON, Subchanter of York Cathedral. 1825.

Psalm 26

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. A Psalm of David. The sweet singer of Israel appears before us in this Psalm as one enduring reproach; in this he was the type of the great Son of David, and is an encouraging example to us to carry the burden of slander to the throne of grace. It is an ingenious surmise that this appeal to heaven was written by David at the time of the assassination of Ishbosheth, by Baanah and Rechab, to protest his innocence of all participation in that treacherous murder; the tenor of the Psalm certainly agrees with the supposed occasion, but it is not possible with such a slender clue to go beyond conjecture.

DIVISION. Unity of subject is so distinctly maintained, that there are no sharp divisions. David Dickson has given an admirable summary in these words:—"He appeals to God", the supreme Judge, in the testimony of a good conscience, bearing him witness; first, of his endeavour to walk

uprightly as a believer, Ps 26:1-3; secondly, of his keeping himself from the contagion of the evil counsel, sinful causes, and examples of the wicked, Ps 26:4-5; thirdly, of his purpose still to behave himself holily and righteously, out of love to be partaker of the public privileges of the Lord's people in the congregation, Ps 26:6-8 Whereupon he prayeth to be free of the judgment coming upon the wicked, Ps 26:9-10 according as he had purposed to eschew their sins, Ps 26:11 and he closes the prayer with comfort and assurance of being heard, Ps 26:12.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Judge me, O Jehovah.* A solemn appeal to the just tribunal of the heart searching God, warranted by the circumstances of the writer, so far as regarded the particular offences with which he was wrongly charged. Worried and worn out by the injustice of men, the innocent spirit flies from its false accusers to the throne of Eternal Right. He had need have a clear case who dares to carry his suit into the King's Bench of heaven. Such an appeal as this is not to be rashly made on any occasion; and as to the whole of our walk and conversation, it should never be made at all, except as we are justified in Christ Jesus: a far more fitting prayer for a sinful mortal is the petition, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant." *For I have walked in mine integrity.* He held integrity as his principle, and walked in it as his practice. David had not used any traitorous or unrighteous means to gain the crown, or to keep it; he was conscious of having been guided by the noblest principles of honour in all his actions with regard to Saul and his family. What a comfort it is to have the approbation of one's own conscience! If there be peace within the soul, the blustering storms of slander which howl around us are of little consideration. When the little bird in my bosom sings a merry song, it is no matter to me if a thousand owls hoot at me from without. *I have trusted also in the Lord.* Faith is the root and sap of integrity. He who leans upon the Lord is sure to walk in righteousness. David knew that God's covenant had given him the crown, and therefore he took no indirect or unlawful means to secure it; he would not slay his enemy in the cave, nor suffer his men at arms to smite him when he slept unguarded on the plain. Faith will work hard for the Lord, and in the Lord's way, but she refuses so much as to lift a finger to fulfil the devices of unrighteous cunning. Rebecca acted out a great falsehood in order to fulfil the Lord's decree in favour of Jacob—this was unbelief; but Abraham left the Lord to fulfil his own purposes, and took the knife to slay his son—this was faith. Faith trusts God to accomplish his own decrees. Why should I steal when God has promised to supply my need? Why should I avenge myself when I know that the Lord has espoused my cause? Confidence in God is a most effectual security against sin. *Therefore I shall not slide.* Slippery as the way is, so that I walk like a man upon ice, yet faith keeps my heels from tripping, and will continue to do so. The doubtful ways of policy are sure sooner or later to give a fall to those who run therein, but the ways of honesty, though often rough, are always safe. We cannot trust in God if we walk crookedly; but straight paths

and simple faith bring the pilgrim happily to his journey's end.

Verse 2. There are three modes of trial here challenged, which are said in the original to refer to trial by touch, trial by smell, and trial by fire. The psalmist was so clear from the charge laid against him, that he submitted himself unconditionally to any form of examination which the Lord might see fit to employ. *Examine me, O Lord.* Look me through and through; make a minute survey; put me to the question, cross examine my evidence. *And prove me.* Put me again to trial; and see if I would follow such wicked designs as my enemies impute to me. *Try my reins and my heart.* Assay me as metals are assayed in the furnace, and do this to my most secret parts, where my affections hold their court; see, O God, whether or no I love murder, and treason, and deceit. All this is a very bold appeal, and made by a man like David, who feared the Lord exceedingly, it manifests a most solemn and complete conviction of innocence. The expressions here used should teach us the thoroughness of the divine judgment, and the necessity of being in all things profoundly sincere, lest we be found wanting at the last. Our enemies are severe with us with the severity of spite, and this a brave man endures without fear; but God's severity is that of unswerving right. Who shall stand against such a trial? The sweet singer says "Who can stand before his cold?" and we may well enquire, "Who can stand before the heat of his justice?"

Verse 3. *For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes.* An object of memory and a ground of hope. A sense of mercy received sets a fair prospect before the faithful mind in its gloomiest condition, for it yields visions of mercies yet to come, visions not visionary but real. Dwell, dear reader, upon that celestial word *lovingkindness*. It has a heavenly savour. Is it not an unmatched word, unexcelled, unrivalled? The goodness of the Lord to us should be before our eyes as a motive actuating our conduct; we are not under the bondage of the law, but we are under the sweet constraints of grace, which are far more mighty, although far more gentle. Men sin with the law before their eyes, but divine love, when clearly seen, sanctifies the conversation. If we were not so forgetful of the way of mercy in which God walks toward us, we should be more careful to walk in the ways of obedience toward him. *And I have walked in thy truth.* The psalmist was preserved from sin by his assurance of the truthfulness of God's promise, which truth he endeavoured to imitate as well as to believe. Observe from this verse that an experience of divine love will show itself in a practical following of divine truth; those who neglect either the doctrinal or practical parts of truth must not wonder if they lose the experimental enjoyment of it. Some *talk of* truth, it is better to *walk in* it. Some vow to do well in future, but their resolutions come to nothing; only the regenerate man can say "*I have walked in thy truth.*"

Verses 4-5. So far from being himself an open offender against the laws of God, the psalmist had not even associated with the lovers of evil. He had kept aloof from the men of Belial. A man is known by his company, and if we have kept ourselves apart from the wicked, it will always be evidence in our

favour should our character be impugned. He who was never in the parish is not likely to have stolen the corn. He who never went to sea is clearly not the man who scuttled the ship.

Verse 4. *I have not sat with vain persons.* True citizens have no dealings with traitors. David had no seat in the parliament of triflers. They were not his boon companions at feasts, nor his advisers in council, nor his associates in conversation. We must needs see, and speak, and trade, with men of the world, but we must on no account take our rest and solace in their empty society. Not only the profane, but the vain are to be shunned by us. All those who live for this life only are vain, chaffy, frothy men, quite unworthy of a Christian's friendship. Moreover as this vanity is often allied with falsehood, it is well to save ourselves altogether from this untoward generation, lest we should be led from bad to worse and from tolerating the vain should come to admire the wicked. *Neither will I go in with dissemblers.* Since I know that hypocritical piety is double iniquity, I will cease all acquaintance with pretenders. If I must need walk the same street, I will not enter the same door and spend my time in their society. The congregation of the hypocrites is not one with which we should cultivate communion; their ultimate rendezvous will be the lowest pit of hell, let us drop their acquaintance now! for we shall not desire it soon. They hang their beads around their necks and carry the devil in their hearts. This clause is in the future tense, to indicate that the writer felt no desire to begin an acquaintance with the characters whom up till then he had shunned. We must maintain the separated path with more and more circumspection as we see the great redemption day approaching. Those who would be transfigured with Jesus, must not be disfigured by conformity to the world. The resolution of the psalmist suggests, that even among professed followers of truth we must make distinctions, for as there are vain persons out of the church, so there are dissemblers in it and both are to be shunned with scrupulous decision.

Verse 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil doers.* A severe sentence, but not too severe. A man who does not hate evil terribly, does not love good heartily. Men, as men, we must always love, for they are our neighbours, and therefore to be loved as ourselves; but evil doers, as such, are traitors to the Great King, and no loyal subject can love traitors. What God hates we must hate. The congregation or assembly of evil doers, signifies violent men in alliance and conclave for the overthrow of the innocent; such synagogues of Satan are to be held in abhorrence. What a sad reflection it is that there should be a congregation of evil doers as well as a congregation of the upright, a church of Satan as well as a church of God; a seed of the serpent as well as a seed of the woman; an old Babylon as well as a new Jerusalem: a great whore sitting upon many waters, to be judged in wrath, as well as a chaste bride of the Lamb to be crowned at his coming. *And will not sit with the wicked.* Saints have a seat at another table, and will never leave the King's dainties for the husks of the swine trough. Better to sit with the blind, and the halt, and the lame, at the table of mercy, than with the wicked in their feasts of ungodliness, yea, better to sit on Job's dunghill than on

Pharaoh's throne. Let each reader see well to his company, for such as we keep in this world, we are likely to keep in the next.

Verse 6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency.* He would publicly avow himself to be altogether clear of the accusations laid against him, and if any fault in other matters could be truthfully alleged against him, he would for the future abstain from it. The washing of the hands is a significant action to set forth our having no connection with a deed, as we still say, "I wash my hands of the whole business." As to perfect innocence, David does not here claim it, but he avows his innocence of the crimes whereof he was slanderously accused; there is, however, a sense in which we may be washed in absolute innocency, for the atoning blood makes us clean every whit. We ought never to rest satisfied short of a full persuasion of our complete cleansing by Jesus' precious blood. *So will I compass thine altar, O Lord.* Priests unto God must take great care to be personally cleansed; the brazen laver was as needful as the golden altar; God's worship requires us to be holy in life. He who is unjust to man cannot be acceptably religious towards God. We must not bring our thank offerings with hands defiled with guilt. To love justice and purity is far more acceptable to God, than ten thousands of the fat of fed beasts. We see from this verse that holy minds delight in the worship of the Lord, and find their sweetest solace at his altar; and that it is their deepest concern never to enter upon any course of action which would unfit them for the most sacred communion with God. Our eye must be upon the altar which sanctifies both the giver and the gift, yet we must never draw from the atoning sacrifice an excuse for sin, but rather find in it a most convincing argument for holiness.

Verse 7. *That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving.* David was so far instructed that he does not mention the typical offering, but discerns the spiritual offering which was intended thereby, not the groans of bullocks, but songs of gratitude the spiritual worshipper presents. To sound abroad the worthy praises of the God of all grace should be the everyday business of a pardoned sinner. Let men slander us as they will, let us not defraud the Lord of his praises; let dogs bark, but let us like the moon shine on. *And tell of all thy wondrous works.* God's people should not be tongue tied. The wonders of divine grace are enough to make the tongue of the dumb sing. God's works of love are wondrous if we consider the unworthiness of their objects, the costliness of their method, and the glory of their result. And as men find great pleasure in discoursing upon things remarkable and astonishing, so the saints rejoice to tell of the great things which the Lord hath done for them.

Verse 8. *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house.* Into the abodes of sin he would not enter, but the house of God he had long loved, and loved it still. We were sad children if we did not love our Father's dwelling place. Though we own no sacred buildings, yet the church of the living God is the house of God, and true Christians delight in her ordinances, services, and assemblies. O that all our days were Sabbaths! *And the place where thine honour dwelleth.* In his church where God is had in honour at all times, where he reveals himself in the glory of his grace, and is proclaimed by his

people as the Lord of all. We come not together as the Lord's people to honour the preacher, but to give glory to God; such an occupation is most pleasant to the saints of the Most High. What are those gatherings where God is not honoured, are they not an offence to his pure and holy eyes, and are they not a sad stumbling block to the people of God? It brings the scalding tear upon our cheek to hear sermons in which the honour of God is so far from being the preacher's object, that one might almost imagine that the preacher worshipped the dignity of manhood, and thought more of it than of the Infinite Majesty of God.

Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* Lord, when, like fruit, I must be gathered, put me not in the same basket with the best of sinners, much less with the worst of them. The company of sinners is so distasteful to us here, that we cannot endure the thought of being bound up in the same bundle with them to all eternity. Our comfort is, that the Great Husbandman discerns the tares from the wheat, and will find a separate place for distinct characters. In the former verses we see that the psalmist kept himself clear of profane persons, and this is to be understood as a reason why he should not be thrust into their company at the last. Let us think of the doom of the wicked, and the prayer of the text will forcibly rise to our lips; meanwhile, as we see the rule of judgment by which like is gathered to its like, we who have passed from death unto life have nothing to fear. *Nor my life with bloody men.* Our soul sickens to hear them speak; their cruel dispatches, in which they treat the shooting of their fellow men as rare sport, are horrifying to us; Lord, let us not be shut up in the same prison with them; nay, the same paradise with such men would be a hell, if they remained as they are now.

Verse 10. *In whose hands is mischief.* They have both hands full of it, plotting it and carrying it out. *And their right hand, with which they are most dexterous, is full of bribes;* like thieves who would steal with impunity, they carry a sop for the dogs of justice. He who gives bribes is every way as guilty as the man who takes them, and in the matter of our parliamentary elections the rich villain who give the bribe is by far the worse. Bribery, in any form or shape, should be as detestable to a Christian as carrion to a dove, or garbage to a lamb. Let those whose dirty hands are fond of bribes remember that neither death nor the devil can be bribed to let them escape their well earned doom.

Verse 11. Here is the lover of godliness entering his personal protest against unrighteous gain. He is a Nonconformist, and is ready to stand alone in his Nonconformity. Like a live fish, he swims against the stream. Trusting in God, the psalmist resolves that the plain way of righteousness shall be his choice, and those who will, may prefer the tortuous paths of violence and deceit. Yet, he is by no means a boaster, or a self righteous vaunter of his own strength, for he cries for redemption and pleads for mercy. Our integrity is not absolute nor inherent, it is a work of grace in us, and is marred by human infirmity; we must, therefore, resort to the redeeming blood and to the throne of mercy, confessing that though we are saints among men, we must still bow as sinners before God.

Verse 12. The song began in the minor, but it has now reached the major key. Saints often sing

themselves into happiness. The *even place* upon which our foot stands is the sure, covenant faithfulness, eternal promise and immutable oath of the Lord of Hosts; there is no fear of falling from this solid basis, or of its being removed from under us. Established in Christ Jesus, by being vitally united to him, we have nothing left to occupy our thoughts but the praises of our God. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and when assembled, let us not be slow to contribute our portion of thanksgiving. Each saint is a witness to divine faithfulness, and should be ready with his testimony. As for the slanderers, let them howl outside the door while the children sing within.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is coupled on to the foregoing by thoughts and words. At the close of the foregoing the psalmist had prayed for *integrity* Ps 26:1. Unless this Psalm is regarded as a sequel to the preceding one, it will seem vainglorious; but being combined with the penitential acknowledgments of sin, and with the earnest supplications for pardon and grace, and with the earnest profession of faith that God has heard his prayer, which breathe forth in the foregoing Psalm, it will be seen that the declarations which the psalmist now makes of integrity, are not assertions of human merit, but acknowledgments of divine mercy. As Augustine says, "*Non merita mea, sed misericordia tua, ante oculos meos est.*" *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1. *Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity.* A good cause, a good conscience, and a good deportment, are good grounds of appeal to God. *Ingram Cobbin.*

Verse 1. *Judge me, O Lord.* Nothing is so pleasing to him that is upright as to know that God knoweth he is so. As it is a small matter with those who are sincere to be condemned by men, so it is not much with them to be condemned or approved by them; for indeed neither "he that commendeth himself, "as the apostle speaks 2Co 10:18, nor he that is commended by others, "is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." The testimony, or letters commendatory of all the men in the world will do us no good, unless God give us his also. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 1. *Judge me, O Lord.* As an instance of appeal to heaven, we quote that mighty preacher of the word, George Whitfield. "However some may account me a mountebank and an enthusiast, one that is only going to make you methodically mad; they may breathe out their invectives against me, yet Christ knows all; he takes notice of it, and I shall leave it to him to plead my cause, for he is a gracious Master. I have already found him so, and am sure he will continue so. Vengeance is his, and he will repay it." *George Whitfield, 1714-1770.*

Verse 1. "*Integrity.*" (Mh), or (Mynt) is used of whatever is uninjured, or is free from any spot or blemish; and hence we find the term applied to an unblemished animal offering in sacrifice. Le 1:3 3:9. *George Phillips.*

Verse 1. *Mine integrity.* There is a force in the possessive pronoun "my, "which must be attended to.

The psalmist intimates that he had proceeded in one uniform course, notwithstanding all the devices of his enemies. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 1. *I have trusted in the Lord.* Trust in God is the *fountain* of "integrity." Whoever places his hope in God need not seek to advance his worldly interests by violating his duty towards his neighbour: he waits for everything *from above*, and is, at the same time, always determined that he will not be deprived of the favour of his heavenly Father through violating his commandments. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 1. *I shall not slide.* It is a striking word, as fully expressive of the completeness of God's protection and the security of his upholding hand as the psalmist's language of the integrity of his walk and trust in God. It is not, as in our Prayer book version, "I shall not fall," but it is, "*I shall not even slide*;" not even make a false step or stumble. *Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 2. The psalmist uses three words, *examine, prove, try*. These words are designed to include all the modes in which the reality of anything is tested; and they imply together that he wished the most *thorough* investigation to be made; he did not shrink from any test. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2. *Examine—prove—try.* As gold, by fire, is severed and parted from dross, so singleness of heart and true Christian simplicity is best seen and made most evident in troubles and afflictions. In prosperity every man will seem godly, but afflictions do draw out of the heart whatsoever is there, whether it be good or bad. *Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 2. *Prove me.* The work of conscience within us doth *prove* us. God hath set up a light within us, and when this is enlightened by the Word, then it makes a man's breast full of light. Now a faithful godly man loveth that this should be tender, active, speaking out of God's Word for every duty, and against every sin. You see the quickness of it in David, when it is said, "His heart smote him;" and 1 John 3., "If thy heart condemn thee, God is greater than thy heart." Alas! if thou within thine own self judgest thyself to sin thus and thus, God doth much more. Try thy integrity; art thou willing to have a tender conscience, and an informed conscience? Dost thou love to hear what that speaks out of God's Word? whether peace or duty? this is comfortable. But on the other side, if thou art a man that rebellest against the light of it, wouldst fain put out the sting of it, wouldst be glad to feel no such living thing in thy breast, then thou hast cause to suspect thyself. Oh, it is to be feared that there are many that give themselves to lusts, and carnal pleasures, that so they may put a foggy mist between their conscience and themselves. Others dig into the world, labouring to become senseless, that so there may be an eclipse of this light by the interposition of the earth. Others run to damnable heresies, denying Scriptures, God, heaven, hell; pleading for an universal salvation of all. What are these but refuges of guilty consciences? We must distinguish between our carnal concupiscence, and conscience; between deluded imaginations, and conscience; between an erroneous and scrupulous conscience, and a well grounded and truly informed conscience; and when we have done so, we

must follow conscience as far as that follows the Word. *Anthony Burgess.*

Verse 2. *Reins...heart.* The "*reins*," as the seat of the lower animal passions; the "*heart*," as comprising not only the higher affections, but also the will and the conscience. He thus desires to keep nothing back; he will submit himself to the searching flame of the Great Refiner, that all dross of self deception may be purged away. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3. The practical effect of divine goodness is seen in this text. As the chief thing communicated from God is the divine nature, whereby we are made to resemble him, so the promises of God set home upon the soul are the means of communication; they are the milk and honey of the Scripture, which do not cherish the old man, but support the new; they are no pillows for sinful sloth, but spurs to holy diligence. The promises of grace animate the soul to duty; and when we thus see the goodness of the Lord, it encourages our subjection to his government. *Timothy Cruso.*

Verses 3-4. *I have walked in thy truth, I have not sat with vain persons.* Be as careful as thou canst, that the persons thou chooseth for thy companions be such as fear God. The man in the gospel was possessed with the devil, who dwelt among the tombs, and conversed with graves and carcasses. Thou art far from walking after the good Spirit, if thou chooseth to converse with open sepulchres, and such as are dead in sins and trespasses. God will not shake the wicked by the hand, as the Vulgate reads Job 8:20, neither must the godly man. David proves the sincerity of his course, by his care to avoid such society: *I have walked in thy truth; I have not sat with vain persons.*

There is a twofold "*truth*." 1. Truth of doctrine. Thy law is the truth, free from all dross of corruption and falsehood of error. 2. Truth of affection, or of the inward parts. This may be called "*thy truth*," or God's truth, though man be the subject of it, partly because it proceedeth from him, partly because it is so pleasant to him; in which respect a broken heart is called the "sacrifice of God." Ps 51:6. As if he had said, I could not have walked in the power of religion, and in integrity, if I had associated with vile and vain company; I could never have walked in thy precepts if I had "*sat with vain persons.*"

Observe the phrase, "*I have not sat with vain persons.*" 1. Sitting is a posture of choice. It is at a man's liberty, whether he will sit or stand. 2. Sitting is a posture of pleasure. Men sit for their ease, and with delight; therefore, the glorified are said to "sit in heavenly places." Eph 2:6. 3. Sitting is a posture of staying or abiding. 2Ki 5:3. Standing is a posture of going, but sitting of staying. The blessed, who shall forever be with the Lord and his chosen, are mentioned "to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Mt 8:11. David in neither of these senses durst *sit with vain persons*. He might, as his occasions required, use their company, but durst not knowingly choose such company. They could not be the object of his election who were not the object of his affection. "*I hate the congregation of evil doers,*" saith he. As sitting is a posture of pleasure, he did not sit with vain persons. He was sometimes amongst them to his sorrow, but not to his solace. They were to him, as the Canaanites to the Israelites, pricks in his eyes, and thorns in his

sides. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" Ps 120:5. It caused grief, not gladness, that he was forced to be amongst the profane. *George Swinnock*.

Verses 3-4. I have walked in thy truth, I have not sat with vain *persons*. See *Psalms on "Ps 26:3"* for further information.

Verse 4. *I have not sat with vain persons*. There is a necessary commerce with men in buying and selling, or as the apostle says, "We must needs go out of the world, "but do not voluntarily choose the company of the wicked. 1Co 5:10. "I have written unto you not to keep company, "etc. 1Co 5:11. Do not be too familiar with them. What do Christ's doves among birds of prey? What do virgins among harlots? The company of the wicked is very defiling, it is like going among them that have the plague. "They were mingled among the heathen and learned their works." If you mingle bright armour with rusty, the bright armour will not brighten the rusty, but the rusty armour will spoil the bright. Pharaoh taught Joseph to swear, but Joseph did not teach Pharaoh to pray. *Thomas Watson*.

Verse 4. *Neither will I go with dissemblers*. Chaldee: "I will not go in with those that hide themselves to do evil." Wickedness is not candid, and loves concealment, while truth and righteousness are open, and seek scrutiny. Job 24:13-17 Joh 3:20-21. None will deny that the candid man has far fewer troubles with his own conduct than the tortuous and deceitful. The righteous shun the wicked both for the *sin* and for the misery that are in their ways. *William S. Plumer*.

Verse 4. *Dissemblers*. The hypocrite has much angel without, more devil within. He fries in words, freezes in works; speaks by ells, doth good by inches. He is a stinking dunghill, covered over with snow; a loose hung mill that keeps great clacking, but grinds no grist; a lying hen that cackles when she hath not laid. *Thomas Adams*.

Verse 4. *Dissemblers*. Perhaps when the bright sunbeams of an early spring have robed all nature in a smiling garb, you have taken your little baskets, and gone in quest of a bank of sweet smelling modest violets, and you may have found flowers so like them, in form and colour, that you have been deceived, and eagerly grasped you prize; but alas! the sweet odour which should have scented the gale, was found wanting, and betrayed the dog violet. An apt emblem this of those, who, "having the form of godliness, deny the power thereof." 2Ti 3:5. *Mrs. Rogers, in "The Shepherd King."*

Verses 4-5. As rotten apples corrupt those sound ones that do touch them and lie close to them, even so the evil manners and bad conditions of the ungodly do infect those that keep them company. *Robert Cawdray*.

Verses 4-5. "It is difficult (saith a late ingenious writer) even to a miracle to keep God's commandments and evil company too." How suddenly after your soul refreshments in your closet communion have you lost all your heats and spiritual fervencies, which you had in secret, and have instantly cooled by going forth into cold and corrupt air! When a saint hath been in private ravished with the love of God and the joys of heaven, and afterwards meets with company, which neither doth

nor can speak one word of such matters, what a damp it is to him! What a quenching, as it were, of the Spirit of God in him! Nay, is not that true which one saith, that "the people of God do generally lose more by worldly men, that are of a blameless conversation before men, than they lose by wicked and profane men"? *Lewis Stuckley.*

Verses 4-5, 9. He that would not be found among sinners in the other world, must take heed that he do not frequent their company in this. Those whom the constable finds wandering with vagrants, may be sent with them to the house of correction. "Lord, "said a good woman, on her death bed, when in doubt of her salvation, "send me not to hell amongst wicked men, for thou knowest I never loved their company all my life long." David deprecates their future doom upon the like ground, and argues it as a sign of his sincerity: *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked...O gather not my soul with sinner.* Lord, I have not loved the wicked so well as to sit with them for a little time, and shall I live with them forever? I have not lain amongst them rotting on the earth; and wilt thou gather my soul with those sticks for the unquenchable fire of hell? Lord, I have been so far from liking, that thou knowest I have loathed the congregation of evil doers. Do not I hate them that hate thee? Yea, I hate them with perfect hatred; and shall thy friends fare as thy foes? I appeal to thy Majesty, that my great comfort is in thy chosen. I rejoice only to be amongst thy children here, and shall I be excluded their company hereafter? "*O do not gather my soul with sinners,*" for the wine press of thine eternal anger! Marcion, the heretic, seeing Polycarp, wondered that he would not own him. Do you not know me, Polycarp? Yes, saith Polycarp, "*Scio te esse primogenitum diaboli;*" "I know thee to be the firstborn of the devil, "and so despised him. *George Swinnock.*

Verse 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil doers,* etc. The hatred of God's enemies, *qua* his enemies—"yea, I hate them right sore" so entirely opposed to the indifferentism of the present day, has always been one distinguishing mark of his ancient servants. Witness Phinehas Ps 106:41; "And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore;" Samuel with Agag; Elias with the priests of Baal. And notice the commendation of the angel of Ephesus, "Thou canst not bear them that are evil." Re 2:2. *J. M. Neale.*

Verse 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil doers.* We consider them as God's enemies, so we hate them; not their persons, but their vices; for that, as Augustine defines it, is *odium perfectum*, a perfect hatred. And indeed it is the hatred that God beareth to his enemies; for "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" Ro 1:18; not against their persons—they are his workmanship, and carry his image in some sort, though much disfigured; but against the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, by which their persons do stand obnoxious to his displeasure. And thus I find the saints of God have triumphed over the wicked, as Israel over Pharaoh, and the Gileadites over the children of Ammon; not rejoicing in the destruction of God's

creatures, but of God's enemies; and wishing with Deborah and Barak, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord." This is no more but an applauding of the judgment of God, and a celebration of his justice. *Edward Marbury.*

Verse 5. *I have hated*, etc. Consider that there can be no true friendship betwixt a godly and a wicked person; therefore it concerneth thee to be the more wary in thy choice. He that in factions hath an eye to power, in friendship will have an eye to virtue. Friendship, according to the philosopher, is one soul in two bodies. But how can they ever be of one soul that are as different as air and earth, and as contrary as fire and water? All true love is, *motus animi ad fruendum Deo propter ipsum; se et proximo propter Deum*—a motion of the soul towards the enjoyment of God for himself, and his neighbours for God's sake; so that he can never truly love man who doth not love his Maker. God is the only foundation upon which we can build friendship; therefore such as live without him, cannot love us in him. That building which is loose, without this foundation can never stand long. A wicked man may call that profession he maketh to his brother by the name of love, but heathens can tell us that virtue alone is the hand which can twist the cords of love; that other combinations are but a confederacy, and all other but conjunctions in hypocrisy. *George Swinnock.*

Verse 5. Wheresoever we perceive any people to worship God truly after his word, there we may be certain the church of Christ to be, unto the which we ought to associate ourselves, and to desire, with the prophet David, to praise God in the midst of this church. But if we behold, through the iniquity of time, congregations to be made with counterfeit religion, otherwise than the word of God doth teach, we ought then, if we be required to be companions thereof, to say again with David, "*I have hated the synagogue of the malignant, and will not sit with the wicked.*" In the Apocalypse, the church of Ephesus is highly commended, because she tried such as said they were apostles and were not in deed, and therefore would not abide the company of them. Further, God commanded his people that they should not seek Bethel, neither enter into Galgala, where idolatry was used, by the mouth of his prophet Amos. *John Philpot (Martyr). Burnt at Smithfield, 1555.*

Verse 5. How few consider how they harden wicked men by an intimacy with them, whereas withdrawal from them might be a means to make them ashamed! Whilst we are merry and jovial with them, we make them believe their condition is not deplorable, their danger is not great; whereas if we shunned them, as we would a bowed wall, whilst they remain enemies to the Lord, this might do them good, for the startling of them, and rousing of them out of their unhappy security and strong delusions wherein they are held. *Lewis Stuckley.*

Verse 6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency.* There are two eminent lavers in the gospel; the first, Christ's bath, a hot bath, *lavacrum sanguinis*, the laver of Christ's blood; the second, our bath, a cold bath, *lavacrum lachrimarum*, the laver of repentance. These two mixed together will prove a sovereign composition, wrought first by Christ himself when he sweat water and blood. The first is as

that pool of Bethesda into which whoever enters with *faith*, is healed; the blood of Christ is the true laver of regeneration, a fountain set open for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in. "The blood of Christ purgeth us from all sins." 1Jo 1:7. We account it charity in mothers to feed their children with their own milk: how dear is the love of Christ, that both washes and feeds us with his own blood! No sooner are we born in Christ, but just as our mother's, so Christ's blood is turned into milk, nourishing us to everlasting salvation. What is *calamus benjamini*, or storax, or a thousand rivers of oil, to make us clean, except the Lord purge and cleanse us? No; it is his blood "that speaks better things than the blood of Abel." "Unto him, therefore, that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever." Re 1:5-6. But yet it is the second bath, the laver of repentance, that must apply and make the first operative. This bath of Mary Magdalene's repentance, it is a kind of rebaptism, giving strength and effect to the first washing. And it implies a three fold act: first, to bruise our hearts by *contrition*; secondly, to lay our wounds open by *confession* to God; thirdly, to *wash our hands in innocency*, by *satisfaction* to men...Wash now and wash all; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is nothing in us but wounds and sores; yet above all there is something here in it that David washes his "*hands*." Indeed it is not enough to come with wet eyes, if we come with foul hands to offer with unwashen hands; the Gentiles would not do it. Contrition and confession to God make not up complete repentance without satisfaction to men. *Non remittitur peccatum nisi restituatur ablatum*: (Augustine), it is as true as old, and in old father Latimer's English it is "Either there must be restitution, open or secret, or else hell." Whoever repairs not the wrong, rejoiceth in the sin. Pr 2:14. Where there is no satisfaction, *Non agitur sed fingitur paenitentia*, saith St. Augustine; and those who restore not all, wash not their whole hands, they dip only the tips of their fingers. Extortion, rapine, bribery, these are the sins of the hands (sins so proper to the Jews, that they may well conceive as they do that the devil lies all night on their hands, and that is it makes them so diligent in washing); but as for us Christians, unless these vipers be shaken off our hands, though ye cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, yet if you continue in your pollutions, God regards not your offering any more, nor will he receive it with good will at your hands. Mt 2:13. *Isaac Bargrave's Sermon before the House of Commons*, 1623.

Verse 6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.* If *greatness* might have privileged this person from impurity, David was a king; if the *grace of his soul* might have freed him from the soil of sin, he was "a man after God's own heart." But let not great men put too much trust in their greatness; the longer the robe is the more soil in contracts: great power may prove the mother of great damnation. And as for purity, there is a generation that say there's no sin in them, but they deceive themselves; there is no truth in them. Whatever Rome's *rusiology* pretend for the power of nature, and of free will, we wretched sinners are taught to conceive more truly of our own infirmity.

Christ's own apostle, stout Thomas, failed in the faith of his resurrection; Peter (whose chair is now the pretended seat of infallibility) denied his Master; David, "a man after God's own heart," hath need of *washing*; and who can say, I am pure in the sight of the Lord? Certainly, O Lord, no flesh is righteous in thy sight. No; this is the best ground of Christian felicity, if with David we fall to a sight of our own sins; if with the Publican we strike our own breasts, and not with the Pharisee, cast our eye so much upon other men's faults. Why should we, like tailors, measure all men but ourselves? as if the best of us had not sin enough of his own to think on. See how David calls himself to account for his own sins; "O Lord, I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me." Oh, the powerful effect of Christian devotion, when by the reflective act of the understanding, science is turned into conscience, and our knowledge is but the glass of our imperfection, the glass wherein the sight of our sins sends us presently to God, as it did David here, who makes this account only betwixt God and his own soul, "*I, O Lord.*" First, he takes his rise from humility and the sight of his own sins, and he soars up by the wings of faith to the throne of God's mercy: "*I, O Lord.*" He sees with his own eyes, and not only with the church, or the priest's spectacles; he is his own penitentiary and confessor; here's no intercession by saints, no masses, merits, indulgences, trentals, dirges: all's done betwixt God and him: "*I, O Lord.*" With the eye of *humility* he looks to himself and his own misery; then with the eye of *faith* to God and his mercy, and from both these results a third virtue of *repentance* in the act of preparation, washing the soil of sin in the bath of sorrow: "*I will wash mine hands,*" etc. *Isaac Bargrave.*

Verse 6. *I will wash mine hands in purity.* Referring in these words, to the ordinary use of the sacrifices, he makes a distinction between himself and those who professed to offer the same divine worship, and thrust themselves forward in the services of the sanctuary, as if they alone had the sole right to perform them. As David, therefore, and these hypocrites were one in this respect, that they entered the sanctuary, and surrounded the sacred altar together, he proceeds to show that he was a true worshipper, declaring that he not only diligently attended to the external rites, but came to worship God with unfeigned devotion. It is obvious that he alludes to the solemn rite of washing which was practised under the law. He, accordingly, reproves the gross superstition of hypocrites, who, in seeking only the purification of water, neglected true purification; whereas it was God's design, in the appointment of the outward sign, to put men in mind of their inward pollution, and thus to encourage them to repentance. The outward washing alone, instead of profiting hypocrites, kept them at a greater distance from God. When the psalmist, therefore, says, "*I will wash my hands in innocence,*" he intimates that they only gather more pollution and filth by their washings. The Hebrew word (Nwyqn) *nikkayon*, signifies the cleanness of anything, and is figuratively used for *innocence*. We thus see, that as hypocrites derive no moral purity whatever from their washings, David mocks at the labour with which they vainly toil and torment themselves in such rites. *John Calvin.*

Verse 6. "*I will wash mine hands,*" etc. David willing to express his coming with a pure heart to pray to

God, doth it by this similitude of a priest: that as a priest *washes his hands*, and *then offers oblation*, so had he constantly joined *purity* and *devotion* together. *Henry Hammond*.

Verse 6. *In innocency*. The very *akmt* and crown of all our preparation, the purest water we can wash in, is *innocency*; and *innocency* is a virtue of the heart as well as of the hand. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." Jas 4:8. I could wish our washing might be like Cyprian's baptising, *ad tincturam*, even till we were dyed in repentance and the blood of Christ. Let the quantity of thy sins be the measure of thy repentance. First offer thine *innocency*, then thy sacrifice. It is not enough that you come this day by order, you must come with *innocency*. God requires the duty of the second table, as well as of the first; he abhors the outward act of piety where he finds no conscience and practice of *innocency*. *Isaac Bargrave*.

Verse 6. (*first clause*). One morning, as Gotthold was pouring water into a basin, he recollected the words of Scripture: *I will wash my hands in innocency*, a text which shows how diligently the royal prophet had endeavoured to lead a blameless life, and walk habitually in the fear of God. Upon this he mused, and said, Henceforth, my God, every time I pour out water to wash with, I will call to mind that it is my duty to cleanse my hands from wicked actions, my mouth from wicked words, and my heart from wicked lusts and desires, that so I may be enabled to lift holy hands unto thee, and with unspotted lips and heart worship thee, to the best of my ability. What will it profit me to strive after outward purity, if my heart is filthy and abominable in thy sight? Can the food nourish me which I have earned with polluted hands, or seized with violence and injustice, or eaten with insensibility and ingratitude? Ah! no, my God; far from me be food like this. My first care shall be to maintain a blameless walk; my next, when I have thoughtlessly defiled myself, to cleanse and wash away the stain, and remove mine iniquity from thine eyes. "*Purge me, O my God, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*" Ps 51:7. *Christian Scriver* (1629-1693), in "*Gotthold's Emblems*."

Verse 6. *I will compass thine altar, O Lord*. On the next day after this feast (the Feast of Tabernacles), the people compassed the altar seven times, with palm boughs in their hands, in the remembrance of the overthrow of Jericho...Not only the boughs, but the days of this whole Feast of Tabernacles, were termed *Hosannoth*, from the usual acclamation of the people whilst they carried the boughs up and down. *Thomas Godwyn, B.D.* (1587-1643), in "*Moses and Aaron*."

Verse 6. By the phrase *compassing the altar*, either he alludes to some Levitical custom of going about the altar, as the priests did in the oblation of their sacrifices; and the people, especially those of them who were more devout and zealous, who possibly moved from place to place, but still within their own court, that they might discern what was done on the several sides of the altar, and so be more affected with it; or rather he implies that he would offer many sacrifices together, which would employ the priests round about the altar. *Matthew Poole*.

Verse 8. *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house,* etc. "I have in my congregation," said a venerable minister of the gospel, "a worthy, aged woman, who has for many years been so deaf as not to distinguish the loudest sound, and yet she is always one of the first in the meeting. On asking the reason of her constant attendance (as it was impossible for her to hear my voice), she answered, 'Though I cannot hear you, I come to God's house because I love it, and would be found in his ways; and he gives me many a sweet thought upon the text when it is pointed out to me: another reason is, because there I am in the best company, in the more immediate presence of God, and among his saints, the honourable of the earth. I am not satisfied with serving God in private; it is my duty and privilege to honour him regularly in public.'" What a reproof this is to those who have their hearing, and yet always come to a place of worship late, or not at all! *K. Arvine.*

Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* Now is the time that people should be in care and concern, that their souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world. In discoursing from this doctrine we shall—1. Consider some things implied in it. 2. Show who are the sinners, that we are to have a horror of our souls being gathered with in the other world. 3. What it is for one's soul to be gathered with sinners in the other world. 4. Consider this care and concern, or show what is implied in this earnest request, "Gather not my soul with sinners" 5. Give the reasons why we should be in such care and concern. 6. Make application. Death is the gathering time, which the psalmist has in view in the text. Ye have a time here that ye call the gathering time, about the term when the servants are going away, wherein ye gather your strayed sheep, that every one may get their own again. Death is God's gathering time wherein he gets the souls belonging to him, and the devil those belonging to him. They did go long together, but then they are parted, and the saints are taken home to the congregation of saints, and sinners to the congregation of sinners. And it concerns us to say, "Gather not my soul with sinners." Whoever be our people here, God's people or the devil's, death will gather our souls to them. It is a horrible thing to be gathered with sinners in the other world. To think of our souls being gathered with them there, may make the hair of one's head stand up. Many now like no gathering like the gathering with sinners; it is the very delight of their hearts, it makes a brave jovial life in their eyes. And it is a pain to them to be gathered with saints, to be detained before the Lord on a Sabbath day. But to be gathered with them in the other world, is a horror to all sorts. 1. The saints have a horror of it, as in the text. To think to be staked down in their company in the other world would be a hell of itself to the godly. David never had such a horror of the society of the diseased, the persecuted, etc., as of sinners. He is content to be gathered with saints of whatever condition; but, "Lord," say he, "Gather not my soul with sinners." 2. The wicked themselves have a horror of it. Nu 23:10. "Let me die the death of the righteous," said the wicked Balaam, "and let my last end be like his." Though they would be content to live with them, or be with them in life, their consciences bear witness that they have a horror of being with them in death. They would live with sinners, but they

would die with saints. A poor, unreasonable, self condemning thought. *Thomas Boston*.

Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* Bind me not up in the same bundle with them, like the tares for the fire. Mt 13:30. The contrast to this is seen in the following Ps 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up; " literally, will *gather me* to his fold. *Christopher Wordsworth*.

Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* The Lord hath a harvest and a gleaning time also, set for cutting down and binding together, in the fellowship of judgments, God's enemies, who have followed the same course of sinning: for here we are given to understand that God will "*gather their souls,*" and so will let none escape. *David Dickson*.

Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* After all, it may be objected that this concern seems to be common with saints and sinners. Even a wicked Balaam said, "*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*" Nu 23:10. Take a few differences between them in this matter. 1. It is separation from Christ that makes the saints to have a horror at being gathered with sinners hereafter. Separation from Christ is the main ground of the believer's horror: but if other things were to be right with the sinner in the other world, he would be easy under separation from Christ. 2. The believer has a horror at being gathered with sinners on account of their filthiness; but the thing that makes the sinner concerned is the prospect of punishment. No doubt, a principle of self preservation must make punishment frightful to all; but abstracted from that, the saints have a concern not to be gathered with sinners in the other world, upon account of their unholiness and filthiness. "He who is filthy, let him be filthy still, "is enough to make a saint abhor the lot of sinners in the life to come. 3. The concern of the saints has a mighty influence upon them, to make them study holiness here; but sinners live unholy for all their concern. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1Jo 3:3. What hope? The hope of seeing Christ as he is, and of being perfectly like him, of being separated from sinners. 4. Lastly, the concern of the saints is such, that they do with purpose of heart come out from among sinners more and more in this world; but sinners are not concerned to be separated from sinners here. Balaam wished to die the death of the righteous; but he had no concern to live the life of the righteous, and to be separated from sinners here. *James Scot, 1773*.

Verses 9-12. David prays that God would not "gather his soul with sinners, whose right hand is full of bribes; "such as, for advantage, would be bribed to sin, to which wicked gang he opposeth himself, Ps 26:11; "*But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity;*" where he tells us what kept him from being corrupted and enticed, as they were; from God—it was his *integrity*. A soul walking in its integrity will take bribes neither from men, nor sin itself: and therefore he saith Ps 26:12, "His foot stood in an even place; "or, as some read it, "My foot standeth in righteousness." *William Gurnall*.

Verse 10. *Their right hand is full of bribes.* If the great men in Turkey should use their religion of

Mahomet to sell, as our patrons commonly sell benefices here (the office of preaching, the office of salvation), it should be taken as an intolerable thing; the Turk would not suffer it in his commonwealth. Patrons be charged to see the office done, and not to seek a lucre and a gain by their patronage. There was a patron in England that had a benefice fallen into his hand, and a good brother of mine came unto him, and brought him up thirty apples in a dish, and gave them to his man to carry them to his master. It is like he gave one to his man for his labour, to make up the gain, and so there was thirty-one. This man cometh to his master, and presented him with the dish of apples, saying, "Sir, such a man hath sent you a dish of fruit, and desireth you to be good unto him for such a benefice." "Tush, tush," said he, "this is no apple matter, I will none of his apples, I have as good as these (or any he hath) in mine own orchard." The man came to the priest again, and told him what his master said. "Then," said the priest, "desire him yet to prove one of them for my sake, he shall find them much better than they look for." He cut one of them, and found ten pieces of gold in it. "Marry," said he, "this is a good apple." The priest standing not far off, hearing what the gentleman said, cried out and answered, "they are all one apples, I warrant you, sir; they grew all on one tree, and have all one taste." "Well, he is a good fellow, let him have it," said the patron, etc. Get you a graft of this same tree, and I warrant you it shall stand you in better stead than all St. Paul's learning. *Hugh Latimer.*

Verse 10. *Bribes.* They that see furthest into the law, and most clearly discern the cause of justice, if they suffer the dust of bribes to be thrown into their sight, their eyes will water and twinkle, and fall at last to blind connivance. It is a wretched thing when justice is made a hackney that may be backed for money, and put on with golden spurs, even to the desired journey's end of injury and iniquity. Far be from our souls this wickedness, that the ear which should be open to complaints should be stopped with the earwax of partiality. Alas! poor truth, that she must now be put to charges of a golden ear pick, or she cannot be heard! *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 10.

What makes all doctrines plain and clear?

About two hundred pounds a year,

And that which was proved true before

Proved false again? Two hundred more.

—Samuel Butler (1600-1680), *in Hudibras*. Part 3. Canto 1.

Verses 12 (first clause). The upright man's *foot*, is said to *stand in an even place*; he walks not haltingly and uncomely, as those who go in unequal ways, which are hobbling, and up and down, or those whose feet and legs are not even (as Solomon saith), "The legs of the lame are not equal," and so cannot *stand in an even place*, because one is long and the other short; the sincere man's feet are *even*, and the legs of a length, as I may say; his care alike conscientious to the whole will of God. The

hypocrite, like the badger, hath one foot shorter than another; or, like a foundered horse, he doth not stand, as we say, right of all four; one foot at least you shall perceive he favours, loath to put it down.

William Gurnall.

Verse 12. *On an even place.* As a man whose feet are firmly fixed upon even ground is apprehensive of no fall, so the pious worshippers of Jehovah feel no dread lest their adversaries should finally triumph over them. *William Walford.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1.

1. *Two inseparable companions*—faith and holiness.
2. *The blessedness of the man who possesses them.* He needs not fear the judgment, nor the danger of the way.
3. *The only means of procuring them.*

Verse 1. (*last sentence*). The upholding power of trust in God.

Verse 2. *Divine examinations.* Their variety, severity, searching nature, accuracy, certainty: when to be desired, and when to be dreaded.

Verse 3. Delight for the eyes and safety for the feet; or the good man's sweet contemplation and holy practice; or the heavenly compound of godliness—motive, and motion, enjoying and acting, love and truth, free grace and good works.

Verse 3. *Thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes.* It might be well to follow David and to keep the lovingkindness of God before *our* eyes. This should be done in four ways:—1. As a subject of contemplation.

2. As the source of encouragement.
3. As an incitement to praise.
4. As an example for imitation.

—*William Jay.*

Verse 4. *Vain persons.* Who they are. Why they are to be avoided. What will become of them. *Dissemblers.* Describe this numerous family. Show what their objects are. The mischief done to believers by their craftiness. The need of shunning them, and their fearful end.

Verse 5. *Bad company.* Cases of its evil results, excuses for it answered, warnings given, motives urged for relinquishing.

Verse 6. The necessity of personal holiness in order to acceptable worship.

Verse 7. 1. The believer's calling—a publisher.

2. The author selected, and the quality of his works. "*Thy wondrous works.*"
3. The mode of advertising—"voice of thanksgiving", "tell", etc.

Verse 8. God's house. Why we love it. What we love in it. How we show our love. How our love will be rewarded.

Verse 9. See "Spurgeon's Sermons, "No. 524. "The Saints' Horror at the Sinners' Hell."

Verse 11. The best men needing redemption and mercy; or the outward walk before men, and the secret walk with God.

Verse 12. Secure standing, honoured position, grateful praise.

Verse 12 (*last clause*). Congregational Psalmody, and our personal share in it.

Psalm 27

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE AND SUBJECT. Nothing whatever can be drawn from the title as to the time when this Psalm was written, for the heading, "A Psalm of David," is common to so many of the Psalms; but if one may judge from the matter of the song, the writer was pursued by enemies, Ps 27:2-3, was shut out from the house of the Lord, Ps 27:4, was just parting from father and mother, Ps 27:10, and was subject to slander, Ps 27:12; do not all these meet in the time when Doeg, the Edomite, spake against him to Saul? It is a song of cheerful hope, well fitted for those in trial who have learned to lean upon the Almighty arm. The Psalm may with profit be read in a threefold way, as the language of David, of the Church, and of the Lord Jesus. The plenitude of Scripture will thus appear the more wonderful.

DIVISION. The poet first sounds forth his sure confidence in his God, Ps 27:1-3, and his love of communion with him, Ps 27:4-6. He then betakes himself to prayer, Ps 27:7-12, and concludes with an acknowledgment of the sustaining power of faith in his own case, and an exhortation to others to follow his example.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *The Lord is my light and my salvation.* Here is personal interest, "*my light*," "*my salvation*;" "the soul is assured of it, and therefore, declaring it boldly. "*My light*;"—into the soul at the new birth divine light is poured as the precursor of salvation; where there is not enough light to see our own darkness and to long for the Lord Jesus, there is no evidence of salvation. Salvation finds us in the dark, but it does not leave us there; it gives light to those who sit in the valley of the shadow of death. After conversion our God is our joy, comfort, guide, teacher, and in every sense our light; he is light within, light around, light reflected from us, and light to be revealed to us. Note, it is not said merely

that the Lord gives light, but that he "is" light; nor that he gives salvation, but that he is salvation; he, then, who by faith has laid hold upon God has all covenant blessings in his possession. Every light is not the sun, but the sun is the father of all lights. This being made sure as a fact, the argument drawn from it is put in the form of a question, *Whom shall I fear?* A question which is its own answer. The powers of darkness are not to be feared, for the Lord, our light, destroys them; and the damnation of hell is not to be dreaded by us, for the Lord is our salvation. This is a very different challenge from that of boastful Goliath, for it is based upon a very different foundation; it rests not upon the conceited vigour of an arm of flesh, but upon the real power of the omnipotent I AM. *The Lord is the strength of my life.* Here is a third glowing epithet, to show that the writer's hope was fastened with a threefold cord which could not be broken. We may well accumulate terms of praise where the Lord lavishes deeds of grace. Our life derives all its strength from him who is the author of it; and if he deigns to make us strong we cannot be weakened by all the machinations of the adversary. *Of whom shall I be afraid?* The bold question looks into the future as well as the present. "If God be for us, "who can be against us, either now or in time to come?"

Verse 2. This verse records a past deliverance, and is an instance of the way in which experience should be employed to reassure our faith in times of trial. Each word is instructive. *When the wicked.* It is a hopeful sign for us when the wicked hate us; if our foes were godly men it would be a sore sorrow, but as for the wicked their hatred is better than their love. *Even mine enemies and my foes.* There were many of them, they were of different sorts, but they were unanimous in mischief and hearty in hatred. *Came upon me*—advanced to the attack, leaping upon the victim like a lion upon its prey. *To eat up my flesh,* like cannibals they would make a full end of the man, tear him limb from limb, and make a feast for their malice. The enemies of our souls are not deficient in ferocity, they yield no quarter, and ought to have none in return. See in what danger David was; in the grip and grasp of numerous, powerful, and cruel enemies, and yet observe his perfect safety and their utter discomfiture! *They stumbled and fell.* God's breath blew them off their legs. There were stones in the way which they never reckoned upon, and over these they made an ignominious tumble. This was literally true in the case of our Lord in Gethsemane, when those who came to take him went backward and fell to the ground; and herein he was a prophetic representative of all wrestling believers who, rising from their knees shall, by the power of faith, throw their foes upon their faces.

Verse 3. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall *not fear.* Before the actual conflict, while as yet the battle is untried, the warrior's heart, being held in suspense, is very liable to become fluttered. The encamping host often inspires greater dread than the same host in actual affray. Young tells us of some—"Who feel a thousand deaths in fearing one." Doubtless the shadow of anticipated trouble is, to timorous minds, a more prolific source of sorrow than the trouble itself, but faith puts a strengthening plaister to the back of courage, and throws out of the window the dregs of

the cup of trembling. *Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.* When it actually comes to push of pike, faith's shield will ward off the blow; and if the first brush should be but the beginning of a war, yet faith's banners will wave in spite of the foe. Though battle should succeed battle, and one campaign should be followed by another, the believer will not be dismayed at the length of the conflict. Reader, this third verse is the comfortable and logical inference from the second, confidence is the child of experience. Have you been delivered out of great perils? then set up your ensign, wait at your watch fire, and let the enemy do his worst.

Verse 4. *One thing.* Divided aims tend to distraction, weakness, disappointment. The man of one book is eminent, the man of one pursuit is successful. Let all our affections be bound up in one affection, and that affection set upon heavenly things. *Have I desired*—what we cannot at once attain, it is well to desire. God judges us very much by the desire of our hearts. He who rides a lame horse is not blamed by his master for want of speed, if he makes all the haste he can, and would make more if he could; God takes the will for the deed with his children. *Of the Lord.* This is the right target for desires, this is the well into which to dip our buckets, this is the door to knock at, the bank to draw upon; desire of men, and lie upon the dunghill with Lazarus: desire of the Lord, and to be carried of angels into Abraham's bosom. Our desires of the Lord should be sanctified, humble, constant, submissive, fervent, and it is well if, as with the psalmist, they are all molten into one mass. Under David's painful circumstances we might have expected him to desire repose, safety, and a thousand other good things, but no, he has set his heart on the pearl, and leaves the rest. *That will I seek after.* Holy desires must lead to resolute action. The old proverb says, "Wishers and woulders are never good housekeepers," and "wishing never fills a sack." Desires are seed which must be sown in the good soil of activity, or they will yield no harvest. We shall find our desires to be like clouds without rain, unless followed up by practical endeavours. *That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* For the sake of communion with the King, David longed to dwell always in the palace; so far from being wearied with the services of the Tabernacle, he longed to be constantly engaged in them, as his life long pleasure. He desired above all things to be one of the household of God, a home born child, living at home with his Father. This is our dearest wish, only we extend it to those days of our immortal life which have not yet dawned. We pine for our Father's house above, the home of our souls; if we may but dwell there for ever, we care but little for the goods or ills of this poor life. "Jerusalem the golden" is the one and only goal of our heart's longings. *To behold the beauty of the Lord.* An exercise both for earthly and heavenly worshippers. We must not enter the assemblies of the saints in order to see and be seen, or merely to hear the minister; we must repair to the gatherings of the righteous, intent upon the gracious object of learning more of the loving Father, more of the glorified Jesus, more of the mysterious Spirit, in order that we may the more lovingly admire, and the more reverently adore our glorious God. What a word is that, "*the beauty of the*

Lord!" Think of it, dear reader! Better far—behold it by faith! What a sight will that be when every faithful follower of Jesus shall behold "the King in his beauty!" Oh, for that infinitely blessed vision! *And to enquire in his temple.* We should make our visits to the Lord's house enquirers' meetings. Not seeking sinners alone, but assured saints should be enquirers. We must enquire as to the will of God and how we may do it; as to our interest in the heavenly city, and how we may be more assured of it. We shall not need to make enquiries in heaven, for there we shall know even as we are known; but meanwhile we should sit at Jesus' feet, and awaken all our faculties to learn of him.

Verse 5. This verse gives an excellent reason for the psalmist's desire after communion with God, namely, that he was thus secured in the hour of peril. *For in the time of trouble,* that needy time, that time when others forsake me, *he shall hide me in his pavilion:* he shall give me the best of shelter in the worst of danger. The royal pavilion was erected in the centre of the army, and around it all the mighty men kept guard at all hours; thus in that divine sovereignty which almighty power is sworn to maintain, the believer peacefully is hidden, hidden not by himself furtively, but by the king, who hospitably entertains him. *In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.* Sacrifice aids sovereignty in screening the elect from harm. No one of old dared to enter the most holy place on pain of death; and if the Lord has hidden his people there, what foe shall venture to molest them? *He shall set me up upon a rock.* Immutability, eternity, and infinite power here come to the aid of sovereignty and sacrifice. How blessed is the standing of the man whom God himself sets on high above his foes, upon an impregnable rock which never can be stormed! Well may we desire to dwell with the Lord who so effectually protects his people.

Verse 6. *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me.* He is quite sure of it. Godly men of old prayed in faith, nothing wavering, and spoke of their answer to their prayers as a certainty. David was by faith so sure of a glorious victory over all those who beset him, that he arranged in his own heart what he would do when his foes lay all prostrate before him; that arrangement was such as gratitude suggested. *Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy.* That place for which he longed in his conflict, should see his thankful joy in his triumphant return. He does not speak of jubilation to be offered in his palace, and feasting in his banqueting halls, but holy mirth he selects as most fitting for so divine a deliverance. *I will sing.* This is the most natural mode of expressing thankfulness. *Yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.* The vow is confirmed by repetition, and explained by addition, which addition vows all the praise unto Jehovah. Let who will be silent, the believer when his prayer is heard, must and will make his praise to be heard also; and let who will sing unto the vanities of the world, the believer reserves his music for the Lord alone.

Verse 7. *Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice.* The pendulum of spirituality swings from prayer to praise. The voice which in the last verse was tuned to music is here turned to crying. As a good soldier, David knew how to handle his weapons, and found himself much at home with the weapon of

"all prayer." Note his anxiety to be heard. Pharisees care not a fig for the Lord's hearing them, so long as they are heard of men, or charm their own pride with their sounding devotions; but with a genuine man, the Lord's ear is everything. The *voice* may be profitably used even in private prayer; for though it is unnecessary, it is often helpful, and aids in preventing distractions. *Have mercy also upon me.* Mercy is the hope of sinners and the refuge of saints. All acceptable petitioners dwell much upon this attribute. *And answer me.* We may expect answers to prayer, and should not be easy without them any more than we should be if we had written a letter to a friend upon important business, and had received no reply.

Verse 8. In this verse we are taught that if we would have the Lord hear our voice, we must be careful to respond to *his* voice. The true heart should echo the will of God as the rocks among the Alps repeat in sweetest music the notes of the peasant's horn. Observe, that the command was in the plural, to all the saints, *Seek ye*; but the man of God turned it into the singular by a personal application, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* The voice of the Lord is very effectual where all other voices fail. *When thou saidst,* then my *heart,* my inmost nature was moved to an obedient reply. Note the promptness of the response—no sooner said than done; as soon as God said "*seek,*" the heart said, "*I will seek.*" Oh, for more of this holy readiness! Would to God that we were more plastic to the divine hand, more sensitive of the touch of God's Spirit.

Verse 9. *Hide not thy face far from me.* The word "*far*" is not in the original, and is a very superfluous addition of the translators, since even the least hiding of the Lord's face is a great affliction to a believer. The command to seek the Lord's face would be a painful one if the Lord, by withdrawing himself, rendered it impossible for the seeker to meet with him. A smile from the Lord is the greatest of comforts, his frown the worst of ills. *Put not thy servant away in anger.* Other servants had been put away when they proved unfaithful, as for instance, his predecessor Saul; and this made David, while conscious of many faults, most anxious that divine long suffering should continue him in favour. This is a most appropriate prayer for us under a similar sense of unworthiness. *Thou hast been my help.* How truly can we join in this declaration; for many years, in circumstances of varied trial, we have been upheld by our God, and must and will confess our obligation. "Ingratitude, "it is said, "is natural to fallen man, "but to spiritual men it is unnatural and detestable. *Leave me not, neither forsake me.* A prayer for the future, and an inference from the past. If the Lord had meant to leave us, why did he begin with us? Past help is but a waste of effort if the soul now be deserted. The first petition, "*leave me not,*" may refer to temporary desertions, and the second word to the final withdrawal of grace, both are to be prayed against; and concerning the second, we have immutable promises to urge. *O God of my salvation.* A sweet title worthy of much meditation.

Verse 10. *When my father and my mother forsake me.* These dear relations will be the last to desert me, but if the milk of human kindness should dry up even from their breasts, there is a Father who

never forgets. Some of the greatest of the saints have been cast out by their families, and persecuted for righteousness' sake. *Then the Lord will take me up.* Will espouse my cause, will uplift me from my woes, will carry me in his arms, will elevate me above my enemies, will at last receive me to his eternal dwelling place.

Verse 11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord.* He does not pray to be indulged with his own way, but to be informed as to the path in which the righteous Jehovah would have him walk. This prayer evinces an humble sense of personal ignorance, great teachableness of spirit, and cheerful obedience of heart. *Lead me in a plain path.* Help is here sought as well as direction; we not only need a map of the way, but a guide to assist us in the journey. A path is here desired which shall be open, honest, straightforward, in opposition to the way of cunning, which is intricate, tortuous, dangerous. Good men seldom succeed in fine speculations and doubtful courses; plain simplicity is the best spirit for an heir of heaven: let us leave shifty tricks and political expedencies to the citizens of the world—the New Jerusalem owns plain men for its citizens. Esau was a cunning hunter, Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. *Because of mine enemies.* These will catch us if they can, but the way of manifest, simple honesty is safe from their rage. It is wonderful to observe how honest simplicity baffles and outwits the craftiness of wickedness. Truth is wisdom. "Honesty is the best policy."

Verse 12. *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies;* or I should be like a victim cast to the lions, to be rent in pieces and utterly devoured. God be thanked that our foes cannot have their way with us, or Smithfield would soon be on a blaze again. *For false witnesses are risen up against me.* Slander is an old fashioned weapon out of the armoury of hell, and is still in plentiful use; and no matter how holy a man may be, there will be some who will defame him. "Give a dog an ill name, and hang him; "but glory be to God, the Lord's people are not dogs, and their ill names do not injure them. *And such as breathe out cruelty.* It is their vital breath to hate the good; they cannot speak without cursing them; such was Paul before conversion. They who breathe out cruelty may well expect to be sent to breathe their native air in hell; let persecutors beware!

Verse 13. Faintness of heart is a common infirmity; even he who slew Goliath was subject to its attacks. Faith puts its bottle of cordial to the lip of the soul, and so prevents fainting. Hope is heaven's balm for present sorrow. In this land of the dying, it is our blessedness to be looking and longing for our fair portion in the land of the living, whence the goodness of God has banished the wickedness of man, and where holy spirits charm with their society those persecuted saints who were vilified and despised among men. We must believe to see, not see to believe; we must wait the appointed time, and stay our soul's hunger with foretastes of the Lord's eternal goodness which shall soon be our feast and our song.

Verse 14. *Wait on the Lord.* Wait at his door with prayer; wait at his foot with humility; wait at his table with service; wait at his window with expectancy. Suitors often win nothing but the cold shoulder from

earthly patrons after long and obsequious waiting; he speeds best whose patron is in the skies. *Be of good courage.* A soldier's motto. Be it mine. Courage we shall need, and for the exercise of it we have as much reason as necessity, if we are soldiers of King Jesus. *And he shall strengthen thine heart.* He can lay the plaister right upon the weak place. Let the heart be strengthened, and the whole machine of humanity is filled with power; a strong heart makes a strong arm. What strength is this which God himself gives to the heart? Read the "Book of Martyrs, "and see its glorious deeds of prowess; go to God rather, and get such power thyself. *Wait, I say, on the Lord.* David, in the words "*I say,*" sets his own private seal to the word which, as an inspired man, he had been moved to write. It is *his* testimony as well as the command of God, and indeed he who writes these scanty notes has himself found it so sweet, so reviving, so profitable to draw near to God, that on his own account he also feels bound to write, "*Wait, I SAY, on the Lord.*"

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Verse 1. *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?* Alice Driver, martyr, at her examination, put all the doctors to silence, so that they had not a word to say, but one looked upon another; then she said, "Have you no more to say? God be honoured, you be not able to resist the Spirit of God, in me, a poor woman. I was an honest poor man's daughter, never brought up at the University as you have seen; but I have driven the plough many a time before my father, I thank God; yet, notwithstanding, in the defence of God's truth, and in the cause of my Master, Christ, by his grace I will set my foot against the foot of any of you all, in the maintenance and defence of the same; and if I had a thousand lives they should go for the payment thereof." So the Chancellor condemned her, and she returned to the prison joyful. *Charles Bradbury.*

Verse 1. *The Lord is my light,* etc. St. John tells us, that "in Christ was life; and the life was the light of men; "but he adds that, "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Joh 1:4-5. There is a great difference between the *light*, and the eye that sees it. A blind man may know a great deal about the shining of the sun, but it does not shine for him—it gives him no light. So, to know that "God is light, "is one thing 1Jo 1:5, and to be able to say, "The Lord is *my* light, "is quite another thing. The Lord must be the light by which the way of life is made plain to us—the light by which we may see to walk in that way—the light that exposes the darkness of sin—the light by which we can discover the hidden sins of our own hearts. When he is thus *our light*, then he is *our salvation* also. He is pledged to guide us right; not only to show us sin, but to save us from it. Not only to make us see God's hatred of sin, and his curse upon it, but also to draw us unto God's love, and to take away the curse. With the Lord lighting us along the road of salvation, who, or what need we fear? Our life is hid with Christ in God. Col 3:3. We are weak, very weak, but his "strength is made perfect in weakness." 2Co 12:2. With the Lord himself pledged to be the strength of our life, of whom need we

be afraid? *From Sacramental Meditations on the Twenty-seventh Psalm, 1843.*

Verse 1. *The Lord is my light.* "Light" which makes all things visible, was the first made of all visible things; and whether God did it for our example, or no, I know not; but ever since, in imitation of this manner of God's proceeding, the first thing we do when we intend to do anything, is to get us "light."
Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 1. *The Lord is my light.* Adorable Sun, cried St. Bernard, I cannot walk without thee: enlighten my steps, and furnish this barren and ignorant mind with thoughts worthy of thee. Adorable fulness of light and heat, be thou the true noonday of my soul; exterminate its darkness, disperse its clouds; burn, dry up, and consume all its filth and impurities. Divine Sun, rise upon my mind, and never set.
Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon, 1652-1729.

Verse 1. *Whom shall I fear?* Neither spiritual nor military heroes do exploits through cowardice, Courage is a necessary virtue. In Jehovah is the best possible foundation for unflinching intrepidity.
William S. Plumer.

Verse 1. *Of whom shall I be afraid?* I have no notion of a timid, disingenuous profession of Christ. Such preachers and professors are like a rat playing at hide and seek behind a wainscot, who puts his head through a hole to see if the coast is clear, and ventures out if nobody is in the way; but slinks back again if danger appears. We cannot be honest to Christ except we are bold for him. He is either worth *all* we can lose for him, or he is worth *nothing*. *H. G. Salter, A.M., in "The Book of Illustrations," 1840.*

Verse 2. *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.* There is no such dainty dish to a malicious stomach, as the flesh of an enemy; it goes down without chewing, and they swallow it up whole like cormorants. But though malice have a ravenous stomach, yet she hath but slow digestion; though her teeth be sharp, yet her feet are lame, at least apt to stumble; and this made well for David, for when his enemies came upon him to eat up his flesh, because they came upon the feet of malice, *they stumbled and fell.* A man may *stumble* and yet not *fall*; but to *stumble and fall* withal, is the proper stumbling of *the wicked*, and especially of the maliciously wicked; and such, it seems, was the stumbling of David's enemies, because the enemies were such; and such I doubt not shall be the stumbling of mine enemies, because mine are such; and of what then, of whom now, should I be afraid? *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 2. *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.* He describes his enemies by their malice and by their ruin. 1. His enemies were *cruel enemies*, blood suckers, eaters of flesh. We call them cannibals. As indeed men that have not grace, if they have greatness, and be opposed, their greatness is inaccessible, one man is a devil to another. The Scripture calls them "wolves, that leave nothing till morning." Zep 3:3. As the great fishes eat up the little ones, so great men they make no more conscience of eating up other men,

than of eating bread; they make no more bones of overthrowing men and undoing them, than of eating bread. "They eat up my people as they eat bread." Ps 14:4. 2. But not withstanding their cruelty, *they were overthrown*. Saith David, *When my foes came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell*. For, indeed, God's children, when they are delivered, it is usually with the confusion of their enemies. God doth two things at once, because the special grievance of God's children it is from inward and outward enemies. He seldom or never delivers them but with the confusion of their enemies. This will be most apparent at the day of judgment when Satan, and all that are led by his spirit, all the malignant church, shall be sent to their own place, and the church shall be for ever free from all kind of enemies. When the church is most free, then the enemies of the church are nearest to destruction; like a pair of balances, when they are up at the one end, they are down at the other. So when it is up with the church, down go the enemies. *Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 2. *The wicked, mine enemies*. The wicked hate the godly; there is enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent. Ge 3:15. As in nature there is an antipathy between the vine and the bay tree, the elephant and the dragon. Vultures have an antipathy against sweet smells: so in the wicked there is an antipathy against the people of God; they hate the sweet perfumes of their graces. It is true the saints have their infirmities; but the wicked do not hate them for these, but for their holiness; and from this hatred ariseth open violence: the thief hates the light, therefore would blow it out. *Thomas Watson*.

Verse 2. There was great wisdom in the prayer of John Wesley: "Lord, if I must contend, let it not be with thy people." When we have for foes and enemies those who hate good men, we have at least this consolation, that God is not on their side, and therefore it is essentially weak. *William S. Plumer*.

Verse 3. Though an host should encamp against me, etc. He puts the case of the greatest danger that can be. *Though an host should encompass me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident*. Here is great *courage* for the time to come. "*Experience breeds hope and confidence*." David was not so courageous a man of himself; but upon experience of God's former comfort and assistance, his faith brake as fire out of the smoke, or as the sun out of a cloud. Though I was in such and such perplexities, yet for the time to come, I have such confidence and experience of God's goodness, that I will not fear. He that seeth God by a spirit of faith in his greatness and power, he sees all other things below as nothing. Therefore, he saith here, he cares not for the time to come for any opposition; no, not of an army. "If God be with us, who can be against us?" Ro 8:31. He saw God in his power; and then, looking from God to the creature, alas! who was he? As Micah, when he had seen God sitting upon his throne; what was Ahab to him, when he had seen God once? So when the prophet David had seen God once, then "*though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear*, "etc. *Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 3. Though an host should encamp against me, etc. If I love my God, and I love him with a

noble spirited love, all my enemies will fight against me in vain; I shall never fear them, and the whole world cannot harm me. Charity cannot be offended, because she takes offence at nothing. Enemies, enviers, slanderers, persecutors, I defy you; if I love, I shall triumph over your attacks. Ye can take away my goods; but if my love has a generous spirit, I shall be always rich enough, and ye cannot take away my love, which alone makes all my riches and treasures. Ye may blacken my reputation; but as I hold you cheaply quit of all homage of praise and applause, I, with all my heart, give you a free leave to blame and to defame. Happily for me, ye cannot blacken me before my God, and his esteem alone makes amends to me, and rewards me, for all your contempt. Ye can persecute my body, but there I even will help you on by my penances; the sooner it shall perish, the sooner shall I be delivered from this domestic enemy, which is a burden to me. What harm, then, can ye do me? If I am resolved to suffer all, and if I think I deserve all the outrages ye can do me, ye will only give more loftiness of spirit to my love, more brilliancy to my crown. *Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon.*

Verse 3. Those who are willing to be combatants *for* God, shall also be more than conquerors *through* God. None are so truly courageous as those who are truly religious. If a Christian live, he knows by whose might he stands; and if he die, he knows for whose sake he falls. Where there is no confidence *in* God, there will be no continuance *with* God. When the wind of faith ceases to fill the sails, the ship of obedience ceases to plough the seas. The taunts of Ishmael shall never make an Isaac disesteem his inheritance, *William Secker.*

Verses 3-4. The favourite grows great by the many favours, gifts, jewels, offices, the prince bestows upon him. The Christian grows rich in *experiences*, which he wears as bracelets, and keeps as his richest jewels. He calls one *Ebenezer*—"hitherto God hath helped; "and other *Naphtali*—"I have wrestled with God and prevailed; "another *Gershom*—"I was a stranger; "another *Joseph*—"God will yet add more; "and another, *Peniel*—"I have seen the face of God." 1Sa 7:12 Ge 30:8 Ex 2:22 Ge 30:24 Ge 32:30. I have been delivered from the *lion*, therefore shall be from the *bear*; from lion and bear, therefore from the *Philistine*; from the Philistine, therefore from *Saul*; from Saul, therefore God will deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me blameless to his heavenly kingdom. *John Sheffield.*

Verse 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.* Some interpreters vary concerning what the psalmist aims at; I understand thus much in a generality, which is clear that he means a communion and fellowship with God, which is that *one thing*, which if a Christian had, he needs desire no more: that we should all desire and desire again and be in love with, and that is enough even to satisfy us, the fruition of God, and the beholding of him in his ordinances, in his temple, to have correspondence and fellowship and communion with him there. O God, vouchsafe us that! Now this is so infinitely sweet, that it was the psalmist's only desire, and the

sum of all his desires here, and therefore much more in the tabernacle of heaven, which doth make up the consummation and completeness of all our happiness. *John Stoughton*.

Verse 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord*, etc. Seeing David would make but *one* request to God, why would he not make a greater? for, alas! what a poor request is this—to desire *to dwell in God's house?* and what to do? but only to *see?* and to see what? but only a *beauty*, a fading thing, at most but *to enquire*; and what is enquiring? but only to hear news; a vain fancy. And what cause in any of these why David should make it his request to God? But mark, O my soul, what goes with it! Take altogether—to *behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple*. And now tell me, if there be, if there can be, any greater request to be made? any greater cause to be earnest about it? For though worldly beauty be a fading thing, yet *"the beauty of the Lord"* shall continue when the world shall fade away; and though enquiring after news be a vain fancy, yet *to enquire in God's Temple* is the way to learn there is no new thing under the sun, and there it was that Solomon learned that "all is vanity." Indeed, this *"one thing"* that David desires, is in effect that *unum necessarium* that Christ speaks of in the gospel; which Mary makes choice of there, as David doth here. *Sir Richard Baker*.

Verse 4. *One thing*, etc. A heavenly mind gathers itself up into one wish and no more. *"One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require."* Grant me thyself, O Lord, and I will ask no more. The new creature asks nothing of God, but to enjoy God: give me this, O Lord, and for the rest, let Ziba take all. I will part with all to buy that one pearl, the riches of heavenly grace. *Jeremy Taylor*.

Verse 4. *One thing*. The first thing, then, is David's choice, summarily described in the word, *"one thing."* So Christ confirmeth the prophet's word, while he called Mary's choice, *"one thing."* Lu 10:42. And that for these three reasons: First, because it is not a common but a *chief* good. If there be any good above it, it is not the chief good; and if there be any good equal unto it, it is not alone. Next, because it is the *last end* which we mind eternally to enjoy; if there be any end beyond it, it is not the last, but amidst, and a degree to it. All means and ends are used for it, but it is sought for itself, and, therefore, must be but one. Thirdly, it is a *centre* whereunto all reasonable spirits draw. As all lines from a circle meet in the centre, so every one that seeketh happiness aright meeteth in the chief good, as the only thing which they intend, and, therefore, must be *one*. *William Struther, in "True Happiness, or King David's Choice," 1633.*

Verse 4. *One thing*. Changes, great changes, and many bereavements there have been in my life. I have been emptied from vessel to vessel. But one thing has never failed—one thing makes me feel that my life has been *one*; it has calmed my joys, it has soothed my sorrows, it has guided me in difficulty, it has strengthened me in weakness. It is the *presence* of God—a faithful and loving God. Yes, brethren, the presence of God is not only *light*, it is *unity*. It gives *unity* to the heart that believes it—*unity* to the life that is conformed to it. It was the presence of God in David's soul that enabled him to say, *"One thing have I desired of the Lord;* "and in St. Paul's that enabled him to say, "This one

thing I do." *George Wagner, in the "Wanderings of the Children of Israel," 1862.*

Verse 4. *One thing.—*

One master passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

—*Alexander Pope.*

Verse 4. *That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* To approach continually unto the temple, and thither continually to repair was the *dwelling*, no doubt, here meant; to *dwell*, to reside continually there, not to come for a spurt or a fit...And thus dwelt Hannah, the daughter of Phanuel, who is said, in the second of Luke, for the space of four score and four years not to have gone out of the temple. Not that she was there always, but often, saith Lyra; and venerable Bede to the same purpose. Not that she was never absent, no, not an hour; but for that she was often in the temple. And the same St. Luke, speaking of our Saviour's disciples, after they had seen him ascended into heaven—"They returned, "saith he, "to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God, " Lu 24:52-53. Thus, St. Austin's mother, in her time too, might be said to *dwell* in God's house, whereunto she came so duly and truly twice a day, "That she, in thy Scriptures, "saith St. Austin, "might hear, O God, what thou saidst to her, and thou, in her prayers, what she said to thee." In a word, such were the Christians the same St. Austin speaks of in another place, whom he calleth *the emmets* of God. "Behold the emmet of God, "saith he, "it rises early every day, it runs to God's church, it there prays, it hears the lesson read, it sings a psalm, it ruminates what it hears, it meditates thereupon, and hoards up within itself the precious corn gathered from that barn floor." *John Day's "David's Desire to go to Church," 1609.*

Verse 4. *That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* In the beginning of the Psalm, David keeps an audit of his soul's accounts, reckoning up the large incomes and lasting treasures of God's bounty, grace, and mercy; the sum whereof is this: The Lord is my light and my life, my strength and my salvation. And now, where shall David design his presence, but where is his light? Where shall he desire his person, but where is his strength? Where shall he wish his soul, but where is his life? and where shall he fix his habitation, but where is his salvation? even in communion with his God; and this, especially, in the holy worship of his sanctuary. No wonder, then, if above all things he desires and seeks after this *"one thing, ""to dwell in the house of the Lord, "etc.* *Robert Mossom.*

Verse 4. *The house of the Lord.* It (the tabernacle, the sanctuary), is called the house of God because he is present there, as a man delights to be present in his house. It is the place where God will be met withal. As a man will be found in his house, and there he will have suitors come to him, where he reveals his secrets. A man rests, he lies, and lodgeth in his house. Where is a man so familiar as in his house? and what other place hath he such care to protect and provide for as his

house? and he lays up his treasures and his jewels in his house. So God lays up all the treasures of grace and comfort in the visible church. In the church he is to be spoken with as a man in his house. There he gives us sweet meetings; there are mutual, spiritual kisses. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." So 1:2. A man's house is his castle, as we say, that he will protect and provide for. God will be sure to protect and provide for his church. Therefore he calls the church of God, that is, the tabernacle (that was the church at that time), *the house of God*. If we apply it to our times, that answers the tabernacle now is particular visible churches under particular pastors, where the means of salvation are set up. Particular visible churches now are God's tabernacle. The church of the Jews was a national church. There was but one church, but one place, and one tabernacle; but now God hath erected particular tabernacles. Every particular church and congregation under one pastor, their meeting is the church of God, a several church independent. *Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 4. *To behold the beauty of the Lord.* That was one end of his desire, to dwell in the house of God; not to feed his eyes with speculations and goodly sights (as indeed there were in the tabernacle goodly things to be seen). No; he had a more spiritual sight than that. He saw the inward spiritual beauty of those spiritual things. The other were but outward things, as the apostle calls them. I desire to dwell in the house of the Lord, *to behold the beauty of the Lord*, the inward beauty of the Lord especially. *Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 4. *The beauty of the Lord.* In connection with these words, we would try to show that the character of God is attractive, and fitted to inspire us with love for him, and to make us, as it were, run after him. The discussion of our subject may be arranged under three heads. I. Some of the elements of the beauty of the Lord. II. Where the beauty of the Lord may be seen. III. Peculiar traits of the beauty of the Lord. I. Some of the elements of the beauty of the Lord. God is a Spirit. Hence his beauty is spiritual, and its elements must be sought for in spiritual perfection. 1. One of the elements of this beauty is holiness. 2. But the elements of the divine beauty on which we intend at this time to dwell, are those which are included under the general description of God's mercy and grace. The attractiveness of these is more easily perceived, and their influence is sooner felt by persons in our fallen condition. It is mainly through the instrumentality of these that sinners are won over from their enmity against God, and that the Holy Ghost sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. 3. Another thing, which we may call an element of beauty in God, is the combination of his various attributes in one harmonious whole. The colours of the rainbow are beautiful, when taken one by one: but there is a beauty in the rainbow, which arises not from any single tint; there is a beauty in it which would not exist if the several hues were assumed in succession—a beauty which is a result of their assemblage and collocation, and consists in their blended radiance. In like manner so the several perfections, which coexist and unite in the nature of God, produce a glorious beauty. Holiness is beautiful; mercy is beautiful; truth is beautiful. But, over and above, there is a beauty which belongs to such

combinations and harmonies as the psalmist describes, when he tells us, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep, "etc. II. We are next to inquire where the beauty of the Lord may be seen. It may so far be seen in the *natural world*. The throne of nature, although in some respects clouds and darkness are round about it, is not without its rainbow of beauty, any more than the throne of grace. The beauty of the Lord may be seen in the *moral law*. In the law! Even so. In the unbending law, with its terrible anathema, his beauty and amiableness shine forth. The law is full of love. The duties of the law are duties of love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. The curse of the law is designed and employed for the maintenance of love. Obedience to the law, and the reign of love, are but different aspects of the same state of things. And one of the most sublime lessons of the law is the fact, that God is love. Again, the beauty of the Lord may be seen in the *gospel*. We see it, as it were, by reflection, in the law; in the gospel, we see it directly. The law shows us the hearts of men, as God would have them to be; the gospel shows us God's own heart. Again the beauty of the Lord is seen in *Christ*. It is seen in Christ, for he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father. The beauty of the Lord is seen in Christ, when we consider him as the Father's gift, and when we look to his offices and to his character. The character of Christ was the finest spectacle of moral beauty which men or angels ever set their eyes on. III. We conclude by noticing some traits of the beauty of the Lord. 1. It never deceives. 2. It never fades. 3. It never loses its power. 4. It never disappoints. *Condensed from Andrew Gray (1805-1861), in "Gospel Contrasts and Parallels."*

Verse 4. *The beauty of the Lord.* The Lord's *beauty*, to be seen in his house, is not the beauty of his essence, for so no man can see God and live Ex 23:18,20; before this glorious beauty the angels cover their faces with their wings Isa 6:1-2; but it is the beauty of his ordinances, wherein God doth reveal to the eyes of men's minds, enlightened by his Spirit, the pleasant beauty of his goodness, justice, love, and mercy in Jesus Christ. *Thomas Pierson, M.A., 1570-1633.*

Verse 4. *The beauty of the Lord.* "*Beauty*" is too particular a word to express the fulness of the Holy Ghost, the pleasantness or the delight of God. Take the word in a general sense, in your apprehensions. It may be the object of all senses, inward and outward. Delight is most transcendent for pleasantness; for indeed God in his ordinances, is not only "*beauty*" to the eye of the soul, but is ointment to the smell, and sweetness to the taste, and all in all to all the powers of the soul. God in Christ, therefore, he is delightful and sweet...*The beauty of the Lord* is especially the amiable things of God, which is his mercy and love, that makes all other things beautiful that is in the church. *Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 4. *To enquire in his temple.* The more grace the more business ye will find ye have to do with

God in his ordinances; little grace hath little to do, and much grace hath much to do; he hath always business with God, special earnest business. *To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.* Oh, I have somewhat to enquire after; I am to do something by this duty, and therefore cannot trifle. He that comes to visit his friend in a compliment, he talks, he walks, he trifles, and goes home again; but he that comes upon business, he is full of it: he is like Abraham's honest and faithful servant. Ge 24:33. "And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told my errand." I have great business with the Lord, about the church and about my soul, and I will not eat, nor talk, nor think, nor dally about anything, till I have told mine errand, or heard my Maker's errand unto me. And for this end it's a rare thing to carry somewhat always on the spirit, to spread before God, a heart pregnant with some needful request or matter whereof to treat with God. Ps 45:1. *Richard Steele's "Antidote against Distractions," 1673.*

Verse 4. It was David's earnest prayer, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.* There are many that pray David's words, but not with David's heart. *Unum petii,* one thing have I desired, *de praeterito,* for the time past; *et hoc requiram,* this I will seek after, *de futuro,* for the time to come: I have required it long, and this suit I will urge till I have obtained it. What? To dwell in some of the houses of God all the days of my life, and to leave them to my children after me; not to serve him there with devotion, but to make the place mine own possession? These love the house of God too well; they love it to have and to hold; but because the conveyance is made by the lawyer, and not by the minister, their title will be found naught in the end; and if there be not a *nisi prius* to prevent them, yet at that great day of universal audit, the Judge of all the world shall condemn them. By this way, the nearer to the church, the further from God. The Lord's temple is ordained to gain us to him, not for us to gain it from him. If we love the Lord, we "will love the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelleth; "that so by being humble frequenters of his temple below, we may be made noble saints of his house above, the glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 4. David being in this safe condition, what doth he now think upon or look at, as his main scope? Not as Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, to sit still and be merry, when he had overcome the Romans and all his enemies, as he sometime said to Cyneas, the philosopher, but to improve his rest to perpetual piety, in going from day to day to God's house, as Hannah is said afterwards to have done. Luke 2. And this, first, for the solace of his soul, in seeing the beauty of his sanctuary. Secondly, that he might still be directed aright and be safe. Thirdly, that he might yet be more highly exalted in kingly glory. Fourthly, for all this, as he should have abundant cause, sacrificing and singing psalms to God without ceasing: see Ps 27:5-6. *John Mayer.*

Verse 4. O my soul, what sights have I seen in the house of God! what provisions have I tasted! what

entertainments have I had! what enlargements in prayer, and answers thereto! what impression under his word, what entertainment at his table, as he has sometimes brought me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me has been love! And though I cannot, it may be, say so much of this as some others; yet what I have found, I cannot but remember with thankfulness, and desire more; and as this was *in the house of God, here would I still desire to dwell.* *Daniel Wilcox, 1676-1733.*

Verse 5. *The time of trouble.* Though God does not always deliver his people out of trouble, yet he delivers them from the evil of trouble, the despair of trouble, by supporting the spirit; nay, he delivers by trouble, for he sanctifies the trouble to cure the souls, and by less troubles delivers them from greater. *From a Broad Sheet in the British Museum, dated, London: printed for D. M., 1678.*

Verse 5. *He shall hide me.* The word here used means to hide, to secrete, and then, to defend or protect. It would properly be applied to one who had fled from oppression, or from any impending evil, and who should be *secreted* in a house or cavern, and thus rendered safe from pursuers, or from the threatening evil. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 5. *Pavilion* comes from *papilio, a butterfly.* It signifies a *tent* made of cloth stretched out on poles, which in form resembles in some measure the insect above named. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 5. *In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.* He alludes to the ancient custom of offenders, who used to flee to the tabernacle or altar, where they esteemed themselves safe. 1Ki 2:28. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 5. *In the secret of his tabernacle.* Were there no other place, he would put me in the *holy of holies*, so that an enemy would not dare to approach me. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6. *Now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me.* A man cannot drown so long as his head is above water. Now, it is the proper office of hope to do this for the Christian in times of any danger. Lu 21:28. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh." A strange time, one would think, for Christ then to bid his disciples *lift up their heads* in, when they see other men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth Lu 21:26; yet now is the time of the rising of their sun, when others' is setting, and the blackness of darkness is overtaking others; because now the Christian's feast is coming, for which hope hath saved its stomach so long. "Your redemption draweth nigh." Two things make the head hang down—fear and shame; hope eases the Christian's heart of both these, and so forbids him to give any sign of a desponding mind by a dejected countenance. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 6. *Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy.* "Surely, "some may say, "he could have called on God beyond the precincts of the temple. Wherever he wandered as an exile, he carried with him the precious promise of God, so that he needed not to put so great a value upon the sight of the external edifice. He appears, by some gross imagination or other, to suppose that God

could be enclosed by wood and stones." But if we examine the words more carefully, it will be easy to see, that his object was altogether different from a mere sight of the noble building and its ornaments, however costly. He speaks, indeed, of the temple, but he places that beauty not so much in the goodliness that was to be seen by the eye, as in its being the celestial pattern which was shown to Moses, as it is written in Ex 25:40: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." As the fashion of the temple was not framed according to the wisdom of man, but was an image of spiritual things, the prophet directed his eyes and all his affections to this object. Their madness is, therefore, truly detestable who wrest this place in favour of pictures and images, which, instead of deserving to be numbered among temple ornaments, are rather like the dung and filth, defiling all the purity of holy things. *John Calvin.*

Verse 8. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* In the former verse, David begins a prayer to God, "Hear, O Lord; have mercy upon me, and answer me." This verse is a ground of that prayer, *Seek ye my face*, saith God. The heart answers again, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek*; therefore I am encouraged to pray to thee. In the words are contained God's command and David's obedience. God's warrant and David's work answerable, the voice and the echo: the voice, "*Seek my face*"; the rebound back again of a gracious heart, "*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" "*When thou saidst.*" It is not in the original. It only makes way to the sense. Passionate speeches are usually abrupt: "*Seek my face:*" "*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" ...

God is willing to be known. He is willing to open and discover himself; God delights not to hide himself. God stands not upon state, as some emperors do that think their presence diminishes respect. God is no such God, but he may be searched into. Man, if any weakness be discovered, we can soon search into the depth of his excellency; but with God it is clean otherwise. The more we know of him, the more we shall admire him. None admire him more than the blessed angels, that see most of him, and the blessed spirits that have communion with him. Therefore he hides not himself, nay, he desires to be known; and all those that have his Spirit desire to make him known. Those that suppress the knowledge of God in his will, what he performs for men, and what he requires of them, they are enemies to God and of God's people. They suppress the opening of God, clean contrary to God's meaning; "*Seek my face*"; "I desire to be made known, and lay open myself to you. Therefore we may observe by the way, that when we are in any dark condition, that a Christian finds not the beams of God shining on him, let him not lay the blame upon God, as if God were a God that delighted to hide himself. Oh, no! it is not his delight. He loves not strangeness to his poor creatures. It is not a point of his policy. He is too great to affect (Choose=love) such poor things. No; the fault is altogether in us. We walk not worthy of such a presence; we want humility and preparation. If there be any darkness in the creature, that he finds God doth not so shine on him as in former times, undoubtedly the cause is in himself; for God saith, "*Seek my face.*" He desires to reveal himself.

Richard Sibbes.

Verse 8. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, etc.* All the Spirit's motions are seasonable, and therefore not to be put off; for delay is a kind of denial, and savours of such ungrateful contempt, as must needs be very displeasing to him. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* God does not only expect such an answer, but expects it immediately upon his call. Whenever he blows with his wind, he looks that we should spread our sails. If we refuse his offered help, we may deservedly want it when desired. As Christ withdrew himself from the spouse because she let him stand knocking so long at the door of her heart, and she still deferred to open, and tired out his loving forbearance with vain and frivolous excuses. So 5:2, etc. But as we must not omit the present performance of any duty which he excites unto, we must not check his influences by being weary of the duties which he assists us in: if we do not improve extraordinary aids by holding out the longer, we provoke him to depart. *Timothy Cruso.*

Verse 8. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, etc.* We see here thus much, that God must *begin* with us, before we can *close with him*; God must seek us, before we can seek him; God must first desire that we draw near to him, before we for our particulars are able to draw near unto God. Thou saidst, Seek my face; and then and not till then my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. *Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8. *When thou saidst, etc.* Now God then speaks to the heart to pray when not only he puts upon the duty by saying to the conscience, This thou oughtest to do; but God's speaking to pray is such as his speech at first was, when he made the world, when he said, "Let there be light, and there was light:" so he says, let there be a prayer, and there is a prayer; that is, he pours upon a man a spirit of grace and supplication, a praying disposition; he puts in motives, suggests arguments and pleas to God; all which you shall find come in readily, and of themselves, and that likewise with a quickening heat and enlargement of affection, and with a lingering and longing, and restlessness of spirit to be alone, to pour out the soul to God, and to vent and form those motions and suggestions into a prayer, till you have laid them together, and made a prayer of them. And this is a speaking to the heart. Observe such times when God doth thus, and neglect them not, then to strike whilst the iron is hot; thou hast then his ear; it is a special opportunity for that business, such a one as thou mayest never have the like. Suitors at court observe *molissima fandi tempora*, their times of begging when they have kings in a good mood, which they will be sure to take the advantage of; but especially if they should find that the king himself should begin of himself to speak of the business which they would have of him: and thus that phrase of Ps 10:17, that God prepares the heart, is understood by some, that God prepares the heart, and causeth the ear to hear; that is, he fashions it and composes it into a praying frame. And sure it is a great sign that God means to hear us when himself shall thus indite the petition. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8. *When thou saidst, etc.* And well may this be pleaded, in that God useth not so to stir up and

strengthen us to seek him, but when he intends to be found of us. Ps 10:17. "Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." Jer 29:13. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And God maketh it an argument to himself, that if he say to any inwardly as well as outwardly, *Seek my face*, he that speaketh righteousness cannot speak thus to them, and frustrate their prayers, and so bid them seek his face in vain. Isa 45:19, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain; I the Lord speak right things." If Ahasuerus bid his spouse to ask, surely he will not fail to grant her petition Es 7:2; so here. And as when Christ called the blind man to come to him to tell him his grievance, it was truly said to him by them, "Be of good comfort, rise, for he calleth thee." Mr 10:49. So it is in this case.

Thomas Cobbett.

Verse 8. *My heart said unto thee.* The heart is between God and our obedience, as it were, an ambassador. It understands from God what God would have done, and then it lays a command upon the whole man. The heart and conscience of man is partly divine, partly human. It hath some divinity in it, especially if the man be a holy man. God speaks, and the heart speaks. God speaks to the heart, and the heart speaks to us. And oftentimes when we hear conscience speaking to us, we neglect it; and as St. Augustine said of himself, "God spake often to me, and I was ignorant of it." When there is no command in the word that the heart directly thinks of (as indeed many profane careless men scarce have a Bible in their houses), God speaks to them thus; conscience speaks to them some broken command, that they learn against their wills. They heed it not, but David did not so. God said, *Seek ye my face*: his *heart* answers, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." The heart looks upward to God, and then to itself, *My heart said*. It said to thee and then to itself. First, his heart said to God, "Lord, I have encouragement from thee. Thou hast commanded that I should seek thy face." So his heart looked to God, and then it speaks to itself. *Thy face, Lord, will I seek*. It looks first to God, and then to all things that come from itself. *Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 8. There are diverse things considerable of us in this *answer* and *compliance* of David's with God's *command* or *invitation* to him. First, it was *seasonable*, and *in due time*; presently does David make this return: "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." This is the property and disposition of every wise and prudent Christian, to close with the very first opportunities of God's invitation. Secondly, this answer, as it was seasonable and present, so it was also *full and complete*; the performance was proportionable to the injunction. Ye shall have some kind of people in the world that God bids them do one thing and they will be sure to do the quite contrary; or, at least, not do as much as they should do, but do it by halves. But, now, here David makes return to God in the full extent and proportion of obedience. God said, *Seek my face*, and he answered *Thy face, Lord, will I seek*. Thirdly, it was *real, and entire, and sincere*; "My heart said." It is one thing to say it with the *mouth*, and it is another thing to say it with the *heart*. With the *mouth* it is quite easy and ordinary, and nothing more usual. Lord, thy

face will we seek, especially in any trouble or calamity, which is incident unto us; but for the heart to say it, that is not so frequent. Fourthly, it was *settled and peremptory*. "Thy face will I seek; "there is nothing shall hinder me of it, or keep me from it, but I will do it against all opposition. Lastly, this protestation of David was *absolute and indefinite and unlimited*; "I will seek thy face; "without prescription of time, or place, or condition; not only now, but hereafter: not only for a time, but for ever, in all seasons, in all estates, in all circumstances, still I shall keep me to this—to hold my communion with thee. Then are we Christians, indeed, when we are so immutably and irreversibly and independently upon the opinions or practices of any other person. *Condensed from Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8. God hath promised his favour, and, therefore, his people may seek his favour. Nay, he hath commanded his people to seek his favour, and therefore they should seek it. It is an unadvised folly, during the suspension of God's favour, to unson ourselves, and unpeople ourselves, *i.e.*, by denying the grace and spiritual relation which exist between us and God. That is not the way to gain favour; for when we have undone our relation of children we exclude ourselves from the expectation of favour. No, the wisest and surest way is to seek the renewing of God's loving countenance, and not to be driven away from God by our unbelief. *Obadiah Sedgwick, in "The Doubting Believer," 1653.*

Verse 9. *Hide not thy face far from me.* When I seek thy face, vouchsafe, O God, not to hide thy face from me; for to what purpose should I seek it if I cannot find it? and what hope of finding it if thou be bent to hide it? *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 9. *Put not thy servant away in anger.* God puts away many in anger for their supposed goodness, but not any at all for their confessed badness. *John Trapp.*

Verse 9. *Thy servant.* It is a blessed and happy thing to be God's true "*servant.*" Consider what the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon's servants 1Ki 10:8: "Happy are these thy servants, "&c. Now Christ Jesus is greater than Solomon, Mt 12:42, and so a better Master. Good earthly masters will honour good servants, as Pr 27:18, "He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured; " Pr 17:2, "A wise servant shall have a portion, or inheritance, among the brethren." But however some earthly masters may be Nabals and Labans, yet God will not be so: Joh 12:26: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." "If any man serve me, him will my father honour, "see Lu 12:37. The watchful servants are blessed; their master will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them, as Mt 25:21,23: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." *Thomas Pierson.*

Verse 9. *Thou hast been my help; leave me not,* etc. One act of mercy engages God to another. Men argue thus: I have showed you kindness already, therefore trouble me no more; but because God has shown mercy he is more ready still to show mercy; his mercy in election makes him justify, adopt, glorify. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 9. *Leave me not;* rather, "dismiss me not; "let not go thy hold of me." This is the proper sense of the Hebrew verb (vjn), to set a thing loose, to let it go, to abandon it. *Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 10. *When my father and my mother forsake me.* As there seems to be some difficulty in supposing the psalmist's parents to have "deserted" him, they might perhaps be said to have "*forsaken*" him (as *Muis conjectures*), that is, to have left him behind them, as being dead. *James Merrick, M.A., 1720-1769.*

Verse 10. *When my father and my mother forsake me.* It is indeed the nature of all living creatures, though never so tender of their young ones, yet when they are grown to a ripeness of age and strength, to turn them off to shift for themselves; and even a father and a mother, as tender as they are, have yet somewhat of this common nature in them; for while their children are young they lead them by the hand, but when they are grown up they leave them to their own legs, and if they chance to fall let them rise as they can. But God even then takes his children up, for he knows of what they are made; he knows their strength must be as well supported as their weakness be assisted; he knows they must as well be taken up when they fall, as be held up when they stand. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 10. *Father and mother.* First, who are they? Properly and chiefly our natural parents, of whom we were begotten and born; to whom (under God) we owe our being and breeding. Yet here, not they only; but by *synecdoche* all other kinsfolks, neighbours, friends, acquaintances, or, indeed, more generally yet, all worldly comforts, stays, and helps whatsoever. 2. But, then, why these named the rather, and the rest to be included in these? Because we promise to ourselves more help from them than from any of the other. We have a nearer relation to, and a greater interest in them than in any other; and they of all other are the least likely to forsake us. The very brute creatures forsake not their young ones. A hen will not desert her chickens, nor a bear endure to be robbed of her whelps. 3. But, then, thirdly, why *both* named—*father* and *mother* too? Partly because it can hardly be imagined that both of them should forsake their child, though one should hap to be unkind. Partly, because the *father's love* being commonly with more *providence*, the *mother's* with more *tenderness*; both together do better express than alone either would do, the abundant love of God towards us, who is infinitely dear over us, beyond the care of the most provident father, beyond the affection of the most tender mother. 4. But, then, fourthly, when may they be said to *forsake* us? When at any time they leave us destitute of such help as we stand in need of; whether it be out of *choice*, when they list not to help us, though they might if they would; or out of *necessity*, when they cannot help us, though they would if they could. *Robert Sanderson.*

Verse 10. *Then the Lord will take me up.* But *dictum factum*: these are but *words*: Are there producible and *deeds* to make it good? Verily, there are, and that to the very letter. When Ishmael's mother, despairing of his life, had *forsaken* him, and laid him down gasping (his last, for ought she

knew or could do to help it), in the wilderness, the Lord *took him up*; he opened a new spring of water, and opened her eyes to see it, and so the child was preserved. Genesis 21. When Moses' parents had also *forsaken* him (for they durst not stand by him any longer), and laid him down among the rushy flags, the Lord *took him up* too. He provided him of a saviour, the king's own daughter, and of a nurse the child's own mother—and so he was preserved too. Ex 2:6-9. Take but two examples more, out of either Testament one. David and St. Paul, both *forsaken* of men, both *taken up* of God. How was David forsaken, in Ps 142:4, when he had looked upon his right hand, and saw no man that would know him; he had no place to fly unto, and no man cared for his soul. But all the while *Dominus ad dextris*, there was one at his right hand (though at first he was not aware of him), ready to *take him up*; as it there followeth, Ps 142:5, "I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." And how St. Paul was forsaken; take it from himself, 2Ti 4:16, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me:" a heavy case, and had been heavier had there not been one ready to take his part, at the next verse, "Nevertheless the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me," etc. What need we any more witnesses? *In ore duorum*—in the mouth of two such witnesses the point is sufficiently established. But you will yet say, these two might testify what they had already found *post factum*. But David, in the text, pronounces it *de futuro*, beforehand, and that somewhat confidently: "*The Lord will take me up.*" As he doth also elsewhere: "Sure I am that the Lord will avenge the poor, and maintain the cause of the helpless," Psalm 109. But is there any ground for that? Doubtless there is; a *double* ground; one in the *nature*, another in the *promise* of God. In his *nature* four *qualities* there are (we take leave so to speak, suitably to our own low apprehensions, for in the Godhead there are properly no *qualities*); but call them *qualities* or *attributes* or what else you will; there are *four perfections* in God, opposite to those *defects* which in our *earthly parents* we have found to be the chief causes why they do so oft *forsake* us; which give us full assurance that he will *take us up* when all other succors fail us. Those are his *love*, his *wisdom*, his *power*, his *eternity*, and all in his nature. To which *four*, add his *promise*, and you have the fulness of all the assurance that can be desired. *Robert Sanderson.*

Verse 10. *The Lord will take me up:* Hebrew, *will gather me*, that is, take me into his care and keeping. In the civil law, we find provision made for outcasts and friendless persons; some hospitals to entertain them, some liberties to comfort and compensate their trouble. It is sure, that in God the forlorn and fatherless find mercy. *John Trapp.*

Verse 11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord.* Having compared himself to an exposed, deserted infant, adopted by God, he anon fairly asks to be shown how to walk. He asks the grace of being able to observe all his holy commandments, which he never loses sight of through the whole one hundred and fifty Psalms. What else could he do? when it was the only path to that heavenly house of God, which he had just declared to be the only wish and desire of his heart. *Robert Bellarmine (Cardinal),*

1542-1621.

Verse 11. *Lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.* If a man travelling in the King's highway, be robbed between sun and sun, satisfaction is recoverable upon the county where the robbery was made; but if he takes his journey in the night, being an unseasonable time, then it is at his own peril, he must take what falls. So, if a man keep in *God's ways*, he shall be sure of God's protection; but if he stray out of them, he exposes himself to danger. *Robert Skinner (Bishop)*, 1636.

Verse 11. *Because of mine enemies.* If once a man commence a professor, the eyes of all are upon him; and well they may, for his profession *in the world* is a separation *from the world*. Believers condemn those by their lives who condemn them by their lips. Righteous David saw many who were waiting to triumph in his mistakes. Hence the more they watched, the more he prayed: "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies." It may be rendered, *because of mine observers*. Christian, if you dwell in the open tent of licentiousness, the wicked will not walk backward, like modest Shem and Japheth, to cover your shame: but they will walk forward, like cursed Ham, to publish it. Thus they make use of your weakness as a plea for their wickedness. Men are merciless in their censures of Christians; they have no sympathy for their infirmity: while God weighs them in more equal scales, and says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." While a saint is a *dove* in the eyes of God, he is only a *raven* in the estimation of sinners. *William Secker*.

Verse 13. *I had fainted*, etc. Study much the all sufficiency, the power, the goodness, the unchangeableness of God. 1. The all sufficiency of God. What fulness there is in him to make up all you can lose for him; what refreshments there are in him to sweeten all you can suffer for him. What fulness! You may as well doubt that all the waters of the ocean cannot fill a spoon, as that the divine fulness cannot be enough to you, if you should have nothing left in this world; for all the waters that cover the sea are not so much as a spoonful, compared with the boundless and infinite fulness of all sufficiency. What refreshments in him! One drop of divine sweetness is enough to make one in the very agony of the cruellest death to cry out with joy, "The bitterness of death is past." Now in him there are not only drops, but rivers; not a scanty sprinkling, but an infinite fulness. 2. Eye much the power of God, how it can support under the cross, what it can bring to pass for you by the cross. No cross so sharp and grievous, but he can make it sweet and comfortable. No cross so heavy and intolerable, but he can make light and easy. No cross so ignominious and reproachful, but he can turn it to your honour. No cross so fastened to you, but he can easily remove it. 3. His *goodness*. His all sufficiency and power make him able, his *goodness* makes him willing to do for his people under the cross what his all sufficiency and almighty power can afford. His *goodness* sets his mighty power to work for his suffering saints. His *goodness* sets his all sufficiency, his fulness, abroad for them, so that it runs freely upon them; and never more freely than when they are under the cross. *I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord*, &c. What is it that makes you ready to faint

under the cross, or thoughts and foresight of it? Look to the *goodness of God*, there is support.
Condensed from David Clarkson.

Verse 13. *I had fainted.* The words in italics are supplied by our translators; but, far from being necessary, they injure the sense. Throw out the words, *I had fainted*, and leave a *break* after the verse, and the elegant figure of the psalmist will be preserved: "Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"—what! what, alas! should have become of me! *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 13. *Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* In the Hebrew this verse is elliptical, as Calvin here translates it. In the French version he supplies the ellipsis, by adding to the end of the verse the words, "C'estoit fait de moy, "I had perished." In our English version the words, "I had fainted," are introduced as a supplement in the beginning of the verse. Both the supplement of Calvin, and that of our English version, which are substantially the same, doubtless explain the meaning of the passage; but they destroy the elegant abrupt form of the expression employed by the psalmist, who breaks off in the middle of his discourse without completing the sentence, although what he meant to say is very evident. *Editorial note to Calvin, in loc.*

Verse 13. Under sore trouble and distress, labour to exercise a strong and lively faith. It was a noble and heroic resolution in that holy man Job, under his singular trials Job 13:15: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; "as if he had said, Let my strokes be never so sore and heavy, yet I will not let go my grips of his word and promises, I will not raze these foundations of my hope. It was the way the psalmist kept himself from sinking under his heavy burdens: *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* ...Faith brings new strength and auxiliary supplies of grace from heaven, when the former supply is exhausted and spent; whereof David had the sweet experience here. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the soul, so he is pleased to come in with seasonable supplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, answerable to their present exigencies and pressures; and thus he doth from time to time feed the believer's lamp with fresh oil, give in more faith, more love, more hope, and more desires; and hereby he gives power to the faint, and strengthens the things which remain when ready to die. *John Willison.*

Verse 13. *Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living:* a cordial made up of three sovereign ingredients—a hope to see; and to see *the goodness of God*; and the goodness of God *in the land of the living.* *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 13. *The land of the living.* Alas! what a *land of the living* is this, in which there are more dead than living, more under ground than above it; where the earth is fuller of graves than houses; where life lies trembling under the hand of death; and where death hath power to tyrannize over life! No, my

soul, *there* only is the *land of the living* where there are none but the living; where there is a church, not militant, but triumphant; a church indeed, but no churchyard, because none dead, nor none that can die; where life is not passive, nor death active; where life sits crowned, and where death is swallowed up in victory. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage. Be comfortable, hold fast (as the Greek hath), be manly, or quit thee as a man;* which word the apostle useth. 1Co 16:13. These are the words of encouragement against remissness, fear, faintness of heart, or other infirmities. *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage.*

Stand but your ground, your ghostly foes will fly—
Hell trembles at a heaven directed eye;
Choose rather to defend than to assail—
Self confidence will in the conflict fail:
When you are challenged you may dangers meet—
True *courage* is a fixed, not sudden heat;
Is always humble, lives in self distrust,
And will itself into no danger thrust.
Devote yourself to God, and you will find
God fights the battles of a will resigned.
Love Jesus! love will no base fear endure—
Love Jesus! and of conquest rest secure.
—*Thomas Ken (Bishop), 1637-1710-11.*

Verse 14. Think not the government is out of Christ's hand, when men are doing many sad things, and giving many heavy blows to the work of God. No, no; men are but his hand; and it is the hand of God that justly and righteously is lying heavy upon his people. Look above men, then; you have not to do with them: there is a turn of matters, just as he is pleased to turn his hand. *Ralph Erskine, 1685-1752.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. (*first clause*). The relation of illumination to salvation, or the need of light if men would be saved.

Verse 1. The Christian hero, and the secret springs of his courage.

Verse 1. The believer's fearless challenge.

Verse 2. The character, number, power, and cruelty of the enemies of the church, and the mysterious way in which they have been defeated.

Verse 3. Christian peace. 1. Exhibited in the calm foresight of trouble.

2. Displayed in the confident endurance of affliction.
3. Sustained by divine help and past experience Ps 27:1-2.
4. Producing the richest results, glory to God, etc.

Verse 4. Model Christian life.

1. Unity of desire.
2. Earnestness of action.
3. Nearness of communion.
4. Heavenliness of contemplation.
5. Progress in divine education.

Verse 4. The affection of moral esteem towards God. *Thomas Chalmers.*

Verse 4. A breathing after God. *R. Sibbes's Sermon.*

Verse 4. (*last clause*). Sabbath occupations and heavenly delights.

Verse 4. (*final clause*). Matters for enquiry in the Temple of old opened up in the light of the New Testament.

Verse 6. The saint's present triumph over his spiritual foes, his practical gratitude, and his vocal praises.

Verse 7. Prayer. To whom addressed? How? *Cry*, etc. When? *Left indefinite*. On what is it based? *Mercy*. What it needs? *Hear, answer*.

Verse 8. The heart in tune with its God. Note, the promptness, heartiness, personality, unreservedness, accuracy, and resolution of the response to the precept.

Verse 8. The successful seeker. *R. Sibbe's Sermon.*

Verse 8. The echo. See Spurgeon's Sermons. No. 767.

- Verse 9.**
1. Desertion deprecated in all its forms.
 2. Experience pleaded.
 3. Divine aid implored.

Verse 9. The horror of saints at the hell of sinners. *James Scot.*

Verse 10. The portion of the orphan, the comfort of the persecuted, the paradise of the departing.

Verse 11. The plain man's pathway desired, described, divinely approved, "*thy way*", "*a plain way*", and divinely taught, "*teach me, O Lord, ""lead me.*"

Verse 13. Faith, its precedence of sight, its objects, its sustaining power.

Verse 13. Believing to see. See Spurgeon's Sermons. No. 766.

Verse 14. The believer's position, "*wait*;" his condition, "*good courage*;" his support, "*he shall*," etc.; his perseverance, "*wait*" repeated a second time; his reward.

WORKS UPON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PSALM

Excellent Encouragements against Afflictions, containing David's Triumph over Distress; or an Exposition of Psalm 27. By THOMAS PIERSON, M.A. (Reprinted in Nichol's Series of Puritan Commentaries.)

Meditations upon the 27th Psalm of David. By SIR RICHARD BAKER.

Psalm 28

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE AND SUBJECT. Again, the title "*A Psalm of David,*" is too general to give us any clue to the occasion on which it was written. Its position, as following the twenty-seventh, seems to have been designed, for it is a most suitable pendant and sequel to it. It is another of those "songs in the night" of which the pen of David was so prolific. The thorn at the breast of the nightingale was said by the old naturalists to make it sing: David's griefs made him eloquent in holy psalmody. The main pleading of this Psalm is that the suppliant may not be confounded with the workers of iniquity for whom he expresses the utmost abhorrence; it may suit any slandered saint, who being misunderstood by men, and treated by them as an unworthy character, is anxious to stand aright before the bar of God. The Lord Jesus may be seen here pleading as the representative of his people.

DIVISION. The first and second verses earnestly entreat audience of the Lord in a time of dire emergency. From Ps 28:2-5, the portion of the wicked is described and deprecated. In Ps 28:6-8, praise is given for the Lord's mercy in hearing prayer, and the Psalm concludes with a general petition for the whole host of militant believers.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Unto thee will I cry, O Lord, my rock.* A cry is the natural expression of sorrow, and is a suitable utterance when all other modes of appeal fail us; but the cry must be alone directed to the Lord, for to cry to man is to waste our entreaties upon the air. When we consider the readiness of the Lord to hear, and his ability to aid, we shall see good reason for directing all our appeals at once to the God of our salvation, and shall use language of firm resolve like that in the text, "I will cry." The immutable Jehovah is our *rock*, the immovable foundation of all our hopes and our refuge in time of trouble: we are fixed in our determination to flee to him as our stronghold in every hour of danger. It will be in vain to call to the rocks in the day of judgment, but our rock attends to our cries. *Be not silent to me.* Mere formalists may be content without answers to their prayers, but genuine suppliants

cannot; they are not satisfied with the results of prayer itself in calming the mind and subduing the will—they must go further and obtain actual replies from heaven, or they cannot rest; and those replies they long to receive at once, if possible; they dread even a little of God's silence. God's voice is often so terrible that it shakes the wilderness; but his silence is equally full of awe to an eager suppliant. When God seems to close his ear, we must not therefore close our mouths, but rather cry with more earnestness; for when our note grows shrill with eagerness and grief, he will not long deny us a hearing. What a dreadful case should we be in if the Lord should become for ever silent to our prayers! This thought suggested itself to David, and he turned it into a plea, thus teaching us to argue and reason with God in our prayers. *Lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.* Deprived of the God who answers prayer, we should be in a more pitiable plight than the dead in the grave, and should soon sink to the same level as the lost in hell. *We must* have answers to prayer: ours is an urgent case of dire necessity; surely the Lord will speak peace to our agitated minds, for he never can find it in his heart to permit his own elect to perish.

Verse 2. This is much to the same effect as the first verse, only that it refers to future as well as present pleadings. Hear me! Hear me! *Hear the voice of my supplications!* This is the burden of both verses. We cannot be put off with a refusal when we are in the spirit of prayer; we labour, use importunity, and agonize in supplications until a hearing is granted us. The word "supplications," in the plural, shows the number, continuance, and variety of a good man's prayers, while the expression "hear *the voice*," seems to hint that there is an inner meaning, or heart voice, about which spiritual men are far more concerned than for their outward and audible utterances. A silent prayer may have a louder voice than the cries of those priests who sought to awaken Baal with their shouts. *When I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle:* which holy place was the type of our Lord Jesus; and if we would gain acceptance, we must turn ourselves evermore to the blood besprinkled mercy seat of his atonement. Uplifted hands have ever been a form of devout posture, and are intended to signify a reaching upward towards God, a readiness, an eagerness to receive the blessing sought after. We stretch out empty hands, for we are beggars; we lift them up, for we seek heavenly supplies; we lift them towards the mercy seat of Jesus, for there our expectation dwells. O that whenever we use devout gestures, we may possess contrite hearts, and so speed well with God.

Verse 3. *Draw me not away with the wicked.* They shall be dragged off to hell like felons of old drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn, like logs drawn to the fire, like fagots to the oven. David fears lest he should be bound up in their bundle, drawn to their doom; and the fear is an appropriate one for every godly man. The best of the wicked are dangerous company in time, and would make terrible companions for eternity; we must avoid them in their pleasures, if we would not be confounded with them in their miseries. *And with the workers of iniquity.* These are overtly sinful, and their judgment will be sure; Lord, do not make us to drink of their cup. Activity is found with the wicked even if it be lacking to the

righteous. Oh! to be "workers" for the Lord. *Which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.* They have learned the manners of the place to which they are going: the doom of liars is their portion for ever, and lying is their conversation on the road. Soft words, oily with pretended love, are the deceitful meshes of the infernal net in which Satan catches the precious life; many of his children are learned in his abominable craft, and fish with their father's nets, almost as cunningly as he himself could do it. It is a sure sign of baseness when the tongue and the heart do not ring to the same note. Deceitful men are more to be dreaded than wild beasts: it were better to be shut up in a pit with serpents than to be compelled to live with liars. He who cries "peace" too loudly, means to sell it if he can get his price. "Good wine need no bush:" if he were so very peaceful he would not need to say so; he means mischief, make sure of that.

Verse 4. When we view the wicked simply as such, and not as our fellow men, our indignation against sin leads us entirely to coincide with the acts of divine justice which punish evil, and to wish that justice might use her power to restrain by her terrors the cruel and unjust; but still the desires of the present verse, as our version renders it, are not readily made consistent with the spirit of the Christian dispensation, which seeks rather the reformation than the punishment of sinners. If we view the words before us as prophetic, or as in the future tense, declaring a fact, we are probably nearer to the true meaning than that given in our version. Ungodly reader, what will be your lot when the Lord deals with you according to your desert, and weighs out to you his wrath, not only in proportion to what you have actually done, but according to what you would have done if you could. Our *endeavours* are taken as facts; God takes the will for the deed, and punishes or rewards accordingly. Not in this life, but certainly in the next, God will repay his enemies to their faces, and give them the wages of their sins. Not according to their fawning words, but after the measure of their mischievous deeds, will the Lord mete out vengeance to them that know him not.

Verse 5. *Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands.* God works in creation—nature teems with proofs of his wisdom and goodness, yet purblind atheists refuse to see him: he works in providence, ruling and overruling, and his hand is very manifest in human history, yet the infidel will not discern him: he works in grace—remarkable conversions are still met with on all hands, yet the ungodly refuse to see the operations of the Lord. Where angels wonder, carnal men despise. God condescends to teach, and man refuses to learn. *He shall destroy them:* he will make them "behold, and wonder, and perish." If they would not see the hand of judgment upon others, they shall feel it upon themselves. Both soul and body shall be overwhelmed with utter destruction for ever and ever. *And not build them up.* God's cure is positive and negative; his sword has two edges, and cuts right and left. Their heritage of evil shall prevent the ungodly receiving any good; the ephah shall be too full of wrath to contain a grain of hope. They have become like old, rotten, decayed houses of timber, useless to the owner, and harbouring all manner of evil, and, therefore, the Great Builder will

demolish them utterly. Incurable offenders may expect speedy destruction: they who will not mend, shall be thrown away as worthless. Let us be very attentive to all the lessons of God's word and work, lest being found disobedient to the divine will, we be made to suffer the divine wrath.

Verse 6. *Blessed be the Lord.* Saints are full of benedictions; they are a blessed people, and a blessing people; but they give their best blessings, the fat of their sacrifices, to their glorious Lord. Our Psalm was prayer up to this point, and now it turns to praise. They who pray well, will soon praise well: prayer and praise are the two lips of the soul; two bells to ring out sweet and acceptable music in the ears of God; two angels to climb Jacob's ladder: two altars smoking with incense; two of Solomon's lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh; they are two young roes that are twins, feeding upon the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. *Because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.* Real praise is established upon sufficient and constraining reasons; it is not irrational emotion, but rises, like a pure spring, from the deeps of experience. Answered prayers should be acknowledged. Do we not often fail in this duty? Would it not greatly encourage others, and strengthen ourselves, if we faithfully recorded divine goodness, and made a point of extolling it with our tongue? God's mercy is not such an inconsiderable thing that we may safely venture to receive it without so much as thanks. We should shun ingratitude, and live daily in the heavenly atmosphere of thankful love.

Verse 7. Here is David's declaration and confession of faith, coupled with a testimony from his experience. *The Lord is my strength.* The Lord employs his power on our behalf, and moreover, infuses strength into us in our weakness. The psalmist, by an act of appropriating faith, takes the omnipotence of Jehovah to be his own. Dependence upon the invisible God gives great independence of spirit, inspiring us with confidence more than human. *And my shield.* Thus David found both sword and shield in his God. The Lord preserves his people from unnumbered ills; and the Christian warrior, sheltered behind his God, is far more safe than the hero when covered with his shield of brass or triple steel. *My heart trusted in him, and I am helped.* Heart work is sure work; heart trust is never disappointed. Faith must come before help, but help will never be long behindhand. Every day the believer may say, "I am helped, "for the divine assistance is vouchsafed us every moment, or we should go back unto perdition; when more manifest help is needed, we have but to put faith into exercise, and it will be given us. *Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.* The heart is mentioned twice to show the truth of his faith and his joy. Observe the adverb "*greatly*," we need not be afraid of being too full of rejoicing at the remembrance of grace received. We serve a great God, let us greatly rejoice in him. A song is the soul's fittest method of giving vent to its happiness, it were well if we were more like the singing lark, and less like the croaking raven. When the heart is glowing, the lips should not be silent. When God blesses us, we should bless him with all our heart.

Verse 8. *The Lord is their strength.* The heavenly experience of one believer is a pattern of the life of all. To all the militant church, without exception, Jehovah is the same as he was to his servant David, "the least of them shall be as David." They need the same aid and they shall have it, for they are loved with the same love, written in the same book of life, and one with the same anointed Head. *And he is the saving strength of his anointed.* Here behold king David as the type of our Lord Jesus, our covenant Head, our anointed Prince, through whom all blessings come to us. He has achieved full salvation for us, and we desire saving strength from him, and as we share in the unction which is so largely shed upon him, we expect to partake of his salvation. Glory be unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has magnified the power of his grace in his only begotten Son, whom he has anointed to be a Prince and a Saviour unto his people.

Verse 9. This is a prayer for the church militant, written in short words, but full of weighty meaning. We must pray for the whole church, and not for ourselves alone. *Save thy people.* Deliver them from their enemies, preserve them from their sins, succour them under their troubles, rescue them from their temptations, and ward off from them every ill. There is a plea hidden in the expression, "*thy people:*" for it may be safely concluded that God's interest in the church, as his own portion, will lead him to guard it from destruction. *Bless thine inheritance.* Grant positive blessings, peace, plenty, prosperity, happiness; make all thy dearly purchased and precious heritage to be comforted by thy Spirit. Revive, refresh, enlarge, and sanctify thy church. *Feed them also.* Be a shepherd to thy flock, let their bodily and spiritual wants be plentifully supplied. By thy word, and ordinances, direct, rule, sustain, and satisfy those who are the sheep of thy hand. *And lift them up for ever.* Carry them in thine arms on earth, and then lift them into thy bosom in heaven. Elevate their minds and thoughts, spiritualise their affections, make them heavenly, Christlike, and full of God. O Lord, answer this our petition, for Jesus' sake.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Verse 1. *Unto thee do I cry.* It is of the utmost importance that we should have a *definite object* on which to fix our thoughts. Man, at the best of times, has but little power for realising abstractions; but least of all in his time of sorrow. Then he is helpless; then he needs every possible aid; and if his mind wander in vacancy, it will soon weary, and sink down exhausted. God has graciously taken care that this need not be done. He has so manifested himself to man in his word, that the afflicted one can fix his mind's eye on him, as the definite object of his faith, and hope, and prayer. "Call unto *me*, and *I* will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jer 33:3. This was what the psalmist did; and the definiteness of God, as the object of his trust in prayer, is very clearly marked. And specially great is the privilege of the *Christian* in this matter. He can fix his eye on Jesus; he, without any very great stretch of the imagination, can picture that Holy One looking

down upon him; listening to him; feeling for him; preparing to answer him. Dear reader, in the time of your trouble, do not roam; do not send out your sighs into vacancy; do not let your thoughts wander, as though they were looking for some one on whom to fix; for some one to whom you could tell the story of your heart's need and desolation. Fix your heart as the psalmist did, and say, "Unto *thee* will I cry." ... Oh! happy is that man, who feels and knows that when trouble comes, he cannot be bewildered and confused by the stroke, no matter how heavy it may be. Sorrow stricken he will be, but he has his resource, and he *knows* it, and will avail himself of it. His is no vague theory of the general sympathy of God for man; his is a knowledge of God, as a personal and feeling God; he says with the psalmist, "Unto *thee* will I cry." *Philip Bennett Power.*

Verse 1. *My rock.* One day a female friend called on the Rev. William Evans, a pious minister in England, and asked how he felt himself. "I am weakness itself," he replied; "but I am on the *Rock*. I do not experience those transports which some have expressed in the view of death; but my dependence is on the mercy of God in Christ. Here my religion began, and here it must end."

Verse 1. *My rock.* The Rev. John Rees, of Crownstreet, Soho, London, was visited on his deathbed by the Rev. John Leifchild, who very seriously asked him to describe the state of his mind. This appeal to the honour of his religion roused him, and so freshened his dying lamp, that raising himself up in his bed, he looked his friend in the face, and with great deliberation, energy, and dignity, uttered the following words:—"Christ in his person, Christ in the love of his heart, and Christ in the power of his arm, is the Rock on which I rest; and now (reclining his head gently on the pillow), Death, strike!" *K. Arvine.*

Verse 1. *Be not silent to me.* Let us next observe *what the heart desires from God*. It is that he would speak. *Be not silent to me.* Under these circumstances, when we make our prayer, we desire that God would let us know that he hears us, and that he would appear for us, and that he would say, he is our Father. And what do we desire God to say? We want him to let us know that he hears us; we want to hear him speak as distinctly to us, as we feel that we have spoken to him. We want to *know*, *not only by faith* that we have been heard, but *by God's having spoken to us on the very subject whereupon we have spoken to him*. When we feel thus assured that God has heard us, we can with the deepest confidence leave the whole matter about which we have been praying, in his hands. Perhaps an answer cannot come for a long time; perhaps things, meanwhile, seem working in a contrary way; it may be, that there is no direct appearance at all of God upon the scene; still faith will hold up and be strong; and there will be comfort in the heart, from the felt consciousness that God has heard our cry about the matter, and that he has told us so. We shall say to ourselves, "God knows all about it; God has in point of fact told me so; therefore I am in peace." And let it be enough for us that God tells us this, when he will perhaps tell us no more; let us not want to try and induce him to speak much, when it is his will to speak but little: the best answer we can have at certain times

is simply the statement that "he hears; "by this answer to our prayer he at once encourages and exercises our faith. "It is said, "saith Rutherford, speaking of the Saviour's delay in responding to the request of the Syrophenician woman, "he *answered* not a word, "but it is not said, he *heard* not a word. These two differ much. Christ often heareth when he doth not answer—his *not* answering is an *answer*, and speaks thus—"pray on, go on and cry, for the Lord holdeth his door fast bolted, not to keep you out, but that you may knock, and knock, and it shall be opened." *Philip Bennett Power*.

Verse 1. *Lest...I become like them that go down into the pit.* Thou seest, great God, my sad situation. Nothing to me is great or desirable upon this earth but the felicity of serving thee, and yet the misery of my destiny, and the duties of my state, bring me into connection with men who regard all godliness as a thing to be censured and derided. With secret horror I daily hear them blaspheming the ineffable gifts of thy grace, and ridiculing the faith and fervour of the godly as mere imbecility of mind. Exposed to such impiety, all my consolation, O my God, is to make my cries of distress ascend to the foot of thy throne. Although for the present, these sacrilegious blasphemies only awaken in my soul emotions of horror and pity, yet I fear that at last they may enfeeble me and seduce me into a crooked course of policy, unworthy of thy glory, and of the gratitude which I owe to thee. I fear that insensibly I may become such a coward as to blush at thy name, such a sinner as to resist the impulses of thy grace, such a traitor as to withhold my testimony against sin, such a self deceiver as to disguise my criminal timidity by the name of prudence. Already I feel that this poison is insinuating itself into my heart, for while I would not have my conduct resemble that of the wicked who surround me, yet I am too much biased by the fear of giving them offence. I dare not imitate them, but I am almost as much afraid of irritating them. I know that it is impossible both to please a corrupt world and a holy God, and yet I so far lose sight of this truth, that instead of sustaining me in decision, it only serves to render my vacillation the more inexcusable. What remains for me but to implore thy help! Strengthen me, O Lord, against these declensions so injurious to thy glory, so fatal to the fidelity which is due to thee. Cause me to hear thy strengthening and encouraging voice. If the voice of thy grace be not lifted up in my spirit, reanimating my feeble faith, I feel that there is but a step between me and despair. I am on the brink of the precipice, I am ready to fall into a criminal complicity with those who would fain drag me down with them into the pit. *Jean Baptiste Massillon, 1663-1742, freely translated by C.H.S.*

Verse 2. *I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.* Called (rybd), *debhir*, because there hence God spake and gave answer. Toward this (a type of Christ, the Word essential), David lifteth up his hands, that it might be as a ladder, whereby his prayer might get up to heaven. *John Trapp*.

Verse 3. *Draw me not away with the wicked...which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.* The godly man abhors dissimulation towards men; his heart goes along with his tongue, he cannot flatter and hate, commend and censure. "Let love be without dissimulation." Ro

12:9. Dissembled love is worse than hatred; counterfeiting of friendship is no better than a lie Ps 78:36, for there is a pretence of that which is not. Many are like Joab: "He took Amasa by the beard to kiss him, and smote him with his sword in the fifth rib, that he died." There is a river in Spain, where the fish seem to be of a golden colour, but take them out of the water, and they are like other fish. All is not gold that glitters; there are some pretend much kindness, but they are like great veins which have little blood; if you lean upon them they are as a leg out of joint. For my part, I much question his truth towards God, that will flatter and lie to his friend. "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander is a fool." Pr 10:18. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3. *Draw me not out with.* An allusion, I conceive, to a shepherd selecting out a certain portion of his flock. "*Reckon me not among.*" *Professor Lee.*

Verse 3. *Draw me not away.* (ynkvmt-la) from (Kvm); that signifies, both to draw and apprehend, will be best rendered here, *seize not on me*, as he that *seizes* on any to *carry* or *drag* him to *execution*. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 4. *Give them according to their deeds*, etc. Here, again, occurs the difficult question about praying for vengeance, which, however, I shall despatch in a few words. In the first place, then, it is unquestionable, that if the flesh move us to seek revenge, the desire is wicked in the sight of God. He not only forbids us to imprecate evil upon our enemies in revenge for private injuries, but it cannot be otherwise than that all those desires which spring from hatred must be disordered. David's example, therefore, must not be alleged by those who are driven by their own intemperate passion to seek vengeance. The holy prophet is not inflamed here by his own private sorrow to devote his enemies to destruction; but laying aside the desire of the flesh, he give judgment concerning the matter itself. Before a man can, therefore, denounce vengeance against the wicked, he must first shake himself free from all improper feelings in his own mind. In the second place, prudence must be exercised, that the heinousness of the evils which offend us drive us not to intemperate zeal, which happened even to Christ's disciples, when they desired that fire might be brought from heaven to consume those who refused to entertain their Master. Lu 9:54. They pretended, it is true, to act according to the example of Elias, but Christ severely rebuked them, and told them that they knew not by what spirit they were actuated. In particular, we must observe this general rule, that we cordially desire and labour for the welfare of the whole human race. Thus it will come to pass, that we shall not only give way to the exercise of God's mercy, but shall also wish the conversion of those who seem obstinately to rush upon their own destruction. In short, David, being free from every evil passion, and likewise endued with the spirit of discretion and judgment, pleads here not so much his own cause as the cause of God. And by this prayer, he further reminds both himself and the faithful, that although the wicked may give themselves loose reins in the commission of every species of vice with impunity for a time, they must at length stand before the judgment seat of God. *John Calvin.*

Verse 4. *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours.*

Yes, great God, since thou hast from the beginning been only occupied in saving men, thou wilt surely strike with an eternal malediction these children of iniquity who appear to have been born only to be lost themselves, and to destroy others. The very benevolence towards mankind solicits thy thunders against these corrupters of society. The more thou hast done for our race, the more surely will the severity of thy justice reveal itself in destroying the wretches whose only study is to counteract thy goodness towards mankind. They labour incessantly to put men far away from thee, O my God, and in return thou wilt put them far away from thee for ever. They count it great gain to make their fellows thine enemies, and they shall have the desperate consolation of being such themselves to all eternity. What more fitting punishment for the wretches who desire to make all hearts rebel against thine adorable Majesty, than to lie through the baseness of their nature, under the eternal and frightful necessity of hating thee for ever. *Jean Baptiste Massillon, rendered very freely by C. H. S.*

Verse 4. *Give them according to their deeds.* The *Egyptians* killed the Hebrew male children, and God smote the firstborn of Egypt. *Sisera*, who thought to destroy Israel with his iron chariots, was himself killed with an iron nail, stuck through his temples. *Adonibezek*, Jud 1:5-7. *Gideon* slew forty elders of Succoth, and his sons were murdered by *Abimelech*. *Abimelech* slew seventy sons of Gideon upon one stone, and his own head was broken by a piece of millstone thrown by a woman. *Samson* fell by the "lust of the eye," and before death the Philistines put out his eyes. *Agag*, 1Sa 20:33. *Saul* slew the Gibeonites, and seven of his sons were hung up before the Lord. 2Sa 21:1-9. *Ahab*, after coveting Naboth's vineyard, 1Ki 21:19, fulfilled 2Ki 9:24-26. *Jeroboam*, the same hand that was stretched forth against the altar was withered, 1Ki 13:1-6. *Joab* having killed Abner, Amasa, and Absalom, was put to death by Solomon. *Daniel's accusers* thrown into the lion's den meant for Daniel. *Haman* hung upon the gallows designed for Mordecai. *Judas* purchased the field of blood, and then went and hanged himself. So in the history of *later days*, *Bajazet* was carried about by *Tamerlane* in an iron cage, as he intended to have carried *Tamerlane*. *Mazentius* built a bridge to entrap *Constantine*, and was overthrown himself of that very spot. *Alexander VI.* was poisoned by the wine he had prepared for another. *Charles IX.* made the streets of Paris to stream with Protestant blood, and soon after blood streamed from all parts of his body in a bloody sweat. *Cardinal Beaton* condemned *George Wishart* to death, and presently died a violent death himself. He was murdered in bed, and his body was laid out in the same window from which he had looked upon *Wishart's* execution. *G. S. Bowes, in "Illustrative Gatherings."*

Verse 4. *Render to them their desert.* Meditate on God's righteousness, that it is not only his will, but his nature to punish sin; sin must damn thee without Christ, there is not only a possibility or probability that sin may ruin, but without an interest in Christ it must do so; whet much upon thy heart that *must*; God cannot but hate sin, because he is holy; and he cannot but punish sin, because he is

righteous. God must not forego his own nature to gratify our humours. *Christopher Fowler, in "Morning Exercises," 1676.*

Verse 4. He prayeth against his enemies, not out of any private revenge, but being led by the infallible spirit of prophecy, looking through these men to the enemies of Christ, and of his people in all ages. *David Dickson.*

Verses 4-5. In these verses, as indeed in most of the imprecatory passages, the imperative and the future are used promiscuously: *Give them—render them—he shall destroy them.* If therefore, the verbs, in all such passages, were uniformly rendered in the "future," every objection against the Scripture imprecations would vanish at once, and they would appear clearly to be what they are, namely, prophecies of the divine judgments, which have been since executed against the Jews, and which will be executed against all the enemies of Jehovah, and his Christ; whom neither the "works" of creation, nor those of redemption, can lead to repentance. *George Horne.*

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Verse 6. *He hath heard.* Prayer is the best remedy in a calamity. This is indeed a true *catholicum*, a general remedy for every malady. Not like the empiric's *catholicum*, which sometimes may work, but for the most part fails: but that which upon assured evidence and constant experience hath its *probatum est*; being that which the most wise, learned, honest, and skilful Physician that ever was, or can be, hath prescribed—even he that teacheth us how to bear what is to be borne, or how to heal and help what hath been borne. *William Gouge.*

Verse 7. *The Lord is my strength.* Oh, sweet consolation! If a man have a burden upon him, yet if he have *strength* added to him, if the burden be doubled, yet if his *strength* be trebled, the burden will not be heavier, but lighter than it was before to his natural strength; so if our afflictions be heavy, and we cry out, Oh, we cannot bear them! yet if we cannot bear them with our own strength, why may we not bear them with the strength of Jesus Christ? Do we think that Christ could not bear them? or if we dare not think but that Christ could bear them, why may not we come to bear them? Some may question, can we have the strength of Christ? Yes; that very strength is made over to us by faith, for so the Scripture saith frequently, *The Lord is our strength; God is our strength; The Lord Jehovah is our strength; Christ is our strength* Ps 28:7 43:2 Ps 118:14 Isa 12:2 Hab 3:19 Col 1:11; and,

therefore, is Christ's strength ours, made over unto us, that we may be able to bear whatsoever lies upon us. *Isaac Ambrose.*

Verse 7. *The Lord is my strength inwardly, and my shield outwardly.* Faith finds both these in Jehovah, and the one not without the other, for what is a shield without strength, or strength without a shield? *My heart trusted in him, and I am helped:* the idea of the former sentence is here carried out, that outward help was granted to inward confidence. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 7. *My heart trusted in him, and I am helped.* Faith substantiates things not yet seen; it altereth the tense, saith one, and putteth the future into the present tense as here. *John Trapp.*

Verse 8. *The Lord is their strength:* not mine only, but the strength of every believer. Note—the saints rejoice in their friends' comforts as well as their own; for as we have not the less benefit by the light of the sun, so neither by the light of God's countenance, for others sharing therein; for we are sure there is enough for all, and enough for each. This is our communion with all saints, that God is their strength and ours; Christ their Lord and ours. 1Co 1:2. He is their strength, the strength of all Israel, because he is the saving strength of *his anointed*, i.e., 1. Of David in the type: God in strengthening him that was their king and fought their battles, strengthened the whole kingdom. He calls himself God's anointed, because it was the unction he had received that exposed him to the envy of his enemies, and therefore entitled him to the divine protection. 2. Of Christ, his Anointed, his Messiah, in the antitype. God was his *saving strength*, qualified him for his undertaking, and carried him through it. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 9. *Lift them up.* The word here used may mean *sustain* them, or *support* them; but it more properly means *bear*, and would be best expressed by a reference to the fact, that the shepherd carries the feeble, the young, and the sickly of his flock in his arms, or that he lifts them up when unable themselves to rise. *Albert Barnes.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. (*first clause*). A sinner's wise resolution in the hour of despondency.

Verse 1. The saint's fear of becoming like the ungodly.

Verse 1. God's silence—what terror may lie in it.

Verse 1. (*last clause*). How low a soul may sink when God hides his face.

Verses 1-2. Prayer. 1. *Its nature*—a "cry": (a) The utterance of life, (b) The expression of pain, (c) The pleading of need, (d) The voice of deep earnestness.

2. *Its object*—"O Lord, my rock." God as our Foundation, Refuge, and immutable Friend.

3. *Its aim*—"Hear, ""Be not silent." We expect an answer, a clear and manifest answer, a speedy answer, a suitable answer, an effectual answer.

4. *Its medium*—"Towards thy holy oracle." Our Lord Jesus, the true mercy seat, etc.

Verse 3. The characters to be avoided, the doom to be dreaded, the grace to keep us from both.

Verse 4. Measure for measure, or punishment proportioned to desert.

Verse 4. Endeavour the measure of sin rather than mere result. Hence some are guilty of sins which they were unable to commit.

Verse 5. Culpable negligence constantly persisted in, losing much blessing, and involving terrible condemnation.

Verse 6. Answered prayers, a retrospect and song.

Verse 7. The heart's possessions, confidence, experience, joy, and music.

Verse 7. Adoring God for his mercies. 1. What God is to the believer.

2. What should be the disposition of our hearts towards him. —*C. Simeon.*

Verse 8. All power given to believers because of their union with Jesus.

Verse 9. "A prayer for the church militant." See Exposition and Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 768.

Psalm 29

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. A Psalm of David. The title affords us no information beyond the fact that David is the author of this sublime song.

SUBJECT. It seems to be the general opinion of modern annotators, that this Psalm is meant to express the glory of God as heard in the pealing thunder, and seen in the equinoctial tornado. Just as the eighth Psalm is to be read by moonlight, when the stars are bright, as the nineteenth needs the rays of the rising sun to bring out its beauty, so this can be best rehearsed beneath the black wing of tempest, by the glare of the lightning, or amid that dubious dusk which heralds the war of elements. The verses march to the tune of thunderbolts. God is everywhere conspicuous, and all the earth is hushed by the majesty of his presence. The word of God in the law and gospel is here also depicted in its majesty of power. True ministers are sons of thunder, and the voice of God in Christ Jesus is full of majesty. Thus we have God's works and God's word joined together: let no man put them asunder by a false idea that theology and science can by any possibility oppose each other. We may, perhaps, by a prophetic glance, behold in this Psalm the dread tempests of the latter days, and the security of the elect people.

DIVISION. The first two verses are a call to adoration. From Ps 29:3-10 the path of the tempest is traced, the attributes of God's word are rehearsed, and God magnified in all the terrible grandeur of his power; and the last verse sweetly closes the scene with the assurance that the omnipotent

Jehovah will give both strength and peace to his people. Let heaven and earth pass away, the Lord will surely bless his people.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Give*, i.e., ascribe. Neither men nor angels can confer anything upon Jehovah, but they should recognise his glory and might, and ascribe it to him in their songs and in their hearts. *Unto the Lord*, and unto him alone, must honour be given. Natural causes, as men call them, are God in action, and we must not ascribe power to them, but to the infinite Invisible who is the true source of all. *O ye mighty*. Ye great ones of earth and of heaven, kings and angels, join in rendering worship to the blessed and only Potentate; ye lords among men need thus to be reminded, for ye often fail where humbler men are ardent; but fail no longer, bow your heads at once, and loyally do homage to the King of kings. How frequently do grandees and potentates think it beneath them to fear the Lord; but, when they have been led to extol Jehovah, their piety has been the greatest jewel in their crowns. *Give unto the Lord glory and strength*, both of which men are too apt to claim for themselves, although they are the exclusive prerogatives of the self-existent God. Let crowns and swords acknowledge their dependence upon God. Not to your arms, O kings, give ye the glory, nor look for strength to your hosts of warriors, for all your pomp is but as a fading flower, and your might is as a shadow which declineth. When shall the day arrive when kings and princes shall count it their delight to glorify their God? "All worship be to God only, "let this be emblazoned on every coat of arms.

Verse 2. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name*. A third time the admonition is given, for men are backward in glorifying God, and especially great men, who are often too much swollen with their own glory to spare time to give God his rightful praise, although nothing more is asked of them than is most just and right. Surely men should not need so much pressing to give what is due, especially when the payment is so pleasant. Unbelief and distrust, complaining and murmuring, rob God of his honour; in this respect, even the saints fail to give due glory to their King. *Worship the Lord*, bow before him with devout homage and sacred awe, and let your worship be such as he appoints. Of old, worship was cumbered with ceremonial, and men gathered around one dedicated building, whose solemn pomp was emblematic of *the beauty of holiness*; but now our worship is spiritual, and the architecture of the house and the garments of the worshippers are matters of no importance; the spiritual beauty of inward purity and outward holiness being far more precious in the eyes of our thrice holy God. O for grace ever to worship with holy motives and in a holy manner, as becometh saints! The call to worship in these two verses chimes in with the loud pealing thunder, which is the church bell of the universe ringing kings and angels, and all the sons of earth to their devotions.

Verse 3. *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.* The thunder is not only poetically but instructively called "the voice of God," since it peals from on high; it surpasses all other sounds, it inspires awe, it is entirely independent of man, and has been used on some occasions as the grand accompaniment of God's speech to Adam's sons. There is a peculiar terror in a tempest at sea, when deep calleth unto deep, and the raging sea echoes to the angry sky. No sight more alarming than the flash of lightning around the mast of the ship; and no sound more calculated to inspire reverent awe than the roar of the storm. The children of heaven have often enjoyed the tumult with humble joy peculiar to the saints, and even those who know not God have been forced into unwilling reverence while the storm has lasted. *The glory of God thundereth.* Thunder is in truth no mere electric phenomenon, but is caused by the interposition of God himself. Even the old heathen spake of Jupiter Tonans; but our modern wise men will have us believe in laws and forces, and anything or nothing so they may be rid of God. Electricity of itself can do nothing, it must be called and sent upon its errand; and until the almighty Lord commissions it, its bolt of fire is inert and powerless. As well might a rock of granite, or a bar of iron fly in the midst of heaven, as the lightning go without being sent by the great First Cause. *The Lord is upon many waters.* Still the Psalmist's ear hears no voice but that of Jehovah, resounding from the multitudinous and dark waters of the upper ocean of clouds, and echoing from the innumerable billows of the storm tossed sea below. The waters above and beneath the firmament are astonished at the eternal voice. When the Holy Spirit makes the divine promise to be heard above the many waters of our soul's trouble, then is God as glorious in the spiritual world as in the universe of matter. Above us and beneath us all is the peace of God when he gives us quiet.

Verse 4. *The voice of the Lord is powerful.* An irresistible power attends the lightning of which the thunder is the report. In an instant, when the Lord wills it, the force of electricity produces amazing results. A writer upon this subject, speaks of these results as including a light of the intensity of the sun in his strength, a heat capable of fusing the most compact metals, a force in a moment paralysing the muscles of the most powerful animals; a power suspending the all pervading gravity of the earth, and an energy capable of decomposing and recomposing the closest affinities of the most intimate combinations. Well does Thompson speak of "the unconquerable lightning," for it is the chief of the ways of God in physical forces, and none can measure its power. As the voice of God in nature is so powerful, so is it in grace; the reader will do well to draw a parallel, and he will find much in the gospel which may be illustrated by the thunder of the Lord in the tempest. His voice, whether in nature or revelation, shakes both earth and heaven; see that ye refuse not him that speaketh. If his voice be thus mighty, what must his hand be! beware lest ye provoke a blow. *The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.* The King of kings speaks like a king. As when a lion roareth, all the beasts of the forest are still, so is the earth hushed and mute while Jehovah thundereth marvellously.

"It is listening fear and dumb amazement all."

As for the written word of God, its majesty is apparent both in its style, its matter, and its power over the human mind; blessed be God, it is the majesty of mercy wielding a silver sceptre; of such majesty the word of our salvation is *full* to overflowing.

Verse 5. *The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars.*

"Black from the stroke above, the smouldering pine
Stands a sad shattered trunk."

Noble trees fall prostrate beneath the mysterious bolt, or stand in desolation as mementoes of its power. Lebanon itself is not secure, high as it stands, and ancient as are its venerable woods: *Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.* The greatest and most venerable of trees or men, may not reckon upon immunity when the Lord is abroad in his wrath. The gospel of Jesus has a like dominion over the most inaccessible of mortals; and when the Lord sends the word, it breaks hearts far stouter than the cedars.

Verse 6. *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.* Not only the trees, but the mountains themselves move as though they frisked and leaped like young bulls or antelopes. As our own poets would mention hills and valleys known to them, so the Psalmist hears the crash and roar among the ranges of Libanus, and depicts the tumult in graphic terms. Thus sings one of our own countrymen:—"Amid Carnavon's mountains rages loud

The repercussive roar: with mighty crash
Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks
Of Penmaen Mawr, heaped hideous to the sky,
Tumble the smitten cliffs; and Snowdon's peak,
Dissolving, instant yields his wintry load.
Far seen, the heights of heathy Cheviot blaze,
And Thule bellows through her utmost isles."

The glorious gospel of the blessed God has more than equal power over the rocky obduracy and mountainous pride of man. The voice of our dying Lord rent the rocks and opened the graves: his living voice still works the like wonders. Glory be to his name, the hills of our sins leap into his grave, and are buried in the red sea of his blood, when the voice of his intercession is heard.

Verse 7. *The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.* As when sparks fly from the anvil by blows of a ponderous hammer, so the lightning attends the thundering strokes of Jehovah. "At first heard solemn over the verge of heaven,

The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more

The noise astounds: till overhead a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide; then shuts
And opens wider; shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze."

The thunder seems to divide one flash from another, interposing its deepening roar between the flash which precedes it and the next. That the flashes are truly flames of fire is witnessed by their frequently falling upon houses, churches, etc., and wrapping them in a blaze. How easily could the Lord destroy his rebellious creatures with his hot thunderbolts! how gracious is the hand which spares such great offenders, when to crush them would be so easy! Flames of fire attend the voice of God in the gospel, illuminating and melting the hearts of men: by those he consumes our lusts and kindles in us a holy flame of ever aspiring love and holiness. Pentecost is a suggestive commentary upon this verse.

Verse 8. As the storm travelled, it burst over the desert. *The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.* God courts not the applause of men—his grandest deeds are wrought where man's inquisitive glance is all unknown. Where no sound of man was heard, the voice of God was terribly distinct. The vast and silent plains trembled with affright. Silence did homage to the Almighty voice. Low lying plains must hear the voice of God as well as lofty mountains; the poor as well as the mighty must acknowledge the glory of the Lord. Solitary and barren places are to be gladdened by the gospel's heavenly sound. What a shaking and overturning power there is in the word of God! even the conservative desert quivers into progress when God decrees it.

Verse 9. *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,* those timid creatures, in deadly fear of the tempest, drop their burdens in an untimely manner. Perhaps a better reading is, "the oaks to tremble," especially as this agrees with the next sentence, *and discovereth the forests.* The dense shades of the forest are lit up with the lurid glare of the lightning, and even the darkest recesses are for a moment laid bare.

"The gloomy woods
Start at the flash, and from their deep recesses
Wide flaming out, their trembling inmates shake."

Our first parents sought a refuge among the trees, but the voice of the Lord soon found them out, and made their hearts to tremble. There is no concealment from the fire glance of the Almighty—one flash of his angry eye turns midnight into noon. The gospel has a like revealing power in dark hearts, in a moment it lights up every dark recess of the heart's ungodliness, and bids the soul tremble before the Lord. In his temple doth everyone speak of his glory. Those who were worshipping in the temple, were led to speak of the greatness of Jehovah as they heard the repeated thunder claps. The whole

world is also a temple for God, and when he rides abroad upon the wings of the wind, all things are vocal in his praise. We too, the redeemed of the Lord, who are living temples for his Spirit, as we see the wonders of his power in creation, and feel them in grace, unite to magnify his name. No tongue may be dumb in God's temple when his glory is the theme. The original appears to have the force of "every one crieth Glory, "as though all things were moved by a sense of God's majesty to shout in ecstasy, "Glory, glory." Here is a good precedent for our Methodist friends and for the Gogonians of the zealous Welsh.

Verse 10. *The Lord sitteth upon the flood.* Flood follows tempest, but Jehovah is ready for the emergency. No deluge can undermine the foundation of his throne. He is calm and unmoved, however much the deep may roar and be troubled: his government rules the most unstable and boisterous of created things. Far out on the wild waste of waters, Jehovah "plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm, "Yea, *the Lord sitteth King for ever.* Jesus has the government upon his shoulders eternally: our interests in the most stormy times are safe in his hands. Satan is not a king, but Jehovah Jesus is; therefore let us worship him, and rejoice evermore.

Verse 11. Power was displayed in the hurricane whose course this Psalm so grandly pictures; and now, in the cool calm after the storm, that power is promised to be the strength of the chosen. He who wings the unerring bolt, will give to his redeemed the wings of eagles; he who shakes the earth with his voice, will terrify the enemies of his saints, and give his children peace. Why are we weak when we have divine strength to flee to? Why are we troubled when the Lord's own peace is ours? Jesus the mighty God is our peace—what a blessing is this today! What a blessing it will be to us in that day of the Lord which will be in darkness and not light to the ungodly! Dear reader, is not this a noble Psalm to be sung in stormy weather? Can you sing amid the thunder? Will you be able to sing when the last thunders are let loose, and Jesus judges quick and dead? If you are a believer, the last verse is your heritage, and surely that will set you singing.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. In this Psalm, the strength of Jehovah is celebrated; and the exemplification of it is evidently taken from a thunderstorm in Lebanon. The Psalm seems to be addressed to the angels. See Ps 89:7. It thus begins:—

"Render unto Jehovah, ye sons of the mighty,
Render unto Jehovah glory and strength;
Render to Jehovah the glory of his name;
Bow down to Jehovah in the majesty of holiness!"

Immediately follows the description of the thunderstorm, in which it does not seem fanciful to observe the historical progression which is usual on such occasions. The first lines seem to describe only the

noise of the thunder, the description growing more intense as the rumbling draws nearer.

"The voice of Jehovah is above the waters;

The God of glory thundereth,

Jehovah is louder than many waters,

The voice of Jehovah in strength,

The voice of Jehovah in majesty!"

But now the effects become visible; the storm has descended on the mountains and forests:—

"The voice of Jehovah shivers the cedars,

Even shivers Jehovah the cedars of Lebanon;

And makes them to skip, like a calf;

Lebanon and Sirion, like a young buffalo,

The voice of Jehovah forks the lightning's flash!"

From the mountains the storm sweeps down into the plains, where, however, its effects are not so fearful as on the mountains—

"The voice of Jehovah causeth the desert to tremble—

The voice of Jehovah causeth to tremble the desert of Kadesh—

The voice of Jehovah causeth the oaks to tremble,

And lays bare the forests!

Therefore, in his temple every one speaks of his glory."

The description of the swollen torrents closes the scene—

"Jehovah upon the rain torrent sitteth.

Yea, sitteth Jehovah a king for ever."

And the moral of application of the whole is—

"Jehovah to his people will give strength,

Jehovah will bless his people with peace."

—*Robert Murray Macheyne, 1813-1843.*

Whole Psalm. There is no phenomenon in nature so awful as a thunderstorm, and almost every poet from Homer and Virgil down to Dante and Milton, or rather down to Grahame and Pollok, has described it. In the Bible, too, we have a thunderstorm, the twenty-ninth Psalm—the description of a tempest, which, rising from the Mediterranean, and travelling by Lebanon and along the inland mountains, reaches Jerusalem, and sends the people into the temple porticoes for refuge; and; besides those touches of terror in which the geographical progress of the tornado is described, it derives a sacred vitality and power from the presence of Jehovah in each successive peal. *James Hamilton, D.D., in "The Literary Attractions of the Bible," 1849.*

Whole Psalm. A glorious Psalm of praise sung during a tempest, the majesty of which shakes

universal nature, so much so that the greatness of the power of the Lord is felt by all in heaven and on earth. This Lord is the God of his people, who blesses them with strength and peace. To rightly appreciate the feelings of the bard, one ought to realise an Oriental storm, especially in the mountainous regions of Palestine, which, accompanied by the terrific echoes of the encircling mountains, by torrents of rain like waterspouts, often scatters terror on man and beast, destruction on cities and fields. Wilson, the traveller, describes such a tempest in the neighbourhood of Baalbek: "I was overtaken by a storm, as if the floodgates of heaven had burst; it came on in a moment, and raged with a power which suggested the end of the world. Solemn darkness covered the earth: the rain descended in torrents, and sweeping down the mountain side, became by the fearful power of the storm transmuted into thick clouds of fog." Compare also our Lord's parable, taken from life, in Mt 7:27. *Augustus F. Tholuck, in loc.*

Verse 1. *Give unto the Lord. Give, give, give.* This showeth how unwilling such are usually to give God his right, or to suffer a word of exhortation to this purpose. *John Trapp.*

Verse 1. *O ye mighty.* The Septuagint renders it, *O ye sons of rams!* These bell wethers should not cast their noses into the air, and carry their crest the higher, because the shepherd hath bestowed a bell upon them, more than upon the rest of the flock. *John Trapp.*

Verses 1-2. There are three *gives* in these two verses:—*Give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto his name.* Glory is God's right, and he stands upon his right; and this the sincere Christian knows, and therefore he gives him his right, he gives him the honour and the glory that is due unto his name. But pray do not mistake me. I do not say that such as are really sincere do actually eye the glory of Christ in all their actions. Oh, no! This is a happiness desirable on earth, but shall never be attained till we come to heaven. Bye and base ends and aims will be still ready to creep into the best hearts, but all sincere hearts sigh and groan under them. They complain to God of them, and they cry out for justice, justice upon them; and it is the earnest desire and daily endeavours of their souls to be rid of them; and therefore they shall not be imputed to them, nor keep good things from them. But now take a sincere Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course, and you shall find that his aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings are to glorify God, to exalt God, and to lift up God in the world. If the hypocrite did in good earnest aim at the glory of God in what he does, then the glory of God would swallow up his bye aims and carnal ends, as Aaron's rod swallowed up the magician's rods. Ex 7:10-12. Look, as the sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God, where it is aimed at, will put out and consume all bye and base ends. This is most certain, that which is a man's great end, that will work out all other ends. He that sets up the glory of God as his chief end, will find that his chief end will by degrees eat out all low and base ends. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat Ge 31:4, so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends that crowd in upon the soul in religious work. Where the glory of God is kept up as a

man's greatest end, there all bye and base ends will be kept at an under. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 2. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* Which yet you cannot do, for his name is above all praise! Ps 148:13; but you must aim at it. The Rabbins observe that God's holy name is mentioned eighteen several times in this Psalm; that great men especially may give him the honour of his name, that they may stand in awe and not sin, that they may bring presents to him who ought to be feared, and those also the very best of the best, since he is a great king, and standeth much upon his seniority. Mal 1:14. *John Trapp.*

Verse 2. *Worship the Lord.* If any should ask, Why is the Lord to be worshipped? Why must he have such high honours from those that are high? What doth he in the world that calls for such adoration? David answereth meteorologically as well as theologically, he answers from the clouds Ps 29:3-4, "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; "as if he had said, Although the Lord Jesus Christ will not set up an outward, pompous, political kingdom, such as that of Cyrus, Alexander, etc., yet by the ministry of the gospel he will erect a spiritual kingdom, and gather to himself a church that shall abide for ever, out of all the nations of the earth; for the gospel shall be carried and preached, to not only the people of Israel, the Jews, but to the Gentiles, all the world over, that the minds of men may be enlightened, awakened, and moved with that unheard of doctrine of salvation by Christ, which had been hid from ages and generations. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3. *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.* Yes, great God, these torrents of tears which flow down from my eyes announce thy divine presence in my soul. This heart hitherto so dry, so arid, so hard; this rock which thou hast struck a second time, will not resist thee any longer, for out of it there now gushes healthful waters in abundance. The selfsame voice of God which overturns the mountains, thunders, lightens, and divides the heaven above the sinner, now commands the clouds to pour forth showers of blessings, changing the desert of his soul into a field producing a hundredfold; that voice I hear. *J. B. Massillon.*

Verses 3-10. The Lord, etc. All things which we commonly say are the effects of the natural powers of matter and laws of motion, are, indeed (if we will speak strictly and properly), the effects of God's acting upon matter continually and at every moment, either immediately by himself, or mediately by some created intelligent being. Consequently there is no such thing as the cause of nature, or the power of nature. *Samuel Clarke, 1675-1729.* "The friend and disciple of Newton."

Verses 3-10.

The voice of the Lord on the ocean is known,

The God of eternity thundereth abroad;

The voice of the Lord from the depth of his throne

Is terror and power;—all nature is awed.

The voice of the Lord through the calm of the wood
Awakens its echoes, strikes light through its caves;
The Lord sitteth King on the turbulent flood,
The winds are his servants, his servants the waves.

—*James Montgomery, 1771-1854.*

Ver. 3-11—

Messiah's voice is in the cloud,
The God of glory thunders loud.
Messiah rides along the floods,
He treads upon the flying clouds.
Messiah's voice is full of power,
His lightnings play when tempests lower.
Messiah's voice the cedars breaks,
While Lebanon's foundation quakes.
Messiah's voice removes the hills,
And all the plains with rivers fills.
The voice of their expiring God,
Shall make the rocks to start abroad;
Mount Zion and Mount Sirion,
Shall bound along with Lebanon:
The flames of fire shall round him wreath,
When he shall on the ether breathe.
Messiah's voice shall shake the earth,
And, lo! the graves shall groan in birth,
Ten thousand thousand living sons
Shall be the issue of their groans.
The peace of God the gospel sounds;
The peace of God, the earth rebounds,
The gospel everlasting shines
A light from God that never declines.
This is the light Jehovah sends,
To bless the world's remotest ends.

—*Barclay's Paraphrase.*

Verse 4. *The voice of the Lord.* These vehement repetitions resemble a series of thunderclaps; one seems to hear the dread artillery of heaven firing volley after volley, while peal on peal the echo

follows the sound. *C. H. S.*

Verse 4. *The voice of the Lord is powerful.* I would render unto God the glory due unto his name, for the admirable change which he has wrought in my heart. There was nothing to be found in me but an impious hardness and inveterate disorder. From this helpless state he changed me into a new man and made resplendent the glory of his name and the power of his grace. He alone can work such prodigies. Unbelievers who refuse to acknowledge the hand of God in creation must surely in this case admit that "this is the finger of God." Yes, great God, chaos knows not how to resist thee, it hears thy voice obediently, but the obdurate heart repels thee, and thy mighty voice too often calls to it in vain. Thou art not so great and wonderful in creating worlds out of nothing as thou art when thou dost command a rebel heart to arise from its abyss of sin, and to run in the ways of thy commandments. To disperse a chaos of crime and ignorance by the majesty of thy word, to shed light on the direst darkness, and by the Holy Ghost to establish harmonious order where all was confusion, manifests in far greater measure thine omnipotence than the calling forth of heavenly laws and celestial suns from the first chaos. *J. B. Massillon.*

Verse 4. O may the evangelical "Boanerges" so cause the glorious sound of the gospel to be heard under the whole heaven, that the world may again be made sensible thereof; before that voice of the Son of Man, which hath so often called sinners to repentance, shall call them to judgment. *George Horne.*

Verse 4. Where the word of a king is, there is power, but what imperial voice shall be likened unto the majestic thunder of the Lord? *C. H. S.*

Verse 5. *The voice of Jehovah.* Philosophers think not that they have reasoned skilfully enough about inferior causes, unless they separate God very far from his works. It is a diabolical science, however, which fixes our contemplations on the works of nature, and turns them away from God. If any one who wished to know a man, should take no notice of his face, but should fix his eyes only on the points of his nails, his folly might justly be derided. But far greater is the folly of those philosophers, who, out of mediate and proximate causes, weave themselves veils lest they should be compelled to acknowledge the hand of God, which manifestly displays itself in his works. *John Calvin.*

Verse 5. *The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars,* etc. Like as tempests when they arise, and lightnings, quickly and in a trice, hurl down and overturn mountains and the highest trees; even so doth the Lord bring down with a break neck fall, the proud, haughty, arrogant, and insolent, who set themselves against God, and seek the spoil of those that be quiet and godly. *Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 5. *The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars.* The ancient expositors remind us that the *breaking of the cedar trees* by the wind, is a figure of the laying low of the lofty and proud things of this world, by the rushing mighty wind of the Holy Spirit, given on that day. *Confringit cedros Deus,*

hoc est humiliat superbos. (S. Jerome, and so S. Basil.) *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5. The Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. What a shame is it then that our hard hearts break not, yield not, though thunder struck with the dreadful menaces of God's mouth! *John Trapp.*

Verse 5. "*Breaketh the cedars of Lebanon:*"—

When high in the air the pine ascends,
To every ruder blast it bends.
The palace falls with heavier weight,
When tumbling from its airy height;
And when from heaven the lightning flies,
It blasts the hills that proudest rise.

—*Horace, translated by Philip Francis, D.D., 1765.*

Verse 5. *The cedars of Lebanon.* These mighty trees of God, which for ages have stood the force of the tempest, rearing their evergreen colossal boughs in the region of everlasting snow, are the first objects of the fury of the lightning, which is well known to visit first the highest objects. *Robert Murray Macheyne.*

Verse 6. *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn;* that is, the Lord by his thundering, powerful voice, first, will make them skip, as frightened with fear; and secondly, as revived with joy. Yet more Ps 29:7, "The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire; "that is, will send and divide to every one as they need 1Co 12:11, the Holy Spirit, who is compared to and called *fire* Mt 3:11, and who came as with a thunderstorm *of a rushing mighty wind*, and with the appearance of *cloven tongues, like as of fire*, and sat upon each one of the apostles. Ac 2:2-3. Nor did this voice of thunder, accompanied with divided flames of fire reach Jerusalem only; for, as it follows Ps 29:8, "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh; "that is, the Lord by the voice of the gospel shall go forth with power to those Gentiles, who are like a wilderness, barren of goodness, and not fertilized in spirituals, though they dwell in well governed cities, and are well furnished with morals. It shall go forth also to those Gentiles who inhabit waste wildernesses, and are not so much as reduced to civility. These wildernesses, the thundering voice of the Lord hath shaken heretofore, and doth shake at this day, and will yet further shake, that the fulness of the Gentiles may come in. Many of these wildernesses hath the Lord turned into fruitful fields, and pleasant lands, by the voice of the gospel sounding among them. For in these wildernesses (as it followeth, Ps 29:9), "The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve; "that is, they that were as wild, as untaught, and untamed as the *hind*, or any beast in the forest, he brings to the sorrows of their new birth, to repentance and gospel humiliation, and in doing this, "*he* (as the psalmist goes on), *discovereth the forests;* " that is, opens the hearts of men, which are as thick set and full grown with vanity, pride, hypocrisy, self love, and self sufficiency, as also with wantonness

and sensuality, as any forest is overgrown with thickets of trees and bushes, which deny all passage through till cleared away with burning down or cutting up. Such an opening, such a discovery, doth the Lord make in the forests of men's hearts, by the sword and fire, that is, by the word and spirit of the gospel; and when this is done, the forest becomes a *temple*, and as that verse concludes, "In his temple doth every one speak of his glory." And if the *floods* of ungodliness rise up against the people, whom the thunder and lightning of the gospel have subdued to Christ, and framed into a holy temple, then the psalmist assures us Ps 29:10, "*The Lord sitteth upon the flood*," that is, it is under his power, he rules and overrules it; "*Yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever*;" and Ps 29:11, "*The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.*" Thus the Lord "thundereth marvellously" Job 37:5, and these are glorious marvels which he thundereth; he converts sinners. Thus, though I like not their way who are given to allegorize the Scriptures, yet I doubt not but we may make a profitable use of this and many other Scriptures by way of allegory. This being an undeniable truth, which is the ground of it—that the Lord puts forth, as it were, the power of thunder and lightning in the preaching of his Word; these two things are to be marked. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 6. *He maketh them also to skip like a calf.* That is to say, he hath made the splinters and broken pieces of trees that have been struck with lightning, to fly up into the air, or when they have been shaken by the wind, storms, or by earthquakes. *John Diodati*.

Verse 6. The original is—

"And makes them skip like a calf,
Lebanon and Sirion, like a young buffalo."

At first sight it might appear that the cedars were still meant, and that Lebanon and Sirion were used by metonymy for the cedars which grew upon them. But, 1. We never hear of cedars growing upon Sirion, or Shenir, or Hermon, for it has all these names; and, 2. There is a parallel passage where this interpretation will hardly answer in Psalm 114. Describing the exodus of Israel, it says—

"The mountains skipped like rams,
And the little hills like lambs."

The same verb occurs here, the verb which means "to skip, to dance," used in Na 3:2, to signify the jolting of chariots, and also in Joe 2:5. In both these instances, rough motion, accompanied with noise, seems intended. Now, though this may very well be understood as a highly figurative description, as it undoubtedly is, of the usual effect of a thunderstorm; yet it is interesting to compare it with the following passage of Volney, which described certain phenomena as frequent in Mount Lebanon, which may give a new meaning to the "skipping of the mountains:"—"When the traveller, "say he, "penetrates the interior of these mountains, the ruggedness of the roads, the steepness of the declivities, the depth of the precipices, have at first a terrific effect; but the sagacity of the mules which bear him soon inspires him with confidence, and enables him to examine at his ease the

picturesque scenes which succeed one another, so as almost to bewilder him." There, as in the Alps, he sometimes travels whole days to arrive at a spot which was in sight when he set out. He turns, he descends, he winds round, he climbs; and under the perpetual change of position, one is ready to think that a magical power is varying at every step the beauties of the landscapes. Sometimes villages are seen, ready as it were to slide down the deep declivities, and so disposed that the roofs of the one row of houses serve as a street to the row above. At another time, you see a convent seated on an isolated cone, like Marshaia in the valley of Tigre. Here a rock is pierced by a torrent, forming a natural cascade, as at *Nahr el Leban*; there another rock assumes the appearance of a natural wall! Often on the sides, ledges of stones, washed down and left by the waters, resemble ruins disposed by art. In some places, the waters meeting with inclined beds, have undermined the intermediate earth, and have formed caverns, as at Nahr el Kelb, near Antoura. In other places, they have worn for themselves subterranean channels, through which flow little rivulets during part of the year, as at Mar Hama. Sometimes these picturesque circumstances have become tragical ones. Rocks loosened or thrown off their equilibrium by thaw or earthquake, have been known to precipitate themselves on the adjacent dwellings, and crush the inhabitants. An accident of this kind, about twenty years ago, buried a whole village near Mar Djordos, so as to leave no trace of its existence. More recently, and near the same spot, the soil of a hill planted with mulberry trees and vines detached itself by a sudden thaw, and, sliding over the surface of the rock which it had covered, like a vessel launched from the stocks, established itself in the valley below. *Robert Murray Macheyne.*

Verse 7. *The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.* By the power of God, the "flames of fire" are "divided" and sent abroad from the clouds upon the earth, in the terrible form of lightning, that sharp and glittering sword of the Almighty, which no substance can withstand. The same power of God goeth forth by his word, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword." penetrating, melting, enlightening, and inflaming the hearts of men, Ac 2:3 Heb 4:12. *George Horne.*

Verse 7. *The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.* The voice of the Lord is here said to *divide the flames*; literally, *to hew out flames*, (latomein flav). The *Septuagint* has (diakoptei floga puroz). In the words of Gensenius, "The voice of Jehovah *cutteth out flames* of fire, "i.e., "sendeth out divided flames of fire." This is (as Theodoret has observed) very descriptive of the divine action at Pentecost, sending forth *divided flames*, like "*tela trisulca*, "in the tongues of fire which were divided off from one heavenly source or fountain of flame, and sat upon the heads of the apostles, and which filled them with the fire of holy zeal and love. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 7. *Divideth the flames of fire.* Margin, *cutteth out*. The Hebrew word (bux) *khatzab* means properly *to cut, to hew, to hew out*; as for example, stones. The allusion here is undoubtedly to lightning; and the image is either that it seems to be cut out, or cut into tongues and streaks—or,

more probably, that the *clouds* seem to be cut or hewed, so as to make openings or paths for the lightning. The eye is evidently fixed on the clouds, and on the sudden flash of lightning, as if the clouds has been *cleaved* or *opened* for the passage of it. The idea of the psalmist is, that the "*voice of the Lord*," or the thunder, seems to cleave or open the clouds for the flames of fire to play amidst the tempest. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 8. *The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.* That Kadesh Naphtali is meant, the geographical position of Lebanon would make us believe, though this is not necessary. And, although Syria is much exposed to earthquakes—as, for example, that of Aleppo, in 1822, which was sensibly felt at Damascus—yet it does not seem necessary to imagine anything farther than the usual affects of a thunderstorm. The *oaks and forests* of Ps 29:9, suit well with the description given of the lower limbs of Lebanon, which abound in "thickets of myrtle, woods of fir, walnut trees, carob trees, and Turkish oaks." And the *rain torrent* of Ps 29:10 is admirably descriptive of the sudden swell of the thousand streams which flow from Lebanon. According to modern travellers, the number of water courses descending from Lebanon is immense; and the suddenness of the rise of these streams may be gathered from the contradictions in their accounts. The Nahr el Sazib is described by one as "a rivulet, though crossed by a bridge of six arches; "by another it is called "a large river." The Damour (the ancient Tamyras), which flows immediately from Lebanon, is "a river," says Mandrell, "apt to swell much upon sudden rains; in which case, precipitating itself from the mountains with great rapidity, it has been fatal to many a passenger." He mentions a French gentleman, M. Spon, who, a few years before, in attempting to ford it, was hurried down by the stream, and perished in the sea. This is one instance of very many in the mountains of Lebanon, where the brook, which is usually nearly dry, become all at once an impassable torrent. When Volney looked upon the rivers of Syria in summer, he doubted whether they could be called rivers. But had he ventured to cross them after a thunderstorm, his scepticism would no longer have had room or time to exercise itself, and he would have felt the propriety of the psalmist's painting, where he says—

"Jehovah sitteth on the rain torrents,

Jehovah sitteth a King for ever."

Robert Murray Macheyne.

Verse 8. *The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness.* Great God, I have laboured to escape thee! I sought refuge for my remorse in a retreat where nothing might recall me to my God. Far away from the succours of religion, remote from all the channels which bring to me the waters of grace, apart from all whose reproofing witness might restrain me from iniquity; yet even there, Great God, where I believed that I had found an asylum inaccessible to thine eternal mercy, wherein I could sin with impunity, even there, in that wilderness, thy voice arrested me and laid me at thy feet. *J. B. Massillon.*

Verse 9. *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.* With respect to the sense conveyed by the

common reading, it may be observed, that hinds bring forth their young with great difficulty and pain, "bowing themselves, bruising their young ones, and casting out their sorrows" Job 39:4,6; and it therefore heightens the description given of the terrific character of the thunderstorm, when the thunder which is here called "the voice of God, "is represented as causing, through the terror which it inspires, the hinds in their pregnant state prematurely to drop their young; although, according to our ideas of poetical imagery, this may not accord so well with the other images in the passage, nor appear so beautiful and sublime as the image of the oaks trembling at the voice of Jehovah. *John Calvin.*

Verse 9. *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.* The care and tenderness of God toward beasts turns to his praise, as well as the care which he hath of, and the tenderness which he shows to believers. As it doth exceedingly advance the glory of God, that he takes care of wild beasts, so it may exceedingly strengthen the faith of man that he will take care of him. Doth the Lord take care of *hinds*? then certainly he takes care of those who particularly belong to him. There is a special providence of God towards these and such like creatures for the production of their young. He—if I may so speak with reverence—shows his midwifery in helping these savage beasts when their pains come upon them. As the Lord takes man, in an eminent manner, "out of the womb" Ps 22:9, so in a manner he takes beasts out of the womb too. "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh; "so we translate it; but the word which we render "*shaketh*" is the same with that in Job 39:2, which signifieth *to bring forth*; and hence, some very learned in the Hebrew tongue do not render as we, "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness, "but "The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness *to bring forth*; the Lord maketh the wilderness of Kadesh *to bring forth*; "which is not to be understood of the vegetative creatures (that's a truth, the Lord makes the trees of the forest to bring forth both leaves and fruit), but it is meant of animals or living creatures there. And then when he saith, "The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness to bring forth, " the meaning is, the Lord makes the wild beast of the wilderness to bring forth; which seems to be the clear sense of the place by that which followeth: for the psalmist having said this in general at the eighth verse, "*The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness to bring forth*, "he in the ninth verse gives the special instance of the *hind*: "*The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.*" *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9. *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.* It is with great propriety, says one of the ancients that Jehovah demands, "The birth of the hinds dost thou guard"? Job 39:1, for since this animal is always in flight, and with fear and terror always leaping and skipping about, she could never bring her young to maturity without such a special protection. The providence of God, therefore, is equally conspicuous in the preservation of the mother and the fawn; both are the objects of his compassion and tender care; and, consequently, that afflicted man has no reason to charge his Maker with unkindness, who condescended to watch over the goats and the hinds. It seems to be

generally admitted, that the hind brings forth her young with great difficulty; and so much appears to be suggested in the verse, "They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows." But if Pliny and other naturalists are worthy of credit, divine providence has been graciously pleased to provide certain herbs, which greatly facilitate the birth; and by instinct, he directs the hind to feed upon them, when the time of gestation draws towards a close. Whatever truth there may be in this assertion, we know from higher authority, that providence promotes the parturition of the hind, by awakening her fears, and agitating her frame by the rolling thunder:—"The voice of Jehovah (a common Hebrew phrase, denoting thunder) maketh the hinds to calve." Nor ought we to wonder, that so timorous a creature as the hind, should be so much affected by that awful atmospheric convulsion, when some of the proudest men that ever existed, have been known to tremble. Augustus, the Roman emperor, according to Suetonius, was so terrified when it thundered, that he wrapped a seal skin round his body, with the view of defending it from the lightning, and concealed himself in some secret corner till the tempest ceased. The tyrant Caligula, who sometimes affected to threaten Jupiter himself, covered his head, or hid himself under a bed; and Horace confesses he was reclaimed from atheism by the terror of thunder and lightning, the effects of which he describes with his usual felicity. (Odes, b. 1 34.) *George Paxton's "Illustrations of Scripture."*

Verse 9. *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve. "Cervi sunt predicatores,"* says S. Jerome, who bring forth souls to Christ by the gospel which is God's voice; and the stripping of the leaves of the forest by the voice of the Lord, represents their work in humbling the strong oaks and lofty cedars of the world by the power of the gospel, and in stripping the souls of the worldly minded of their manifold disguises (S. Basil). Others apply it to act of the preachers of God's word, disclosing the dark thickets of divine mysteries in the holy Scriptures by evangelical light set forth by the Holy Ghost (S. Jerome). *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 9. *(first clause). "The voice of Jehovah makes havoc of the oaks, and strips bare the forests."* *Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 9. *In his temple.* Some conceive that this Psalm was appointed by David to be sung in the temple in time of thunder, which is not unlikely. There are writers who make God to be the nominative case to the verb speaketh; and render it thus, *in his temple doth he utter all his glory.* As much as to say, much of his glory God uttereth in his thunder, but all in his temple, for whatsoever there he speaketh with his mouth he fulfils it with his hand. *John Trapp.*

Verse 9. *(last clause).* David speaking in the former part of the Psalm of the effects of natural thunder only, towards the close of the Psalm applies it to the Word of God, while he saith, *And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory;* that is, the word and ordinances of God, ministered in his church or temple, will put every one to acknowledge and speak of the glorious power of God, even much more

than the mighty thunder which sounds in our ears, or the subtle lightning which flashes in our eyes. There is far more royal power in the thunder of the Word, than in the word of thunder. This terrifies only to conviction, but that terrifies to salvation; for after God speaks terror there in his threatenings, he speaks comfort in the promises; and when he hath affrighted us with a sense of our sins and of his wrath due to us for our sins, as with an horrible tempest, he presently refresheth us with the gentle gales of revealed grace, and with the pleasant amiable sunshine of his favour by Jesus Christ.

Joseph Caryl.

Verse 11. *The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace;* i.e., he is in war their strength, and their felicity in peace; in war he is the Author of all that power wherewith they are enabled to oppose and overcome potent enemies; and in peace, he is their truly felicitating good, and makes them, by his own vouchsafed presence, a truly blessed people. *John Howe.*

Verse 11. *The Lord will bless his people with peace.* Though some precious souls that have closed with Christ, and embraced the gospel, be not at present brought to rest in their own consciences, but continue for awhile under some dissatisfaction and trouble in their own spirits, yet even then they have *peace* of conscience in a threefold respect; *in pretio, in promisso, in semine.* First, every true believer hath peace of conscience *in pretio*; the gospel puts that price into his hand, which will assuredly purchase it, and that is the blood of Christ. We say that is gold which is worth gold, which we may anywhere exchange for gold; such is the blood of Christ; it is peace of conscience, because the soul that hath this may exchange it for this. God himself cannot deny the poor creature that prays on these terms: Lord, give me peace of conscience; here is Christ's blood, the price of it. That which could pay the debt, surely can procure the receipt. Peace of conscience is but a discharge under God's hand, that the debt due to divine justice is fully paid. The blood of Christ hath done that the greater for the believer, it shall therefore do this the less. If there were such a rare potion that did infallibly procure health to every one that takes it, we might safely say, as soon as the sick man hath drunk it down, that he hath drunk his health, it is in him, though at present he doth not feel himself to have it: in time it will appear. Secondly, *In promisso.* Every true believer hath peace of conscience in the promise, and that we count as good as ready money in the purse, which we have sure bond for. *The Lord will bless his people with peace.* He is resolved on it, and then who shall hinder it? It is worth your reading the whole Psalm, to see what weight the Lord gives to this sweet promise, for the encouragement of our faith in expecting the performance thereof. Nothing more hard to enter into the heart of a poor creature (when all is in an uproar in his bosom, and his conscience threatening nothing but fire and sword, wrath, vengeance, from God for his sins), than thoughts or hopes of peace and comfort. Now the psalm is spent in showing what great things God can do, and that with no more trouble to himself than a word speaking, "*The voice of the Lord is full of majesty*" Ps 29:4, "It

breaks the cedars, it divides the flames, it shakes the wilderness, it makes the hinds to calve." This God that does all this, promises *to bless his people with peace*, outward and inward; for without this inward peace, though he might give them peace, yet could he never bless them with peace as he there undertakes. A sad peace, were it not, to have quiet streets, but cutting of throats in our houses? yet infinitely more sad to have peace both in our streets and houses, but war and blood in our guilty consciences. What peace can a poor creature taste or relish while the sword of God's wrath lies at the throat of conscience? not peace with God himself. Therefore Christ purchased peace of pardon, to obtain peace of conscience for his pardoned ones, and accordingly hath bequeathed it in the promise to them, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Joh 14:27. Where you see he is both the testator to leave, and the executor of his own will, to give out with his own hands what his love hath left believers; so that there is no fear but his will shall be performed to the full, seeing himself lives to see it done. Thirdly, *In semine*. Every believer hath this untoward peace in the seed. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Ps 97:11. Where sown, but in the believer's own bosom, when principles of grace and holiness were cast into it by the Spirit of God? Hence it is called "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Heb 12:11. It shoots as naturally from holiness, as any fruit in its kind doth from the seed proper to it. It is, indeed, most true, that the seed runs and ripens into this fruit sooner in some than it doth in others. This spiritual harvest comes not alike soon to all, no more than the other that is outward doth; but here is the comfort—whoever hath a seed time of grace pass over his soul, shall have his harvest time also of joy. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 11. *Peace*. There is a threefold "peace, "*externa, interna, aeterna*; temporal, spiritual, celestial peace. There is outward peace, the *blessing*; inward peace, the *grace*; and everlasting peace, of *glory*. And as in a stately palace there is a lodge or court that leads into the inmost goodly rooms, so external peace is the entrance or introduction to the inward lodgings of the sweet peace of conscience and of that external rest in which our peace in heaven shall be happy, inasmuch as external peace affords us many accommodations and helps to the gaining and obtaining both the one and the other. *Ephraim Udall, 1642*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The duty of ascribing our strength and the honour of it to God; the penalty of neglecting to do so; the pleasure of so doing.

Verse 1. National glorying should be in the Lord.

Verse 2. (*first clause*). Royal dues, the royal treasury, loyal subjects paying their dues, the king receiving them. Smugglers and preventive men.

Verse 2. (*second clause*). Inspired ritualism. What to do? *Worship*. Whom? *The Lord*. How? *In the beauty of holiness*. Absence of all allusions to place, time, order, words, form, vestments, etc.

Verse 3. God's voice heard in trouble and above trouble, or in great personal and national calamities.

Verse 4. Power and majesty of the gospel. Illustrate by succeeding verses.

Verse 4. (*last clause*). "The majestic voice." See Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 87.

Verse 5. The breaking power of the gospel.

Verse 6. The unsettling power of the gospel.

Verse 7. The fire which goes with the word. This is a wide subject.

Verse 8. The arousing and alarming of godless places by the preaching of the word.

Verse 9. The revealing power of the word of God in the secrets of man's heart, and its regenerating force.

Verse 9 (*last clause*). 1. Matchless temple.

2. Unanimous worship.

3. Forcible motive.

4. General enthusiasm, "*glory.*"

Verse 10. The ever present and undisturbed government of God.

Verse 11. The twin blessings from the same source; their connection, and their consummation.

Verse 11. The two wills, the two blessings, the one people, the one Lord.

Psalm 30

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. A Psalm and Song at the Dedication of the House of David; or rather, A Psalm; a Song of Dedication for the House. By David. A song of faith since the house of Jehovah, here intended, David never lived to see. A Psalm of praise, since a sore judgment had been stayed, and a great sin forgiven. From our English version it would appear that this Psalm was intended to be sung at the building of that house of cedar which David erected for himself, when he no longer had to hide himself in the Cave of Adullam, but had become a great king. If this had been the meaning, it would have been well to observe that it is right for the believer when removing, to dedicate his new abode to God. We should call together our Christian friends, and show that where we dwell, God Dwells, and where we have a tent, God has an altar. But as the song refers to the temple, for which it was David's joy to lay by in store, and for the site of which he purchased in his later days the floor of Ornan, we must content ourselves with remarking the holy faith which foresaw the fulfilment of the promise made to him concerning Solomon. Faith can sing—

"Glory to thee for all the grace
I have not tasted yet."

Throughout this Psalm there are indications that David had been greatly afflicted, both personally and relatively, after having, in his presumption, fancied himself secure. When God's children prosper one way, they are generally tried another, for few of us can bear unmingled prosperity. Even the joys of hope need to be mixed with the pains of experience, and the more surely so when comfort breeds carnal security and self confidence. Nevertheless, pardon soon followed repentance, and God's mercy was glorified. The Psalm is a song, and not a complaint. Let it be read in the light of the last days of David, when he had numbered the people, and God had chastened him, and then in mercy had bidden the angel sheathe his sword. On the floor of Ornan, the poet received the inspiration which glows in this delightful ode. It is the Psalm of the numbering of the people, and of the dedication temple which commemorated the staying of the plague. **DIVISION.** In Ps 30:1-3, David extols the Lord for delivering him. Ps 30:4-5 he invites the saints to unite with him in celebrating divine compassion. In Ps 30:6-7 he confesses the fault for which he was chastened, Ps 30:8-10 repeats the supplication which he offered, and concludes with commemorating his deliverance and vowing eternal praise.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *I will extol thee.* I will have high and honourable conceptions of thee, and give them utterance in my best music. Others may forget thee, murmur at thee, despise thee, blaspheme thee, but "I will extol thee, "for I have been favoured above all others. I will extol thy name, thy character, thine attributes, thy mercy to me, thy great forbearance to my people; but, especially will I speak well of thyself; "I will extol thee, "O Jehovah; this shall be my cheerful and constant employ. *For thou hast lifted me up.* Here is an antithesis, "I will exalt thee, for thou hast exalted me." I would render according to the benefits received. The Psalmist's praise was reasonable. He had a reason to give for the praise that was in his heart. He had been drawn up like a prisoner from a dungeon, like Joseph out of the pit, and therefore he loved his deliverer. Grace has uplifted us from the pit of hell, from the ditch of sin, from the Slough of Despond, from the bed of sickness, from the bondage of doubts and fears: have we no song to offer for all this? How high has our Lord lifted us? Lifted us up into the children's place, to be adopted into the family; lifted us up into union with Christ, "to sit together with him in heavenly places." Lift high the name of our God, for he has lifted us up above the stars. *And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.* This was the judgment which David most feared out of the three evils; he said, let me fall into the hand of the Lord, and not into the hand of man. Terrible indeed were our lot if we were delivered over to the will of our enemies. Blessed be the Lord, we have been preserved from so dire a fate. The devil and all our spiritual enemies have not been

permitted to rejoice over us; for we have been saved from the fowler's snare. Our evil companions, who prophesied that we should go back to our old sins, are disappointed. Those who watched for our halting, and would fain say, "Aha! Aha! So would we have it!" have watched in vain until now. O happy they whom the Lord keeps so consistent in character that the lynx eyes of the world can see no real fault in them. Is this our case? let us ascribe all the glory to him who has sustained us in our integrity.

Verse 2. *O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.* David sent up prayers for himself and for his people when visited with the pestilence. He went at once to head quarters, and not roundabout to fallible means. God is the best physician, even for our bodily infirmities. We do very wickedly and foolishly when we forget God. It was a sin in Asa that he trusted to physicians and not to God. If we must have a physician, let it be so, but still let us go to our God first of all; and, above all, remember that there can be no power to heal in medicine of itself; the healing energy must flow from the divine hand. If our watch is out of order, we take it to the watchmaker; if our body or soul be in an evil plight, let us resort to him who created them, and has unfailing skill to put them in right condition. As for our spiritual diseases, nothing can heal these evils but the touch of the Lord Christ: if we do but touch the hem of his garment, we shall be made whole, while if we embrace all other physicians in our arms, they can do us no service. "*O Lord my God.*" Observe the covenant name which faith uses—"my God." Thrice happy is he who can claim the Lord himself to be his portion. Note how David's faith ascends the scale; he sang "O Lord" in the first verse, but it is "O Lord my God," in the second. Heavenly heart music is an ascending thing, like the pillars of smoke which rose from the altar of incense. *I cried unto thee.* I could hardly pray, but I cried; I poured out my soul as a little child pours out its desires. I cried to my God: I knew to whom to cry; I did not cry to my friends, or to any arm of flesh. Hence the sure and satisfactory result—*Thou hast healed me.* I know it. I am sure of it. I have the evidence of spiritual health within me now: glory be to thy name! Every humble suppliant with God who seeks release from the disease of sin, shall speed as well as the Psalmists did, but those who will not so much as seek a cure, need not wonder if their wounds putrefy and their soul dies.

Verse 3. *O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave.* Mark, it is not "I hope so; "but it is, "*Thou hast; thou hast; thou hast*"—three times over. David is quite sure, beyond a doubt, that God has done great things for him, whereof he is exceeding glad. He had descended to the brink of the sepulchre, and yet was restored to tell of the forbearance of God; nor was this all, he owned that nothing but grace had kept him from the lowest hell, and this made him doubly thankful. To be spared from the grave is much; to be delivered from the pit is more; hence there is growing cause for praise, since both deliverances are alone traceable to the glorious right hand of the Lord, who is the only preserver of life, and the only Redeemer of our souls from hell.

Verse 4. *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.* "Join my song; assist me to express my gratitude." He felt that he could not praise God enough himself, and therefore he would enlist the hearts of others. *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.* David would not fill his choir with reprobates, but with sanctified persons, who could sing from their hearts. He calls to you, ye people of God, because ye are *saints*; and if sinners are wickedly silent, let your holiness constrain *you* to sing. You are *his* saints—chosen, blood bought, called, and set apart for God; sanctified on purpose that you should offer the daily sacrifice of praise. Abound ye in this heavenly duty. *Sing unto the Lord.* It is a pleasing exercise; it is a profitable engagement. Do not need to be stirred up so often to so pleasant a service. *And give thanks.* Let your songs be grateful songs, in which the Lord's mercies shall live again in joyful remembrance. The very remembrance of the past should tune our harps, even if present joys be lacking. *At the remembrance of his holiness.* Holiness is an attribute which inspires the deepest awe, and demands a reverent mind; but still give thanks at the remembrance of it. "Holy, holy, holy!" is the song of seraphim and cherubim; let us join it—not dolefully, as though we trembled at the holiness of God, but cheerfully, as humbly rejoicing in it.

Verse 5. *For his anger endureth but a moment.* David here alludes to those dispensations of God's providence which are the chastisement ordered in his paternal government towards his erring children, such as the plague which fell upon Jerusalem for David's sins; these are but short judgments, and they are removed as soon as real penitence sues for pardon and presents the great and acceptable sacrifice. What a mercy is this, for if the Lord's wrath smoked for a long season, flesh would utterly fail before him. God puts up his rod with great readiness as soon as its work is done; he is slow to anger and swift to end it. If his temporary and fatherly anger be so severe that it has need be short, what must be the terror of eternal wrath exercised by the Judge towards his adversaries? *In his favour is life.* As soon as the Lord looked favourably upon David, the city lived, and the king's heart lived too. We die like withered flowers when the Lord frowns, but his sweet smile revives us as the dews refresh the field. His favour not only sweetens and cheers life, but it is life itself, the very essence of life. Who would know life, let him seek the favour of the Lord. *Weeping may endure for a night*, but nights are not for ever. Even in the dreary winter the day star lights his lamp. It seems fit that in our nights the dews of grief should fall. When the Bridegroom's absence makes it dark within, it is meet that the widowed soul should pine for a renewed sight of the Well beloved. *But joy cometh in the morning.* When the Sun of Righteousness comes, we wipe our eyes, and joy chases out intruding sorrow. Who would not be joyful that knows Jesus? The first beams of the morning brings us comfort when Jesus is the day dawn, and all believers know it to be so. Mourning only lasts to morning: when the night is gone the gloom shall vanish. This is adduced as a reason for saintly singing, and forcible reason it is; short nights and merry days call for the psaltery and harp.

Verse 6. *In my prosperity.* When all his foes were quiet, and his rebellious son dead and buried, then

was the time of peril. Many a vessel founders in a calm. No temptation is so bad as tranquillity. *I said, I shall never be moved.* Ah! David, you said more than was wise to say, or even to think, for God has founded the world upon the floods, to show us what a poor, mutable, moveable, inconstant world it is. Unhappy he who builds upon it! He builds himself a dungeon for his hopes. Instead of conceiving that we shall never be moved, we ought to remember that we shall very soon be removed altogether. Nothing is abiding beneath the moon. Because I happen to be prosperous today, I must not fancy that I shall be in my high estate tomorrow. As in a wheel, the uppermost spokes descend to the bottom in due course, so it is with mortal conditions. There is a constant revolution: many who are in the dust today shall be highly elevated tomorrow; while those who are now aloft shall soon grind the earth. Prosperity had evidently turned the psalmist's head, or he would not have been so self-confident. He stood by grace, and yet forgot himself, and so met with a fall. Reader, is there not much of the same proud stuff in all our hearts? let us beware lest the fumes of intoxicating success get into our brains and make fools of us also.

Verse 7. *Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong.* He ascribed his prosperity to the Lord's favour—so far good, it is well to own the hand of the Lord in all our stability and wealth. But observe that the good in a good man is not unmingled good, for this was alloyed with carnal security. His state he compares to a mountain, a molehill would have been nearer—we never think too little of ourselves. He boasted that his mountain stood strong, and yet he had before, in Psalm 29, spoken of Sirion and Lebanon as moving like young unicorns. Was David's state more firm than Lebanon? Ah, vain conceit, too common to us all! How soon the bubble bursts when God's people get conceit into their heads, and fancy that they are to enjoy immutability beneath the stars, and constancy upon this whirling orb. How touchingly and teachingly God corrected his servant's mistake: *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* There was no need to come to blows, a hidden face was enough. This proves, first, that David was a genuine saint, for no hiding of God's face on earth would trouble a sinner; and, secondly, that the joy of the saint is dependent upon the presence of his Lord. No mountain, however firm, can yield us rest when our communion with God is broken, and his face is concealed. However, in such a case, it is well to be troubled. The next best thing to basking in the light of God's countenance, is to be thoroughly unhappy when that bliss is denied us.

"Lord, let me weep for nought for sin!

And after none but thee!

And then I would—O that I might,

A constant weeper be!"

Verse 8. *I cried to thee, O Lord.* Prayer is the unfailing resource of God's people. If they are driven to their wit's end, they may still go to the mercyseat. When an earthquake makes our mountain tremble, the throne of grace still stands firm, and we may come to it. Let us never forget to pray, and let us

never doubt the success of prayer. The hand which wounds can heal: let us turn to him who smites us, and he will be entreated of us. Prayer is better solace than Cain's building a city, or Saul's seeking for music. Mirth and carnal amusements are a sorry prescription for a mind distracted and despairing: prayer will succeed where all else fails.

Verse 9. In this verse we learn the form and method of David's prayer. It was an argument with God, an urging of reasons, a pleading of his cause. It was not a statement of doctrinal opinions, nor a narration of experience, much less a sly hit at other people under pretence of praying to God, although all these things and worse have been substituted for holy supplication at certain prayer meetings. He wrestled with the angel of the covenant with vehement pleadings, and therefore he prevailed. Head and heart, judgment and affections, memory and intellect were all at work to spread the case aright before the Lord of love. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Wilt thou not lose a songster from thy choir, and one who loves to magnify thee? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? Will there not be one witness the less to thy faithfulness and veracity? Spare, then, thy poor unworthy one for thine own name sake!*

Verse 10. *Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me.* A short and comprehensive petition, available at all seasons, let us use it full often. It is the publican's prayer; be it ours. If God hears prayer, it is a great act of mercy; our petitions do not merit a reply. *Lord, be thou my helper.* Another compact, expressive, ever fitting prayer. It is suitable to hundreds of the cases of the Lord's people; it is well becoming in the minister when he is going to preach, to the sufferer upon the bed of pain, to the toiler in the field of service, to the believer under temptation, to the man of God under adversity; when God helps, difficulties vanish. He is the help of his people, a very present help in trouble. The two brief petitions of this verse are commended as ejaculations to believers full of business, denied to those longer seasons of devotion which are the rare privilege of those whose days are spent in retirement.

Verse 11. Observe the contrast, God takes away the mourning of his people; and what does he give them instead of it? Quiet and peace? Aye, and a great deal more than that. *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing.* He makes their hearts to dance at the sound of his name. He takes off their sackcloth. That is good. What a delight to be rid of the habiliments of woe! But what then? He clothes us. And how? With some common dress? Nay, but with that royal vestment which is the array of glorified spirits in heaven. *Thou hast girded me with gladness.* This is better than to wear garments of silk or cloth of gold, bedight with embroidery and bespangled with gems. Many a poor man wears this heavenly apparel wrapped around his heart, though fustian and corduroy are his only outward garb; and such a man needs not envy the emperor in all his pomp. Glory be to thee, O God, if, by a sense of full forgiveness and present justification, thou hast enriched my spiritual nature, and filled me with all the fulness of God.

Verse 12. *To the end*—namely, with this view and intent—that *my glory*—that is, my tongue or my

soul—*may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.* It would be a shameful crime, if, after receiving God's mercies, we should forget to praise him. God would not have our tongues lie idle while so many themes for gratitude are spread on every hand. He would have no dumb children in the house. They are all to sing in heaven, and therefore they should all sing on earth. Let us sing with the poet:

"I would begin the music here,

And so my soul should rise:

Oh for some heavenly notes to bear

My passions to the skies."

O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

"I will praise him in life; I will praise him in death;

I will praise him as long as he lendeth me breath;

And say when the death dew lays cold on my brow,

If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, it is now."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Title. "*A Psalm and Song,*" etc. It is thought that when these two words of *Psalm and Song* are both put in the title of a Psalm, it is meant that the sound of instruments was to be joined with the voice when they were sung in the Temple, and that the voice went *before* when it is said *Song and Psalm*, and did come *after* when it is said *Psalm and Song.* *John Diodati.*

Title. *At the dedication of it.* (tybh tknx) The original word (Knx) signifies *initiari, egkainizein, rei novae primam usurpationem.* So Cocceius, to initiate, or the first use that is made of anything. It was common, when any person had finished a house and entered into it, to celebrate it with great rejoicing, and keep a festival, to which his friends are invited, and to perform some religious ceremonies, to secure the protection of heaven. Thus, when the second temple was finished, the Priests and Levites, and the rest of the captivity, kept the dedication of the house of God with joy, and offered numerous sacrifices. Ezr 6:16. We read in the New Testament Joh 10:22, of *the feast of the dedication* appointed by Judas Maccabaeus, in memory of the purification and restoration of the temple of Jerusalem, after it had been defiled and almost laid in ruins by Antiochus Epiphanes; and celebrated annually, to the time of its destruction by Titus, by solemn sacrifices, music, songs, and hymns, to the praises of God, and feasts, and everything that could give the people pleasure, for eight days successively. Josephus Ant. 1:7. Judas ordained, that "the days of the dedication should be kept in their season, from year to year, with mirth and gladness." 1 Mac 4:59. And that this was customary, even amongst private persons, to keep a kind of religious festival, upon their first entrance into a new house, appears from the order of God De 20:5, that no person who had built a new house should be forced into the army, "if he had not dedicated the house," *i.e.,* taken possession

of it according to the usual ceremonies practised on such occasions; a custom this that hath more or less prevailed amongst all nations. Thus the Romans dedicated their temples, their theatres, their statues, and their palaces and houses. Suet. Octav. c. 43. p 13; c. 31. p 9. *Samuel Chandler*.

Title. The present Psalm is the only one that is called a *shir*, or song, in the first book of the Psalms, *i.e.*, Psalms 1-41. The word (ryv) *shir* is found in the titles of Psalms 45, 46, 48, 65, 68, 75, 83, 87, 88, 92, 108, 120, 134. Psalm 18 is entitled, "*a shirah* (or *song*) of deliverance from his enemies, "and the present *shir* may be coupled with it. *Christopher Wordsworth*.

Title. As by offering the first fruits to God they acknowledged that they received the increase of the whole year from him, in like manner, by consecrating their houses to God, they declared that they were God's tenants, confessing that they were strangers, and that it was he who lodged and gave them a habitation there. If a levy for war, therefore, took place, this was a just cause of exemption, when any one alleged that he had not yet dedicated his house. Besides, they were at the same time admonished by this ceremony, that every one enjoyed his house aright and regularly, only when he so regulated it that it was as it were a sanctuary of God, and that true piety and the pure worship of God reigned in it. The types of the law have now ceased, but we must still keep to the doctrine of Paul, that whatsoever things God appoints for our use, are still "sanctified by the word of God and prayer." 1Ti 4:4-5. *John Calvin*.

Whole Psalm. Calmet supposes it to have been made by David on the dedication of the place which he built on the threshing floor of the Araunah, after the grievous *plague* which had so nearly desolated the kingdom. 2Sa 24:25 1Ch 21:26. All the parts of the Psalm agree to this: and they agree to this so well, and to no other hypothesis, that I feel myself justified in modelling the comment on this principle alone. *Adam Clarke*.

Whole Psalm. In the following verses I have endeavoured to give the spirit of the Psalm, and to preserve the frequent antitheses.

I will exalt thee, Lord of hosts,
For thou'st exalted me;
Since thou hast silenced Satan's boasts,
I will therefore boast in thee.
My sins had brought me near the grave,
The grave of black despair;
I looked, but there was none to save,
Till I looked up in prayer.
In answer to my piteous cries,
From hell's dark brink I am brought:
My Jesus saw me from the skies,

And swift salvation wrought.
All through the night I wept full sore,
But morning brought relief;
That hand, which broke my bones before,
Then broke my bonds of grief.
My mourning he to dancing turns,
For sackcloth joy he gives,
A moment, Lord, thine anger burns,
But long thy favour lives.
Sing with me then, ye favoured men,
Who long have known his grace;
With thanks recall the seasons when
Ye also sought his face.

—C. H. S.

Verse 1. *I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up.* I will lift thee up, for thou hast lifted me up.
Adam Clarke.

Verse 1. *Thou hast lifted me up.* (yntyld) The verb is used, in its original meaning, to denote *the reciprocating motion of the buckets of a well*, one descending as the other rises, and *vice versa*; and is here applied with admirable propriety, to point out the various reciprocations and changes of David's fortunes, as described in this Psalm, as to prosperity and adversity; and particularly that gracious reverse of his afflicted condition which he now celebrates, God having raised him up to great honour and prosperity; for having built his palace, he "perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." 2Sa 5:12.
Samuel Chandler.

Verse 2. *Thou hast healed me.* (wnakdt) The verb is used, either for the healing of bodily disorders Ps 103:3, or to denote the happy alteration of any person's affairs, either in private or public life, by the removal of any kind of distress, personal or national. Ps 107:20 Isa 19:22. So in the place before us: "*Thou hast healed me*, "means, Thou hast brought me out of my distresses, hast restored my health, and rendered me safe and prosperous. Under Saul, he was frequently in the most imminent danger of his life, out of which God wonderfully brought him, which he strongly expresses by saying, "*Thou hast brought up my soul from Hades: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.*" I thought myself lost, and that nothing could prevent my destruction, and we can scarce help looking on the deliverance thou hast vouchsafed me otherwise than as a kind of restoration from the dead: *Thou hast revived me*, or recovered me to life, *from amongst those who go down to the pit*; according to the literal rendering of the latter clause. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 4. *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.* If it were to sing of another thing, I should require the whole quire of God's creatures to join in the singing; but now that it is to sing of God's "holiness, "what should profane voices do in the concert? None but "saints, "are fit to sing of "holiness, "and specially of God's holiness; but most specially with songs of holiness. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4. *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.* As God requires outward and inward worship, so a spiritual frame for inward worship may be forwarded by the outward composure. Gazing drowsiness hinders the activity of the soul, but the contrary temper furthers and helps it. Singing calls up the soul into such a posture, and doth, as it were, awaken it: it is a lively rousing up of the heart. Singing God's praise is a work of the most meditation of any we perform in public. It keeps the heart longest upon the thing spoken. Prayer and hearing pass quick from one sentence to another; this sticks long upon it. Meditation must follow after hearing the word, and praying with the minister—for new sentences, still succeeding, give not liberty, in the instant, well to muse and consider upon what is spoken; but in this you pray and meditate. God hath so ordered this duty, that, while we are employed in it, we feed and chew the cud together. "Higgaion, "or "Meditation, "is set upon some passages of the Psalms, as Ps 9:16. The same may be writ up the whole duty, and all parts of it; namely, "Meditation." Set before you one in the posture to sing to the best advantage: eyes lifted to heaven, denote his desire that his heart may be there too; he hath before him a line or verse of prayer, mourning, praise, mention of God's works; how fairly now may his heart spread itself in meditation on the thing, while he is singing it over! Our singing is measured in deliberate time not more for music than meditation. He that seeks not, finds not, this advantage in singing Psalms—hath not yet learned what it means. *John Lightfoot, 1675.*

Verse 5. *His anger.* Seeing God is often angry with his own servants, what cause have those of you who fear him, to bless him that he is not angry with you, and that you do not feel his displeasure! He sets up others as his mark against which he shoots his arrows; you hear others groaning for his departure, and yet your hearts are not saddened as theirs are; your eyes can look up toward heaven with hope, whilst theirs are clouded with a veil of sorrow; he speaks roughly to them, but comfortable words to you; he seems to set himself against them as his enemies, whilst he deals with you as a loving friend; you see a reviving smile on his face and they can discern nothing there but one continued and dreadful frown. O admire, and for ever wonder at the sovereign, distinguishing grace of God. Are you that are at ease better than many of his people that are now thrown into a fiery furnace? Have you less dross than they? Have they sinned, think you, at a higher rate than you have ever done? He is angry with them for their lukewarmness, for their backsliding; and have your hearts always burned with love? Have your feet always kept his way and not declined? Have you never wandered? Have you never turned aside to the right hand or to the left? Surely you have; and therefore, what a mercy is it, that he is not angry with you as well as with them...Do not presume for

all this; for though he is not angry yet with you, he may be so. This was the fault of David: "*In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved;*" but it immediately follows, "*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*" The sun shines now upon you, the candle of the Lord does refresh your tabernacle; but you may meet with many storms, and clouds, and darkness before you come to your journey's end. The disciples were once greatly pleased with the glory of the transfiguration; and during the delightful interview between Christ, and Moses, and Elias, they thought themselves as in heaven; but a cloud came and obscured the preceding glory, and then the poor men were afraid. It is true the anger of God *endured but for a moment;* but even that moment is very sad, and terrible beyond expression. Weeping endureth for *a night;* but it may be a very bitter and doleful night for all this. It is a night like that of the Egyptians: when they arose they saw all their firstborn slain, and there was a hideous universal cry and mourning throughout all the land. So this night of the anger of the Lord may destroy all our comforts, and make the firstborn of our strength, the confidence and pleasure of our hopes to give up the ghost. *Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 5. *In his favour is life.* Let us see wherein the weight of the blessing and cursing of sheep and goats doth lie. Is it not the gift of eternal life that is our happiness in heaven; but as David saith, "*in his favour is life.*" If a damned soul should be admitted to the fruition of all the pleasures of eternal life without the favour of God, heaven would be hell to him. It is not the dark and horrid house of woe that maketh a soul miserable in hell, but God's displeasure, *ite maledicti*. If an elect soul should be cast thither, and retain the favour of God, hell would be an heaven to him, and his joy could not all the devils in hell take from him; his night would be turned into day. *Edward Marbury.*

Verse 5. As an apprentice holds out in hard labour and (it may be) bad usage for seven years together or more, and in all that time is serviceable to his master without any murmuring or repining, because he sees that the time wears away, and that his bondage will not last always, but he shall be set at large and made a freeman in the conclusion: thus should everyone that groaneth under the burden of any cross or affliction whatsoever, bridle his affections, possess his soul in patience, and cease from all murmuring and repining whatsoever, considering well with himself, that the rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the righteous; that *weeping may abide at evening, but joy cometh in the morning;* and that troubles will have an end, and not continue for ever. *John Spencer.*

Verse 5. How often have we experienced the literal truth of that verse, *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning!* How heavily does any trouble weigh on us *at night!* Our wearied nerve and brain seem unable to bear up under the pressure. Our pulse throbs, and the fevered restless body refuses to help in the work of endurance. Miserable and helpless we feel; and passionately weep under the force of the unresisted attack. At last sleep comes. Trouble, temptation, whatever it be that strives to overcome us, takes the one step too far which overleaps its mark, and by sheer force drives our poor humanity beyond the present reach of further trial. After such a night of

struggle, and the heavy sleep of exhaustion, we awake with a vague sense of trouble. Our thoughts gather, and we *wonder* over our own violence, as the memory of it returns upon us. What was it that seemed so hopeless—so dark? Why were we so helpless and despairing? Things do not look so *now*—sad indeed still, but endurable—hard, but no longer impossible—bad enough perhaps, but we despair no more. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* And so, when life with its struggles and toils and sins, bringing us perpetual conflict, ends at last in the fierce struggle of *death*, then God "giveth his beloved sleep." They sleep in Jesus, and awake to the joy of a morning which shall know no wane—the morning of joy. The Sun of Righteousness is beaming on them. Light is now on all their ways. And they can only wonder when they recall the despair and darkness, and toil, and violence of their earthly life, and say, as they have often said on earth, "Weeping has endured only for *the night*, and now it is morning, and joy has come!" And our sorrows, our doubts, our difficulties, our long looks forward, with despair of enduring strength for so long a night of trial—Where are they? Shall we not feel as is so beautifully described in the words of one of our hymns—

"When in our Father's happy land
We meet our own once more,
Then we shall scarcely understand
Why we have wept before."

—*Mary B. M. Duncan, 1825-1865.*

Verse 5. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* Their mourning shall last but till morning. God will turn their winter's night into a summer's day, their sighing into singing, their grief into gladness, their mourning into music, their bitter into sweet, their wilderness into a paradise. The life of a Christian is filled up with interchanges of sickness and health, weakness and strength, want and wealth, disgrace and honour, crosses, and comforts, miseries and mercies, joys and sorrows, mirth and mourning; all honey would harm us, all wormwood would undo us; a composition of both is the best way in the world to keep our souls in a healthy constitution. It is best and most for the health of the soul that the south wind of mercy, and the north wind of adversity, do both blow upon it; and though every wind that blows shall blow good to the saints, yet certainly their sins die most, and their graces thrive best, when they are under the drying, nipping north wind of calamity, as well as under the warm, cherishing south wind of mercy and prosperity. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 5. *Joy cometh in the morning.* The godly man's joy *cometh in the morning*, when the wicked man's goeth; for to him "the morning is even as the shadow of death." Job 24:17. He is not only afraid of reproof and punishment, but he grieves and suffers sufficiently, though nobody should know of his actions, for the impair and loss, and misspence of his strength and his time and his money. *Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 5. In the second half of the verse *weeping* is personified, and represented by the figure of a wanderer, who leaves in the morning the lodging, into which he had entered the preceding evening. After him another guest arrives, namely, *joy*. *E. W. Hengstenberg*.

Verse 5. The princely prophet says plainly, *heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*. As the two angels that came to Lot lodged with him for a night, and when they had dispatched their errand, went away in the morning; so afflictions, which are the angels or the messengers of God. God sendeth afflictions to do an errand unto us; to tell us we forget God, we forget ourselves, we are too proud, too self conceited, and such like; and when they have said as they were bid, then presently they are gone. *Thomas Playfere*.

Verses 5-10. When a man's heart is set upon the creatures, there being thorns in them all, therefore if he will grasp too much of them, or too hard, he shall find it. God's children are trained up so to it, that God will not let them go away with a sin; if they be too adulterously affected, they shall find a cross in such a thing. You may observe this in the thirtieth Psalm; there you may see the circle God goes in with his children. David has many afflictions, as appeareth by the fifth verse: I cried, and then God returned to me, and joy came. What did David then? "I said, I shall never be moved:" his heart grew wanton, but God would not let him go away so: "God turned away his face and I was troubled." At the seventh verse he is, you see, in trouble again: well, David cries again, at the eighth and tenth verses, and then God turned his mourning into joy again. And this is to be his dealing you shall find in all the Scriptures; but because we find his dealing set so close together in this Psalm, therefore I name it. *John Preston, D.D. (1587-1628), in "The Golden Scepter held forth to the Humble."*

Verse 6. *In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.* Our entering upon a special service for God, or receiving a special favour from God, are two solemn seasons, which Satan makes use of for temptation...We are apt to get proud, careless, and confident, after or upon such employments and favours; even as men are apt to sleep or surfeit upon a full meal, or to forget themselves when they are advanced to honour. Job's great peace and plenty made him, as he confesseth, so confident, that he concluded he should "die in his nest." Job 29:18. David enjoying the favour of God in a more than ordinary measure, though he was more acquainted with vicissitudes and changes than most of men, grows secure in his apprehension that he "*should never be moved*;" but he acknowledgeth his mistake, and leaves it upon record as an experience necessary for others to take warning by, that when he became warm under the beams of God's countenance, then he was apt to fall into security; and this it seems was usual with him in all such cases—when he was most secure he was nearest some trouble or disquiet. "*Thou didst hide thy face*"—and then to be sure the devil will show him his—"*and I was troubled.*" Enjoyments beget confidence; confidence brings forth carelessness; carelessness makes God withdraw, and gives opportunity to Satan to work unseen. And thus, as armies after victory growing secure, are oft surprised; so are we oft after our spiritual advancements

thrown down. *Richard Gilpin.*

Verse 6. *In my prosperity.* (ywlvg) The word denotes *peace and tranquillity, arising from an affluent prosperous condition.* When God had settled him quietly on the throne, he thought all his troubles were over, and that he should enjoy uninterrupted happiness; and that God "*had made his mountain so strong, as that it should never be moved; "i.e.,* placed him as secure from all danger as though he had taken refuge upon an inaccessible mountain; or made his prosperity firm, and subject to no more alteration, than a mountain is liable to be removed out of its place; or, raised him to an eminent degree of honour and prosperity; a mountain, by its height, being a very natural representation of a very superior condition, remarkable for power, affluence, and dignity. He had taken the fortress of Mount Sion, which was properly *his mountain,* as he had fixed on it for his dwelling. It was strong by nature, and rendered almost impregnable by the fortifications he had added to it. This he regarded as the effect of God's favour to him, and promised himself that his peace and happiness for the future should be as undisturbed and unshaken as Mount Sion itself. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 6. *In my prosperity.* Prosperity is more pleasant than profitable to us. Though it show it look like a fair summer, yet it is indeed a wasting winter, and spendeth all the fruit we have reaped in the harvest of sanctified affliction. We are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. To be always indulged of God, and never to taste of trouble, is rather a token of God's neglect than of his tender love. *William Struther.*

Verse 7. It is rare to receive much of this world, and not as the prodigal to go afar off; it is hard to keep close to God in prosperity, when we have much of this world to live upon and content ourselves with; to live upon God, and make him our content and stay, as if we had no other life nor livelihood but in him; we are very apt in such a case to contract a carnal frame, let go our hold of God, discustom ourselves to the exercise of faith, abate and estrange our affections from God. See how it was with David: "*I said, I shall never be moved, thou hast made my mountain so strong.*" I solaced myself on these outward accommodations, as if I needed no other support, strength, or content, and there were no fear of a change; no care now to make God my constant joy and stay, and reckon upon God only for my portion, and that I must follow him with a cross, and be conformed to my Saviour, in being crucified to the world. What comes of this? *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled;* namely, because he had too much indulged a life of sense. Children that are held up by their nurses' hand, and mind not to feel their feet and ground when the nurses let them go, they fall, as if they had no feet or ground to stand upon. Or thus: we are like children, who, playing in the golden sunshine, and following their sport, stray so far from their father's house, that night coming upon them ere they are aware, they are as it were lost, and full of fears, not knowing how to recover home. The world steals away our hearts from God, gives so few opportunities for the exercise of the life of faith, and such advantages to a life of sense, wears off the sense of our dependence on God, and need

thereof, so that when we are put to it by affliction, we are ready to miscarry ere we can recover our weapon or hold. Faith is our cordial Ps 27:13; now if it be not at hand (as in health, when we have no need of it, it use to be) we may faint ere we recover the use of it. *Elias Pledger's Sermon in "The Morning Exercises," 1677.*

Verse 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* What soul can be deserted and not be afflicted? Certainly his absence cannot but be lamented with greatest grief, whose presence the soul prizes above all earthly joy; when the evidence of salvation is obscured, the light of God's countenance darkened, the comforts of the Spirit detained, then the heavens appear not so clear, the promises taste not so sweet, the ordinances prove not so lively, yea, the clouds which hang over the soul gather blackness, doubts arise, fears overflow, terrors increase, troubles enlarge, and the soul becomes languishingly afflicted, even with all variety of disquietments. *Robert Mossom.*

Verse 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* A believer puts on the sackcloth of contrition, for having put off the garment of perfection. As the sugar loaf is dissolved, and weeps itself away, when dipped in wine; so do our hearts melt under a sense of divine love. *William Secker.*

Verse 7. (*last clause*). No verse can more plainly teach us that glorious and comforting truth on which the medieval writers especially love to dwell, that it is the looking, or not looking, of God upon his creature, that forms the happiness or the misery of that creature; that those secret springs of joy which sometimes seem to rise up of themselves, and with which a stranger intermeddeth not, are nothing but God's direct and immediate looking on us; while the sorrow for which we cannot assign any especial cause—call it melancholy, or low spirits, or by whatever other name—is nothing but his turning away his face from us. *John Mason Neale.*

Verse 7. (*last clause*). Is spiritual desertion and the hiding of God's face matter of affliction, and casting down to believers? Yes, yes; it quails their hearts, nothing can comfort them. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* Outward afflictions do but break the skin, this touches the quick; they like rain fall only upon the tiles, this soaks into the house; but Christ brings to believers substantial matter of consolation against the troubles of desertion; he himself was deserted of God for a time, that they might not be deserted for ever. *John Flavel.*

Verse 7. (*last clause*). If God be thy portion, then there is no loss in all the world that lies so hard and so heavy upon thee as the loss of thy God. There is no loss under heaven that doth so affect and afflict a man that hath God for his portion, as the loss of his God. David met with many a loss, but no loss made so sad and so great a breach upon his spirit as the loss of the face of God, the loss of the favour of God: "*In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*" The Hebrew word (*lhn*) *bahal* signifies to be greatly troubled, to be sorely terrified, as you may see in that 1Sa 28:21. "And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled." Here is the same Hebrew word

bahal. Saul was so terrified, affrighted, and disanimated with the dreadful news that the devil in Samuel's likeness told him, that his very vital spirits so failed him, that he fell into a deadly swoon. And it was even so with David upon God's hiding of his face. David was like a withered flower that had lost its sap, life, and vigour, when God had wrapped himself up in a cloud. The life of some creatures lieth in the light and warmth of the sun; and so doth the life of the saints lie in the light and warmth of God's countenance. And, as in an eclipse of the sun, there is a drooping in the whole frame of nature, so when God hides his face, gracious souls cannot but droop and languish, and bow down themselves before him. Many insensible creatures, some by opening and shutting, as marigolds and tulips, others by bowing and inclining the head, as the solsequy (the early name of the sunflower) and mallow flowers, are so sensible of the presence and absence of the sun, that there seems to be such a sympathy between the sun and them, that if the sun be gone or clouded, they wrap up themselves or hang down their heads, as being unwilling to be seen by any eye but his that fills them: and just thus it was with David when God had his face in a cloud. *Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 8. *I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication.* Bernard, under a fiction, proposes a fable well worthy of our beholding: therein the kings of Babylon and Jerusalem, signifying the state of the world and the church, always warring together; in which encounter, at length it fell out, that one of the soldiers of Jerusalem was fled to the castle of Justice. Siege laid to the castle, and a multitude of enemies entrenched round about it, Fear gave over all hope, but Prudence ministered her comfort. "Does thou not know," saith she, "that our king is the King of glory; the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle? Let us therefore despatch a messenger that may inform him of our necessities." Fear replies, "But who is able to break through? Darkness is upon the face of the earth, and our walls are begirt with a watchful troop of armed men, and we, utterly inexpert in the way into so far a country." Whereupon Justice is consulted. "Be of good cheer," saith Justice, "I have a messenger of especial trust, well known to the king and his court, Prayer by name, who knoweth to address herself by ways unknown in the stillest silence of the night, till she cometh to the secrets and chamber of the King himself." Forthwith she goeth, and findeth the gates shut, knocketh again, "Open, ye gates of righteousness, and be ye opened, ye everlasting doors, that I may come in and tell the King of Jerusalem how our case standeth." Doubtless the trustiest and most effectual messenger we have to send is Prayer. If we send up merits, the stars in heaven will disdain it, that we which dwell at the footstool of God dare to presume so far, when the purest creatures in heaven are impure in his sight. If we send up fear and distrustfulness, the length of the way will tire them out. They are as heavy and lumpish as gads of iron; they will sink to the ground before they come half way to the throne of salvation. If we send up blasphemies and curses, all the creatures betwixt heaven and earth will band themselves against us. The sun and the moon will rain down blood; the fire, hot burning coals; the air, thunderbolts upon our heads. Prayer, I say again, is the surest

ambassador; which neither the tediousness of the way, nor difficulties of the passage, can hinder from her purpose; quick of speed, faithful for trustiness, happy for success, able to mount above the eagles of the sky, into the heaven of heavens, and as a chariot of fire bearing us aloft into the presence of God to seek his assistance. *John King.*

Verse 9. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?* Implying that he would willingly die, if he could thereby do any real service to God, or his country. Php 2:17. But he saw not what good could be done by his dying in the bed of sickness, as might be if he had died in the bed of honour. Lord, saith he, wilt thou sell one of "thine own people for nought, and not increase thy wealth by the price?" Ps 44:12. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 9. *What profit is there in my blood,* etc. The little gain that the Lord would have by denying his people in the mercies they request, may also be used as a plea in prayer. David begs his own life of God, using this plea, *What profit is there in my blood?* So did the captive church plead Ps 44:12; "Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price." So then, poor saints of God when they come and tell the Lord in their prayers that indeed he may condemn, or confound, or cut or cast them off; he may continue to frown upon them; he may deny such and such requests of theirs, for such and such just causes in them; but what will he gain thereby? He may gain many praises, etc., by hearing them, and helping them; but what good will it do him to see them oppressed by the enemies of their souls? or what delight would it be to him to see them sighing and sinking, and fainting under sad pressures, etc.? this is an allowed and a very successful kind of pleading. *Thomas Cobbet.*

Verse 9. *Shall the dust praise thee?* Can any number be sufficient to praise thee? Can there ever be mouths enough to declare thy truth? And may not I make one—a sinful one I know—but yet one in the number, if thou be pleased to spare me from descending into the pit? *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 9. Prayer that is likely to prevail with God must be argumentative. God loves to have us plead with him and overcome him with arguments in prayer. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 11. *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.* This might be true of David, delivered from his calamity; it was true of Christ, arising from the tomb, to die no more; it is true of the penitent, exchanging his sackcloth for the garments of salvation; and it will be verified in all us, at the last day, when we shall put off the dishonours of the grave, to shine in glory everlasting. *George Horne.*

Verse 11. *Thou hast turned.* I do so like the ups and downs in the Psalms. *Adelaide Newton.*

Verse 11. *Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.* I say with the apostle, "Overcome evil with good, " sorrow with joy. Joy is the true remedy for sorrow. It never had, never could have any other. We must always give the soul that weeps reason to rejoice; all other consolation is utterly useless. *Alexander Rodolph Vinet, D.D., 1797-1847.*

Verse 11. *Thou hast girded me with gladness.* My "sackcloth" was but a loose garment about me, which might easily be put off at pleasure, but my "*gladness*" is *girt* about me, to be fast and sure, and cannot leave me though it would; at least none shall be able to take it from me. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 12. Even as the Chaldeans formerly measured their natural day differently from the Israelites; they put the day first and the night after; but the Israelites, on the contrary, according to the order that was observed in the creation; for in the beginning darkness was upon the face of the deep, and of every one of the six days it is said, "The evening and the morning were the first day," etc. So the times of the world and of the church are differently disposed; for the world begins hers by the day of temporal prosperity, and finishes it by a night of darkness and anguish that is eternal; but the church, on the contrary, begins hers by the night of adversity, which she suffers for awhile, and ends them by a day of consolation which she shall have for ever. The prophet in this Psalm begins with the *anger* of God, but ends with his *favour*: as of old, when they entered into the tabernacle they did at first see unpleasant things, as the knives of the sacrifices, the blood of victims, the fire that burned upon the altar, which consumed the offerings; but when they passed a little further there was the holy place, the candlestick of gold, the shewbread, and the altar of gold on which they offered perfumes; and in fine, there was the holy of holies, and the ark of the covenant, and the mercyseat and the cherubims which was called the face of God. *Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 12. *I will give thanks.* What is praise? The rent we owe to God; and the larger the farm the greater the rent should be. *G. S. Bowes, 1863.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Title. House dedication, and how to arrange it.

Whole Psalm. In this ode we may see the workings of David's mind before, and under, and after, the affliction. 1. *Before* the affliction: Ps 30:6.

2. *Under* the affliction: Ps 30:7-10.

3. *After* the affliction: Ps 30:11-12.

—William Jay.

Verse 1. (*first clause*). God and his people exalting each other.

Verse 1. (*second clause*). The happiness of being preserved so as not to be the scorn of our enemies.

Verse 1. The disappointment of the devil.

Verse 2. The sick man, the physician, the night bell, the medicine, and the cure; or, a covenant God, a sick saint, a crying heart, a healing hand.

Verse 3. *Upbringing and preservation*, two choice mercies; made the more illustrious by two terrible evils, *grave*, and *pit*, traced immediately to the Lord, *thou hast*.

Verse 4. *Song*, a sacred service; *saints* especially called to it; *divine holiness*, a choice subject for it; *Memory*, an admirable aid in it.

Verse 5. The anger of God in relation to his people.

Verse 5. *The night of weeping, and the morning of joy.*

Verse 5. *Life in God's favour.*

Verse 5. The transient nature of the believer's trouble, and the permanence of his joy.

Verse 6. The peculiar dangers of *prosperity*.

Verses 6-12. David's prosperity had lulled him into a state of undue security; God sent him this affliction to rouse him from it. The successive frames of his mind are here clearly marked; and must successively be considered as they are here presented to our view. 1. His carnal security.

2. His spiritual dereliction.

3. His fervent prayers.

4. His speedy recovery.

5. His grateful acknowledgments.

—*Charles Simeon.*

Verse 7. (*first clause*). Carnal security; its causes, dangers, and cures.

Verse 7. (*last clause*). The gracious bemoanings of a soul in spiritual darkness.

Verse 8., in connection with verse 3 *prayer the universal remedy.*

Verse 9. (*first clause*). Arguments with God for continued life and renewed favour.

Verse 9. (*last clause*). The resurrection, a time in which the *dust* shall *praise* God, and *declare* his *truth*.

Verse 10. Two gems of prayer; short, but full and needful.

Verse 10. *Lord, be thou my helper.* I see many fall; I shall fall too except thou hold me up. I am weak; I am exposed to temptation. My heart is deceitful. My enemies are strong. I cannot trust in man; I dare not trust in myself. The grace I have received will not keep me without thee. *Lord, be thou my helper.* In every duty; in every conflict; in every trial; in every effort to promote the Lord's cause; in every season of prosperity; in every hour we live, this short and inspired prayer is suitable. May it flow from our hearts, be often on our lips, and be answered in our experience. For if the Lord help us, there is no duty which we cannot perform; there is no foe which we cannot overcome; there is no difficulty which we cannot surmount. *James Smith's Daily Remembrancer.*

Verse 11. *Transformations.* Sudden; complete; divine, *thou*; personal, "*for me*"; "gracious.

Verse 11. *Holy dancing*: open up the metaphor.

Verse 11. The believer's change of raiment: illustrate by life of Mordecai or Joseph; mention all the garbs the believer is made to wear, as a mourner, a beggar, a criminal, &c.

Verse 12. Our *glory*, and its relation to God's glory.

Verse 12. The end of gracious dispensations.

Verse 12. Silence—when sinful.

Verse 12. (*last clause*). The believer's vow and the time for making it. See the whole Psalm.

WORKS UPON THE THIRTIETH PSALM

Meditations upon the XXX Psalme of David. By Sir RICHARD BAKER. (See Page 10.)

In Chandler's Life of David (Vol. II., pp. 8-15), there is an *Exposition of Psalm 30*.