

The Treasury of David

by

Charles H. Spurgeon

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Ps. 42-72 (Book 2)

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Psalm 42

Exposition
 Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
 Hints to the Village Preacher
 Other Works

TITLE. To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah. Dedicated to the Master of Music, this Psalm is worthy of his office; he who can sing best can have nothing better to sing. It is called, Maschil, or an instructive ode; and full as it is of deep experimental expressions, it is eminently calculated to instruct those pilgrims whose road to heaven is of the same trying kind as David's was. It is always edifying to listen to the experience of a thoroughly gracious and much afflicted saint.

That choice band of singers, the sons of Korah, are bidden to make this delightful Psalm one of their peculiars. They had been spared when their father and all his company, and all the children of his associates were swallowed up alive in their sin. Nu 27:11. They were the spared ones of sovereign grace. Preserved, we know not why, by the distinguishing favour of God, it may be surmised that after their remarkable election to mercy, they became so filled with gratitude that they addicted themselves to sacred music in order that their spared lives might be consecrated to the glory of God. At any rate, we who have been rescued as they were from going down into the pit, out of the mere good pleasure of Jehovah, can heartily join in this Psalm, and indeed in all the songs which show forth the praises of our God and the pantings of our hearts after him. Although David is not mentioned as the author, this Psalm must be the offspring of his pen; it is so Davidic, it smells of the son of Jesse, it bears the marks of his style and experience in every letter. We could sooner doubt the authorship of the second part of Pilgrim's Progress than question David's title to be the composer of this Psalm.

SUBJECT. It is the cry of a man far removed from the outward ordinances and worship of God, sighing for the long loved house of his God; and at the same time it is the voice of a spiritual believer, under depressions, longing for the renewal of the divine presence, struggling with doubts and fears, but yet holding his ground by faith in the living God. Most of the Lord's family have sailed on the sea which is here so graphically described. It is probable that David's flight from Absalom may have been the occasion for composing this Maschil.

DIVISION. The structure of the song directs us to consider it in two parts which end with the same refrain; Ps 42:1-5 and then Ps 42:6-11.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* As after a long drought the poor fainting hind longs for the streams, or rather as the hunted hart instinctively seeks after the river to lave its smoking flanks and to escape the dogs, even so my weary, persecuted soul pants after the Lord my God. Debarred from public worship, David was heartsick. Ease he

did not seek, honour he did not covet, but the enjoyment of communion with God was an urgent need of his soul; he viewed it not merely as the sweetest of all luxuries, but as an absolute necessity, like water to a stag. Like the parched traveller in the wilderness, whose skin bottle is empty, and who finds the wells dry, he must drink or die—he must have his God or faint. His *soul*, his very self, his deepest life, was insatiable for a sense of the divine presence. As the hart brays so his soul prays. Give him his God and he is as content as the poor deer which at length slakes its thirst and is perfectly happy; but deny him his Lord, and his heart heaves, his bosom palpitates, his whole frame is convulsed, like one who gasps for breath, or pants with long running. Dear reader, dost thou know what this is, by personally having felt the same? It is a sweet bitterness. The next best thing to living in the light of the Lord's love is to be unhappy till we have it, and to pant hourly after it—hourly, did I say? thirst is a perpetual appetite, and not to be forgotten, and even thus continual is the heart's longing after God. When it is as natural for us to long for God as for an animal to thirst, it is well with our souls, however painful our feelings. We may learn from this verse that the eagerness of our desires may be pleaded with God, and the more so, because there are special promises for the importunate and fervent.

Verse 2. *My soul.* All my nature, my inmost self. *Thirsteth.* Which is more than hungering; hunger you can palliate, but thirst is awful, insatiable, clamorous, deadly. O to have the most intense craving after the highest good! this is no questionable mark of grace. *For God.* Not merely for the temple and the ordinances, but for fellowship with God himself. None but spiritual men can sympathise with this thirst. *For the living God.* Because he lives, and gives to men the living water; therefore we, with greater eagerness, desire him. A dead God is a mere mockery; we loathe such a monstrous deity; but the ever living God, the perennial fountain of life and light and love, is our soul's desire. What are gold, honour, pleasure, but dead idols? May we never pant for these. *When shall I come and appear before God?* He who loves the Lord loves also the assemblies wherein his name is adored. Vain are all pretences to religion where the outward means of grace have no attraction. David was never so much at home as in the house of the Lord; he was not content with private worship; he did not forsake the place where saints assemble, as the manner of some is. See how pathetically he questions as to the prospect of his again uniting in the joyous gathering! How he repeats and reiterates his desire! After his God, his Elohim (his God to be worshipped, who had entered into covenant with him), he pined even as the drooping flowers for the dew, or the moaning turtle for her mate. It were well if all our resortings to public worship were viewed as appearances before God, it would then be a sure mark of grace to delight in them. Alas, how many appear before the minister, or their fellow men, and

think that enough! "To see the face of God" is a nearer translation of the Hebrew; but the two ideas may be combined—he would see his God and be seen of him: this is worth thirsting after!

Verse 3. *My tears have been my meat day and night.* Salt meats, but healthful to the soul. When a man comes to tears, constant tears, plenteous tears, tears that fill his cup and trencher, he is in earnest indeed. As the big tears stand in the stag's eyes in her distress, so did the salt drops glitter in the eyes of David. His appetite was gone, his tears not only seasoned his meat, but became his only meat, he had no mind for other diet. Perhaps it was well for him that the heart could open the safety valves; there is a dry grief far more terrible than showery sorrows. His tears, since they were shed because God was blasphemed, were "honourable dew," drops of holy water, such as Jehovah putteth into his bottle. *While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?* Cruel taunts come naturally from coward minds. Surely they might have left the mourner alone; he could weep no more than he did—it was a supererogation of malice to pump more tears from a heart which already overflowed. Note how incessant was their jeer, and how artfully they framed it! It cut the good man to the bone to have the faithfulness of his God impugned. They had better have thrust needles into his eyes than have darted insinuations against his God. Shimei may here be alluded to who after this fashion mocked David as he fled from Absalom. He roundly asserted that David was a bloody man, and that God was punishing him for supplanting Saul and his house; his wish was father to his thought. The wicked know that our worst misfortune would be to lose God's favour, hence their diabolical malice leads them to declare that such is the case. Glory be to God, they lie in their throats, for our God is in the heavens, aye, and in the furnace too, succouring his people.

Verse 4. *When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.* When he harped upon his woes his heart melted into water and was poured out upon itself. God hidden, and foes raging, a pair of evils enough to bring down the stoutest heart! Yet why let reflections so gloomy engross us, since the result is of no value: merely to turn the soul on itself, to empty it from itself into itself is useless, how much better to pour out the heart before the Lord! The prisoner's tread wheel might sooner land him in the skies than mere inward questioning raise us nearer to consolation. *For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.* Painful reflections were awakened by the memory of past joys; he had mingled in the pious throng, their numbers had helped to give him exhilaration and to awaken holy delight, their company had been a charm to him as with them he ascended the hill of Zion. Gently proceeding with holy ease, in comely procession, with frequent strains of song, he and the people of

Jehovah had marched in reverent ranks up to the shrine of sacrifice, the dear abode of peace and holiness. Far away from such goodly company the holy man pictures the sacred scene and dwells upon the details of the pious march. *With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.* The festive noise is in his ears, and the solemn dance before his eyes. Perhaps he alludes to the removal of the ark and to the glorious gatherings of the tribes on that grand national holy day and holiday. How changed his present place! For Zion, a wilderness; for the priests in white linen, soldiers in garments of war; for the song, the sneer of blasphemy; for the festivity, lamentation; for joy in the Lord, a mournful dirge over his absence.

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* As though he were two men, the psalmist talks to himself. His faith reasons with his fears, his hope argues with his sorrows. These present troubles, are they to last forever? The rejoicings of my foes, are they more than empty talk? My absence from the solemn feasts, is that a perpetual exile? Why this deep depression, this faithless fainting, this chicken hearted melancholy? As Trapp says, "David chides David out of the dumps; "and herein he is an example for all desponding ones. To search out the cause of our sorrow is often the best surgery for grief. Self ignorance is not bliss; in this case it is misery. The mist of ignorance magnifies the causes of our alarm; a clearer view will make monsters dwindle into trifles. *Why art thou disquieted within me?* Why is my quiet gone? If I cannot keep a public Sabbath, yet wherefore do I deny my soul her indoor Sabbath? Why am I agitated like a troubled sea, and why do my thoughts make a noise like a tumultuous multitude? The causes are not enough to justify such utter yielding to despondency. Up, my heart! What aileth thee? Play the man, and thy castings down shall turn to up liftings, and thy disquietudes to calm. *Hope thou in God.* If every evil be let loose from Pandora's box, yet is there hope at the bottom. This is the grace that swims, though the waves roar and be troubled. God is unchangeable, and therefore his grace is the ground for unshaken hope. If everything be dark, yet the day will come, and meanwhile hope carries stars in her eyes; her lamps are not dependent on oil from without, her light is fed by secret visitations of God, which sustain the spirit. *For I shall yet praise him.* Yet will my sighs give place to songs, my mournful ditties shall be exchanged for triumphal paeans. A loss of the present sense of God's love is not a loss of that love itself; the jewel is there, though it gleams not on our breast; hope knows her title good when she cannot read it clear; she expects the promised boon though present providence stands before her with empty hands. *For I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.* Salvations come from the propitious face of God, and he will yet lift up his countenance upon us. Note well that the main hope and chief desire of David rest in the smile of God. His

face is what he seeks and hopes to see, and this will recover his low spirits, this will put to scorn his laughing enemies, this will restore to him all the joys of those holy and happy days around which memory lingers. This is grand cheer. This verse, like the singing of Paul and Silas, looses chains and shakes prison walls. He who can use such heroic language in his gloomy hours will surely conquer. In the garden of hope grow the laurels for future victories, the roses of coming joy, the lilies of approaching peace.

Verse 6. *O my God, my soul is cast down within me.* Here the song begins again upon the bass. So sweet an ending deserves that for the sake of a second hopeful close the Psalm should even begin again. Perhaps the psalmist's dejection continued, the spasm of despondency returned; well, then, he will down with his harp again, and try again its power upon himself, as in his younger days, he saw its influence upon Saul when the evil spirit came upon him. With God the song begins a second time more nearly than at first. The singer was also a little more tranquil. Outward expression of desire was gone; there was no visible panting; the sorrow was not all restrained within doors. Within or upon himself he was cast down; and, verily, it may well be so, while our thoughts look more within than upward. If self were to furnish comfort, we should have but poor provender. There is no solid foundation for comfort in such fickle frames as our heart is subject to. It is well to tell the Lord how we feel, and the more plain the confession the better: David talks like a sick child to its mother, and we should learn to imitate him. *Therefore will I remember thee.* It is well to fly to our God. Here is *terra firma*. Blessed down casting which drives us to so sure a rock of refuge as thee, O Lord! *From the hill Mizar.* He recalls his seasons of choice communion by the river and among the hills, and especially that dearest hour upon the little hill, where love spake her sweetest language and revealed her nearest fellowship. It is great wisdom to store up in memory our choice occasions of converse with heaven; we may want them another day, when the Lord is slow in bringing back his banished ones, and our soul is aching with fear. "His love in times past" has been a precious cordial to many a fainting one; like soft breath it has fanned the smoking flax into a flame, and bound up the bruised reed. Oh, never to be forgotten valley of Achor, thou art a door of hope! Fair days, now gone, ye have left a light behind you which cheers our present gloom. Or does David mean that even where he was he would bethink him of his God; does he declare that, forgetful of time and place, he would count Jordan as sacred as Siloa, Hermon as holy as Zion, and even Mizar, that insignificant rising ground as glorious as the mountains which are round about Jerusalem! Oh! it is a heavenly heart which can sing

"To me remains nor place nor time;
my country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there."

"Could I be cast where thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot,
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all."

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.* Thy severe dealings with me seem to excite all creation to attack me; heaven, and earth, and hell, call to each other, stirring each other up in dreadful conspiracy against my peace. As in a waterspout, the deeps above and below clasp hands, so it seemed to David that heaven and earth united to create a tempest around him. His woes were incessant and overwhelming. Billow followed billow, one sea echoed the roaring of another; bodily pain aroused mental fear, Satanic suggestions chimed in with mistrustful forebodings, outward tribulation thundered in awful harmony with inward anguish: his soul seemed drowned as in a universal deluge of trouble, over whose waves the providence of the Lord moved as a watery pillar, in dreadful majesty inspiring the utmost terror. As for the afflicted one he was like a lonely bark around which the fury of a storm is bursting, or a mariner floating on a mast, almost every moment submerged. *All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.* David thought that every trouble in the world had met in him, but he exaggerated, for *all* the breaking waves of Jehovah have passed over none but the Lord Jesus; there are griefs to which he makes his children strangers for his love's sake. Sorrow naturally states its case forcibly; the mercy is that the Lord after all hath not dealt with us according to our fears. Yet what a plight to be in! Atlantic rollers sweeping in ceaseless succession over one's head, waterspouts coming nearer and nearer, and all the ocean in uproar around the weary swimmer; most of the heirs of heaven can realise the description, for they have experienced the like. This is a deep experience unknown to babes in grace, but common enough to such as do business on great waters of affliction: to such it is some comfort to remember that the waves and billows are the Lord's, "*thy waves and thy billows*," says David, they are all sent, and directed by him, and achieve his designs, and the child of God knowing this, is the more resigned.

Verse 8. *Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime.* Come what may there shall be "a certain secret something" to sweeten all. Lovingkindness is a noble life belt in a rough sea. The day may darken into a strange and untimely midnight, but the love of God ordained of old to be the

portion of the elect, shall be by sovereign decree meted out to them. No day shall ever dawn on an heir of grace and find him altogether forsaken of his Lord: the Lord reigneth, and as a sovereign he will with authority command mercy to be reserved for his chosen. *And in the night.* Both divisions of the day shall be illuminated with special love, and no stress of trial shall prevent it. Our God is God of the nights as well as the days; none shall find his Israel unprotected, be the hour what it may. *His song shall be with me.* Songs of praise for blessings received shall cheer the gloom of night. No music sweeter than this. The belief that we shall yet glorify the Lord for mercy given in extremity is a delightful stay to the soul. Affliction may put out our candle, but if it cannot silence our song we will soon light the candle again. *And my prayer unto the God of my life.* Prayer is yoked with praise. He who is the living God, is the God of our life, from him we derive it, with him in prayer and praise we spend it, to him we devote it, in him we shall perfect it. To be assured that our sighs and songs shall both have free access to our glorious Lord is to have reason for hope in the most deplorable condition.

Verse 9. *I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?* Faith is allowed to enquire of her God the causes of his displeasure, and she is even permitted to expostulate with him and put him in mind of his promises, and ask why apparently they are not fulfilled. If the Lord be indeed our refuge, when we find no refuge, it is time to be raising the question, "Why is this?" Yet we must not let go our hold, the Lord must be *my rock* still; we must keep to him as our alone confidence, and never forego our interest in him. *Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* He who condescends to be pleaded with by Abraham, his friend, allows us to put to him the question that we may search out the causes of his severity towards us. Surely he can have no pleasure in seeing the faces of his servants stained and squalid with their tears; he can find no content in the harshness with which their foes assail them. He can never take pleasure in the tyranny with which Satan vexes them. Why then does he leave them to be mocked by his enemies and theirs? How can the strong God, who is as firm and abiding as a rock, be also as hard and unmoved as a rock towards those who trust in him? Such enquiries humbly pressed often afford relief to the soul. To know the reason for sorrow is in part to know how to escape it, or at least to endure it. Want of attentive consideration often makes adversity appear to be more mysterious and hopeless than it really is. It is a pitiable thing for any man to have a limb amputated, but when we know that the operation was needful to save life, we are glad to hear that it has been successfully performed; even thus as trial unfolds, the design of the Lord sending it becomes far more easy to bear.

Verse 10. *As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me.* Cruel mockeries cut deeper than the flesh, they reach the soul as though a rapier were introduced between the ribs to prick the heart. If reproaches kill not, yet they are killing, the pain caused is excruciating. The tongue cuts to the bone, and its wounds are hard to cure. *While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?* This is the most unkind cut of all, reflecting as it does both upon the Lord's faithfulness and his servant's character. Such was the malice of David's foes, that having thought of the cruel question, they *said* it, said it *daily*, repeated it *to him*, and that for a length, of time; surely the continual yapping of these curs at his heel was enough to madden him, and perhaps would have done so had he not resorted to prayer and made the persecutions of his enemies a plea with his Lord.

Verse 11. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?* In the rehearsal of his sorrow, he finds after all no sufficient ground for being disquieted. Looked in the face, his fears were not so overwhelming as they seemed when shrouded in obscurity. *Hope thou in God.* Let the anchor still keep its hold. God is faithful, God is love, therefore there is room and reason for hope. *Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* This is the same hopeful expression as that contained in verse five, but the addition of *and my God* shows that the writer was growing in confidence, and was able defiantly to reply to the question, "Where is thy God?" Here, even here, he is, ready to deliver me. I am not ashamed to own him amid your sneers and taunts, for he will rescue me out of your hands. Thus faith closes the struggle, a victor in fact by anticipation, and in heart by firm reliance. The saddest countenance shall yet be made to shine, if there be a taking of God at his word and an expectation of his salvation.

"For yet I know I shall him praise
Who graciously to me,
The health is of my countenance,
Yea, mine own God is he."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. *"Sons of Korah."* Who were *the sons of Korah*? These opinions have more or less prevailed. One is that they sprang from some one of that name in the days of David. Mudge and others think that the sons of Korah were a society of musicians, founded or presided over by Korah. Others think that the sons of Korah were the surviving descendants of that miserable man who, together with two hundred and fifty of his adherents, who were princes,

perished when "the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, together with Korah." In Nu 26:11 we read: "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." They had taken the warning given, and had departed from the tents of these wicked men. Nu 16:24,26. It must be admitted that the name *Korah* and the patronymic *Korahite* are found in the Scriptures in a way that creates considerable doubt respecting the particular man from whom the Korahites are named. See 1Ch 1:35 2:43 6:22,54 9:19 26:1 2Ch 20:19. Yet the more common belief is that they descended from him who perished in his gainsaying. This view is taken by Ainsworth with entire confidence, by Gill, and others. Korah, who perished, was a Levite. Whatever may have been their origin, it is clear *the sons of Korah* were a Levitical family of singers. Nothing, then, could be more appropriate than the dedication of a sacred song to these very people. *William S. Plumer.*

Title. "*Sons of Korah.*" The "*Korah*" whose "*sons*" are here spoken of, is the Levite who headed the insurrection against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. Nu 16:1-50. We find his descendants existing as a powerful Levitical family in the time of David, at least, if they are to be identified, as is probable, with the Korahites mentioned in 1Ch 12:6, who, like our own warlike bishops of former times, seem to have known how to doff the priestly vestment for the soldier's armour, and whose hand could wield the sword as well as strike the harp. The Korahites were a part of the band who acknowledged David as their chief, at Ziklag; warriors "whose faces, "it is said, "were like the faces of lions, and who were (for speed) like gazelles upon the mountains." According to 1Ch 9:17-19, the Korahites were in David's time, keepers of the threshold of the tabernacle; and still earlier, in the time of Moses, watchmen at the entrance of the camp of the Levites. In 1Ch 26:1-19, we find two branches of this family associated with that of Merari, as guardians of the doors of the Temple. There is probably an allusion to this their office, in Ps 84:10. But the Korahites were also celebrated musicians and singers; see 1Ch 6:16-33, where Heman, one of the three famous musicians of the time, is said to be a Korahite (compare 1Ch 25:1-31). The musical reputation of the family continued in the time of Jehoshaphat 2Ch 20:19, where we have the peculiar doubly plural form (Myxqrhynb), "Sons of the Korahites." *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Title. "*Sons of Korah.*" Medieval writers remark how here, as so often, it was the will of God to raise up saints where they could have been least looked for. Who should imagine that from the posterity of him who said, "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Aaron, "should have risen those whose sweet Psalms would be the heritage of the church of God to the end of time? *J. M. Neale.*

Verse 1. *The hart panteth after the water brooks.* And here we have started up, and have sent leaping over the plain another of Solomon's favourites. What elegant creatures these gazelles are, and how gracefully they bound! ...The sacred writers frequently mention gazelles under the various names of harts, roes, and hinds...I have seen large flocks of these panting harts gather round the water brooks in the great deserts of Central Syria, so subdued by thirst that you could approach quite near them before they fled. *W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 1. Little do the drunkards think that take so much pleasure in frequenting the houses of Bacchus, that the godly take a great deal more, and have a great deal more joy in frequenting the houses of God. But it is a thing that God promised long ago by the prophet: "Then will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." Isa 56:7. And I think, I hear the willing people of God's power, merrily calling one to another in the words of Mic 4:2, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." How is a godly man ravished with "the beauty of holiness, "when he is at such meetings! How was holy David taken with being in the house of God at Jerusalem! insomuch, that if he were kept from it but a little while, his soul panted for it, and longed after it, and fainted for lack of it, as a thirsty hart would do for lack of water! *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?* The poor disconsolate captives preferred it to the best place in their memory. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." Ps 137:5; nay, they preferred it to their chiefest joy: "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy, "Ps 42:6. There was no place in the world that David regarded or cared to be in in comparison of it. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" Ps 84:10, insomuch, that he could find it in his heart, nay, and would choose, if he might have his desire, to spend all his days in that house. Ps 27:4. *Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 1. The soul strongly desires acquaintance with God here in his ordinances. Chrysostom's very rhetorical upon the text, and tells us how that David, like a lover in absence, must express his affection; as they have their dainty sighs, and passionate complaints, their loving exclamations, and sundry discoveries of affection; they can meet with never a tree, but in the bark of it

they must engrave the name of their darling, Denfos d o erws d kittos auton ek paaes anadeoai profaoews; it will twine upon every opportunity, as the Moralist speaks. And the true lovers of God, they are always thinking upon him, sighing for him, panting after him, talking of him, and (if it were possible) would engrave the name of the Lord Jesus upon the breasts of all the men in the world. Look upon David, now a banished man, and fled from the presence of Saul, and see how he behaves himself: not like Themistocles or Camillus, or some of those brave banished worthies. He does not complain of the ungratefulness of his country, the malice of his adversaries, and his own unhappy success. No, instead of murmuring, he falls a panting, and that only after his God. He is banished from the sanctuary, the palace of God's nearest presence, and chiefest residence; he cannot enjoy the beauty of holiness, and all other places seem to him but as the tents of Kedar. He is banished from the temple, and he thinks himself banished from his God, as it is in the following words, *When shall I come and appear before God?* The whole stream of expositors run this way, that it is meant of his strong longing to visit the Temple, and those amiable courts of his God, with which his soul was so much taken. *Nathanael Culverwel's "Panting Soul,"* 1652.

Verses 1-3. are an illustration of the frequent use of the word Elohim in the second book of Psalms. We give Fry's translation of the first three verses.—

As the hart looketh for the springs of water,
 So my soul looketh for thee, O Elohim.
 My soul is athirst for Elohim for the living El:
 When shall I go and see the face of Elohim?
 My tears have been my meat day and night,
 While they say to me continually, Where is thy Elohim?

Verse 3. *My tears have been my meat day and night.* The psalmist could eat nothing because of his extreme grief. *John Gadsby.*

Verse 3. *They say unto me.* It is not only of me, but to me; they spake it to his very face, as those who were ready to justify it and make it good, that God had forsaken him. Backbiting argues more baseness, but open reproach carries more boldness, and shamelessness, and impudence in it; and this is that which David's enemies were guilty of here in this place. *Thomas Horton.*

Verse 3. *Where is thy God?* God's children are impatient, as far as they are men, of reproaches; but so far as they are Christian men, they are impatient of reproaches in religion; *Where is now thy God?* They were not such desperate Atheists as to think there was no God, to call in question whether there were a

God or no, though, indeed, they were little better; but they rather reproach and upbraid him with his singularity, *where is thy God?* You are one of God's darlings; you are one that thought nobody served God but you; you are one that will go alone—*your* God! So this is an ordinary reproach, an ordinary part for wicked men to cast at the best people, especially when they are in misery. What it become of your profession now? What is become of your forwardness and strictness now? What is become of your God that you bragged so of, and thought yourselves so happy in, as if he had been nobody's God but yours? We may learn hence the disposition of wicked men. It is a character of a full of poison, cursed disposition to upbraid a man with his religion. But what is the scope? The scope is worse than the words *Where is thy God?* The scope is to shake his faith and his confidence in God, and this is *that* which touched him so nearly while they upbraided him. For the devil knows well enough that as long as God and the soul join together, it is in vain to trouble any man, therefore he labours to put jealousies, to accuse God to man, and man to God. He knows there is nothing in the world can stand against God. As long as we make God our confidence, all his enterprises are in vain. His scope is, therefore, to shake our affiance in God. *Where is thy God?* So he dealt with the head of the church, our blessed Saviour himself, when he came to tempt him. "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." Mt 4:3. He comes with an "if," he laboured to shake him in his Sonship. The devil, since he was divided from God himself eternally, is become a spirit of division; he labours to divide even God the Father from his own Son; "*If thou be the Son of God?*" So he labours to sever Christians from their head Christ. *Where is thy God?* There was his scope, to breed division if he could, between his heart and God, that he might call God into jealousy, as if he had not regarded him: thou hast taken a great deal of pains in serving thy God; thou seest how he regards thee now; *Where is thy God?* *Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 3. How powerfully do the scoffs and reproaches of the ungodly tend to shake the faith of a mind already dejected! How peculiarly afflictive to the soul that loves God, is the dishonour cast upon him by his enemies! *Henry March,* in "*Sabbaths at Home,*" 1823.

Verse 3. *Where is thy God?*

"Where is now thy God!" Oh, sorrow!
 Hourly thus to hear him say,
 Finding thus the longed for morrow,
 Mournful as the dark to day.
 Yet not thus my soul would languish,
 Would not thus be grieved and shamed,

But for that severer anguish,
When I hear the Lord defamed.

"Where is now thy God!" Oh, aid me,
Lord of mercy, to reply—
"He is HERE—though foes invade me,
Know his outstretched arm is nigh."
Help me thus to be victorious,
While the shield of faith I take;
Lord, appear, and make thee glorious:
Help me for thy honour's sake.
—*Henry March.*

Verse 4. *When I remember these things*, etc. To a person in misery it is a great increase of misery to have been once happy: it was to David an occasion of new tears when he remembered his former joys. Time was, says the poor soul, when I thought of God with comfort, and when I thought of him as my own God; and to lose a God that I once enjoyed is the loss of all my losses, and of all my terrors the most terrible. Time was when I could go and pray to him, and ease myself in prayer; but now I have no boldness, no hope, no success in prayer. I cannot call him *my Father* any more. Time was when I could read the Bible and treasure up the promises, and survey the land of Canaan as my own inheritance; but now I dare not look into the Word lest I read my own condemnation there. The Sabbath was formerly to me as one of the days of heaven, but now it is also, as well as the rest, a sad and mournful day. I formerly rejoiced in the name of Christ, "I sat under his shadow." So 2:3. I was in his eyes as one that found favour; but now my soul is like the deserts of Arabia, I am scorched with burning heat. From how great a height have I fallen! How fair was I once for heaven and for salvation, and now am like to come short of it! I once was flourishing in the courts of the Lord, and now all my fruit is blasted and withered away: "his dew lay all night upon my branches," "but now I am like the mountains of Gilboa, no rain falls upon me. Had I never heard of heaven I could not have been so miserable as I now am: had I never known God, the loss of him had not been so terrible as now it is like to be. Job 29:2-3. *Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 4. (*first clause*). The blessedness of even the remembrance of divine worship is so great, that it can save the soul from despair. *J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 4. *I pour out my soul.* The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 4. *I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.* The gracious God is pleased to esteem it his glory to have many beggars thronging at the beautiful gate of his temple, for spiritual and corporal alms. What an honour is it to our great Landlord that multitudes of tenants flock together to his house to pay their rent of thanks and worship for their all which they hold of him! How loud and lovely is the noise of many golden trumpets! Good Lord, what an echo do they make in heaven's ears! When many skilful musicians play in concert with well tuned and prepared instruments the music cannot but be ravishing to God himself. *George Swinnock.*

Verse 4. Do but consider David's tears and grief for want of, and his fervent prayers for the fruition of public ordinances even then, when he had opportunities for private performances; and surely thou wilt esteem the ministry of the Word no mean mercy. See his sorrow when he was driven from God's sanctuary. *When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.* "My soul is poured out; that is, I am overwhelmed with grief, and ever ready to die when I compare my present condition with my former happiness in the fruition of religious assemblies. There is an elegancy in the phrase *poured out*; the word is applied to water, or any liquid thing, and in Scripture signifieth abundance. Joe 2:28. My life is ready to be poured out as water upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, when I remember my former mercies, and consider my present misery...The loss of his father, mother, wives, children, lands, liberty—nay, of his very life, would not have gone so near his heart as the loss of public ordinances. As his sorrow was great for the want, so was his suit most earnest for the enjoyment of them. How many a prayer doth he put up for the liberty of the tabernacle! Ps 43:3-4 27:4,8. It is the one thing, the principal thing which he begs of God. *Henry Smith.*

Verse 4. The bias of the soul is remarkably shown by the objects of regretful recollection. *Henry March.*

Verse 4. *With a multitude that kept holy day.*

Though private prayer be a brave design
 Yet public hath more promises, more love:
 And love's a weight to hearts, to eyes a sign.
 We all are but cold suitors; let us move
 Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven;
 Pray with the most: for where most pray, is heaven.
 —George Herbert, in "*The Temple*."

Verse 5. *WHY art thou cast down, O my soul?* Athanasius counselled his friend, that when any trouble should fall upon him, he should fall presently to the reading of this Psalm; for there was a way, he thought, of curing by the like, as well as by the *contrary*: for it is observed indeed that when two instruments are tuned to the same unison, if you touch the strings of the one, the strings of the other will move too, though untouched, if placed at a convenient distance. That therefore you may try the same experiments upon yourselves, do but set your affections for a tune in the same key in which these words were spoken; if really you *feel* none, imagine some affliction laid upon you; when you have done so, that you may be the more fully moved, place your attention at a convenient distance, look narrowly on this holy prophet, observe how he retires himself, shuts out the world, calls his sad soul to as sad a reckoning: *Quare tam tristis?* O my soul! thou that wert infused to give me life; nay, says Philo the Jew, a spark, a beam of the divinity, thou, which shouldest be to this dark body of mine as the sun is to the earth, enlightening, quickening, cheering up my spirits; tell me, why art *thou* clouded? why art *thou* cast down? ...

Think of this, ye that feel the heaviness of your soul; think of it, ye that do not, for ye may feel it. Know there is a sorrow "that worketh repentance not to be repented of." Know again there is a sorrow "that worketh death." Remember that there were tears that got sinful Mary heaven; remember again there were tears that got sinful Esau *nothing*. For as in martyrdom, it is not the sword, the boiling lead, or fire, not *what* we suffer, but *why*, that makes us martyrs; so in our sorrows, it is not how deep they wound, but *why*, that justifies them. Let every one, therefore, that hath a troubled heart, ask his soul the "*Why*:" "*Why art thou cast down?*" Is it not for thine own sins, or the sins of others? Take either of them, thine eyes will have a large field to water. Is it for that thou hast been a child of wrath, a servant of the devil? Is it for that thou art a candle set in the wind, blown at by several temptations? or is it for that thou wouldst be freed from them? "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" Ps 120:5. Art thou troubled as St. Augustine was, when he read that the way to heaven was narrow, the number small that travelled thither? Or hast thou put on St. Bernard's resolution, who had made a compact with his soul, never to joy till he had heard his Saviour call him, "Come ye blessed, "nor never to leave sorrowing till he had escaped the bitter sentence, "Go, ye cursed?" If any of these be the *Why*, the ground of thy sorrows, if such thoughts have *cast thee down*; know, that thy Saviour hath already blessed thee, for "Blessed are they that mourn." The angels are thy servants, they gather thy tears; God is thy treasurer, he lays them up in his bottle; the Holy Ghost is thy comforter, he will not leave thee. Fear not, then, to be thus *cast down*, fear not

to be thus *disquieted within thee*. Brian Duppa (Bishop), 1588-1662, in a *Sermon entitled "The Soule's Soloquie."*

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* Why, or what may be the reason, that this text is three times used in this Psalm and in the next? whereas you do not find two verses of the same length used in all the Book of Psalms besides, except in Psalm 107, where is often repeated, "O that men would praise the Lord," etc. Now, surely the frequent mention of this text and words doth argue and note unto us the weightiness of the matter... Wicked men oppressed David, and the devil tempted him; yet he chides his own heart and nothing else. David did not chide at Saul, nor chide at Absalom; but he chides and checks his own heart. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" Though the devil and wicked men, the one do tempt, the other do oppress as instruments of punishment for sin; yet we with David are to chide our own hearts. Consider, what though in our translations the words are translated and rendered passively, *Why art thou cast down?* yet, in the original, they are rendered actively; we read it, *Why art thou cast down?* etc; but in the original it is read, (yle ymht-hmw yvkn yxxwtvt-hm) "*Why bowest (or pressest) thou down thyself, my soul? and why tumultest thou against me?*" As Arias Montanus, *Cur humiliasti te? Cur deprimes te anima mea?* So Lorinus, Pr 12:25. And the words so read, they do not intimate thus much, that God's own people may be cast down too much for the sense of sin, and they are most active in their own down casting. It is not God nor the devil that cast thee down; but *Why dost thou cast thyself down?* to create more trouble on thyself than either God doth inflict or the devil tempt thee to. Christopher Love, in "*The Dejected Soul's Cure*," 1657.

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* Consider but this, how much there is of God in the affliction. 1. Came it not without *God's privity*? Why art thou troubled, then? Thy Father knowing of it would have stopped its course if it had been best for thee. 2. Came it not *without his command*? Why art thou troubled? It is the cup that thy Father hath given thee, and wilt thou not drink it? 3. Is it thy Father's will that thou shouldest suffer, and shall it be thy humour to rebel? 4. Hath God done *no more than he might do*? Why dost thou murmur, as if he had done thee wrong? 5. Is it a piece of his *wise acting*? Why dost thou exalt thy foolish will above his infinite wisdom? 6. Is his way *a way of mercy*? Why does thy mutinous spirits tumble at it, as a rough way? 7. Is the thing *good* that is befallen thee? Why dost thou quarrel as if it were evil? 8. Is it *less than men suffer*, than his own people, yea, than his own Son hath suffered, and hast thou cause to complain? 9. Is it but *thy merit*? and less than that, too; and shall the living man complain for the punishment of his sin? 10. Is it *in measure*, ordered with care? (1) by the physician's hand; and (2) a little draught, and (3)

proportioned to thy strength; (4) measured out according to the proportion of strength and comfort he intends to measure thee out, to bear it withal? Why are thou cast down? Why art thou disquieted? Is the end and fruit of it but to make thee white, and purify thee? to purge thy sin past, and to prevent it for the time to come? and dost thou find a present fruit in it? Dost thou find that now thou art turned into a chalk stone; thy groves and images—those corruptions which did attend thee while thou wert in prosperity, and which would attend thee if you had those good things which you want, and are disquieted for; and if those evils which you feel or fear were far from your sense and fear, would still attend thee—that those do not now stand up? Lift up thy head, Christian! say to thy soul, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?* Meditate what there is of God in the cause of thy disquietments. *John Collinge (1623-1690) in "A Cordial for a Fainting Soule," 1652.*

Verse 5. *Why art thou disquieted?* more literally, *tumultuated*, a word frequently applied to the roaring and tumult and tossing of the sea. See Isa 17:12 Jer 5:22 6:23 51:55. *Henry March.*

Verse 5. *Hope thou in God.* I shall show what powerful influence *hope* hath on the Christian in affliction, and how. First, it stills and silences him under affliction. It keeps the king's peace in the heart, which else would soon be in an uproar. A hopeless soul is clamorous: one while it charges God, another while it reviles his instruments. It cannot long rest, and no wonder, when hope is not there. Hope hath a rare art in stilling a froward spirit, when nothing else can; as the mother can make the crying child quiet by laying it to the breast, when the rod makes it cry worse. This way David took, and found it effectual; when his soul was unquiet by reason of his present affliction, he lays it to the breast of the promise: "Why art thou cast down O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God." And here his soul sweetly sleeps, as the child with the breast in his mouth; and that this was his usual way, we may think by the frequent instances we find; thrice we find him taking this course in two Psalms, 42 and 43...Secondly, this hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called "the rejoicing of hope," Heb 3:6. And hope never affords more joy than in affliction. It is on a watery cloud that the sun paints those curious colours in the rainbow...There are two graces, which Christ useth above any other, to fill the soul with joy—faith and hope, because these two fetch all their wine of joy without door. Faith tells the soul what Christ hath done for it; and so comforts it; hope revives the soul with the news of what Christ will do: both draw at one tap—Christ and his promise. *Condensed from William Gurnall.*

Verse 5. *Hope thou in God.* The word which is here rendered, *hope* denotes that *expectation* which is founded on faith in God, and which leads the soul to *wait* upon him. The idea is beautifully expressed in Ps 39:7. "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee." *Henry March.*

Verse 5. *I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.* When it may be said, "He whom God loveth is sick," then it may be said, "This sickness is not unto death; "and though it be to the first death, yet not to the second. Who would think when Jonah was in the sea Jon 3:1-10, that he would preach at Nineveh? Who would think when Nebuchadnezzar was in the forest Da 4:1-37, that he should reign again in Babel? Who would think when Joseph was banished of his brethren, that his brethren should seek unto him like his servants? Who would think when Job scraped his sores upon the dunghill, all his houses were burned, all his cattle stolen, and all his children dead, that he should be richer than ever he was? These are the acts of mercy which make the righteous sing, "The Lord hath triumphed valiantly." Exodus 15-21. *Henry Smith.*

Verse 5. *I shall yet praise him.* David's mind is upon the *duty* more than upon the *mercy*; upon the *duty*, as it is a matter of *grace*, more than upon the *mercy*, as it is a matter of *sense*. And, therefore, by a happy mistake, his tongue slips, as men are wont to do in such cases, and he puts one for the other; when he should say, *I shall receive mercy from God*, he says, *I shall give praise to him.* *Thomas Horton.*

Verse 5. He is the skilful physician, who at the same time that he evacuates the disease, doth also comfort and strengthen nature; and he the true Christian, that doth not content himself with a bare laying aside evil customs and practices, but labours to walk in the exercise of the contrary graces. Art thou discomposed with impatience, haunted with a discontented spirit under any affliction? Think it not enough to silence thy heart from quarrelling with God, but leave not till thou canst bring it sweetly to rely on God. Holy David drove it thus far, he did not only chide his soul for being disquieted, but he charges it to trust in God. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 5. There was one Alice Benden, who, among others, was imprisoned for religion in Canterbury Castle; but after awhile, by the bishop's order, she was let down into a deep dungeon, where none of her friends could come at her. There she was fed with an halfpenny bread, and a farthing beer a day, neither would they allow her any more for her money. Her lodging was upon a little straw, between a pair of stocks and a stone wall. This made her grievously to bewail and lament her estate, reasoning with herself, why her Lord God did in

so heavy a wise afflict her, and suffered her thus to be sequestered from the sweet society of her loving prison fellows. In this extremity of misery, and in the midst of these dolorous mournings she continued, till on a night, repeating that of the psalmist: *"Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so cast down within me? Still trust in God,"* etc.; and, *God's right hand can change all this,* etc.; she received comfort in the midst of her sorrows, and so continued joyful to the time of her release. *Samuel Clarke's "Mirror."*

Verses 5, 11. In case thou art at any time oppressed with sorrows, ask thy heart and soul that question which David did in the like case twice in one Psalm: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?* and certainly the soul would return answer, My distress of sadness springs from my unbelief. You may know the disease by the cure, in the very next words, *O put thy trust in God; hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* All sorrow of heart springs principally from our unbelief, not from the greatness of other evils; I mean, *destructive* sorrow, for godly sorrow is a friend to godly joy. It is not so much the weight of the burden, as the soreness of the back, that troubles the poor beast: so it is not so much the weight of outward evils, as the inward soreness of a galled conscience, not purified nor healed by faith, that vexes and troubles the poor creature. *Matthew Lawrence, in "The Use and Practice of Faith," 1657.*

Verses 5, 11. As afflictions do proceed from ourselves, they may be called troubles, or perturbations; for the best man doth sometimes cause this bad liquor to boil out of his own bowels. David, not once, but often, hath cried out, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?* And show me the man that annoys and troubles not himself in vain, because with patience he doth not tarry the Lord's leisure? The foolish bird, who, being in a room whose door is locked, and the casements shut, beateth herself against the wall and windows, breaking her feathers and bruising her body, whereas, would she stay till the passages were by the keeper opened, she might depart, being not at all wounded; even so falleth it out with us: for when the Lord doth shut us up, and straiten our liberty for a time, we would fain make way for ourselves, having many devices in our hearts to break through the walls of his providence; whereas, if we would stay his leisure, depend on his promise, and submit ourselves to be disposed of by his hand, we might with more ease endure this prison, and with less hurt at the last be set at liberty. For God is in one mind, and who can change him? He will bring to pass that thing that he hath decreed upon us. *John Barlow's Sermon, 1618.*

Verses 5, 11. If you would get assurance, spend more time in strengthening your evidences for heaven, than in questioning of them. It is the great fault of

many Christians they will spend much time in questioning, and not in strengthening their comforts. They will reason themselves into unbelief, and say, Lord, why should I believe? Why should I take hold of a promise that am so unholy and so unmortified a creature? And so by this they reason themselves to such a pass that they dare not lay hold upon Christ, whereas it should be your work to reason yourselves into Christ as much as you can. Labour to strengthen your comforts, and reason thus, Why should I not believe in Christ? Thus David did. Psalm 42. *"Why art thou troubled, O my soul, and why art thou cast down within me?"* Is not the mercy of God more than sin in the creature? Is not there free grace where there is guilt? Are not there pardoning mercies where condemnation is deserved? You should reason up your comforts rather than reason them down, and spend more time in strengthening than in questioning of them. You would count him a very unwise man that hath a lease of so much land, and he himself shall create scruples and doubts, and shall use no means to make his title good. And truly many Christians are as unwise for heaven. They have, as I may say, good bond and seal that God will bring them to heaven, and yet they will question and cavil themselves into unbelief. Beloved, this should not be, but you ought rather to strengthen your comforts than question them. *Christopher Love.*

Verse 6. *O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee.* "Because I am very low in spirit, am deeply sorrowful, *therefore* will I remember thee. I will remember how condescending thou art to thy 'poor and afflicted people; 'how ready to receive them when deserted or cast out by men; how kind and patient to hear their complaint when they pour out the soul before thee. I will remember thy lovingkindness to *me* in seasons past; how thou hast looked on my distress, hast heard the voice of my supplications, hast delivered me from my trials, or helped me to bear their burden, strengthening me with strength in my soul. I will remember all that I have enjoyed of thy presence when waiting on thee in thy house, or when celebrating thy praises in company with thy 'saints, the excellent of the earth.' I will remember what thou ART; how meet an object for the trust of a desolate being like myself! For though I am poor, thou art rich; though I am weak, thou art mighty; though I am miserable, thou art happy. I will remember that thou art *my* God. That thou hast manifested thyself to my soul, that thou hast enabled me to choose thee for my portion, that I have trusted in thee, and have never been confounded. I will remember that word of promise on which thou hast caused me to hope, to which thou hast ever been faithful throughout all the past, and *will* be, as I truly believe, even unto the end." Oh, how happy, even in the midst of their unhappiness, are they, who in their trials, can take shelter in God! *Henry March.*

Verse 6. "MY God." Astonishing expression! Who shall dare to say to the Creator of the ends of the earth, the Majesty in the heavens, "My God"? An exile, a wanderer, an outcast; a man forsaken, despised, reviled; a soul cast down and disquieted: *he* shall dare. By what right? Of covenant. *Henry March.*

Verse 6. *Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.* It is remarkable what course the psalmist took to regain comfort; he would remember three experiments of his goodness—"the land of *Jordan*, "the land "of the *Hermonites*, "and "the hill *Mizar*." First, will I remember the land *Jordan*; that is, I will remember the great goodness of God in drying up the river Jordan, that so the tribes of Israel might pass over to the promised land: why, God that hath been good, will be good. Then, I will remember the land of the *Hermonites*; in that land were Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, defeated; that you read of in Jos 12:1-2. "Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto Mount Hermon." *Mizar*, some think to be a little hill near Mount Sinai, where the law was given. I will remember God's goodness, in giving a law to his people. Here David would call to remembrance the goodness of God of old, to regain to him comfort and quietness in his mind. *Christopher Love.*

Verse 6. *The Hermons*, or the peaks or ridges of Hermon, the plural being used either because of the *two* peaks of the mountain (Wilson, "*Land of the Bible*"), or as I think probably, of the whole range of its snowy heights. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 6. *The Hermons*, i.e., as some suppose, Mount Hermon, and the other mountains upon that side of the river, just as Baalim means Baal, and other idols worshipped with him; or more probably Mount Hermon considered not as a single eminence, but a chain or range, like the Alps, the Alleghenies, etc. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 6. *From the hill.* He that has a rich life of past experience is thereby placed upon an eminence from which he may take a happy view of the path lying before him. *J. P Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.* Here he has conjoined two awful and terrific phenomena of nature. It is a fact well ascertained by the evidence of travellers, that the falling of waterspouts is not uncommon on the coast of Judea. It should seem that they are occasioned by the congregating of great masses of cloud, whose waters concentrating to a

point, pour themselves down in a tremendous column, accompanied with a roaring noise. Now, the image conceived in the mind of the psalmist seems to be that of the rushing of this vast waterspout down into the sea, already agitated, and increasing the turbulence and disorder of its waves. And awful picture! Especially if there be added to it the ideas of a black tempestuous sky, and the deafening roar occasioned by the tumult. What would be the situation of a vessel in the midst of such a tempest, the deluge pouring down from above, and all around her the furious ocean heaving its tremendous surges—how ungovernable, how helpless, how next to impossible that she should escape foundering except by some almost miraculous interference! Yet to such a situation does David here compare the state of his soul when submersed, as it were, under a sea of afflictions; "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." How pungent must his sense of grief have been to occasion him to make use of such a comparison, so strongly expressive of the utmost danger and terror! *Henry March.*

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep*, etc. The abyss above calls on the abyss below, in the voice of the droppings of thy waterspouts. *Targum.*

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep.* So let prayer unto prayer, and faith unto faith, and one grace to the exercise of another. If we cannot prevail with God it may be the first time, yet we may the second; or if not then, the third. *Thomas Horton.*

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep.* What's that? Why, it is expressed in the verse before: "O God, "says he, "*my soul is cast down within me.*" "Down, "that is *deep* into the jaws of distrust and fear. And, Lord, my soul in this *depth* of sorrow, calls for help to thy *depth* of mercy. For though I am sinking and going down, yet not so low but that thy mercy is yet underneath me. Do, of thy compassions, open those everlasting arms, and catch him that has no help or stay in himself. For so it is with one that is falling into a *well* or a *dungeon*. *John Bunion.*

Verse 7. Here the psalmist feels the spirit of bondage, which is wrath and fear; and he prays for the joy of God's salvation, and to be upheld by God's free spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of love and power. He complains of "*deep calling unto deep.*" A soul in the horrible pit hears little else but the calls of law and justice for vengeance, which are always answered again by the accusations of Satan and conscience. The storms of Sinai, like a *waterspout* at sea, threaten the earthen vessel with a deluge of wrath, which would soon drown it in destruction and perdition. These waves of real, and some imaginary, displeasure (no less terrible than real), rolling over the poor creature, are ready

to send the bark to the bottom. This is the terrible way in which some fallen and backsliding souls are purged and reclaimed, and especially such as have brought public scandal upon the gospel, and church of Christ. *William Huntington* (1744-1813) in "*Contemplations of the God of Israel*."

Verse 7. *Thy waterspouts.* Dr. Boothroyd translates (Kyrwnu), "*thy cataracts*." In justification of which translation, he observes that the situation of David suggested this forcible image. He saw the torrents falling from the precipices, and heard them resounding, and as if calling to one another for assistance; so, says he, all thy waves, that is, afflictions and troubles, come upon me and overwhelm me. *John Morison*.

Verse 7. *Waterspouts.* Look at those clouds which hang like a heavy pall of sackcloth over the sea, along the western horizon. From them, on such windy days as these, are formed *waterspouts*, and I have already noticed several incipient "spouts" lengthening downward from their lower edge. These remarkable phenomena occur most frequently in spring, but I have also seen them in autumn. They are not accompanied with much rain; and between the dark stratum above and the sea, the sky is clear and bright. Here and there fragments of black vapour, shaped like long funnels, are drawn down from the clouds towards the sea, and are seen to be in violent agitation, whirling around on themselves as they are driven along by the wind. Directly beneath them, the surface of the sea is also in commotion by a whirlwind, which travels on in concert with the spout above. I have often seen the two actually unite in midair, and rush toward the mountains, writhing, and twisting, and bending, like a huge serpent, with its head in the clouds and its tail on the deep. They make a loud noise, of course, and appear very frightful. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me*, said David, when his soul was cast down within him. But, though formidable in appearance, they do very little injury. I have never heard of more than one instance in which they proved destructive even to boats, though the sailors are extremely afraid of them. As soon as they approach the shore, they dissolve and disappear. That kind of waterspout which bursts on the mountains, generally in the dry months of summer, does immense mischief. In a few minutes the wadies along its track are swollen into furious rivers, which sweep away grain, olives, raisins, and every other produce of the farmer. I have frequently known them to carry off and drown flocks of sheep and goats, and even cows, horses, and their owners alike. *W. M. Thomson*.

Verse 7. *All thy waves and thy billows.*

Deep to deep incessant calling,
Tossed by furious tempests' roll,
Endless waves and billows falling,
Overwhelm my fainting soul.

Yet I see a Power presiding
Mid the tumult of the storm,
Ever ruling, ever guiding,
Love's intentions to perform.

Yes, mid sorrows most distressing,
Faith contemplates thy design,
Humbly bowing, and confessing
All the waves and billows THINE.
—Henry March.

Verse 7. *All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*

Wide over misfortune's surging tide
Billows succeeding billows spread;
Should one, its fury spent, subside,
Another lifts its boisterous head.
—Aeschylus in "The Seven Chiefs against Thebes."

Verse 8. *Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness.* His expression is remarkable; he does not say simply that the Lord will bestow, but *command his lovingkindness*. As the gift bestowed is grace—free favour to the unworthy; so the manner of bestowing it is sovereign. It is given by decree; it is a royal donative. And if *he* commands the blessing, who shall hinder its reception?
Henry March.

Verse 8. It is all one to a godly man, *night* or *day*. For what *night* can there be to him who hath God always with him, who is a *sun* to comfort him, as well as a shield to protect him Ps 84:11; and *the light of whose countenance*, if it be but very little, is more comfortable than all things else whatsoever that the *day* can bring with it. He can say, "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" Mic 7:8; and "the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." Ps 18:28. To tell you the truth, I think the *night* is the merriest time that the godly man hath, and the saddest for the wicked man (who, though he may make use of *darkness* to hide his sin, yet is he afraid, because of that very thing in which his safety consists). For if a man be merry in good company, he must needs be more merry when he enjoys it better, and there is less to disturb his mirth. So as it is

with a godly man in the *night*, when the greatest part of his hindrances are removed, and he can "delight himself in the Almighty" without disturbance. Job 27:10. David says that the Lord would indeed *command his lovingkindness in the daytime*. but, *in the night* (says he) *his song shall be with me*.—"His song, "as I think, not of *thanksgiving*, but of *joy and exultation*, such as God uses to give at that time. Job 35:10. In the *daytime* the soul is so taken up with base employments, so distracted with variety of sensible objects, and so busied with work for the body, that either she hath no leisure at all to do her own work (such as this joy is as much as anything) or she cannot do it so well as she would, or so well as she could *in the night*, when she hath less to do. I doubt not but the worldly and carnal man, now that I am talking so much of *night*, and sleep, will be ready to say that I do but *dream*, and to answer me as the fellow did the hunter, when he bade him hear "what heavenly music his dogs made." For I know he counts the music and songs that we speak of, nothing but a frenzy, or a fancy at least, such as mad and diseased people have in their brain, while they imagine it to be in the air. But, as Peter said of those upon whom the Holy Ghost fell, "These men are not drunk, as ye suppose; "so may I reply to such men, No such matter, the godly are not mad, as ye suppose, for their songs are not works of their own fancy, not made of their own head, but set for them by God himself, "who giveth songs in the night." Job 35:10. *Zachary Bogan*.

Verse 8. *And my prayer unto the God of my life*. Here may be seen that David's religion was a religion of prayer *after* deliverance, as well as before. The selfish who cry out in trouble will have done with their prayers, when the trouble is over. With David it was the very reverse. Deliverance from trouble would strengthen his confidence in God, embolden his addresses to him, and furnish him with new arguments...There is great *need* of prayer after deliverance; for the time of deliverance is often a time of temptation; the soul being elated, and thrown off its guard. At such seasons much of the joy that is felt may be merely natural, as David's would probably be when rescued from that corroding care which injures the body as well as distresses the soul. There is danger of mistaking; of supposing it to be all spiritual, and hence of imagining the soul to be in a higher state of grace than it really is, and so, of being imperceptibly drawn into a state of false security. There is then especial need of that prayer. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." And with some peculiarly, who being of a sanguine constitution of mind, are in times of enjoyment, soon puffed up and brought into danger. *Henry March*.

Verse 8. (*last clause*). Your song and your prayer must be directed to God as *the God of your life*. You do not own him as God, except you own and adore him as your all sufficient good, and that "fulness which filleth all in all." You

detract from the glory of his Godhead, if you attribute not this to him; and if, accordingly, as one that cannot live without him, you do not seek union with him, and join yourself to him, and then rejoice and solace yourself in that blessed conjunction. *John Howe.*

Verse 9. *God my rock.* David was a fugitive, with little means of defence, and continually pursued by enemies who were powerful and numerous. The country in which he wandered was mountainous, and he often sought and found shelter on the tops of precipitous rocks, or in their natural hollows or excavated caves. Thus the idea of shelter and defence being associated in his mind with that of a rock, how natural that he should apply the term to God, and when seeking him as his refuge and helper, should address him by that appellation... *Why hast thou forgotten me?* Not that he supposed he was literally forgotten of God, so as to be given up and abandoned by him; because he had still sufficient trust in his faithfulness to seek him for a refuge, and to hope in his mercy. His expression is to be regarded as the language of feeling, not of judgment. He felt, he seemed, as one forgotten by God. Those visits of love, those manifestations of favour with which he had formerly been indulged, and which then seemed to him to be so many tokens of the divine remembrance, were now withheld, now when, on account of his distress, they appeared so unspeakably more needful and desirable; whence it was that he felt as one forgotten. *Henry March.*

Verse 10. *Mine enemies.* It is strange that *he* should have enemies, that was so harmless a man that when they were sick and distressed, he prayed for them, and put on sackcloth for them, as it is, Ps 35:1-28. This compassionate sweet natured man, yet, notwithstanding, you see he had enemies, and enemies that would discover themselves to reproach him, and that bitterly; in the bitterest manner, they reproach him in his religion. We may be armed by this observation against the scandal of opposition—that if we meet with enemies in the world, we should not be much offended at it; grieve we may, but wonder we need not. Was there ever any that did more good than our Saviour Christ? "He went about doing good." Ac 10:38. He did never a miracle that was harmful (but only of the swine that were drowned in the sea, and that was their own fault), but he went about doing all the good he could; yet, notwithstanding, we see what malicious opposites he had. That that is true of the head must be true in the members. Therefore we should rejoice in our conformity to Christ, if it be in a good cause, that we find enemies and opposition. The devil is not made a Christian yet, and he will never be made good, for his is *in termino*, as we say, he is in his bounds, his nature is immovable; he is in hell in regard of his estate, though he be loose to do mischief. Now, until the devil be good,

God's children shall never want enemies; and he will never be good; therefore, though there were good kings and good governors over all the world, yet good men shall never want enemies as long as the devil is alive, as long as he hath anything to do in the world. Enemies, therefore, we must look for, and such enemies as will not conceal their malice neither; for that were something, if they would suffer their malice to boil and concoct in their own hearts, but that will not be, but "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak."

Richard Sibbes.

Verse 10. *They say daily unto me.* Here's their constancy and perseverance in this their carriage and language, it is *daily*, or *all the day*, (Mwyh-lk) It is not only for a fit and away, but it is their frequent and continual practice; it's every, and it's all the day; they begin in the morning, and they hold out still till night as unquiet persons use to do; and they begin the week with it, and so they continue till the end; he could never come into their company or near them, but he had such language from them. *Thomas Horton.*

Verse 10. *Where is thy God?* David might rather have said to them, Where are your eyes? where is your sight? for God is not only in heaven, but in me. Though David was shut out from the sanctuary, yet David's soul was a sanctuary for God; for God is not tied to a sanctuary made with hands. God hath two sanctuaries, he hath two heavens—the heaven of heavens and a broken spirit. God dwelt in David as in his temple. God was with David and in him; and he was never more with him, nor never more in him than in his greatest afflictions. They wanted eyes, he wanted not God. Though sometimes God hide himself, not only from the world but from his own children, yet he is there; howsoever their sorrow is such that it dims their sight (as we see in Hagar), so that they cannot see him for the present, he sometimes looks in their face, as we see in Mary's case. She could not see Christ distinctly, but thought him to be the gardener. There is a kind of concealment awhile in heavenly wisdom, yet notwithstanding, God is with his children always, and they know it by faith though not by feeling always...Therefore, it was an ignorant question of them to ask, *Where is thy God?* It showed that they were ignorant of the passages of God's dealing with his children, as indeed none are greater atheists than your scoffers. *Where is thy God?* as if God had been only a God of observation, to be observed outwardly in all his passages towards his children; whereas, as I said, he is a God hiding himself oftentimes; and he shows himself in contrary conditions most of all, most comfortably. His work is by contraries. But these carnal men were ignorant of the mysteries of religion, and the mysteries of divine providence towards God's children. Therefore, their question savours of their disposition, *Where is now thy God?* *Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 10. *Where is thy God?* It is the deriding question which persecutors put to the saints in the time of their trials and troubles, *Ubi Deus?* "Where is now your God?" But they may return a bold and confident answer, *Hic Deus*, "Our God is here, "our God is nigh unto us, our God is round about us, our God is in the midst of us, our God has given us his promise "that he will never leave us nor forsake us." Heb 13:5. In every trouble, in every danger, in every death, the Lord will be sure to keep us company. God will bear his children company, not only whilst they are in a delightful paradise, but also when they are in a howling wilderness. Ho 2:14. When a company of poor Christians were going into banishment, one standing by to see them pass along said, that it was a very sad condition that those poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and to be made companions of the beasts of the fields. True, said another, it were a sad condition indeed, if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, for God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of his presence whithersoever they go, his presence is infinite, and filleth all places. The Rabbins put *Makom*, which signifies *place*, among the names of God; Bythner brings them in expounding that text Es 4:14, thus: "Deliverance shall arise from another place, "that is, from God. Now, they called God *place*, because he is in every place, filling heaven and earth with his presence. *Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 10. Forest flies, small as they are, drive the noble war horse mad; therefore David says, *As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?* *Frederick William Robertson*, 1851.

Verse 11. Imitate here the example of David, instead of yielding to a vague grief: cite your soul; *enquire* of it the particular cause of your sorrow: different remedies will be requisite according to the different sources of your distress; and be careful that you trifle not with God, and your comfort, and your salvation, while you enquire of your soul, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* Be impartial, there is another and more solemn judgment to succeed: be persevering, like the psalmist, return, again and again to the investigation: be prayerful; self love, or the delusion of your heart, may otherwise deceive you. Pray then to God, to "search you, and see if there be any wicked way in you." *Henry Kollock, D.D., in "Sermons," etc.* 1822.

Verse 11. *Hope.* Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us. *Samuel Smiles, L.L.D.*

Verse 11. *God...is the health of my countenance.* The health of David's countenance was not in his countenance, but *in his God*, and this makes his

faith silence his fears, and so peremptorily resolve upon it, that there is a time coming (how near so ever he now lies to the grave's mouth) when he *shall yet praise him*. The health and life of thy grace lie both of them, not in thy grace, saith faith, but *in God*, who is *thy God*, therefore I shall yet live and praise him. I do not wonder that the weak Christian is melancholy and sad, when he sees his sickly face in any other glass than this. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 11. *The health of my countenance.* The countenance is often a true index to the mind. In the present awakening in religion, nothing is more remarkable than the sad or joyous looks of those whom God has spiritually exercised. It is easy who are sad, and who happy. There is nothing new in this; the psalmist says, "My soul is cast down within me." Therefore had he a dejected countenance; but said he, "Send thy light and thy truth; let them lead me; then will I go unto God, my exceeding joy...And he shall be *the health of my countenance*." In his sorrow, the face of Jesus was marred more than any man's, and his visage more than the sons of men. The martyr Stephen was so filled with the sight of Jesus, that in the midst of his persecutors, with death in prospect, he had a face which "shone as the face of an angel." My friend, how is it with thee? Is thy countenance sad? or doth it shine with the joy of the Lord, telling the true tale of thy life and lot? *J. Denham Smith*. 1860.

Verse 11. Hast thou seen the sun shine forth in February, and the sky blue, and the hedgerows bursting into bud, and the primrose peeping beneath the bank, and the birds singing in the bushes? Thou hast thought that spring was already come in its beauty and sweet odours. But a few days, and the clouds returned, and the atmosphere was chilled, and the birds were mute, and snow was on the ground, and thou hast said that spring would never come. And thus sometimes the young convert finds his fears removed, and the comforts of the gospel shed abroad in his heart, and praise and thanksgiving, and a new song put in his mouth. And he deems unadvisedly that his troubles are past for ever. But awhile, and his doubts return, and his comforts die away, and his light is taken from him, and his spirit is overwhelmed, and he is fain to conclude that salvation and all its blessings are not for him. But the spring, though late, shall break at last. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?* *H. G. Salter's "Book of Illustrations,"* 1840.

Verse 11. His arguments and motives hereunto are impregnated with very great sense and strength; and urged upon himself as the just rate thereof. *Hope thou in God*. For he is 1. *God*. 2. *Thy God*. 3. *The health of thy countenance*, and 4. *One whom thou shalt* (certainly and for ever) *praise as such*. And 5. *Do it yet*, as lamentable and hopeless as thy case appears at present through seeming difficulties or unlikelihoods. God and ourselves well understood, deeply

considered, and skilfully urged and improved, give gracious hearts the best encouragements and supports under the severest accidents of time. And they will very strangely animate our hopes in God under our sorest troubles and dejections. David had (1) confidence in God; and (2) reasons for it; and (3) skill and a heart to urge them. When he reviewed himself, he saw that his soul was gracious; and so he knew God valued it. It was bent for praising God; and so he knew that he should have an opportunity and cause to do it, through some signal favours from him. He had an interest in God; and he would neither lose it nor neglect it, and he had great experience of God's former mercies, and he would not forget them. And when he thinks on God, then praises must be thought on too, and everything relating to it, and all the divine perfections, within the circumference of his knowledge, must have their fresh remembrances and powerful sense revived upon his own heart. *Matthew Sylvester (1636-1708), in "Morning Exercises."*

Verse 11. The soul, when once greatly disturbed, is often not soon calmed, on account of infirmities and remaining corruptions. *Henry March.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The longing heart and the panting hart compared.

Verses 1,2. Those who have enjoyed the presence of God in the public ordinances of religion will greatly desire, if deprived of them, to be favoured with them again...Prevention from attending the public ordinances of God's house may be made the means of great benefit to the soul.

1. By renewing our relish for the provisions of the Lord's house, which so soon and so often palls.

2. By making us to prize the means of grace more highly. There is, through human degeneracy, a proneness to value things less, however excellent in themselves, because of their being common, or plentiful, or of easy attainment.

3. By driving us more directly from God. *H. March.*

Verses 1-3. The home sickness of the soul. What awakens it in the soul? To what is it directed, or does it point or tend? Wherewith can it be satisfied? By the bitter, but oftentimes wholesome food of tears. *J. P. Lange.*

Verses 1-2. Those who have enjoyed the presence of God in the public ordinances of religion will greatly desire, if deprived of them, to be favoured with them again...Prevention from attending the public ordinances of God's house may be

Verse 2.

1. What thirsts? "my soul."
2. For what? "for God."
3. In what way? "when shall I come."

Or, the cause, incentives, excellences, and privileges of spiritual thirst.

Verse 2. (*last clause*). The true view of public worship.

Verse 2. (*last clause*). Appearance before God here and hereafter. *Isaac Watts, D.D., Two Sermons.*

Verses 1-3. The home sickness of the soul. What awakens it in the soul? To what is it directed, or does it point or tend? Wherewith can it be satisfied? By the bitter, but oftentimes wholesome food of tears. *J. P. Lange.*

Verse 3. The believer's Lent, and its salt meats.

1. What causes the sorrow?
2. What will remove it?
3. What benefit will come of it?

Verses 3, 10. The carriage of David's enemies.

1. The *nature* of it, and that was *reproach*.
2. The *expression* of it, *They say unto me*.
3. The *constancy* of it: *daily*, or, *all the day long*.
4. The *specification* of it, in a scornful and opprobrious question: *Where is (now) thy God? Thomas Horton.*

Verse 4.

1. It is common for the mind, in seasons of sorrow, to seek relief from the present in recollections of the past.

2. In recollections of past enjoyments, those that relate to social worship will be peculiarly dear to the servant of God.

3. Man is a social being, hence he derives help from united worship.

Verse 4. *I pour out my soul in me.* The uselessness of mistrustful introspection.

Verse 4. *I had gone with the multitude,* etc. Company, if it be that which is good, is a very blessed and comfortable accommodation in sundry respects.

1. It is an exercise of men's faculties, and the powers and abilities of the mind.

2. It is a fence against danger, and a preservative against sadness and various temptations.

3. An opportunity of doing more good. *Thomas Horton.*

Verse 4. *I had gone,* etc. Sunny memories, their lessons of gratitude and hope.

Verse 4. *(last clause).* Not Chaucer's tales of the Canterbury pilgrims, but David's tales of the Jerusalem pilgrims.

Verse 4. *With the voice,* etc. Congregational singing defended, extolled, discriminated, and urged.

Verse 5. Sorrow put to the question, or the Consolatory Catechism.

Verse 5. The sweetness, safety, and rightness of hope *in* God. Good grip for the anchor.

Verse 5. The music of the future, *I shall yet praise him.*

Verse 5. *The help of his countenance,* or the sustaining power of God's presence.

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down?*

1. The mind, even of a holy man, may be unduly cast down and disquieted.

2. In cases of undue dejection and disquietude, the proper remedy is to expostulate with the soul, and to direct it to the *only true source* of relief.

3. Expostulation with the soul in times of distress, is then productive of its proper end, when it leads to an immediate application to God. *H. March.*

Verse 5. An emphasis of *enquiry or examination*; David calls himself to account for his present passion and trouble of mind. An emphasis of *reproof or objugation*; David chides and rebukes himself for his present distemper. "*Why art thou thus?*" *Thomas Horton.*

Verses 5, 11. or *help* and *health*.

Verse 6. *Remember thee.* The consolation derivable from thoughts of God.

Verse 6. *Therefore will I remember thee.* There are two ways of understanding this; each of them instructive and profitable...

1. It may be considered as an expression of *determined remembrance of God* should he ever be found in such places and conditions. Believers can suppose the worst, and yet hope for the best.

2. The language may be considered as an expression of *encouragement derived from reflection*. He had been in these situations and circumstances, and had experienced in them displays of divine providence and grace. *W. Jay.*

Verse 6. Ebenezers, many, varied, remembered, helpful.

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep.* See Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 865.

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep.* One evil inviting another.

1. The *variety* of evils—one evil to another.

2. The *conjunction* of evils—one evil with another.

3. The *connexion* of evils, or dependence and mutual reference—one evil upon another. *T. Horton.*

Verse 7. The threefold depth which the saints and servants of God are subject to here in this life.

1. The depth of *temptation*.

2. The depth of *desertion*.

3. The depth of *affliction and human calamities*. *T. Horton*.

Verses 7, 8. In seasons of affliction the servants of God will be distinguished from others by their ready perception and acknowledgment of the hand of God in their trials. *H. March*.

Verse 8. Daily mercy and nightly song; the mercies of sunshine and shade.

Verse 8. (*last clause*). The blessed alternation between praise and prayer.

Verse 8. *God of my life*. Author, sustainer, comforter, object, crown, consummation.

Verse 8. *The God of my life*. There is a threefold life whereof we partake, and God is the God of each unto us. First, the life of *nature*; secondly, the life of *grace*; thirdly, the life of *glory*. *T. Horton*.

Verse 9. *God my rock*. Appellations of God, suited to circumstances.

Verse 9. *My rock*. See Keach in his metaphors.

Verse 9.

1. Why *thou*?

2. Why *I*?

3. Why *he*? It is a *why* to all three. To God, *Why has thou forgotten me?* To David himself, *Why do I go mourning?* To David's *adversary*, whoever he was, *Why does the enemy oppress me?*—*T. Horton*.

Verse 10. The most grievous of taunts.

Verse 11. *My God*.

1. It's a word of *interest*—*My God*, as in covenant with him.

2. A word of *compliance*—*My God*, as submitting to him.

3. A word of affection—*My God*, as taking delight, and rejoicing in him. *T. Horton*.

Verse 11. A catechism, a consolation, a commendation.

Verse 11.

1. David's *experience* of God. *He is the health, or help of my countenance.*
2. His *relation* to God, and *interest* in him—*And my God.* T. Horton.

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM

A Practical Exposition of the Forty-second Psalm, in ten Sermons, in *Choice and Practical Expositions on four select Psalms*. Psalms 4, 42, 51, 63. By THOMAS HORTON, D.D. 1675. Folio.

Sabbaths at Home: or, a help to their right improvement; founded on *the Forty-second and Forty-third Psalms*. Intended for the use of pious persons when prevented from attending the public worship of God. By HENRY MARCH. London: 1823.

On the eleventh verse of this Psalm there are the following works:—Twelve Sermons, in "*A Cordial for a Fainting Soule.*" By JOHN COLLINGS. 1652. Part 2, pp. 133-206.

Thirteen Sermons in the works of WILLIAM BRIDGE (1600-1670), entitled, "*A Lifting Up for the Downcast.*" Volume 2, of the edition of 1845.

Comfort and Counsel for Dejected Souls. By JOHN DURANT. 8vo. 1651.

The Soul's Conflict with Itself. By RICHARD SIBBES. (Numerous old editions). In Sibbes' Works, Nichol's Puritan Series, vol. I.

Psalm 43

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. On account of the similarity of the structure of this Psalm to that of Psalm forty-two, it has been supposed to be a fragment wrongly separated from the preceding song; but it is always dangerous to allow these theories of error in Holy Scripture, and in this instance it would be very difficult to show just cause for such an admission. Why should the Psalm have been broken? Its similarity would have secured its unity had it ever been part and parcel of the forty-second. Is it not far more likely that some in their fancied wisdom united them wrongly in the few MSS in which they are found as one? We believe the fact is that the style of the poetry was pleasant to the writer, and therefore in after life he wrote this supplemental hymn after the same manner. As an appendix it needed no title. David complains of his enemies, and asks the privilege of communion with God as his surest deliverance from them.

DIVISION. The psalmist cried to God in prayer, Ps 43:1-3. Promises praise in the anticipation of an answer, Ps 43:4, and chides himself for his despondency, Ps 43:5.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Judge me, O God.* Others are unable to understand my motives, and unwilling to give me a just verdict. My heart is clear as to intent and therefore I bring my case before thee, content that thou wilt impartially weigh my character, and right my wrongs. If thou wilt judge, thy acceptance of my conduct will be enough for me; I can laugh at human misrepresentation if my conscience knows that thou art on my side; thou art the only one I care for; and besides, thy verdict will not sleep, but thou wilt see practical justice done to thy slandered servant. *And plead my cause against an ungodly nation.* One such advocate as the Lord will more than suffice to answer a nation of brawling accusers. When people are ungodly, no wonder that they are unjust; those who are not true to God himself cannot be expected to deal rightly with his people. Hating the King they will not love his subjects. Popular opinion weighs with many, but divine opinion is far more weighty with the gracious few. One good word from God outweighs ten thousand railing speeches of men. He bears a brazen shield before him whose reliance in all things is upon his God; the arrows of calumny fall harmlessly from such a buckler. *O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.* Deceit and injustice are boon companions: he who fawns will not fear to slander. From two such devils none can deliver us but God. His wisdom can outwit the craft of the vilest serpent, and his power can overmatch the most raging lion. Whether this was Doeg or Ahithophel is small matter, such double distilled villains are plentiful, and the only way of dealing

with them is to refer the matter to the righteous Judge of all; if we try to fight them with their own weapons, we shall suffer more serious injury from ourselves than from them. O child of God, leave these thine enemies in better hands, remembering that vengeance belongeth not to thee, but to thy Lord. Turn to him in prayer, crying, "O deliver me, "and ere long you shall publish abroad the remembrance of his salvation.

Verse 2. *For.* Here is argument, which is the very sinew of prayer. If we reasoned more with the Lord we should have more victories in supplication. *Thou art the God of my strength.* All my strength belongs to thee—I will not, therefore, use it on my own behalf against my personal foes. All my strength comes from thee, I therefore seek help from thee, who art able to bestow it. All my strength is in thee, I leave therefore this task of combating my foes entirely in thy hands. Faith which leaves such things alone is wise faith. Note the assurance of David, *thou art*, not I hope and trust so, but I know it is so; we shall find confidence to be our consolation. *Why dost thou cast me off?* Why am I treated as if thou didst loathe me? Am I become an offence unto thee? There are many reasons why the Lord might cast us off, but no reason shall prevail to make him do so. He hath not cast off his people, though he for awhile treats them as cast offs. Learn from this question that it is well to enquire into dark providences, but we must enquire of God, not of our own fears. He who is the author of a mysterious trial can best expound it to us.

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Why do I wander hither and thither like a restless spirit? Why wear I the weeds of sorrow on my body, and the lines of grief on my face? Oppression makes a wise man mad; why, Lord, am I called to endure so much of it for so long a time? Here again is a useful question, addressed to the right quarter. The answer will often be because we are saints, and must be made like our Head, and because such sorrow is chastening to the spirit, and yieldeth comfortable fruit. We are not to cross question the Lord in peevishness, but we may ask of him in humility; God help us to observe the distinction so as not to sin through stress of sorrow.

Verse 3. *O send out thy light and thy truth.* The joy of thy presence and the faithfulness of thy heart; let both of these be manifest to me. Reveal my true character by thy light, and reward me according to thy truthful promise. As the sun darts forth his beams, so does the Lord send forth his favour and his

faithfulness towards all his people; and as all nature rejoices in the sunshine, even so the saints triumph in the manifestation of the love and fidelity of their God, which, like the golden sunbeam, lights up even the darkest surroundings with delightful splendour. *Let them lead me.* Be these my star to guide me to my rest. Be these my Alpine guides to conduct me over mountains and precipices to the abodes of grace. *Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.* First in thy mercy bring me to thine earthly courts, and end my weary exile, and then in due time admit me to thy celestial palace above. We seek not light to sin by, nor truth to be exalted by it, but that they may become our practical guides to the nearest communion with God: only such light and truth as are sent us from God will do this, common light is not strong enough to show the road to heaven, nor will mere moral or physical truths assist to the holy hill; but the light of the Holy Spirit, and the truth as it is in Jesus, these are elevating, sanctifying, perfecting; and hence their virtue in leading us to the glorious presence of God. It is beautiful to observe how David's longing to be away from the oppression of man always leads him to sigh more intensely for communion with God.

Verse 4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God.* If David might but be favoured with such a deliverance as would permit his return, it would not be his own house or heritage which would be his first resort, but to the altar of God his willing feet should conduct him. His whole heart would go as sacrifice to the altar, he himself counting it his greatest happiness to be permitted to lie as a burnt offering wholly dedicated to the Lord. With what exultation should believers draw near unto Christ, who is the antitype of the altar! clearer light should give greater intensity of desire. *Unto God my exceeding joy.* It was not the altar as such that the psalmist cared for, he was no believer in the heathenism of ritualism: his soul desired spiritual fellowship, fellowship with God himself in very deed. What are all the rites of worship unless the Lord be in them; what, indeed, but empty shells and dry husks? Note the holy rapture with which David regards his Lord! He is not his *joy* alone, but his *exceeding joy*; not the fountain of joy, the giver of joy, or the maintainer of joy, but that joy itself. The margin hath it, "The gladness of my joy, "*i.e.*, the soul, the essence, the very bowels of my joy. To draw near to God, who is such a joy to us, may well be the object of our hungering and thirsting. *Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee.* His best music for his best love. When God fills us with joy we ought ever to pour it out at his feet in praise, and all the skill and talent we have should be laid under contribution to increase the divine revenue of glory. *O God, my God.* How he dwells upon the name which he loves so well! He already harps on it as though his harp music had begun. What sweeter sounds

can music know than these four words? To have God in possession, and to know it by faith, is the heart's heaven—a fulness of bliss lies therein.

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* If God be thine, why this dejection? If he uplifts thee, why art thou so near the ground? The dew of love is falling, O withering heart, revive. *And why art thou disquieted within me?* What cause is there to break the repose of thy heart? Wherefore indulge unreasonable sorrows, which benefit no one, fret thyself, and dishonour thy God? Why overburden thyself with forebodings? *Hope in God, or wait for God.* There is need of patience, but there is ground for hope. The Lord cannot but avenge his own elect. The heavenly Father will not stand by and see his children trampled on for ever; as surely as the sun is in the heavens, light must arise for the people of God, though for awhile they may walk in darkness. Why, then, should we not be encouraged, and lift up our head with comfortable hope? *For I shall yet praise him.* Times of complaint will soon end, and seasons of praise will begin. Come, my heart, look out of the window, borrow the telescopic glass, forecast a little, and sweeten thy chamber with sprigs of the sweet herb of hope. *Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* My God will clear the furrows from my brow, and the tear marks from my cheek; therefore will I lift up my head and smile in the face of the storm. The Psalm has a blessed ending, such as we would fain imitate when death puts an end to our mortal existence.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is evidently a continuation or supplement to the preceding. In some MSS of Kenicott and de Rossi's, they are united, and make one Psalm. *George Phillips, B.D.*

Verse 1. *Judge me, O God, and plead my cause,* etc. Believers may appeal to God's justice, and plead God's righteousness.

1. Touching suffering wrongs of men. Touching suffering wrongs of men, believers may appeal upon these three grounds:

(a) The injustice that men do to believers, is as well against *God's just nature*, as against the believers' ease. So their appeals to God are agreeable to God's enmity against injustice; therefore, his enmity concurs with their appeals. Ro 1:18.

(b) Justice in men is according to God's nature, as well as for the believer's welfare, and, therefore, the disposition and inclination of God's nature concurs with their prayers for deliverance. Ps 11:7 Lu 23:6-7.

(c) Such wrong God who do wrong his people 2Ch 15:11 Zec 2:8 Ac 9:4-5; so that in deliverance God vindicates himself as well as the believers.

2. Touching sin in relation to God's wrath. Touching sin in relation to God's wrath, a true believer may plead God's justice or righteousness on these three grounds:

(a) Christ our Advocate or Attorney so pleads. Joh 17:24, etc. Now, the client may plead the same as the advocate, seeing it is in relation to the same party and the same issue.

(b) Christ hath satisfied God's justice, so that on Christ was laid all the sins of all believers. He was "wounded" for them. Now, God cannot in justice punish twice; therefore, seeing Christ was wounded, believers must be healed. Isa 53:1-12.

(c). Believers have God's righteousness imputed to them 2Co 5:1-21; therefore, God must deal with believers as he will deal with his own righteousness.

Useful is this doctrine two ways.

1. For terror to the enemies of believers. How many prevailing cries to the justice of God are against such enemies? (a) Their own sins cry. (b) Believers injuries cry. (c) Believer's prayers cry. (d) Christ's intercession cries over against their prayers and desires Re 6:9, compared with Re 8:3.

2. The second use is for comfort to believers, that as God's mercy is for them, so his justice to deliver them, not only from *men*, but from *sin*; and in and through Christ they may humbly plead justice as against sinners, so against sin; not only against the guilt but against the power, that seeing Christ died, sin should not live. *Condensed from Nathanael Homes, 1652.*

Verse 1. *Ungodly...deceitful...unjust.* There are *ungodly* men who, being destitute of religious principle, will not scruple to injure us, when they can thereby gratify their passions or advance their worldly interests. There are *deceitful* men who will put on the garb of friendship, and acquire our confidence and esteem, and then treacherously cheat us out of our property, or our reputation, or our peace. There are *unjust* men, who by fraud or by

violence, would rob us of our dearest rights and most valuable possessions, and not only reduce our powers and opportunities of doing good, but even diminish our means of comfortable subsistence. And there are *oppressors*, who taking advantage of our weakness or dependence, and trampling alike on the maxims of equity and humanity, may exact from us unreasonable services, impose upon us heavy burdens and cruel restraints, and ply us with insults, and harassments, and deprivations, from which we can make no escape, and for which we can find no redress. *Andrew Thomson, D.D., in "Lectures on Portions of the Psalms."* 1826.

Verse 2. *Thou art the God of my strength.* The godly man hath from God a threefold strength, namely, natural, providential, and spiritual.

1. *Natural*, Ac 17:28. This is twofold: of body, of mind. Of robustness, hardness, and agility of body; of wit, invention, and valour of mind. Now, these donations of corporal and mental natural endowments are God's gifts. Ps 18:34,39 ...

2. *Providential* strength, which is threefold: (a) God's donation of strengthening mercies—Corporal: wine to make glad, and bread to strengthen. Ps 104:15, and mental, common gifts; as Paul had a singular gift of language and single life; Apollos of elocution, argument, power of convincing. (b) Providential strength is God's making way for his people to act and put forth their strength. Ps 78:50. (c) Providential strength is God's concurrence with our lawful human acting. Ps 18:29.

3. The third sort of power is *spiritual*: God is the godly man's spiritual power. 1Jo 2:14: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, " namely, with spiritual strength, for it follows, "The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." This is the main strength of a godly man; as that text hints, namely, young men are naturally strong, but St. John takes no notice of that, but commends them for their spiritual strength. This spiritual strength is from the word of the Spirit, and from the Spirit of the word, that is, from the Spirit accompanying the word.

From *the word of the Spirit*, the word of God. Ps 119:50: "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me." To be "*quickened*", "*i.e.*, enlivened, is to be full of vigour and spirit and to act mightily, and to "*comfort*" is, as the word signifies, to make strong; for when a man is most cheerful with sobriety, he is most strong. St. John in that place fore quoted, saith the young men to whom he wrote were strong because the word of God abode in them. For Pr 12:25 "whereas sorrow in the heart of man maketh it stoop"—makes it

sickly, weak, drooping—"a good word maketh it glad, "cheerful, strong, vigorous. And so if the word of a wise friend, how much more the word of God, with its many strengthening promises? Ps 20:2 119:28. The word of God is the very mind and will of God, and power of God, and with the word God created the world, therefore, he that receives this word must needs receive a great deal of strength. Ro 1:16.

Verse 2. *The Spirit of the word*, the Holy Spirit that useth to accompany the word to them that receive it. By his Spirit God is in a believer 1Co 6:9 Eph 2:1-22; and this is the spirit of strength and power. Eph 3:16 2Ti 1:7. As a powerful, active soul makes a vigorous body, so the Spirit in the soul makes the soul powerful and strong, being the soul of the soul of a believer. We read more than once or twice in the Scriptures, that when believers did any eminent act, it is said, *the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they did* so and so, *i.e.*, the Spirit of God in them did them put forth its power to make them act powerfully. *Condensed from Nathanael Homes.*

Verse 3. *O send out thy light and thy truth.* Possibly there may be an allusion to the Urim and Thummim, as the symbol of light and truth. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3. *Light and truth.* Delightful and all comprehensive words. They contain all the salvation and all the desire of a believing, confiding soul. But it is only when thus combined—separated they are no longer a ground of trust and joy. For what would favour avail without faithfulness? It would be no more than the uncertain friendship of men, who smile today and reproach tomorrow; who make large promises, but do not perform them. Even the *light* which angels and glorified spirits enjoy in heaven would be insufficient to banish all fear and to fill them with satisfaction, were it not for their confidence in the *truth* of God. How much more, then, must this be the case with erring, sinful, mortals on earth? When the humble spirit is bowed down under a sense of its utter unworthiness and innumerable weaknesses and defilements, its negligences, follies, and wanderings, what should save from despair but the confidence that he who has been merciful will also be faithful; that God is truth as well as light; that he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; "that he "*cannot* lie, "and that, therefore, "his mercy endureth for ever?" On the other hand, *truth* without *light*, faithfulness without grace, would be only the dreadful execution of terrible but just denunciations on the transgressors of the holy law. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam ate, and in that day became the subject of sin and death. This was *truth* executing judgment. But *light* arose around the darkness; beams of mercy tempered the heavy cloud. The promise of the Great Deliverer was given; then faithfulness was enlisted on the

side of grace, and became engaged for its bestowment; "mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other." Since then, all humble and trusting souls have beheld them united, and have made their union the ground of their confidence and joy. *Henry March.*

Verse 3. *Thy tabernacles.* There were two tabernacles, one at Zion, where the ark stood, and another at Gibeon. 1Ch 16:37,39. It is not to this fact that the psalmist alludes, however, but to the circumstance, in all probability of the different parts of the tabernacle. There was, first the holiest of all, then the sanctuary, and then the tabernacle of the convocation. Heb 9:1-8. *John Morison.*

Verse 4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God.* Let us remember that the approach to God in the holy place is by means of the altar, whence eternally ascendeth the fragrance and the preciousness of the one whole, perfect burnt offering, and where for ever and ever the divine holiness resteth and feedeth with its pure fire with infinite satisfaction, with inconceivable delight. Oh, what a holy, a divine, a wondrous place is this *altar of God!* That altar now means all the value and everlasting efficacy of the one offering of Christ unto God for us; and it is in the full power and blessedness thereof that we draw nigh to God. To this point, to this unspeakably blessed position, the light and the truth of God will attract the child of God. Toward this altar all the rays of the light of divine favour and grace, and of divine truth and holiness, have from eternity converged; and from this point they shine forth toward and upon the soul and heart of the poor, far off penitent, attracting him to that altar where he may meet his God. Let us then come to the altar of God; let us enter the cloud of holy incense that filleth the tabernacle of the Most High; let us realise how perfectly God is satisfied with that which Christ has done, with his obedience in dying to meet the claims of divine justice on the sinner, and to complete the perfect surrender of himself as our *exceeding joy*, even the gladness of our joy, the heart, essence, substance, and reality of our joy. *John Offord, 1868.*

Verse 4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God.* He would with cheerfulness run and offer up the sacrifice of thanksgiving to his gracious deliverer; he would take his own soul as the burnt offering, and kindle and burn it up with the fire of a vigorous love and raised affections terminating upon God, the flames whereof should ascend to him alone...*Unto God my exceeding joy*, or, as the Hebrew is more exactly translated, *unto God the gladness of his joy*—that which gave a relish to every other comfort, which was the soul and life of his pleasures, and could only make them real and lasting; it was God who raised his joy to fulness of satisfaction and contentment. *William Dunlop.*

Verse 4. *Then will I go...unto God.* The expression of *going to God* implies SUBMISSION and FRIENDSHIP

1. *Submission.* I will go and pay my homage to him, as my Sovereign; I will go and hear what he says; I will go and receive his orders.

2. *Friendship.* I will go and consult him, and converse with him as a friend; and be thankful that, in such a troublesome and ensnaring world, I have such a friend to advise with.

(a) I will go and tell him my *griefs*; how greatly I am distressed with some particular disorder in my body, or with some disturbance in my family, or with some disappointment in my worldly circumstances, or (which is worse than all of them together) with a sad darkness in my soul.

(b) I will go and tell him my *joys*, for even in this vale of tears "my heart is" sometimes "glad, and my glory rejoiceth."

(c) I will go and tell him of my *sins*. He knows them, indeed, already, but he shall hear them from *me*.

(d) I will go and tell him my *fears*; how greatly I am distressed at times, when I perceive this or the other corruption so strong, which I thought had received its death wound... how I tremble when I have by my folly provoked the Lord to leave me, for fear he will never return again, etc.

(e) I will go and tell him my *hopes*, for some hope I have amidst all my discouragements...I will go and tell him all this; I will unbosom and unburden my whole heart to him; and if my *necessities* did not drive me to him, I should go to him from inclination. *Condensed from Samuel Lavington.*

Verse 4. *Unto God.* Believers are not satisfied in the use of religious duties, unless they arrive at God himself in those duties. We speak not here of that arrival at God himself which is by and after all duties, to a beatific vision of God in glory, but we speak of that arrival at God himself which is to be had *in* duties, while we are in the exercise of duties; namely, to attain to God's special presence in them, in an actual communion, communication and conversing with God, so that we are spiritually sensible he is with us therein. I say God's *special* presence and actual communion, to distinguish it from that ordinary habitual presence and communion of God's being with a believer at all times. Joh 14:16. *Nathanael Homes.*

Verse 4. *My exceeding joy.* The psalmist might well call God his *exceeding* joy, for it infinitely exceeds all other joy in its nature, degree, and duration. *Samuel Lavington.*

Verse 4. *My exceeding joy.* As faith acquires more strength, we come to think of God and address him in more endearing terms. *J. P. Lange.*

Verse 4. *Exceeding joy.* This can be said of no other joy. All other beauties have their boundaries, all other glories have their glooms. This is that illimitable sea, God. *E. Paxton Hood.*

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul.* He comes to his former remedy; he had stilled his grief once before with the same meditation and upbraiding of his own soul, and chiding himself; but he comes to it here as a *probatum est*, as a tried remedy; he takes up his soul very short, *Why art thou so cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?* You see how David's passions here are interlaced with comforts, and his comforts with passions, till at last he gets the victory of his own heart. Beloved, neither sin nor grief for sin, are stilled and quieted at the first. You have some short spirited Christians, if all be not quiet at the first, all is lost with them; but it is not so with a true Christian soul, with the best soul living. It was not so with David when he was in distemper; he checks himself, the distemper was not yet stilled; he checks himself again, then the distemper breaks out again; he checks himself again, and all little enough to bring his soul to a holy, blessed, quiet, temper, to that blessed tranquillity and rest that the soul should be in before it can enjoy its own happiness, and enjoy sweet communion with God. As you see in physic, perhaps one purge will not carry away the peccant humour, then a second must be added; perhaps that will not do it, then there must be a third; so when the soul hath been once checked, perhaps it will not do, we must fall to it again, go to God again. And then it may be there will be breaking out of the grief and malady again; we must to it again, and never give over, that is the right temper of a Christian. *Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 5. *Hope in God.* The more terrible the storm, the more necessary is the anchor. Heb 6:19. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 5. *Hope in God.* The complete and perfect state of God's children here is not in *re*, but in *spe*: as Christ's kingdom is not of this world, so is not our hope. The worldling's motto is, "a bird in the hand." Give me today, say they, and take tomorrow whoso will. But the word of believers is, *spero meliora*—my hopes are better than my present possessions. *Elnathan Parr.*

Verse 5. The varied conflicts of the soul afford occasion for the exercise of the graces, and thus, through the divine wisdom and goodness, are made the means of eventual good. *Henry March.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. We apply to God—

1. As our *Judge: Judge me.*
2. As our *Advocate: Plead my cause.*
3. As our *Deliverer: O deliver me.*

Verse 1. Popular opinion outweighed by divine approbation.

Verse 1. How the Lord pleads the cause of his people.

Verse 1. Deceit and injustice twin vipers; their origin, their character, their folly, their end.

Verses 1-2, 4-5. *Five mys:*

1. My cause—"plead it."
2. My strength—"thou art."
3. My joy—God is.
4. My soul—"why disquieted."
5. My God.

Verse 3. *O send out thy light and thy truth.*

1. What is truth?
2. How truth is to be diffused.
3. Why it should be diffused.
4. Who must be the main agent of it. *Varied from Dr. Bogue. 1800.*

Verse 3. The blessings desired; the guidance sought; the end longed for.

Verse 3. Under what influence we should resort to divine worship.

Verse 4.

1. The good man's duty—expressed by *going to God*.
2. His *blessedness*—expressed by *rejoicing in God*. *Samuel Lavington*.

Verse 4. (*first clause*). When? *Then*. Where? *Altar of God*. Who? *I*. Why? *My exceeding joy*.

Verse 4. (*second clause*). It is God alone who can be an exceeding joy to his creatures. *W. Dunlop's Sermons*.

Verse 4. The joy of joy. The soul of soul joy.

Verse 4. The great object of public worship, its bliss, and the praise resulting from attaining it.

Verse 4.

1. *The medium of joy*, the altar of God, or God in Christ Jesus.
2. *The springs of joy*, or the attributes of God—mercy, justice, power, holiness, as seen in the atonement.
3. *The value of joy*, as comfort, strength, etc.

Verse 4. *God my exceeding joy*. A most rich and precious title.

Verse 4. (*last clause*). Possession, praise, resolution.

Verse 5. Discouragement's recovery. *R. Sibbes Sermons*.

Verse 5. *I shall yet praise him*. *I*, even *I*; *shall*, sooner or later, most assuredly; *yet*, despite troubles, foes, devils; *praise* with gratitude, confidence, exultation; *him* above all other helpers, though now afflicting me.

Verse 5. *Health of my countenance*, removing that which mars it—sin, shame, fear, care, sorrow, weakness, etc.

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-THIRD PSALM

"Soul cordials against Sore Discomforts: in a Commentary or *Explanations and Applications of the whole Forty-third Psalm*, " pp. 312-562 of *"The Works of Dr. Nathanael Homes*, "1652 (folio).

In *"Sabbaths at Home."* by HENRY MARCH, there is an exposition of this Psalm. See *"Treasury of David*, "Vol. II, Page 323.

Psalm 44

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. To the Chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil. The title is similar to the forty-second, and although this is no proof that it is by the same author it makes it highly probable. No other writer should be sought for to father any of the Psalms when David will suffice, and therefore we are loathe to ascribe this sacred song to any but the great psalmist, yet as we hardly know any period of his life which it would fairly describe, we feel compelled to look elsewhere. Some Israelitish patriot fallen on evil times, sings in mingled faith and sorrow, his country's ancient glory and her present griefs, her traditions of former favour and her experience of pressing ills. By Christians it can best be understood if put into the mouth of the church when persecution is peculiarly severe. The last verses remind us of Milton's famous lines on the massacre of the Protestants among the mountains of Piedmont. The song before us is fitted for the voices of the saved by grace, the sons of Korah, and is to them and to all others full of teaching, hence the title Maschil.

DIVISION. From Ps 44:1-3, the Lord's mighty works for Israel are rehearsed, and in remembrance of them faith in the Lord is expressed Ps 44:4-8. Then the notes of complaint are heard Ps 44:9-16, the fidelity of the people to their God is aroused, Ps 44:17-22, and the Lord is entreated to interpose, Ps 44:23-26.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *We have heard with our ears, O God.* Thy mighty acts have been the subjects of common conversation; not alone in books have we read thy famous deeds, but in the ordinary talk of the people we have heard of them. Among the godly Israelites the biography of their nation was preserved by oral tradition, with great diligence and accuracy. This mode of preserving and transmitting history has its disadvantages, but it certainly produces a more vivid impression on the mind than any other; to hear with the ears affects us more sensitively than to read with the eyes; we ought to note this, and seize every possible opportunity of telling abroad the gospel of our Lord Jesus *viva voce*, since this is the most telling mode of communication. The expression, "heard with our ears," may denote the pleasure with which they listened, the intensity of their interest, the personality of their hearing, and the lively remembrance they had of the romantic and soul stirring narrative. Too many have ears but hear not; happy are they who, having ears, have learned to hear. *Our fathers have told us.* They could not have had better informants. Schoolmasters are well enough, but godly fathers are, both by the order of nature and grace, the best instructors of their sons, nor can they delegate the sacred duty. It is to be feared that many children of professors could plead very little before God of what their fathers have told them. When fathers are tongue tied religiously with their offspring,

need they wonder if their children's hearts remain sin tied? Just as in all free nations men delight to gather around the hearth, and tell the deeds of valour of their sires "in the brave days of old, "so the people of God under the old dispensation made their families cheerful around the table, be rehearsing the wondrous doings of the Lord their God. Religious conversation need not be dull, and indeed it could not be if, as in this case, it dealt more with facts and less with opinions. *What work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.* They began with what their own eyes had witnessed, and then passed on to what were the traditions of their youth. Note that the main point of the history transmitted from father to son was the work of God; this is the core of history, and therefore no man can write history aright who is a stranger to the Lord's work. It is delightful to see the footprints of the Lord on the sea of changing events, to behold him riding on the whirlwind of war, pestilence, and famine, and above all to see his unchanging care for his chosen people. Those who are taught to see God in history have learned a good lesson from their fathers, and no son of believing parents should be left in ignorance of so holy an art. A nation tutored as Israel was in a history so marvellous as their own, always had an available argument in pleading with God for aid in trouble, since he who never changes gives in every deed of grace a pledge of mercy yet to come. The traditions of our past experience are powerful pleas for present help.

Verse 2. *How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand.* The destruction of the Canaanites from the promised land is the work here brought to remembrance. A people numerous, warlike, gigantic and courageous, firmly established and strongly fortified, were driven out by a far feebler nation, because the Lord was against them in the fight. It is clear from Scripture that God sent a plague (so that the land ate up the inhabitants thereof), and also a visitation of hornets against the Canaanites, and by other means dispirited them, so that the easy victories of Joshua were but the results of God's having worked beforehand against the idolatrous nation. *And plantedst them.* The tribes of Israel were planted in the places formerly occupied by the heathen. Hivites and Jebusites were chased from their cities to make room for Ephraim and Judah. The Great Wonder worker tore up by the roots the oaks of Bashan, that he might plant instead thereof his own chosen "vineyard of red wine." *How thou didst afflict the people.* With judgments and plagues the condemned nations were harassed, by fire and sword they were hunted to the death, till they were all expelled, and the enemies of Israel were banished far away. *And cast them out.* This most probably refers to Israel and should be read, "caused them to increase." He who troubled his enemies smiled on his friends; he meted out vengeance to the ungodly nations, but he reserved of his mercy for the chosen tribes. How fair is mercy when she stands by the side of justice! Bright beams

the star of grace amid the night of wrath! It is a solemn thought that the greatness of divine love has its counterpart in the greatness of his indignation. The weight of mercy bestowed on Israel is balanced by the tremendous vengeance which swept the thousands of Amorites and Hittites down to hell with the edge of the sword. Hell is as deep as heaven is high, and the flame of Tophet is as everlasting as the blaze of the celestial glory. God's might, as shown in deeds both of mercy and justice, should be called to mind in troublous times as a stay to our fainting faith.

Verse 3. *For they got not the land in possession by their own sword.* Behold how the Lord alone was exalted in bringing his people to the land which floweth with milk and honey! He, in his distinguishing grace, had put a difference between Canaan and Israel, and therefore, by his own effectual power, he wrought *for* his chosen and *against* their adversaries. The tribes fought for their allotments, but their success was wholly due to the Lord who wrought with them. The warriors of Israel were not inactive, but their valour was secondary to that mysterious, divine working by which Jericho's walls fell down, and the hearts of the heathen failed them for fear. The efforts of all the men at arms were employed, but as these would have been futile without divine succour, all the honour is ascribed unto the Lord. The passage may be viewed as a beautiful parable of the work of salvation; men are not saved without prayer, repentance, etc., but none of those save a man, salvation is altogether of the Lord. Canaan was not conquered without the armies of Israel, but equally true is it that it was not conquered by them; the Lord was the conqueror, and the people were but instruments in his hands. *Neither did their own arm save them.* They could not ascribe their memorable victories to themselves; he who made sun and moon stand still for them was worthy of all their praise. A negative is put both upon their weapons and themselves as if to show us how ready men are to ascribe success to second causes. *But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance.* The divine *hand* actively fought for them, the divine *arm* powerfully sustained them with more than human energy, and the divine *smile* inspired them with dauntless courage. Who could not win with such triple help, though earth, death, and hell should rise in war against him? What mattered the tallness of the sons of Anak, or the terror of their chariots of iron, they were as nothing when Jehovah arose for the avenging of Israel. *Because thou hadst a favour unto them.* Here is the fountain from whence every stream of mercy flows. The Lord's delight in his people, his peculiar affection, his distinguishing regard—this is the mainspring which moves every wheel of a gracious providence. Israel was a chosen nation, hence their victories and the scattering of their foes; believers are an elect people, hence their spiritual blessings and conquests. There was nothing in the people

themselves to secure them success, the Lord's favour alone did it, and it is ever so in our case, our hope of final glory must not rest on anything in ourselves, but on the free and sovereign favour of the Lord of Hosts.

Verse 4. *Thou art my King, O God.* Knowing right well thy power and grace my heart is glad to own thee for her sovereign prince. Who among the mighty are so illustrious as thou art? To whom, then, should I yield my homage or turn for aid? God of my fathers in the olden time, thou art my soul's monarch and liege Lord. *Command deliverances for Jacob.* To whom should a people look but to their king? he it is who, by virtue of his office, fights their battles for them. In the case of our King, how easy it is for him to scatter all our foes! O Lord, the King of kings, with what ease canst thou rescue thy people; a word of thine can do it, give but the command and thy persecuted people shall be free. Jacob's long life was crowded with trials and deliverances, and his descendants are here called by his name, as if to typify the similarity of their experience to that of their great forefather. He who would win the blessings of Israel must share the sorrows of Jacob. This verse contains a personal declaration and an intercessory prayer; those can pray best who make most sure of their personal interest in God, and those who have the fullest assurance that the Lord is their God should be the foremost to plead for the rest of the tried family of the faithful.

Verse 5. *Through thee will we push down our enemies.* The fight was very close, bows were of no avail, and swords failed to be of service, it came to daggers drawing, and hand to hand wrestling, pushing and tugging. Jacob's God was renewing in the seed of Jacob their father's wrestling. And how fared it with faith then? Could she stand foot to foot with her foe and hold her own? Yea, verily, she came forth victorious from the encounter, for she is great at a close push, and overthrows all her adversaries, the Lord being her helper.

Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against *us*. The Lord's name served instead of weapons, and enabled those who used it to leap on their foes and crush them with jubilant valour. In union and communion with God, saints work wonders; if God be for us, who can be against us? Mark well that all the conquests of these believers are said to be "through thee," "through thy name:" never let us forget this, lest going a warfare at our own charges, we fail most ignominiously. Let us not, however, fall into the equally dangerous sin of distrust, for the Lord can make the weakest of us equal to any emergency. Though today we are timid and defenceless as sheep, he can by his power make us strong as the firstling of his bullock, and cause us to push as with the horns of unicorns, until those who rose up against us shall be so crushed and battered as never to rise again. Those who of themselves can scarcely keep their feet,

but like little babes totter and fall, are by divine assistance made to overthrow their foes, and set their feet upon their necks. Read Christian's fight with Apollyon, and see how

"The man so bravely played the man
He made the fiend to fly."

Verse 6. *For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.* Thy people Israel, under thy guidance, shouldered out the heathen, and gained their land, not by skill of weapons or prowess of arms, but by thy power alone; therefore will we renounce for ever all reliance upon outward confidences, of which other men make such boast, and we will cast ourselves upon the omnipotence of our God. Bows having been newly introduced by king Saul, were regarded as very formidable weapons in the early history of Israel, but they are here laid aside together with the all conquering sword, in order that there may be room for faith in the living God. This verse, in the first person singular, may serve as the confession of faith of every believer renouncing his own righteousness and strength, and looking alone to the Lord Jesus. O for grace to stand to this self renunciation, for alas! our proud nature is all too apt to fix its trust on the puffed up and supposititious power of the creature. Arm of flesh, how dare I trust thee? How dare I bring upon myself the curse of those who rely upon man?

Verse 7. *But thou hast saved us from our enemies.* In ages past all our rescues have been due to thee, O God. Never hast thou failed us. Out of every danger thou has brought us. *And hast put them to shame that hated us.* With the back of thy saving hand thou hast given them a cuff which has made them hide their faces; thou hast defeated them in such a manner as to make them ashamed of themselves to be overthrown by such puny adversaries as they thought the Israelites to be. The double action of God in blessing his people and confounding his enemies is evermore to be observed; Pharaoh is drowned, while Israel passes through the sea; Amalek is smitten, while the tribes rejoice; the heathen are chased from their abodes, while the sons of Jacob rest beneath their vine and fig tree.

Verse 8. *In God we boast all the day long.* We have abundant reason for doing so while we recount his mighty acts. What blessed boasting is this! it is the only sort of boasting that is bearable. All other manna bred worms and stank except that which was laid up before the Lord, and all other boasting is loathsome save this glorying in the Lord, which is laudable and pleasing. *And praise thy name for ever.* Praise should be perpetual. If there were no new acts of love, yet ought the Lord to be praised for what he has done for his people. High let the

song be lifted up as we bring to remembrance the eternal love which chose us, predestinated us to be sons, redeemed us with a price, and then enriched us with all the fulness of God. *Selah*. A pause comes in fitly here, when we are about to descend from the highest to the lowest key. No longer are we to hear Miriam's timbrel, but rather Rachel's weeping.

Verse 9. *But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame.* Here the patriot bard begins to contrast the past glories of the nation's history with its present sadness and distress; which he does not ascribe to the death of some human champion, or to the accidents of war, but solely and alone to the withdrawal of Israel's God. It seemed to the mourner that Jehovah had grown weary of his people and put them away in abhorrence, as men lay aside leprous garments, loathing the sight of them. To show his displeasure he had made his people to be ridiculed by the heathen, whose easy victories over their largest armies covered Israel with disgrace. Alas! for a church and people when the Lord in the active energy of his Spirit withdraws from them, they want no greater shame or sorrow. He will not cast away his people finally and totally, but many a church has been left to defeat and disgrace on account of sin, and therefore all churches should be exceedingly watchful lest the like should happen to themselves. Poverty and distress bring no shame on a people, but the Lord's absence takes from a church everything which can exalt and ennoble. *And goest not forth with our armies.* If the Lord be not the leader, of what avail are strong battalions? Vain are the combined efforts of the most zealous workers if God's arm be not revealed. May none of us in our churches have to mourn over the ministry, the Sabbath school, the missionary work, the visiting, the street preaching, left to be carried out without the divine aid. If our great ally will not go with us our defeat is inevitable.

Verse 10. *Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy.* The humiliating consciousness that the Lord has left them soon makes men cowards. Flight closes the fight of those who have not the Lord in the van. *And they which hate us spoil for themselves.* After defeat and retreat, comes spoliation. The poor, vanquished nation paid a terrible penalty for being overcome; plunder and murder desolated the conquered land, and the invaders loaded themselves with every precious thing which they could carry away. In spiritual experience we know what it is to be despoiled by our enemies; doubts and fears rob us of our comforts, and terrible forebodings spoil us of our hopes; and all because the Lord, for wise purposes, sees fit to leave us to ourselves. Alas! for the deserted soul; no calamity can equal the sorrow of being left of God, though it be but for a small moment.

Verse 11. *Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat.* As sheep are slaughtered for food, so were the people slain in flocks, with ease, and frequency. Not with dignity of sacrifice, but with the cruelty of the shambles, were they put to death. God appeared to give them up like sheep allotted to the butcher, to abandon them as the hireling abandons the flock to wolves. The complaint is bitterly eloquent. *And hast scattered us among the heathen.* Many were carried into captivity, far off from the public worship of the temple of God, to pine as exiles among idolaters. All this is ascribed to the Lord, as being allowed by him, and even appointed by his decree. It is well to trace the hand of God in our sorrows, for it is surely there.

Verse 12. *Thou sellest thy people for nought.* As men sell merchandise to any one who cares to have it, so the Lord seemed to hand over his people to any nation who might choose to make war upon them. Meanwhile no good result was perceptible from all the miseries of Israel; so far as the psalmist could discover, the Lord's name received no honour from the sorrows of his people; they were given away to their foes as if they were so little valued as not to be worth the ordinary price of slaves, and the Lord did not care to gain by them so long as they did but suffer. The woe expressed in this line is as vinegar mingled with gall: the expression is worthy of the weeping prophet. *And dost not increase thy wealth by their price.* If Jehovah had been glorified by all this wretchedness it could have been borne patiently, but it was the reverse; the Lord's name had, through the nation's calamities, been despised by the insulting heathen, who counted the overthrow of Israel to be the defeat of Jehovah himself. It always lightens a believer's trouble when he can see that God's great name will be honoured thereby, but it is a grievous aggravation of misery when we appear to be tortured in vain. For our comfort let us rest satisfied that in reality the Lord is glorified, and when no revenue of glory is manifestly rendered to him, he none the less accomplishes his own secret purposes, of which the grand result will be revealed in due time. We do not suffer for nought, nor are our griefs without result.

Verse 13. *Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours.* Scorn is always an intensely bitter ingredient in the cup of the oppressed. The taunts and jeers of the victors pain the vanquished almost as much as their swords and spears. It was a mystery indeed that God should suffer his royal nation, his peculiar people, to be taunted by all who dwelt near them. *A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.* The down trodden people had become a common jest; "as base as Israel" cried the cruel tongue of the tyrant: so ordinary had the scorn become that the neighbouring nations, though perhaps equally oppressed, borrowed the language of the conquerors, and joined in the common mockery.

To be a derision to both strong and weak, superiors, equals, and inferiors, is hard to bear. The tooth of scoffing bites to the bone. The psalmist sets forth the brutality of the enemy in many words, in order to move the pity of the Lord, to whose just anger he traced all the sorrows of his people: he used the very best of arguments, for the sufferings of his chosen touch the heart of God far more readily than any other reasonings. Blessed be his name, our great Advocate above knows how to avail himself of this powerful plea, and if we are at this hour enduring reproach for truth's sake, he will urge it before the eternal throne; and shall not God avenge his own elect? A father will not long endure to see his children despitely entreated; he may put up with it for a little, but his love will speedily arouse his anger, and then it will fare ill with the persecutor and reviler.

Verse 14. *Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.* The lamentation is here repeated. They had sunk so low that none did them reverence, but universally and publicly they were treated as infamous and despicable. Those who reviled others dragged in Israel's name by the way as a garnish to their insults, and if perchance they saw one of the seed of Jacob in the street they used lewd gestures to annoy him. Those whose heads were emptiest wagged them at the separated people. They were the common butts of every fool's arrow. Such has been the lot of the righteous in ages past, such is their portion in a measure now, such may be yet again their heritage in the worst sense. The world knows not its nobility, it has no eye for true excellence: it found a cross for the Master, and cannot be expected to award crowns to his disciples.

Verse 15. *My confusion is continually before me.* The poet makes himself the representative of his nation, and declares his own constant distress of soul. He is a man of ill blood who is unconcerned for the sorrows of the church of which he is a member, or the nation of which he is a citizen; the better the heart the greater its sympathy. *And the shame of my face hath covered me.* One constant blush, like a crimson mantle, covered him both before God and man; he felt before God that the divine desertion was well deserved, and before man, that he and his people were despicable indeed now that heavenly help was gone. It is well for a nation when there still exist in it men who lay to heart its sin and shame. God will have pity on his chastened ones, and it is a pledge thereof when he sends us choice ministers, men of tenderness, who make the people's case their own.

Verse 16. *For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth.* It seems that from mocking the people of God, the adversaries advanced to reviling God himself, they proceeded from persecution to the sin which is next of kin,

namely blasphemy. *By reason of the enemy and avenger.* The enemy boasted of avenging the defeats of their forefathers; they took revenge for the ancient victories of Israel, by insulting over the now fallen people. Here was a sad plight for a nation to be placed in, but it was by no means a hopeless case, for the Lord who brought all this evil upon them could with equal ease release them from it. So long as Israel looked alone to her God, and not to her own arm, no foe could retain her beneath his foot; she *must* arise, for God was on her side.

Verse 17. *All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee.* Here the psalmist urges that Israel had not turned away from her allegiance to Jehovah. When in the midst of many griefs we can still cling to God in loving obedience, it must be well with us. True fidelity can endure rough usage. Those who follow God for what they get, will leave him when persecution is stirred up, but not so the sincere believer; he will not forget his God, even though the worst come to the worst. *Neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.* No idol was set up, the ordained worship was not relinquished, God was still nationally acknowledged, and therefore the psalmist is more earnest that the Lord should interpose. This and the succeeding verses are suitable for the lips of martyrs, indeed the entire psalm might be called the martyr's complaint. Not for sin but for righteousness did the saints suffer, not for falsehood but for truth, not for forsaking the Lord, but for following hard after him. Sufferings of such a sort may be very terrible, but they are exceedingly honourable, and the comforts of the Lord shall sustain those who are accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

Verse 18. *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.* Heart and life were agreed, and both were true to the Lord's way. Neither within nor without had the godly sufferers offended; they were not absolutely perfect, but they were sincerely free from all wilful transgression. It was a healthy sign for the nation that her prophet poet could testify to her uprightness before God, both in heart and act; far oftener the case would have worn quite another colour, for the tribes were all too apt to set up other gods and forsake the rock of their salvation.

Verse 19. *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons.* Though utterly crushed and rendered desolate and driven as it were to associate with creatures such as jackals, owls, serpents, which haunt deserted ruins, yet Israel remained faithful. To be true to a smiting God, even when the blows lay our joys in ruinous heaps, is to be such as the Lord delighteth in. Better to be broken by God than from God. Better to be in the place of dragons than of deceivers. *And covered us with the shadow of death.* The language is very

strong. The nation is described as completely enveloped in the dense darkness of despair and death, covered up as though confined in hopelessness. Yet the claim is made that they still remained mindful of their God, and a glorious plea it is. Better death than false of faith. Those who are true to God shall never find him false to them.

Verse 20. An appeal is now made to the omniscience of God; he is himself called in to bear witness that Israel had not set up another God. *If we have forgotten the name of our God.* This would be the first step in apostasy; men first forget the true, and then adore the false. *Or stretched out our hands to a strange god.* Stretching out the hands was the symbol of adoration or of entreaty in prayer; this they had not offered to any of the idols of the heathens.

Verse 21. *Shall not God search this out?* Could such idolatry be concealed from him? Would he not with holy indignation have detected unfaithfulness to itself, even had it been hidden in the heart and unrevealed in the life? *For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.* He is acquainted with the inner workings of the mind, and therefore this could not have escaped him. Not the heart only which is secret, but the secrets of the heart, which are secrets of the most secret thing, are as open to God as a book to a reader. The reasoning is that the Lord himself knew the people to be sincerely his followers, and therefore was not visiting them for sin; hence, then, affliction evidently came from quite another cause.

Verse 22. *Yea*, i.e., assuredly, certainly, *for thy sake*, not for our offences, but for obeying thee; the trials of these suppliants came upon them because they were loyal to their God. *Are we killed all the day long.* Persecution never ceased to hound them to the death, they had no respite and found no door of escape; and all in God's behalf, because they would not forsake their covenant God and King. *We are counted as sheep for the slaughter;* as if we were only meant to be killed, and made on purpose to be victims; as if it were as easy and as innocent a thing to slay us as to slaughter sheep. In this and following verses we clearly hear the martyr's cry. From Piedmont and Smithfield, from St. Bartholomew's massacre and the dragoonades of Claverhouse, this appeal goes up to heaven, while the souls under the altar continue their solemn cry for vengeance. Not long shall the church plead in this fashion, her shame shall be recompensed, her triumph shall dawn.

Verse 23. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord.* God sleepeth not, but the psalmist puts it so, as if on no other theory he could explain the divine inaction. He would fain see the great Judge ending oppression and giving peace to the holy, therefore does he cry "Awake; "he cannot understand why the reign of tyranny

and the oppression of virtue are permitted, and therefore he enquires "Why sleepest thou?" *Arise*. This is all thou needest to do, one move of thine will save us. *Cast us not off for ever*. Long enough hast thou deserted us; the terrible effects of thine absence are destroying us; end thou our calamities, and let thine anger be appeased. In persecuting times men are apt to cry, Where is the God of Israel? At the thought of what the saints have endured from their haughty enemies, we join our voices in the great martyr cry and sing with the bard of Paradise:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even those who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep."

Verse 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?* Not petulantly, but piteously and inquiringly, we may question the Lord when his dealings are mysterious. We are permitted to order our case with arguments, and plead the right before the face of the august Majesty. Why, Lord, dost thou become oblivious of thy children's woes? This question is far more easily asked than answered; it is hard, indeed, in the midst of persecution to see the reason why we are left to suffer so severely.

Verse 25. *For our soul is bowed down to the dust.* Our heart is low as low can be, as low as the dust beneath the soles of men's feet. When the heart sinks, the man is down indeed. Heart sorrow is the very heart of sorrow. *Our belly cleaveth unto the earth.* The man is prone upon the earth, and he is not only down, but fastened down on the earth and glued to it. It is misery, indeed, when the heart cannot escape from itself, is shut up in its own dejection, and bound with the cords of despondency. God's saints may be thus abject, they may be not only in the dust, but on the dunghill with Job and Lazarus, but their day cometh, and their tide will turn, and they shall have a brave summer after their bitter winter.

Verse 26. *Arise for our help.* A short, but sweet and comprehensive prayer, much to the point, clear, simple, urgent, as all prayers should be. *And redeem us for thy mercies' sake.* Here is the final plea. The favour is redemption, the plea is mercy; and this, too, in the case of faithful sufferers who had not forgotten their God. Mercy is always a safe plea, and never will any man find a better.

"Were I a martyr at the stake.
I would plead my Saviour's name,
Intreat a pardon for his sake,
And urge no other claim."

Here ends this memorable Psalm, but in heaven its power ends not, but brings down deliverance for the tried people of God.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. On a survey of this Psalm, it would seem not to admit of a doubt that the speakers are of the race of Israel; and yet expositors for the most part have found much difficulty in so understanding it, in this—the natural sense—so as even to be compelled to abandon it, owing to the impossibility of fixing on any period in the history of that people which would furnish an occasion for it, and verify its language. Thus, it cannot be referred to the times of the Babylonish captivity; for to this it is objected, and with reason; first, that Ps 44:11 4:14 represent the speakers as "scattered among the nations," and "a byword among the peoples," whereas their exile was then confined to one country; and, secondly, that in Ps 44:17-21 there is an assertion of faithful adherence to the worship of the true God, which he is called to witness as acquitting the sufferers of having brought the evil on themselves, while that captivity was a punishment of the nation for their apostasy, and especially for the grievous sin of idolatry. And the same objections lie to interpreting it with reference to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees; beside that, the history of the canon of Scripture is decisive against assigning so late a date to any of the Psalms. Still less can the times of David be looked to for the occasion, since, though religion was then pure, there was, on the other hand, no dispersion of the nation nor any calamity such as to warrant the lamentation, "Thou hast cast us off, and put us to shame. ...Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat," etc. Whence it appeared that there was no alternative but to consider the Psalm as exclusively the language of the Christian church, and, in her primitive days, as the period at once of her greatest purity and suffering. *William de Burgh.*

Whole Psalm. S. Ambrose observes, that in former Psalms we have seen a prophecy of Christ's passion, resurrection, and ascension and of the coming of the Holy Ghost, and that here we are taught that we ourselves must be ready to struggle and suffer, in order that these things may profit us. Human will must work together with divine grace. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1. *We have heard with our ears*, i.e., we have both heard and heeded it with utmost attention and affection. It is not a *pleonasmus*, but an *emphasis* that is here used. *John Trapp*.

Verse 1. *Our fathers have told us*. Hear this, saith Basil, ye fathers that neglect to teach your children such things as may work his fear and love in them, and faith to rely upon and seek to him in all times of danger. They made their mouths, as it were, books, wherein the mighty deeds of the Lord might be read to his praise, and to the drawing of their children's hearts unto him. *John Mayer*.

Verse 1. *What work thou didst*. Why only *work* in the singular, when such innumerable deliverances had been wrought by him, from the passage of the Red Sea to the destruction of the hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians? Because all these were but types of that one great work, that one stretching forth of the Lord's hand, when Satan was vanquished, death destroyed, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers. *Ambrose*.

Verse 1. *What work thou didst*. While the songs of other nations sing of the heroism of their ancestors, the songs of Israel celebrate the works of *God*. *Augustus F. Tholuck*.

Verse 1. Three necessary requirements for learning well: 1. Intention and attention in him who hears, *we have heard with our ears*. 2. Authority in him that teaches, *our fathers have told us*. 3. Love between the teacher and the taught, "*our fathers*." *Hugo (Cardinal)*, quoted in *Neale's Commentary*.

Verses 1-2, 4-8. Children are their parent's heirs; it were unnatural for a father before he dies to bury up his treasure in the earth, where his children should not find or enjoy it; now the mercies of God are not the least part of his treasure, nor the least of his children's inheritance, being both helps to their faith, matter for their praise, and spurs to their obedience. *Our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, how thou didst drive out the heathen*, etc. Ps 44:1-2; from this they ground their confidence; Ps 44:4: *Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob*; and excite their thankfulness, Ps 44:8 *In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever*. Indeed, as children are their parent's heirs, so they become in justice liable to pay their parents' debts; now the great debt which the saint at death stands charged with, is that which he owes to God for his mercies, and, therefore it is but reason he should tie his posterity to the patent thereof. Thus mayest thou be praising God in heaven and earth at the same time. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 3. *They got not the land in possession by their own sword.* The Lord's part in a work is best seen when man's part, and all that he as an instrument hath done, or could have done in it, is declared null; being considered as separate from God who moved the instruments, and did work by them what he pleased. *David Dickson.*

Verse 3. *Because thou hadst a favour unto them.* Free grace was the fundamental cause of all their felicity. God loved them because he loved them. De 7:7. He chose them of his love, and then loved them for his choice. *John Trapp.*

Verse 3. God's love to Israel was free, unmerited, and amazing, and he gave them a land for which they did not labour, and cities which they built not, and vineyards and oliveyards which they planted not. Jos 24:13. In some cases neither sword nor bow were used, but hornets were the instruments of conquest. Jos 24:12. Since the fall of Adam all good things in the lot of any mere man are undeserved kindnesses. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3. *(last clause).* The prophet does not suppose any worthiness in the person of Abraham, nor imagine any desert in his posterity, on account of which God dealt so bountifully with them; but ascribes the whole through the good pleasure of God...Nor does the psalmist here treat of the general benevolence of God, which extends to the whole human race: but he discourses of the difference which exists between the elect and the rest of the world, and the cause of this difference is here referred to the mere good pleasure of God. *John Calvin.*

Verse 5. *Through thee will we push down our enemies;*, literally, "We will toss them in the air with our horn; "a metaphor taken from an ox or bull tossing the dogs into the air which attack him. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6. *I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.* By *bow* and *sword*, he meaneth all manner of weapons and warlike instruments whatsoever; and by "*saving*," he meaneth delivering from dangers, speaking under the person of one (because all the faithful are but one body), in the name of all the rest. *Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 6. *I will not trust in my bow,* etc. I will not trust in *my own* sword or bow, but in the *sword* of the Divine Warrior, and in the *bow* of the Divine Archer, whose arrows are sharp in the heart of his enemies as described in the next Ps 45:3-5, which is connected by that imagery with this Psalm, as well as by its inner meaning. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 6. The less confidence we have in ourselves or in anything beside God, the more evidence have we of the sincerity of our faith in God. *David Dickson.*

Verses 6-7. The two verses correspond exactly to Ps 44:3. As there, in reference to the past, the salvation was ascribed wholly to God, so here in reference to the future. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 11. *Like sheep appointed for meat.* This very strongly and strikingly intimates the extent of the persecution and slaughter to which they were exposed; there being no creature in the world of which such vast numbers are constantly slaughtered as of sheep for the subsistence of man. The constancy of such slaughter is also mentioned in Ps 44:22 as illustrating the continual oppression to which the Hebrews were subject. *Kitto's Pictorial Bible.*

Verse 11. *Like sheep appointed for meat,* and not reserved for breeding or for wool. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 12. *Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.* The sense is: Thou hast given thy people unto the power of their enemies without trouble, without causing the victory even to be clearly bought, as one who parts with a good for any price, which he despises and hates, desiring merely to get rid of it. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 12. *Thou sellest thy people for nought,* etc. Referring to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, Eusebius says: "Many were sold for a small price; there were many to be sold, but few to buy."

Verse 12. *And dost not increase thy wealth by their price.* Thou hast not advanced thy honour and service thereby; for thy enemies do not serve thee more and better than thy people, nor yet so much. *Matthew Pool.*

Verse 12. *(last clause).* *Takest no money for them;* literally, *enhances not the price of them,* as a seller usually does to the buyer. *Daniel Creswell.*

Verse 14. *Thou makest us a byword;* literally, *for a similitude,* (lvm) stands here, as in the original passage De 28:37, in the common signification, *similitude.* The misery of Israel is so great, that people would figuratively call a miserable man a Jew, just as liars were called Cretans; wretched slaves, Sardians. So far as the people from being now "blessed of the Lord" in whom according to the promise, all the heathen are to be blessed. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 15. *My confusion in continually before me.* When the visible church is visited with sad calamities, the true members thereof are partakers of the trouble, and sorrow, and shame of that condition. *David Dickson.*

Verse 17. Eusebius, narrating the cruelties inflicted upon the *Christians* by the Eastern tyrant, Maximinus, says: "He prevailed against all sorts of people, the Christians only excepted, who contemned death and despised his tyranny. The men endured burning, beheading, crucifying, ravenous devouring of beasts, drowning in the sea, maiming and broiling of the members, goring and digging out of the eyes, mangling of the whole body; moreover, famine and imprisonment: to be short, they suffered every kind of torment for the service of God rather than they would leave the worship of God, and embrace the adoration of idols. Women also, not inferior to men through the power of the word of God, put on a manly courage, whereof some suffered the torments with men, some attained unto the like masteries of virtue." *From "The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus."*

Verse 17. *Yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.* Although we cannot excuse ourselves from many other sins for which thou hast justly punished us, yet this we must say for ourselves, that through thy grace we have kept ourselves from apostasy and idolatry, notwithstanding all the examples and provocations, rewards proposed and promised, or punishments threatened to induce us thereunto; which we hope thou wilt graciously consider, and not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 17. If any of you would abide by Jesus Christ in this storm, try how ye have covenanted with him, and how ye have closed the bargain with him, and upon what terms. But I trow there are many of you in this age that are like young wanton folk, that run fast together and marry, but never take any account of how they will keep house, but presently go to poverty and beggary. I trow it falls out so with many of you that are professors in this generation. Ye take up your religion, and ye wot not how, and ye cannot give an account how ye came by it. I will tell you, sirs; ye will abide no longer by Christ than till a storm blow, and then ye will quit him and deny his cause. Ye have need to take heed to this, for it will ruin your souls in the end of the day. But I shall tell you, sirs, the right way of covenanting with God. It is when Christ and the believer meet. Our Lord gives him his laws, statutes, and commands, and he charges him not to quit a hoof of them. No; though he should be torn into a thousand pieces; and the right covenanter says, Amen. *Alexander Peden's Sermon, 1682.*

Verses 17-19. Neither the persecuting hand of men, nor the chastising hand of God, relaxed ancient singular saints. Believers resemble the *moon*, which emerges from her eclipse by keeping her motion, and ceases not to shine because the dogs bark at her. Shall we cease to be professors because others will not cease to be persecutors? *William Secker.*

Verses 17-19. The church having reported her great troubles, speaks it as an argument of much sincerity towards God, and strength of grace received from him: *All this has come upon us* (that is, all these common calamities and afflictions), *yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;* as if she had said, These afflictions have been strong temptations upon us to cause us to decline from thy ways, but through grace we have kept our ground and remained constant in thy covenant, yea, *though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.* As many, yea, most of the saints have improved under the cross, so there have been some, who either through their present unbelief, or forgetfulness of "the exhortation which" (as the apostle saith, Heb 12:5); "speaketh unto them as unto children, " have had their faintings or declinings under it. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 19. *Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons,* etc. Where men, comparable to dragons for their poison and cruelty, dwell, particularly in Rome, and the Roman jurisdiction, both Pagan and Papal, the seat of Satan the great red dragon, and of his wretched brood and offspring, the beast, to whom he has given his power; where the saints and followers of Christ have been sorely afflicted and persecuted, and yet have held fast the name of Christ, and not denied his faith. See Re 2:13 12:3. The wilderness is the habitation of dragons; and this is the name of the place where the church is said to be in the times of the Papacy, and where she is fed and preserved for a time, and times, and half time. Re 12:6,14. *And covered us with the shadow of death.* As the former phrase denotes the cruelty of the enemies of Christ's church and people, this their dismal afflictions and forlorn state and condition; and may have some respect to the darkness of Popery, when it was at the height, and the church of Christ was covered with it, there being very little appearances and breakings forth of gospel light anywhere. *John Gill.*

Verse 19. *Dragons.* The word rendered *dragons*—(Mynt), *tannim*—means either a great fish, a sea monster, a serpent, a dragon, or a crocodile. It may also mean a jackal, a fox, or a wolf. De Wette renders it here *jackals*. The *idea* in the passage is essentially the same, whichever interpretation of the word is adopted. The "*place of dragons*" would denote the place where such monsters

are found, or where they had their abode; that is to say, in desolate places, wastes, deserts, old ruins, depopulated towns. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 20. *Stretched out our hands to a strange god.* The stretching out the hand towards an object of devotion, or an holy place, was an ancient usage among the Jews and heathens both, and it *continues* in the East at this time, which continuance I do not remember to have seen remarked. That this attitude in prayer has *continued* among the Eastern people, appears by the following passage from Pitts, in his account of the religion and manners of the Mohammedans. Speaking of the Algerians throwing wax candles and pots of oil overboard, as a present to some marabbot (or Mohammedan saint), Pitt goes on, and says, "When this is done, they all together *hold up their hands*, begging the marabbot's blessing, and a prosperous voyage." In the same page he tells us, "the marabbots have generally a little neat room built over their graves, resembling in figure their mosques or churches, which is very nicely cleaned, and well looked after." And in the succeeding page he tells us, "Many people there are who will scarce pass by any of them without *lifting up* their hand, and saying some short prayer." In like manner, he tells us, that at quitting the *Beat*, or holy house at Mecca, to which they make devout pilgrimages, "*they hold up their hands towards the Beat*, making earnest petitions." *Harmer's "Observations."*

Verse 21. *Shall not God search this out?* etc. Are there such variety of trials appointed to examine the sincerity of men's graces? How great a vanity, then, is hypocrisy! and to how little purpose do men endeavour to conceal and hide it! We say, murder will out; and we may as confidently affirm, hypocrisy will out. When Rebekah had laid the plot to disguise her son Jacob, and by personating his brother to get the blessing, Jacob thus objects against it: "My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing." As if he should say, But what if my father detect the cheat? How, then, shall I look him in the face? How shall I escape a curse? After the same manner every upright soul scares itself from the way of hypocrisy. If I dissemble, and pretend to be what I am not, my Father will find me out. There is no darkness nor shadow of death that can conceal the hypocrite; but out it will come at last, let him use all the art he can to hide it...If men's works be not good, it is impossible they should be hid long. A gilded piece of brass may pass from hand to hand a little while, but the touchstone will discover the base metal; and if that does not, the fire will. *John Flavel.*

Verse 21. A godly man dares not sin secretly. He knows that God sees in secret. As God cannot be deceived by our subtlety, so he cannot be excluded by our secrecy. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 21. In time of persecution for religion, nothing can counterbalance the terrors and allurements of the persecutors, and make a man steadfast in the cause of God, save the fear of God, and love to God settled in the heart; for the reason of the saint's steadfastness in this Psalm, is because God would have searched out their sin if they had done otherwise, *for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. David Dickson.*

Verse 22. *Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long, etc.* Leonard Schoener left, amongst other papers, the following admonition, to comfort all who were suffering for Christ's name:

"We pray thee, O eternal God, to bow down thy gracious ear. Lord of Sabaoth, thou Lord of hosts, hear our complaint, for great affliction and persecution have prevailed. Pride has entered thine inheritance, and many supposed to be Christians, have united themselves therewith, and have thus brought in the abomination of desolation. They waste and destroy the Christian sanctuary. They have trodden the same under foot, and the abomination of desolation is worshipped as God. They have troubled thy holy city, thrown down thy holy altar, and slain her servants when they could lay their hands upon them. And now that we as a little flock are left, they have driven us into all thy lands with contempt and reproach. We are scattered as sheep having no shepherd. We have been compelled to forsake house and home. We are as night ravens which abide in the rocks; our chambers are in holes and crags. They watch for us as fowls that fly in the air. We wander in the woods, they hunt us with dogs. They lead us away, seized and bound, as lambs that open not their mouths. They cry out against us as seditious persons and heretics. We are brought like sheep to the slaughter. Many sit oppressed, and in bonds which even decay their bodies. Some have sunk under their sufferings, and died without fault. Here is the patience of the saints in the earth. We must be tried by suffering here. The faithful have they hanged on trees, strangled, hewn in pieces, secretly and openly drowned. Not only men, but likewise women, and maidens have borne witness to the truth, that Jesus Christ is the truth, the only way to eternal life. The world still rages, and rests not; it raves as if mad. They invent lies against us. They cease not their fires and murders. They make the world too narrow for us. O Lord, how long wilt thou be silent? How long wilt thou not judge the blood of thy saints? Let it come up before thy throne. How precious in thine eyes is the blood of thy holy ones! Therefore have we comfort in all our need, a refuge in thee alone, and in none besides; but neither comfort, nor rest, nor peace on this earth. But he who hopeth in thee shall never be confounded. O Lord, there is no sorrow so great that can separate us from thee; therefore, without ceasing we call upon thee, through Christ thy Son our Lord, whom

thou of thy free grace hast given us for our comfort. He hath prepared and made known to us the straight path, and the way to eternal life. Everlasting glory and triumph, honour and praise, be given unto thee, both now and to eternity, and let thy righteousness remain for ever. Let all the people bless thy holy name, through Christ the righteous Judge, who cometh to judge the whole world. Amen." *From "A Martyrology of the Churches of Christ, commonly called Baptists. Edited by E. B. Underhill," 1850.*

Verse 22. *For thy sake are we killed.* It is mercy to us, that when God might punish us for our sins, he doth make our correction honourable, and our troubles to be for a good cause. *For thy sake, etc. David Dickson.*

Verse 22. *For thy sake.* This passage is cited by St. Paul, Ro 8:36, apparently from the LXX, in illustration of the fact that the church of God has in all ages been a persecuted church. But there is this remarkable difference between the tone of the psalmist and the tone of the apostle: the former cannot understand the chastening, and complains that God's heavy hand has been laid without cause upon his people; the latter can rejoice in persecutions also, and exclaim, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 22. *Killed.* The word here used is not from (ljq), but from (grh), which means *to strangle*: this is the rendering given in "Lange's Bibelwerk."

Verse 23. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?* and Ps 121:4, "*Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*" If God at no time sleep, why doth the church call on him so often to awake? If he must be awakened from sleep, why doth the psalmist say he never sleeps? Are not these places contradictory?

ANSWER: It is one thing what the afflicted church cries in the heat of her sufferings, another thing what the Spirit of truth speaks for the comfort of the saints. It is ordinary for the best of saints and martyrs, during the storm, to go to God as Peter did to Christ at sea (sleeping in the stern of the ship), with such importunity in prayer as if the Lord were no more sensible of their agony than Jonah was of the mariners' misery, ready to perish in the turbulent ocean, and he cried out, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise! Saints are so familiar with God in prayer, as if they were at his bedside. THE SOUL'S APPLICATION.—O thou never slumbering Watchman of the house of Israel, carest not thou that we perish? Awake, awake! put on strength, gird thyself, O thou arm of God! I know thou art up, but what am I the better except thou help me up? I know thou sleepest not as man doth, but what advantage hath my soul by that, except thou

show thyself, that I may know thou art waking? Oh, it is I that am asleep! You seem to sleep only to awaken me. O that I could watch with thee one hour, as you bid me; I should soon perceive that thy vigilance over me for ever. *William Streat in "The Dividing of the Hoof."* 1654.

Verse 23. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?* etc. The weakness of our faith is open to the temptation of supposing that God regards not the situation of his people in the world; and the Spirit, who knows our infirmities, provides a petition suited to this trial, which expresses at the same time an expectation that God will arise to claim his people as his own. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 25. *For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.* We are as to body and soul, smitten and thrown down, glued as it were to the ground, so that we cannot raise ourselves up. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 25. *For our soul is bowed down to the dust,* etc. The speech is metaphorical, expressing the depth of their misery, or the greatness of their sorrow and humiliation. 1. The depth of their misery, with the allusion to the case of a man overcome in battle, or mortally wounded, and tumbling in the dust, or to a man dead and laid in the earth; as, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Ps 22:15. Sure we are, the expression imports the extremity of distress and danger, either as a man dead or near death. 2. The greatness of their sorrow and humiliation; and so the allusion is taken from a man prostrate and grovelling on the ground, which was their posture of humbling themselves before the Lord, or when any great calamity befell them. As when Herod Agrippa died, they put on sackcloth and lay upon the earth weeping. *Thomas Manton.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The encouraging traditions of church history. The days of yore.

Verse 1. The parent's duty, and the children's privilege.

Verse 1. Family conversation, the most profitable subject for it.

Verse 1. The true glory of the good old times.

Verse 2. The contrast; or, the dealings of God with saints and sinners.

Verse 3. Free grace exalted.

1. In putting a negative upon human power.
2. In manifestations of divine energy.
3. In its secret source, *Because thou hadst a favour unto them.*

Verse 3.

1. The creature laid low.
2. The Lord exalted.
3. Discriminating grace revealed.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). The eternal well spring of all mercy.

Verse 4.

1. Divine royalty acknowledged.
2. Royal interposition entreated.
3. Divine covenant hinted at, *Jacob*; or, the loyal subject seeking royal aid for the royal seed.

Verse 4. Personal allegiance and pleading intercession.

Verse 4. *My King*. This intends—

1. My Ruler.
2. My Honour.
3. My Leader.
4. My Defender.

Verse 4. The deliverances of Jacob, illustrated by his eventful life.

Verse 5. Our enemies, in what ways we push them down, by what strength, and in what spirit.

Verse 5. Our enemies, their activity, the closeness of their approach, the certainty of their overthrow, the secret of our strength.

Verse 6. Relinquishment of outward trusts. *My bow* may miss its aim, may be broken, may be snatched away. *My sword* may snap, or grow blunt, or slip from my hold. We may not trust in our abilities, our experience, our shrewdness, our wealth, etc.

Verse 6. Self renunciation—the duty of saint and sinner.

Verse 7. Accomplished salvation. How never achieved, *But*. By whom wrought, *thou*. When performed, *hast*. For whom, *us*. To what extent, *from our enemies*.

Verse 7. Salvation completed, hell confounded, Christ exalted.

Verse 8. Praise, its continuance—how to make it continual, how to manifest it perpetually, influence of its continuance, and reasons to compel us to abide in it.

Verse 9. A lament for the declension of the church.

Verse 9. In what sense God casts off his people, and why.

Verse 9. (*last clause*). The greatest of all calamities for our churches.

Verse 12. The human and divine estimate of the results of persecution.

Verse 12. In answer to this complaint.

1. God's people lose nothing eventually by their privations.
2. The wicked gain nothing by their triumphs.
3. God loses none of his glory in his dealings with either. —*George Rogers*.

Verse 13. Trial of cruel mockings; our conduct under them, comfort in them, and crown from them.

Verse 14. Unholy proverbs or godless bywords.

Verse 15. Confessions of a penitent.

Verse 17. The trial, truth, and triumph of the godly.

Verse 17. The faithful soul holding fast his integrity.

Verse 17. What it is to be false to our covenant with God.

Verse 18. (*first clause*). When we may be sure that our heart has not apostatised.

Verse 18.

1. The position of the heart in religion—it comes first.
2. The position of the outer moral life in religion—it follows the heart.
3. Necessity of the agreement of the two.
4. The need that both should be faithful to God.

Verse 18. Connection between the heart and the life, both in constancy and apostasy.

Verse 18. God's delight in the progress of the upright. *Thomas Brooks.*

Upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, and in the ways of well doing, notwithstanding all afflictions, troubles, and discouragements, they meet withal. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 18. *Thy ways.* The ways of God are

- (1) *righteous* ways;
- (2) *blessed* ways;
- (3) *soul refreshing* ways;
- (4) *transcendent* ways—ways that transcend all other ways;
- (5) *soul strengthening* ways; and
- (6) sometimes *afflicted, perplexed, and persecuted* ways. —*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 21. Can he not? Will he not?

Verse 21. A question and an assertion.

Verse 22.

1. Innocence in the midst of suffering, *sheep*.
2. Honour in the midst of shame, *for thy sake*. *G. Rogers.*

Verse 23. The cry of a church in sad circumstances. The complaint of a deserted soul.

Verse 24. Reasons for the withdrawal of divine comfort.

Verse 25. The great need, the great prayer, the great plea.

Verse 26. A fit prayer for souls under conviction, for saints under trial or persecution, and for the church under oppression or decay.

Psalm 45

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. The many titles of this Psalm mark its royalty, its deep and solemn import, and the delight the writer had in it. To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim. The most probable translation of this word is upon the lilies, and it is either a poetical title given to this noblest of songs after the Oriental manner, or it may relate to the tune to which it was set, or to the instrument which was meant to accompany it. We incline to the first theory, and if it be the true one, it is easy to see the fitness of borrowing a name for so beautiful, so pure, so choice, so matchless a poem from the golden lilies, whose bright array outshone the glory of Solomon. For the sons of Korah. Special singers are appointed for so divine a hymn. King Jesus deserves to be praised not with random, ranting ravings, but with the sweetest and most skilful music of the best trained choristers. The purest hearts in the spiritual temple are the most harmonious songsters in the ears of God; acceptable song is not a matter so much of tuneful voices as of sanctified affections, but in no case should we sing of Jesus with unprepared hearts. Maschil, an instructive ode, not an idle lay, or a romancing ballad, but a Psalm of holy teaching, didactic and doctrinal. This proves that it is to be spiritually understood. Blessed are the people who know the meaning of its joyful sound. A Song of loves. Not a carnal sentimental love song, but a celestial canticle of everlasting love fit for the tongues and ears of angels.

SUBJECT. Some here see Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter only—they are short sighted; others see both Solomon and Christ—they are cross eyed; well focused spiritual eyes see here Jesus only, or if Solomon be present at all, it must be like those hazy shadows of by passers which cross the face of the camera, and therefore are dimly traceable upon a photographic landscape. "The King, "the God whose throne is for ever and ever, is no mere mortal and his everlasting dominion is not bounded by Lebanon and Egypt's river. This is no wedding song of earthly nuptials, but an Epithalamium for the Heavenly Bridegroom and his elect spouse.

DIVISION. Ps 45:1 is an announcement of intention, a preface to the song; Ps 45:3 adores the matchless beauty of Messiah; and from Ps 45:3-9, he is addressed in admiring ascriptions of praise. Ps 45:10-12 are spoken to the bride. The church is further spoken of in Ps 45:13-15, and the Psalm closes with another address to the King, foretelling his eternal fame, Ps 45:16-17.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *My heart.* There is no writing like that dictated by the heart. Heartless hymns are insults to heaven. *Is inditing a good matter.* A good heart will only be content with good thoughts. Where the fountain is good good streams will flow forth. The learned tell us that the word may be read overflows, or as others, boils or bubbles up, denoting the warmth of the writer's love, the fulness of his heart, and the consequent richness and glow of his utterance, as though it were the ebullition of his inmost soul, when most full of affection. We have here no single cold expression; the writer is not one who frigidly studies the elegancies and proprieties of poetry, his stanzas are the natural outburst of his

soul, comparable to the boiling jets of the geysers of Hecla. As the corn offered in sacrifice was parched in the pan, so is this tribute of love hot with sincere devotion. It is a sad thing when the heart is cold with a good matter, and worse when it is warm with a bad matter, but incomparably well when a warm heart and a good matter meet together. O that we may often offer to God an acceptable *minchah*, a sweet oblation fresh from the pan of hearts warmed with gratitude and admiration. *I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.* This song has "the King" for its only subject, and for the King's honour alone was it composed, well might its writer call it a good matter. The psalmist did not write carelessly; he calls his poem his works, or things which he had made. We are not to offer to the Lord that which costs us nothing. Good material deserves good workmanship. We should well digest in our heart's affections and our mind's meditations any discourse or poem in which we speak of one so great and glorious as our Royal Lord. As our version reads it, the psalmist wrote experimentally things which he had made his own, and personally tasted and handled concerning the King. *My tongue is the pen of a ready writer*, not so much for rapidity, for there the tongue always has the preference, but for exactness, elaboration, deliberation, and skilfulness of expression. Seldom are the excited utterances of the mouth equal in real weight and accuracy to the *verba scripta* of a thoughtful accomplished penman; but here the writer, though filled with enthusiasm, speaks as correctly as a practised writer; his utterances therefore are no ephemeral sentences, but such as fall from men who sit down calmly to write for eternity. It is not always that the best of men are in such a key, and when they are they should not restrain the gush of their hallowed feelings. Such a condition of heart in a gifted mind creates that auspicious hour in which poetry pours forth her tuneful numbers to enrich the service of song in the house of the Lord.

Verse 2. Thou. As though the King himself had suddenly appeared before him, the psalmist lost in admiration of his person, turns from his preface to address his Lord. A loving heart has the power to realise its object. The eyes of a true heart see more than the eyes of the head. Moreover, Jesus reveals himself when we are pouring forth our affections towards him. It is usually the case that when we are ready Christ appears. If our heart is warm it is an index that the sun is shining, and when we enjoy his heat we shall soon behold his light. *Thou art fairer than the children of men.* In person, but especially in mind and character, the King of saints is peerless in beauty. The Hebrew word is doubled, "Beautiful, beautiful art thou." Jesus is so emphatically lovely that words must be doubled, strained, yea, exhausted before he can be described. Among the children of men many have through grace been lovely in character, yet they have each had a flaw; but in Jesus we behold every feature of a perfect

character in harmonious proportion. He is lovely everywhere, and from every point of view, but never more so than when we view him in conjugal union with his church; then love gives a ravishing flush of glory to his loveliness. *Grace is poured into thy lips.* Beauty and eloquence make a man majestic when they are united; they both dwell in perfection in the all fair, all eloquent Lord Jesus. Grace of person and grace of speech reach their highest point in him. Grace has in the most copious manner been poured upon Christ, for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and now grace is in superabundance, poured forth from his lips to cheer and enrich his people. The testimony, the promises, the invitations, the consolations of our King pour forth from him in such volumes of meaning that we cannot but contrast those cataracts of grace with the speech of Moses which did but drop as the rain, and distil as the dew. Whoever in personal communion with the Wellbeloved has listened to his voice will feel that "never man spake like this man." Well did the bride say of him, "his lips are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh." One word from himself dissolved the heart of Saul of Tarsus, and turned him into an apostle, another word raised up John the Divine when fainting in the Isle of Patmos. Oftentimes a sentence from his lips has turned our own midnight into morning, our winter into spring. *Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.* Calvin reads it, *Because God hath blessed thee for ever.* Christ is blessed of God, blessed for ever, and this is to us one great reason for his beauty, and the source of the gracious words which proceed out of his lips. The rare endowments of the man Christ Jesus are given him of the Father, that by them his people may be blessed with all spiritual blessings in union with himself. But if we take our own translation, we read that the Father has blessed the Mediator as a reward for all his gracious labours; and right well does he deserve the recompense. Whom God blesses we should bless, and the more so because all his blessedness is communicated to us.

Verse 3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.* Loving spirits jealous of the Redeemer's glory long to see him putting forth his power to vindicate his own most holy cause. Why should the sword of the Spirit lie still, like a weapon hung up in an armoury; it is sharp and strong, both for cutting and piercing: O that the divine power of Jesus were put forth to use against error. The words before us represent our great King as urged to arm himself for battle, by placing his sword where it is ready for use. Christ is the true champion of the church, others are but underlings who must borrow strength from him; the single arm of Immanuel is the sole hope of the faithful. Our prayer should be that of this verse. There is at this moment an apparent suspension of our Lord's former power, we must by importunate prayer call him to the conflict, for like the Greeks without Achilles we are soon overcome by our enemies, and we are but

dead men if Jesus be not in our midst. *O most mighty*. A title well deserved, and not given from empty courtesy like the serenities, excellencies and highnesses of our fellow mortals—titles, which are but sops for vain glory. Jesus is the truest of heroes. Hero worship in his case alone is commendable. He is mighty to save, mighty in love. *With thy glory and thy majesty*. Let thy sword both win thee renown and dominion, or as it may mean, gird on with thy sword thy robes which indicate thy royal splendour. Love delights to see the Beloved arrayed as becometh his excellency; she weeps as she sees him in the garments of humiliation, she rejoices to behold him in the vestments of his exaltation. Our precious Christ can never be made too much of. Heaven itself is but just good enough for him. All the pomp that angels and archangels, and thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers can pour at his feet is too little for him. Only his own essential glory is such as fully answers to the desire of his people, who can never enough extol him.

Verse 4. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously*. The hero monarch armed and apparelled is now entreated to ascend his triumphal car. Would to God that our Immanuel would come forth in the chariot of love to conquer our spiritual foes and seize by power the souls whom he has bought with blood. *Because of truth and meekness and righteousness*. These words may be rendered, *ride forth upon truth and meekness and righteousness*.—Three noble chargers to draw the war chariot of the gospel. In the sense of our translation it is a most potent argument to urge with our Lord that the cause of the true, the humble, and the good, calls for his advocacy. Truth will be ridiculed, meekness will be oppressed, and righteousness slain, unless the God, the Man in whom these precious things are incarnated, shall arise for their vindication. Our earnest petition ought ever to be that Jesus would lay his almighty arm to the work of grace lest the good cause languish and wickedness prevail. *And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things*. Foreseeing the result of divine working, the psalmist prophesies that the uplifted arm of Messiah will reveal to the King's own eyes the terrible overthrow of his foes. Jesus needs no guide but his own right hand, no teacher but his own might; may he instruct us all in what he can perform, by achieving it speedily before our gladdened eyes.

Verse 5. *Thine arrows*. Our King is master of all weapons: he can strike those who are near and those afar off with equal force. *Are sharp*. Nothing that Jesus does is ill done, he uses no blunted shafts, no pointless darts. *In the heart of the King's enemies*. Our Captain aims at men's hearts rather than their heads, and he hits them too; point blank are his shots, and they enter deep into the vital part of man's nature. Whether for love or vengeance, Christ never misses aim, and when his arrows stick, they cause a smart not soon forgotten, a wound

which only he can heal. Jesus' arrows of conviction are sharp in the quiver of his word, and sharp when on the bow of his ministers, but they are most known to be so when they find a way into careless hearts. They are *his* arrows, he made them, he shoots them. He makes them sharp, and he makes them enter the heart. May none of us ever fall under the darts of his judgment, for none kill so surely as they. *Whereby the people fall under thee.* On either side the slain of the Lord are many when Jesus leads on the war. Nations tremble and turn to him when he shoots abroad his truth. Under his power and presence, men are stricken down as though pricked in the heart. There is no standing against the Son of God when his bow of might is in his hands. Terrible will be that hour when his bow shall be made quite naked, and bolts of devouring fire shall be hurled upon his adversaries: then shall princes fall and nations perish.

Verse 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* To whom can this be spoken but our Lord? The psalmist cannot restrain his adoration. His enlightened eye sees in the royal Husband of the church, God, God to be adored, God reigning, God reigning everlastingly. Blessed sight! Blind are the eyes that cannot see God in Christ Jesus! We never appreciate the tender condescension of our King in becoming one flesh with his church, and placing her at his right hand, until we have fully rejoiced in his essential glory and deity. What a mercy for us that our Saviour is God, for who but a God could execute the work of salvation? What a glad thing it is that he reigns on a throne which will never pass away, for we need both sovereign grace and eternal love to secure our happiness. Could Jesus cease to reign we should cease to be blessed, and were he not God, and therefore eternal, this must be the case. No throne can endure for ever, but that on which God himself sitteth. *The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.* He is the lawful monarch of all things that be. His rule is founded in right, its law is right, its result is right. Our King is no usurper and no oppressor. Even when he shall break his enemies with a rod of iron, he will do no man wrong; his vengeance and his grace are both in conformity with justice. Hence we trust him without suspicion; he cannot err; no affliction is too severe, for he sends it; no judgment too harsh, for he ordains it. O blessed hands of Jesus! the reigning power is safe with you. All the just rejoice in the government of the King who reigns in righteousness.

Verse 7. *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness.* Christ Jesus is not neutral in the great contest between right and wrong: as warmly as he loves the one he abhors the other. What qualifications for a sovereign! what grounds of confidence for a people! The whole of our Lord's life on earth proved the truth of these words; his death to put away sin and bring in the reign of righteousness, sealed the fact beyond all question; his providence by which he

rules from his mediatorial throne, when rightly understood, reveals the same; and his final assize will proclaim it before all worlds. We should imitate him both in his love and hate; they are both needful to complete a righteous character. *Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Jesus as Mediator owned God as his God, to whom, being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient. On account of our Lord's perfect life he is now rewarded with superior joy. Others there are to whom grace has given a sacred fellowship with him, but by their universal consent and his own merit, he is prince among them, the gladdest of all because the cause of all their gladness. At Oriental feasts oil was poured on the heads of distinguished and very welcome guests; God himself anoints the man Christ Jesus, as he sits at the heavenly feasts, anoints him as a reward for his work, with higher and fuller joy than any else can know; thus is the Son of man honoured and rewarded for all his pains. Observe the indisputable testimony to Messiah's Deity in verse six, and to his manhood in the present verse. Of whom could this be written but of Jesus of Nazareth? Our Christ is our Elohim. Jesus is God with us.

Verse 8. *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.* The divine anointing causes fragrance to distil from the robes of the Mighty Hero. He is delightful to every sense, to the eyes most fair, to the ear most gracious, to the spiritual nostril most sweet. The excellences of Jesus are all most precious, comparable to the rarest spices; they are most varied, and to be likened not to myrrh alone, but to all the perfumes blended in due proportion. The Father always finds a pleasure in him, in him he is well pleased; and all regenerated spirits rejoice in him, for he is made of God unto us, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Note that not only is Jesus most sweet, but even his garments are so; everything that he has to do with is perfumed by his person. *All* his garments are thus fragrant; not some of them, but all; we delight as much in his purple of dominion as in the white of his priesthood, his mantle as our prophet is as dear to us as his seamless coat as our friend. All his dress is fragrant with all sweetness. To attempt to spiritualise each spice here mentioned would be unprofitable, the evident sense is that all sweetnesses meet in Jesus, and are poured forth wherever he is present. *Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.* The abode of Jesus now is imperial in splendour, ivory and gold but faintly image his royal seat; there is he made glad in the presence of the Father, and in the company of his saints. Oh, to behold him with his perfumed garments on! The very smell of him from afar ravishes our spirit, what must it be to be on the other side of the pearl gate, within the palace of ivory, amid those halls of Zion, "conjubilant with song, "where is the throne of David, and the abiding presence of the Prince! To think of his

gladness, to know that *he* is full of joy, gives gladness at this moment to our souls. We poor exiles can sing in our banishment since our King, our Wellbeloved, has come to his throne.

Verse 9. *King's daughters were among thy honourable women.* Our Lord's courts lack not for courtiers, and those the fairest and noblest. Virgin souls are maids of honour to the court, the true lilies of heaven. The lowly and pure in heart are esteemed by the Lord Jesus as his most familiar friends, their place in his palace is not among the menials but near the throne. The day will come when those who are "king's daughters" literally will count it their greatest honour to serve the church, and, meanwhile every believing sister is spiritually a King's daughter, a member of the royal family of heaven. *Upon thy right hand,* in the place of love, honour, and power, *did stand the queen in gold of Ophir:* the church shares her Lord's honour and happiness, he sets her in the place of dignity, he clothes her with the best of the best. Gold is the richest of metals, and Ophir gold the purest known. Jesus bestows nothing inferior or of secondary value upon his beloved church. In imparted and imputed righteousness the church is divinely arrayed. Happy those who are members of a church so honoured, so beloved; unhappy those who persecute the beloved people, for as a husband will not endure that his wife should be insulted or maltreated, so neither will the heavenly Husband; he will speedily avenge his own elect. Mark, then, the solemn pomp of the verses we have read. The King is seen with rapture, he girds himself as a warrior, robes himself as a monarch, mounts his chariot, darts his arrows, and conquers his foes. Then he ascends his throne with his sceptre in his hand, fills the palace hall with perfume brought from his secret chambers, his retinue stand around him, and, fairest of all, his bride is at his right hand, with daughters of subject princes as her attendants. Faith is no stranger to this sight, and every time she looks she adores, she loves, she rejoices, she expects.

Verse 10. *Hearken, O daughter, and consider.* Ever is this the great duty of the church. Faith cometh by hearing, and confirmation by consideration. No precept can be more worthy of the attention of those who are honoured to be espoused to Christ than that which follows. *And incline thine ear.* Lean forward so that no syllable may be unheard. The whole faculties of the mind should be bent upon receiving holy teaching. *Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.* To renounce the world is not easy, but it must be done by all who are affianced to the Great King, for a divided heart he cannot endure; it would be misery to the beloved one as well as dishonour to her Lord. Evil acquaintances, and even those who are but neutral, must be forsaken, they can confer no benefits, they must inflict injury. The house of our nativity is the

house of sin—we were shapen in iniquity; the carnal mind is enmity against God, we must come forth of the house of fallen nature, for it is built in the City of Destruction. Not that natural ties are broken by grace, but ties of the sinful nature, bonds of graceless affinity. We have much to forget as well as to learn, and the unlearning is so difficult that only diligent hearing, and considering, and bending of the whole soul to it, can accomplish the work; and even these would be too feeble did not divine grace assist. Yet why should we remember the Egypt from which we came out? Are the leeks and the garlic, and the onions anything, when the iron bondage, and the slavish tasks, and the death dealing Pharaoh of hell are remembered? We part with folly for wisdom; with bubbles for eternal joys; with deceit for truth; with misery for bliss; with idols for the living God. O that Christians were more mindful of the divine precept here recorded; but, alas! worldliness abounds; the church is defiled; and the glory of the Great King is veiled. Only when the whole church leads the separated life will the full splendour and power of Christianity shine forth upon the world.

Verse 11. *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.* Wholehearted love is the duty and bliss of the marriage state in every case, but especially so in this lofty mystic marriage. The church must forsake all others and cleave to Jesus only, or she will not please him nor enjoy the full manifestation of his love. What less can he ask, what less may she dare propose than to be wholly his? Jesus sees a beauty in his church, a beauty which he delights in most when it is not marred by worldliness. He has always been most near and precious to his saints when they have cheerfully taken up his cross and followed him without the camp. His Spirit is grieved when they mingle themselves among the people and learn their ways. No great and lasting revival of religion can be granted us till the professed lovers of Jesus prove their affection by coming out from an ungodly world, being separated, and touching not the unclean thing. *For he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.* He has royal rights still; his condescending grace does not lessen but rather enforce his authority. Our Saviour is also our Ruler. The husband is the head of the wife; the love he bears her does not lessen but strengthen her obligation to obey. The church must reverence Jesus, and bow before him in prostrate adoration; his tender union with her gives her liberty, but not license; it frees her from all other burdens, but places his easy yoke upon her neck. Who would wish it to be otherwise? The service of God is heaven in heaven, and perfectly carried out it is heaven upon earth. Jesus, thou art he whom thy church praises in her unceasing songs, and adores in her perpetual service. Teach us to be wholly thine. Bear with us, and work by thy Spirit in us till thy will is done by us on earth as it is in heaven.

Verse 12. *And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.* When the church abounds in holiness, she shall know no lack of homage from the surrounding people. Her glory shall then impress and attract the heathen around, till they also unite in doing honour to her Lord. The power of missions abroad lies at home: a holy church will be a powerful church. Nor shall there be lack of treasure in her coffers when grace is in her heart; the free gifts of a willing people shall enable the workers for God to carry on their sacred enterprise without stint. Commerce shall send in its revenue to endow, not with forced levies and imperial taxes, but with willing gifts the church of the Great King. *Even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.* Not by pandering to their follies, but by testifying against their sins, shall the wealthy be one to the faith of Jesus. They shall come not to favour the church but to beg for her favour. She shall not be the hireling of the great, but as a queen shall she dispense her favours to the suppliant throng of the rich among the people. We go about to beg for Christ like beggars for alms, and many who should know better will make compromises and become reticent of unpopular truth to please the great ones of the earth; not so will the true bride of Christ degrade herself, when her sanctification is more deep and more visible; then will the hearts of men grow liberal, and offerings from afar, abundant and continual, shall be presented at the throne of the Pacific Prince.

Verse 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within.* Within her secret chambers her glory is great. Though unseen of men her Lord sees her, and commends her. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Or the passage may be understood as meaning within herself—her beauty is not outward only or mainly; the choicest of her charms are to be found in her heart, her secret character, her inward desires. Truth and wisdom in the hidden parts are what the Lord regards; mere skin deep beauty is nothing in his eyes. The church is of royal extraction, of imperial dignity, for she is a king's daughter; and she has been purified and renewed in nature; for she is glorious within. Note the word *all*. The Bridegroom was said to have all his garments perfumed, and now the bride in *all* glorious within—entireness and completeness are great points. There is no mixture of ill savour in Jesus, nor shall there be alloy of unholiness in his people, his church shall be presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. *Her clothing is of wrought gold.* Best material and best workmanship. How laboriously did our Lord work out the precious material of his righteousness into a vesture for his people! no embroidery of golden threads can equal that masterpiece of holy art. Such clothing becomes on so honoured by relationship to the Great King. The Lord looks to it that nothing shall be wanting to the glory and beauty of his bride.

Verse 14. *She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.* The day comes when the celestial marriage shall be openly celebrated, and these words describe the nuptial procession wherein the queen is brought to her royal Husband attended by her handmaidens. In the latter-day glory, and in the consummation of all things, the glory of the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be seen by all the universe with admiration. While she was within doors, and her saints hidden ones, the church was glorious; what will be her splendour when she shall appear in the likeness of her Lord in the day of his manifestation? The finest embroidery is but a faint image of the perfection of the church when sanctified by the Spirit. This verse tells us of the ultimate rest of the church—the King's own bosom; of the way she comes to it, she is *brought* by the power of sovereign grace; of the time when this is done—in the future, *she shall be*, it does not yet appear; of the state in which she shall come—clad in richest array, and attended by brightest spirits. *The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.* Those who love and serve the church for her Lord's sake shall share in her bliss "in that day." In one sense they are a part of the church, but for the sake of the imagery they are represented as maids of honour; and, though the figure may seem incongruous, they are represented as brought to the King with the same loving familiarity as the bride, because the true servants of the church are of the church, and partake in all her happiness. Note that those who are admitted to everlasting communion with Christ, are pure in heart—*virgins*, pure in company—*her companions*, pure in walk—*that follow her*. Let none hope to be brought into heaven at last who are not purified now.

Verse 15. *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought.* Joy becomes a marriage feast. What joy will that be which will be seen at the feasts of paradise when all the redeemed shall be brought home! Gladness in the saints themselves, and rejoicing from the angels shall make the halls of the New Jerusalem ring again with shoutings. *They shall enter into the King's palace.* Their peaceful abodes shall be where Jesus the King reigns in state for ever. They shall not be shut out but shut in. Rights of free entrance into the holiest of all shall be accorded them. Brought by grace, they shall enter into glory. If there was joy in the bringing, what in the entering? What in the abiding? The glorified are not field labourers in the plains of heaven, but sons who dwell at home, princes of the blood, resident in the royal palace. Happy hour when we shall enjoy all this and forget the sorrows of time in the triumph of eternity.

Verse 16. *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.* The ancient saints who stood as fathers in the service of the Great King have all passed away; but a spiritual seed is found to fill their places. The veterans depart, but volunteers fill up the vacant places. The line of grace never becomes extinct. As long as

time shall last, the true apostolical succession will be maintained. *Whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.* Servants of Christ are kings. Where a man has preached successfully, and evangelised a tribe or nation, he gets to himself more than regal honours, and his name is like the name of the great men that be upon the earth. Jesus is the king maker. Ambition of the noblest kind shall win her desire in the army of Christ; immortal crowns are distributed to his faithful soldiers. The whole earth shall yet be subdued for Christ, and honoured are they, who shall, through grace, have a share in the conquest—these shall reign with Christ at his coming.

Verse 17. *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations.* Jehovah by the prophet's mouth promises to the Prince of Peace eternal fame as well as a continuous progeny. His name is his fame, his character, his person; these are dear to his people now—they never can forget them; and it shall be so as long as men exist. Names renowned in one generation have been unknown to the next era, but the laurels of Jesus shall ever be fresh, his renown ever new. God will see to this; his providence and his grace shall make it so. The fame of Messiah is not left to human guardianship; the Eternal guarantees it, and his promise never fails. All down the ages the memories of Gethsemane and Calvary shall glow with inextinguishable light; nor shall the lapse of time, the smoke of error, or the malice of hell be able to dim the glory of the Redeemer's fame. *Therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.* They shall confess thee to be what thou art, and shall render to thee in perpetuity the homage due. Praise is due from every heart to him who loved us, and redeemed us by his blood; this praise will never be fully paid, but will be ever a standing and growing debt. His daily benefits enlarge our obligations, let them increase the number of our songs. Age to age reveals more of his love, let every year swell the volume of the music of earth and heaven, and let thunders of song roll up in full diapason to the throne of him that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death.

"Let him be crowned with majesty
Who bowed his head to death,
And be his honours sounded high
By all things that have breath."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. *"Upon Shoshannim, "or upon lilies.* It will be remembered that lilies were an emblem of purity and loveliness, and were introduced as such in the building of Solomon's temple (see 1Ki 7:19,22,26 2Ch 4:5); and the church is

compared in the Canticles to a "lily among thorns." So 2:2. The Psalms which bear this title, "upon lilies," are the present, the sixty-ninth, and the eightieth (compare Ps 60:1-12); and all these contain prophecies of Christ and his church. The sixtieth is a parallel to the forty-fourth, and represents her supplicating appeal to God, and Christ's victories. The sixty-ninth displays the victories gained by Christ through suffering. The eightieth is also parallel to the forty-fourth and sixtieth, a plaintive lament of the church in distress and a supplicating cry for deliverance. All these three Psalms are (if we may venture to use this expression) like the voice of the "lily among thorns." That there is, therefore, some reference here to the spiritual meaning of the word (Mynvs), or *lilies*, in this title, seems at least to be probable. *Christopher Wordsworth*.

Title. We think that *Shoshannim* signifies an instrument of six strings, or a song of rejoicing. *Augustin Calmet*, 1672-1757. Kitto, on the other hand, says that the word is so clearly *lilies*, that he is disinclined to go out of the way to bring in the Hebrew word for six.

Title. "*To the chief musician upon Shoshannim.*" Some would have it that instruments whereon were many engravings of lilies, which are six leaved flowers, are here meant. And, indeed, some interpreters, because of that derivation of the word, do thus translate it, *upon Shoshannim*, that is, *upon lilies*; and that either in reference to their wedding garlands, that were made much of lilies, or as intending by these lilies Christ and his church. *Arthur Jackson*.

Title. "*A song.*" The word (ryv), *shir*, the meaning of which (*song*), is unquestioned, is prefixed to many of the Psalms, three times simply and thirteen times in connection with *Mizmor*. There is no mark of peculiarity in their composition. The meaning of the word seems to be discriminated from *Mizmor*, as signifying a thing to be sung, with reference to its poetical structure. *John Jebb*.

Whole Psalm. The Psalter, which sets forth so much truth respecting the person and work of Christ—truth more precious than gold and sweeter than the honeycomb—is not silent respecting the bond subsisting between him and his people, THE MYSTICAL UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. When a prince sets his affections on a woman of lowly rank, and takes her home to be his wife, the two are so united that her debts become his, his wealth and honours become hers. Now, that there is formed between Christ and the church, between Christ and every soul that will consent to receive him, a connection, of which the most intimate of all natural relations is the analogue and type, we have already found to be not only taught in the Psalms, but to be

implied in the very structure of many of them. He takes his people's sins upon him, and they receive the right to become the sons of God: the One Spirit of God wherewith he was baptised without measure, dwells in them according to the measure of the grace that is given them. I will only add further, that this union, besides being implied on so many places, is expressly set forth in one most glorious Psalm—the Nuptial Song of Christ and the Church—which has for its peculiar theme the home bringing of Christ's elect, that they may be joined to him in a union that shall survive the everlasting hills. *William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter, and then My tongue shall be like the pen of a ready writer.* Oh, then I shall go merrily on in his service, when I have matter prepared in my heart. And, indeed, as the mariner sees further new stars the further he sails, he loseth sight of the old ones and discovers new; so the growing Christian, the further he sails in religion he discovers new wants, new Scriptures affect him, new trials afflict him, new business he finds with God, and forgetting those things that are behind, he reacheth after those things that are before, and so finds every day new business with the Lord his God; and he that's busy trifles not; the more business the less distractions. *Richard Steele.*

Verse 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter.* (vxi) (*rakhash*); *boils or bubbles up*; denotes the language of the heart full and ready for utterance. *Victorinus Bythner.*

Verse 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter.* Here you have the work of the Spirit of prophecy. By his operation the good "matter" is engendered in the psalmist's bosom, and now his heart is heaving and labouring under the load. It is just beginning to throw it up, like water from a fountain, that it may flow off in the channel of the tongue. Here, therefore, you have some insight given you of the manner of the operation of the Spirit in the heart of man. The psalmist says his heart is doing what the spirit is doing in his heart. The heart does it, indeed, but it is the Spirit's working. The psalmist took all the interest and pleasure in his subject that he could have done, if the Spirit had had nothing to do with it; for when the Spirit works, he works not only by the heart, but in the heart; he seizes upon all its affections, every fibre of it is bent to his will. *George Harpur, in "Christ in the Psalms," 1862.*

Verse 1. *Good matter, the good spell, or gospel.* *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1. A similitude taken from the *mincah*, or *meat offering* in the law, which was dressed in the frying pan Le 7:9, and there boiled in oil, being made of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil Le 2:5, and afterwards was presented

to the Lord by the priest, verse 8. Here the matter of this Psalm is as the *mincah* or oblation, which with the oil, the grace of the Spirit, was boiled and prepared in the prophet's heart, and now presented. *Henry Ainsworth*.

Verse 1. It is reported of Origen, saith Erasmus, that he was ever earnest, but most of all when he discoursed of Christ. Of Johannes Mollias, a Bononian, it is said, that whenever he spake of Jesus Christ, his eyes dropped, for he was fraught with a mighty fervency of God's Holy Spirit; and like the Baptist, he was first a burning (boiling or bubbling), and then a shining light. *John Trapp*.

Verse 1. *Touching the king.* It does not all concern the king immediately, for much of it concerns the queen, and about one half of it is directly addressed to her. But it relates to him inasmuch as it relates to his family. Christ ever identifies himself with his people; so that, whatever is done to them, is done to himself. Their interests are his. *George Harpur*.

Verse 1. *My tongue* shall be like the pen of one that takes minutes or writes shorthand: for I shall speak very briefly, and not in words at length, or so as to be understood in a literal sense, but in figures and emblems. *From "Holy David and his old English Translators cleared," 1706. (Anon.)*

Verse 1. *The pen.* We call the prophets the *penmen* of Scripture, whereas they were but the *pen*.

Verse 2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips.* Thus he begins to set forth his beauty, wherein is the delightfulness of any person; so is it with the soul when God hath made known to man his own filthiness and uncomeliness through sin, and that only by Jesus sin is taken away; oh, how beautiful is this face, the first sight of him! Secondly, *Full of grace are thy lips:* here is the second commendation; which is, when Jesus hath opened his lips to us, from them he pours out grace into our soul, when he makes known the Father to us, and speaks peace to all that are far off and near; when he calls, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you:" and all this is because God hath blessed him for ever; we are assured he comes from God, and that he and his works are eternal, and therefore all his grace poured out upon us shall remain with us, and make us blessed for ever; for he is the Word of God, and he speaks the mind of God, for he speaks nothing but what he hath heard from the Father; and when he speaks to our souls with his Word, the Spirit is given, a certain testimony to our soul that we are the sons of God, and a pledge of our inheritance; for the Spirit and the Word cannot be separated. *Richard Coore, in "Christ set forth."*

Verse 2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men*, etc. Nothing can be more beautiful than this abrupt way of discourse. The prophet sets out with a professed design to speak of the king. But as if in the moment he had so intended, the glorious *Person* of whom he was going to speak appeared to his view, he instantly leaves every other consideration to speak to him himself. And what a rapturous address he makes! He first describes the glories, the beauties, the astonishing loveliness, of his *person*. Though to a carnal eye there was no beauty to desire him, his visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men, yet to an eye truly enlightened, he is the king in his beauty, fairer, as the glorious *Mediator*, the Head, the Bridegroom of his Church and people, than all the children of men. And, in the Father's view, so greatly beloved, so truly glorious, that *grace was poured into his lips*. Reader, observe the expression; not simply grace put into his heart, for the holiness and purity of his person, but poured into his lips, that, like the honey, it might drop upon his people, and be for ever communicated to all his redeemed, in an endless perpetuity of all suited blessings here, and glory hereafter. *Robert Hawker, D.D.*

Verse 2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men*. Are you for *beauty*? That takes with most: for this none like Christ. For beauty and comeliness he infinitely surpasses both men and angels. We read of Moses, that he was exceeding fair; and of David, that he was ruddy, and of a beautiful countenance; and Josephus reports of the one of them, that all that saw him were amazed at and enamoured of his beauty. Oh, but what was their beauty to Christ's? Were their beauty, and with theirs the beauty of men and angels put together, it would all be nothing to the beauty of Christ; not so much as the light of a farthing candle is to the light of the sun at noonday. *Edward Pearse in "The Best Match."* 1673.

Verse 2. *Thou art fairer*, etc. Fair he was (1) in his *conception*, conceived in purity, and a fair angel brought the news. Fair (2) in his *nativity*: *wraioz* is the word in the Septuagint, *tempustivus*, *in time*, that is, all things are beautiful in their time, Ec 3:11. And *in the fulness of time* it was that he was born, and a fair star pointed to him. Fair (3) in his *childhood*; he grew up in grace and favour, Lu 2:52. The doctors were much taken with him. Fair (4) in his *manhood*; had he not been so, says S. Jerome, had there not been something admirable in his countenance and presence, some heavenly beauty, the apostles and the whole world (as the Pharisees themselves confess) would not so suddenly have gone after him. Fair (5) in his *transfiguration*, white as the light, or as the snow, his face glittering as the sun Mt 17:2, even to the ravishing the very soul of S. Peter, that "he knew not what he said, "could let his eyes dwell upon that face

for ever, and never come down the mount again. Fair (6) in his *passion*. *Nihil indecorum*, no uncomeliness, in his nakedness; his very wounds, and the bloody prints of the whips and scourges drew an *ecce* from the mouth of Pilate: "Behold, the man!" the sweetness of his countenance and carriage in the midst of filth and spittle, whips and buffets. His very comeliness upon the cross, and his giving up the ghost, made the centurion cry out, he "*was the Son of God*:" there appeared so sweet a majesty, so heavenly a lustre in him through that very darkness that encompassed him. Fair (7) in his *resurrection*; so subtle a beauty, that mortal eyes, even the eyes of his own disciples, were not able to see or apprehend it, but when he veiled it from them. Fair (8) in his *ascension*; made his disciples stand gazing after him so long (as if they never could look long enough upon him), till an angel is sent from heaven to rebuke them, to look home, Ac 1:2. *Mark Frank*.

Verse 2. O fair sun, and fair moon, and fair stars, and fair flowers, and fair roses, and fair lilies; but O ten thousand thousand times fairer Lord Jesus! Alas! I have wronged him in making the comparison this way. O black sun and moon! but O fair Lord Jesus! O black flowers, and black lilies, and roses! but O fair, fair, ever fair, Lord Jesus! O black heaven! but O fair Christ! O black angels! but O surpassingly fair Lord Jesus! *Samuel Rutherford*.

Verse 2. In one Christ we may contemplate and must confess all the beauty and loveliness both of heaven and earth; the beauty of heaven is God, the beauty of earth is man; the beauty of heaven and earth together is this God man. *Edward Hyde, D.D.*, 1658.

Verse 2. *Thou*. "I have a passion," observed Count Zinzendorf in one of his discourses to the congregation at Herrnhut, "and it is He—He only."

Verse 2. *Thou art fairer*. Hebrew, thou art *double fairer*; the Hebrew word is doubled, *ad corroborandum*, saith Kimchi. *John Trapp*.

Verse 2. *Grace is poured into thy lips*. This is said as if this grace were a gift, and not something inherent in our Lord himself. And is not this exactly what we learn from the histories of the evangelists? Before Jesus went forth to the work of his public mission, the Holy Ghost descended from heaven like a dove, and lit upon him. The Spirit who imparts all its graces to the church of Christ, imparted his graces to Christ himself. Not that the Son of God needed the anointing of the Spirit of God, but he suffered it to be so that he might be in all things like his brethren. If he was to be their example, he must show them wherein their great strength lay. They see in him the fruits of the Holy Ghost who is promised to themselves. All that Christ ever did as the Head and

Representative of his people, he did by that very Spirit which is still resident in his church. *George Harpur*.

Verse 2. *Grace is poured into thy lips. Full of grace are thy lips.* Full of grace for the *matter*, and full of grace for the *manner*.

1. For the *matter*, he delivered acceptable doctrine: "The law was given by Moses, but grace came by Jesus Christ." Joh 1:17. Moses had harsh and hard words in his law; "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them; "but Christ on the contrary speaks better things, the first words in his first sermon are, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Mt 5:3. He cometh unto his people, *cum verbo gratiae, cum osculo gratae*, saith Augustine: his lips are *full of grace*, that is, pouring out gracious words abundantly. Mt 11:28 Joh 3:16 Lu 4:18. "His lips are like lilies dropping down myrrh" So 5:13; all that heard him wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, Lu 4:22.

2. For the *manner*, he taught not as the scribes; he spake so sweetly that the very catch poll officers, astonished at his words, gave this testimony, "Never man spake like this man," Joh 7:46. He spake so graciously that the apostles forsook all things and followed him; at his call Andrew left his nets straightway, James and John their father without tarrying, Matthew from the receipt of custom, Zacchaeus from the like worldly course came hastily to receive him joyfully. Mr 10:28 Mt 4:20-21 9:9 Lu 19:6. Nay, beloved, he was so powerful an orator, that the very winds and waves obeyed his word, Mr 4:39. It is reported in Holy Writ that all princes and people were desirous of hearing Solomon's eloquence; the Queen of Sheba wondering at the same, cried out, "Happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom," 1Ki 10:8. Solomon is type here, but Christ is the truth; and this sheweth evidently that Christ is not a tyrant, but a mild prince, persuading obedience plausibly, not compelling his people violently; his sayings are his *sceptre* and his sword: his piercing exhortations are, as it were, his *sharp arrows* by which his followers are subdued unto him.

To conclude this argument, his fair words (as the Scripture speaks) "are as an honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" Pr 16:24: "an honeycomb," and what more toothsome?" sweetness to the soul and health to the bones; "and what, I pray, more wholesome? The good man's soul is Christ's own spouse, to which he speaks a great many ways graciously; sometimes correcting, and what stronger argument of love? for "whom he loveth he chasteneth" Heb 12:6; sometimes instructing, and his gospel is able to make "the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" 2Ti 3:17;

sometimes wooing in amorous terms, as in his love song everywhere: "my beloved, ""my sister, ""my spouse, " "the fairest among women, ""my love," "my dove." etc.; sometimes promising, and that both the blessings of this life present. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: etc., Isa 41:10, and of that life which is to come. Joh 17:21,24. But Christ's excellent intercession every day to God the Father, appearing in the court of heaven, and as an advocate pleading for us, is yet fuller of grace; for if Caleb easily granted his daughter's request, and bestowed on her "the springs above and the springs beneath" Jud 1:15, how shall Almighty God (whose mercies are above all his works) deny the suits of such a Son in whom he is well pleased?
John Boys.

Verse 2. *Grace is poured into thy lips.* The former clause noted his inward perfections; and this signifies his ability and readiness to communicate them to others. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 2. (*second clause*). Never were there such words of love and sweetness spoken by any man as by him: never was there such a loving and tender heart as the heart of Jesus Christ: *Grace was poured into his lips.* Certainly never were there such words of love, sweetness, and tenderness spoken here upon this earth as those last words of his which were uttered a little before his sufferings, and are recorded in the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th chapters of John. Read over all the books of love and friendship that were ever written by any of the sons of men, they do all come far short of these melting strains of love that are there expressed. So sweet and amiable was the conversation of Jesus Christ, that it is reported of the apostle Peter in the Ecclesiastical History, that after Christ's ascension he wept so abundantly, that he was always seen wiping his face from the tears; and being asked why he wept so, he answered, He could not choose but weep as often as he thought of that most sweet conversation of Jesus Christ. *John Row.*

Verse 3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.* The sword, according to ancient custom was hung in a belt put round the shoulders, and reaching down to the thigh. It was suspended on the back part of the thigh, almost to the ground, but was not girded upon it; the horseman's sword was fixed on the saddle by a girth. When David, in spirit invites the Redeemer of the church to gird his sword upon his thigh, and the spouse says of the valiant of Israel, "every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night" So 3:8, they do not mean that the weapon was literally bound upon their thigh, but hung in the girdle on the back part of it; for this was the mode in which, by the universal testimony of ancient writers, the infantry wore their swords. It is still the practice in the East to wear swords in this manner, for Chardin informs us, that

"the Eastern people wear their swords hanging down at length; and the Turks wear their swords on horseback, and on their thigh." But in his poetical invitation to the Redeemer, to gird his sword upon his thigh, David manifestly points to some special occasion of solemn and official character; and a clear light is thrown upon his meaning by a custom to this day observed in the East. "When a Persian or an Ottoman prince *ascends the throne*, "says Mr. Morier, "he girds on his sabre. Mohammed Jaffer, for example, was proclaimed by the Khan, governor *pro tempore*, till the arrival of his brother, and was invested in this dignity by the *girding of a sword upon his thigh*, and honour which he accepted with a reluctance perhaps not wholly feigned."—"This ceremony, "says Dr. Davey, giving an account of an Eastern coronation, "remained to be performed before the prince could be considered completely king—it was that of choosing a new name, and putting on the regal sword. The prince went in great state to the temple, where he presented offerings, and then, the sword having been girded on his thigh, the priest presented a pot of sandal powder, in which the prince, who *may now be called* king, dipped his fingers." From these anecdotes, it is evident girding a sword on the thigh is part of the ceremony of royal inauguration; and that when the psalmist addresses the Messiah, he refers to his receiving the honours and powers of the Lord of all. *G. Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.*

Verse 3. *Thy sword.* The word of God is compared to such a weapon, for the apostle informs us that it is quick, or living, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and laying open the thoughts and intents of the heart. It must be observed, however, that this description of the word of God is applicable to it only when Christ girds it on, and employs it as his sword. Of what use is a sword, even though it be the sword of Goliath, while it lies still in its scabbard, or is grasped by the powerless hand of an infant? In those circumstances it can neither conquer nor defend, however well suited it might be to do both in the hand of a warrior. It is the same with the sword of the Spirit. While it lies still in its scabbard, or is wielded only by the infantile hand of Christ's ministers, it is a powerless and useless weapon; a weapon at which the weakest sinner can laugh, and against which he can defend himself with the utmost ease. But not so when he who is the Most Mighty girds it on. Then it becomes a weapon of tremendous power, a weapon resistless as the bolt of heaven. "Is not my word like a fire, and a hammer, saith the Lord, which breaketh the rock in pieces?" It is indeed, for what can be more efficacious and irresistible than a weapon sharper than a two edged sword, wielded by the arm of omnipotence? What must his sword be whose glance is lightning? Armed with this weapon, the Captain of our salvation cuts his way to the sinner with

infinite ease, though surrounded by rocks and mountains, scatters his strongholds and refuges of lies, and with a mighty blow cleaves asunder his heart of adamant, and lays him prostrate and trembling at his feet. Since such are the effects of this weapon in the hand of Christ, it is with the utmost propriety that the psalmist begins by requesting him *to gird it on*, and not suffer it to be inactive in its scabbard, or powerless in the feeble grasp of his ministers. *Edward Payson.*

Verse 3. *O most mighty.* Christ is almighty, and so able to make good all that he speaketh, and to make his word of precept, promise, and threatening effectual unto the errand for which it is sent. *David Dickson.*

Verses 3-4. We may reflect with pleasure on the glorious cause in which Christ is engaged, and the holy war which he carries on, and in which he shall prosper. It is the cause of truth, of meekness, and righteousness. His gospel, his sword, which is the word of God, tends to rectify our errors by truth; to control our passions by that meekness which it promotes, and to regulate our lives by the laws of righteousness which it inculcates. Let us rejoice that this sacred cause has hitherto prospered, and shall prosper. *Job Orton, 1717-1783.*

Verse 4. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously,* etc. The wheels of Christ's chariot, whereupon he rideth when he goeth to conquer and subdue new converts to his kingdom, are *majesty, truth, meekness, righteousness*, manifested in the preaching of his gospel; *majesty*, when the stately magnificence of his person and offices is declared; *truth*, when the certainty of all that he teacheth in Scripture is known; *meekness*, when his grace and mercy is offered to rebels; and *righteousness*, when justification by faith in his name is clearly set forth. Christ goeth no voyage in vain, he cometh not short of his intent and purpose, but doth the work for which he cometh, preaching the gospel; *in his majesty, truth, meekness, and righteousness, he rideth prosperously.* *David Dickson.*

Verse 4. *Ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.* The literal translation would be, "Ride on the word of truth, and the meekness of righteousness," and so the Syriac has it. If this rendering be adopted, the meaning will then be, that the great object of Christ's gospel was to vindicate the cause of truth and righteousness in the world. Christ is said to ride on the word of truth, because the knowledge of the truth depends on the word—it is by the word that truth is made known. He is said to ride on the meekness or humility of righteousness, because meekness or humility is its distinguishing characteristic. The former relates to what man is to believe, the latter to how he is to live. *George Harpur.*

Verse 4. *Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.* This expression seems only used to imply, either that by his power he should be enabled to do terrible things, because teaching enables men to do what they are taught, or that by his almighty power he should experimentally see what great and terrible things should be done by him. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 5. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies.* In a still bolder metaphor the arrows which are discharged from the bow of Christ are the preachers of the gospel, especially the apostles and evangelists. "*His sagittis*," says S. Jerome, "*totus orbis vulneratus et captus est.*" Paul, the apostle, was an arrow of the Lord, discharged from his bow from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and from Illyricum to Spain, flying from east to west, and subduing Christ's enemies beneath his feet. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5. While beseeching the Redeemer to ride forth prosperously, and predicting his success, he seems suddenly to have seen his prayers answered and his predictions fulfilled. He saw his all conquering Prince gird on his resistless sword, array himself in glory and majesty, ascend the chariot of his gospel, display the banner of his cross, and ride forth, as on the wings of the wind, while the tremendous voice of a herald proclaimed before him: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, "exalt the valleys, and level the hills; make the crooked ways straight, and the rough places plain; for, behold, the Lord God comes; he comes with a strong hand, his reward is with him, and his work before him. From the bright and fiery cloud which enveloped his chariot, and concealed it from mortal eyes, he saw sharp arrows of conviction shot forth on every side, deeply wounding the obdurate hearts of sinners, and prostrating them in crowds around his path, while his right hand extended raised them again, and healed the wounds which his arrows had made; and his omnipotent voice spoke peace to their despairing souls, and bade them follow in his train, and witness and share in his triumph. From the same bright cloud he saw the vengeful lightnings flashing thick and dreadful, to blast and consume everything that opposed his progress; he saw sin, and death, and hell, with all its legions, baffled, defeated, and flying in trembling consternation before him; he saw them overtaken, bound, and chained to his triumphant chariot wheels; while enraptured voices were heard from heaven exclaiming, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ." Such was the scene which seems to have burst upon the ravished sight of the entranced prophet. Transported with the view, he exclaims, *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.* *Edward Payson.*

Verse 5. *The king's enemies*, is not simply an expression for "Thy enemies," as some think, but rather implies that Christ's kingship is the ground of their

enmity; just as in the second Psalm their cry was, "Let us break their *bands* asunder." *George Harpur*.

Verse 6. *Thy throne, O God.* The original word is, probably vocative, both in the Greek and in the Hebrew; and is so taken by modern Unitarians, who seek their refuge by explaining away yeos. *Henry Alford, D.D.*, on Heb 1:8.

Verse 7. *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness.* Many a one loves righteousness, but would not be its champion; such a love is not Christ's love. Many a one hates iniquity, not for its own sake, but for the sake of its consequences; such a hate is not Christ's hate. To be like Christ we must love righteousness as he loved, and hate wickedness as he hated. To love and hate as he loves and hates is to be perfect as he is perfect. The perfection of this love and hate is moral perfection. *George Harpur*.

Verse 7. *Therefore.* Observe how usual it is to impute Christ's exaltation to his merits. God blessed him for ever, as in the second verse of this Psalm (if such be the sense of that verse), *because* he was fairer than the children of men, and grace was poured into his lips. And so the apostle. God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name, *because* he had humbled himself, and became obedient unto death. And here God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows, *because* he loved righteousness and hated iniquity. *George Harpur*.

Verse 7. *Therefore.* He says not, "Wherefore he anointed thee in order to thy being God, or King, or Son, or Word; "for so he was before, and is for ever, as has been shown; but rather, "Since thou art God and King, therefore thou wast anointed, since none but thou couldst unite man to the Holy Ghost, thou the image of the Father, in which we were made in the beginning: for thine is even the Spirit." *Athanasius*.

Verse 7. *Therefore God, thy God.* God was the God of Christ in covenant, that he might be our God in covenant; for in his transactions, whole Christ, Head and members, are to be considered Ga 3:16 1Co 12:12, the covenant being first transacted with the Head (who is given for a covenant to us, Isa 42:6), and then with the members, with him in reference to us and for us. As God did not fail our surety, but supported him in his great conflict, when out of the depths he called unto him; so neither will he fail us in time of need. Heb 4:16 13:5-6. *William Troughton*.

Verse 7. *Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;* i.e., enriched and filled thee in a singular manner with the

fulness of the Spirit, whereby thou art consecrated to thy office; and by reason whereof you out shine and excellest all the saints who are thy *fellows*, or copartners in these graces. So that in these words you have two parts, namely, first, *the saint's dignity*; and, secondly, *Christ's preeminence*. First. *The saint's dignity*, which consists in this, that they are Christ's *fellows*. The Hebrew word (Kyrkxm), is very full and copious, and is translated consorts, companions, copartners, partakers; or as ours reads it, *fellows*; i.e., such as are partakers with him in the anointing of the Spirit, who do in their measure receive the same Spirit, every Christian being appointed, *modo sibi proportionato*, with the same grace and dignified with the same titles. 1Jo 2:27 Re 1:6. Christ and the saints are in common one with another. Doth the Spirit of holiness dwell in him? So he doth in them too. Is Christ King and Priest? Why, so are they, too, by the grace of union with him. He hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father. This is the saints' dignity, to be Christ's fellows, consorts, or copartners; so that look whatever grace or excellency is in Christ, it is not impropriated to himself, but they do share with him; for indeed he was filled with the fulness of the Spirit for their sakes and use. As the sun is filled with light not to shine to itself, but to others, so is Christ with grace; and therefore some translate the text not *prae consortibus*, above thy fellows, but *propter consortes*, for thy fellows; (Rivetus), making Christ the first receptacle of all grace, who first and immediately is filled from the fountain of the Godhead, but it is for his people who receive and derive from him according to their proportion. This is a great truth; and the dignity of the saints lies chiefly in the partnership with Christ, though our translation, *above thy fellows*, suits best both with the importance of the word and scope of the place. Secondly. But then, whatever *dignity* is ascribed herein to the saints, there is, and still must be, a *preeminence* acknowledged and ascribed to Christ: if they are anointed with the spirit of grace, much more abundantly is Christ: *God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. John Flavel.*

Verse 7. *Oil of gladness.* For sweet smelling oils were also used to beautify the face upon occasions of feasting and mirth. Ps 23:5 104:15 Isa 61:3. And likewise this oil of consecration and infusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost hath been the cause and foundation of Christ's human nature's obtaining of the everlasting joys and glory. Php 2:9 Heb 12:2. *John Diodati.*

Verse 7. Behold, O ye Arians, and acknowledge even hence the truth. The psalmist speaks of us all as *fellows* or *partakers* of the Lord, but were he one of things which come out of nothing, and of things generate, he himself had been one of those who partake. But since he hymned him as the eternal God, saying, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, and has declared that all other things

partake of him, what conclusion must we draw, but that he is distinct from generated things, and he only the Father's veritable Word, Radiance, and Wisdom, which all things generate partake, being sanctified by him in Spirit? And, therefore, he is here *anointed*, not that he may become God, for he was so even before; nor that he may become king, for he has the kingdom eternally, existing as God's image, as the sacred oracle shows; but in our behalf is this written, as before. For the Israelitish kings, upon their being anointed, then became kings, not being so before, as David, as Ezekias, as Josias, and the rest; but the Saviour, on the contrary, being God, and ever ruling in the Father's kingdom, and being himself the dispenser of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless is here said to be anointed, that, as before, being said as man to be anointed with the Spirit, he might provide for us more, not only exaltation and resurrection, but the indwelling and intimacy of the Spirit...And when he received the Spirit, we it was who, by him were made recipients of it. And, moreover, for this reason, not as Aaron, or David, or the rest, was he anointed with oil, but in another way, above all his fellows, *with the oil of gladness*, which he himself interprets to be the Spirit, saying by the prophet, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me; "as also the apostle has said, "How God anointed him with the Holy Ghost." *Athanasius*.

Verse 8. *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.* Although there is considerable obscurity overhanging these words, still the general idea of a *supereminent fulness of anointing* is quite apparent, combined, however, with the other idea that the anointing oil or ointment was of *the most exquisite quality*. Myrrh, and aloes, and cassia were celebrated for their peculiar fragrance, on which account they were used in compounding the choicest unguents. Myrrh and cassia are mentioned in Ex 30:23-24, as two of the spices of which the holy anointing oil was made up. All its ingredients were considered sacred. The Israelites were forbidden to pour it upon man's flesh, or to attempt any imitation of it in their own perfumes. Ivory was in early times, as it still is, rare and costly, and it was highly esteemed as a material for household decoration, on which the finest workmanship and the most princely expenditures were displayed. In palaces of ivory, therefore, it was to be expected that, in correspondence with the magnificence of their structure and the costliness of their furniture, the ointment employed for anointing would be of the richest perfume, and in the greatest profusion. According to our version of the Psalm, the divine Saviour is thus represented as being anointed with oil of the very best kind, even oil taken from the ivory palaces; and also as receiving it in no ordinary measure. His anointing was not confined to a few ceremonial drops poured upon the head, but so abundant is it said to have been, that *all* his

garments *smelled* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Bishop Horsley has proposed a change in the translation, by which means the idea of abundance is connected, not with the fragrance arising from the anointing, but with the anointing itself, which is a different and far more important thing. "Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia, excelling the palaces of ivory, excelling those which delight thee." This translation, which is strictly literal as well as poetical, is at the same time comparatively free from obscurity, and it visibly sets forth, under the most expressive imagery, the surpassing measure of that anointing which was conferred on our Lord above all his fellows. His garments are supposed not merely to have been all richly perfumed, or even thoroughly saturated with the oil of gladness, but to have consisted of the very articles which entered into the composition of the most precious and odoriferous unguent: *Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia*. This is figurative language, but nothing could more emphatically exhibit how truly "the Spirit rested on Jesus, and abode with him" in all the plenitude of his heavenly gifts. That heavenly anointing constituted, as it were, his very dress, "excelling" in the quantity or measure of the anointing "the palaces of ivory; "because their furniture, however highly scented, were not made of aromatic materials. The strength of the perfumes would evaporate, the fragrance would soon diminish; but permanent as well as plentiful fragrance is secured to him whose "garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia." It is added, in the way of parallelism, "excelling those which delight in thee, "or those which make thee glad. To say that the persons here alluded to are the occupiers of the ivory palaces, might perhaps be objected to as fanciful; but palaces are the abodes of kings; and anointed kings wither literally, or typically, or spiritually, are the fellows of the Lord's Anointed One; and it does seem manifest that, as his anointing causes joy and gladness to all the parties concerned in it, so likewise there is an anointing of those who are honoured to be his fellows which causes joy and gladness to him. The persons who are in the one verse spoken of as giving delight to Christ, there is no reason to regard as any other than the persons spoken of in the former verse as his "*fellows*." And if this is the case, then we have a comparison drawn betwixt the one and the other in the matter of their anointing, and to that of Christ a decided superiority is ascribed. *David Pitcairn, in "The Anointed Saviour, "1846.*

Verse 8. *All thy garments smell of myrrh*, etc. These things are true in Jesus; by his garments in meant his righteousness; for it is written, He clothed himself with righteousness and zeal. And here the translator hath put in *smell*, which rather should have been *are*, for "*his garments are* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, " that is, truly purging, cleansing, and making sound; for his righteousness, which is the righteousness of faith, maketh sound hearted Christians; whereas, man's righteousness, which is the righteousness of works,

maketh filthy hypocrites. And by "*ivory palaces*," is meant the true faith and fear of God; for ivory is solid and white, and palaces are king's houses; and by Christ we are made kings, and our dwelling is in faith and fear of God; and this is the gladness and joy of our Lord Jesus, that he brings many sons and daughters unto God. *Richard Coore*, 1683.

Verse 8. *Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*

Commentators have been more perplexed in explaining these words than any other part of the Psalm. Not to detain you with the various expositions that have been proposed, I will give you what I conceive to be the meaning of the passage. The word rendered *whereby*, is also the name of a region in Arabia Felix, namely, Minnaea, which, according to the geographer Strabo, "abounded in myrrh and frankincense." Now, it is singular that, according to the historian, Diodorus Siculus, "the inhabitants of Arabia Felix had sumptuous houses, adorned with *ivory* and precious stones." Putting these two things together, therefore, namely, that this region abounded in myrrh and frankincense, and that its inhabitants adorned their houses with ivory, we may, I conceive, find a clue to the psalmist's meaning. If we substitute "Minnaea" for "whereby," the passage will run thus—

"Myrrh, aloes, and cassia, are all thy garments.
From ivory palaces of Minnaea they have made thee glad."

You recollect in the verse just going before, the oil with which Christ was said to be anointed, is called the oil of "*gladness*." Accordingly, he is here said to be made *glad* (it is the same word in both places in the Hebrew), by the spices of which that oil is composed. These spices are said to have been brought out of the most spicy region of the land of spices, and it is implied that they are the best spices of that spicy region. *Out of the ivory palaces*, says the psalmist; not only houses, but palaces—the mansions of the great, where the best spices would naturally be kept—out of these have come the myrrh, aloes, and cassia, that have composed the oil of gladness whereby thou art made glad. God anointed Christ, when he set him on his everlasting throne, with the oil of gladness; and this anointing was so profuse, his garments were so overspread with it, that they seemed to be nothing but myrrh, aloes, and cassia. The spices, moreover, of which the anointing oil was composed, were the best of their kind, brought, as they were, from the ivory palaces of Minnaea. Such appears to be the psalmist's meaning; and when thus understood, the passage becomes most beautifully expressive of the *excellency* and *unmeasured supply* of the gifts and graces of that Spirit with which Christ was anointed by his Father. *George Harpur*.

Verse 8. *The ivory palaces. The ivory courts.* Probably so called from the great quantity of ivory used in ornamenting and inlaying them; as the emperor Nero's palace, mentioned by Suetonius, was named, "aurea, "or "golden, "because "*lita auro*, ""overlaid with gold." This method of ornamenting or inlaying rooms was very ancient among the Greeks. Homer in the fourth book of the Odyssey, seems to mention it, as employed in Menelaus's palace at Lacedaemon; and that the Romans sometimes ornamented their apartments in like manner, seems evident from Horace and Ovid. So in modern times, the winter apartment of the fair Fatima at Constantinople, has been described by an eye witness as "wainscotted with inlaid work of mother of pearl, *ivory of different colours*, and olive wood." Ivory is likewise employed at Aleppo, as Dr. Russell informs us, in the decoration of some of the more expensive apartments. *Richard Mant.*

Verse 8. *Ivory palaces.* Either edifices 1Ki 22:39 So 7:14, or ivory coffers, and wardrobes, whence those garments were taken, and are kept. *Westminster Assembly's Annotations.*

Verse 8. *Whereby they have made thee glad.* The best sense of the phrase—*from which they rejoice thee*—is had by making *they* refer to the *king's daughters* mentioned in the next verse. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 8. Gesenius and Delitzsch consider (ynm) an abbreviated form of the plural (Mynm) Ps 105:4, "strings, "or "stringed instruments, "and would render thus:—"Thee glad out of the ivory palaces stringed instruments have made." *Dalman Hapstone.* (With this rendering Ewald and Lange agree.) *J. L. K.*

Verse 9. *King's daughters.* Albeit the Catholic church consisting of true converts or real saints be but the one and only true spouse of Christ, yet particular visible churches consisting of saints by calling, by obligation, by profession, and common estimation, their own or others, are many. The true church consisting of true converts (whose praise is of God, to whom only they are certainly known, and not of men), being but one, is compared to the *queen*; but the particular, whose collections and consociations are known to men, being many, are compared to *ladies of honour* who serve the queen. *David Dickson.*

Verse 9. *The queen.* It is written of Matilda, the empress, that she was the daughter of a king, the mother of a king, and the wife of a king.

Ortu magna, viro major, sed maxima prole,
Hic jacet Henrici filia, nupta, parens.

So David intimates in this hymn, that the church is the daughter of a King, at the 13th verse, "The king's daughter is all glorious within; "and the mother of a king, at the 16th verse, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth; "and the wife of a king, in this verse, *Upon thy right hand did stand the queen*, as being (I speak in the language of Canaan), spiritually the wedded and bedded wife to the king of glory. *John Boys*.

Verse 10. *Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.* Three *alls* I expect you to part with, saith Christ. 1. All your sinful lusts, all the ways of the old Adam, our Father's house. Ever since Adam's apostasy, God and man have parted houses. Ever since, our Father's house is a house of ill manners, a house of sin and wickedness. 2. All your worldly advantages. "If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." He that hath all these must be ready to part with all; they are joined not disjunctively but copulatively. 3. All self, self will, self righteousness, self sufficiencies, self confidence, and self seekings. *Lewis Stuckley*.

Verse 10. *Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.* If you see a bee leave a fair flower and stick upon another, you may conclude that she finds most honey dew in that flower she most sticks upon: so here God's people would never leave so many fair flowers in the world's garden, had they not some other in which they find most sweetness. Christ hath his garden, into which he brings his beloved, and there she finds other manner of flowers than any the world hath, in which there is sweetness of a higher nature, even the honey dew of the choice mercy and goodness and blessing of God himself: if God's people do leave the full breasts of the world, it is because they have found the breasts of consolation from which they have sucked other manner of sweetness than the breast of the world can afford. *Jeremiah Burroughs, in "Moses, his self denial."* 1649.

Verse 10. *Forget.* If thou be on the mountain, have no love to look back to Sodom. If thou be in the ark, fly not back to the world, as the raven did. If thou be set on Canaan, forget the flesh pots of Egypt. If marching against Midian, forget stooping to the waters of Harod. Jud 7:1-25. If on the house top, forget that is below thee. Mr 13:15. If thy hand be put to the plough, forget that is behind thee. Lu 9:62. Themistocles desired rather to learn the art of forgetfulness than of memory. Philosophy is an art of remembering, divinity includes in it an art of forgetting. The first lesson that Socrates taught his scholars was, Remember; for he thought that knowledge was nothing else but a calling to remembrance of those things the mind knew ere it knew the body.

But the first lesson that Christ teacheth his scholars is, *Forget: Forget thine own people*; "Repent" Mt 4:17; first, "eschew evil," 1Pe 3:11. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 11. *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.* This is a most sweet promise. For the Holy Spirit knoweth that this monster, Monk, sticks fast in our heart—that we want to be pure and without spot before God. Thus, under Popery, all my temptation was this. I used to say, 'that I would willingly go to the sacrament if I were but worthy.' Thus we seek, naturally, a purity in ourselves; and we examine our whole life and want to find a purity in ourselves, that we might have no need of grace, but might be pronounced righteous upon the grounds of our own merit...Thou wilt certainly never become righteous by thyself and thine own works...The Holy Spirit saith, therefore, I will give thee wholesome counsel; and if thou wilt hear me, thou shalt become a virgin all fair. For, if thou wouldst be beautiful in the sight of God, so that all thy works should please him, and he should say, "Thy prayer pleaseth me; all that thou sayest, doest, and thinkest, pleaseth me!" proceed thou thus: "hear, see, and incline thine ear; "and thou shalt thus become all fair. When thou hast heard, hast seen, hast forgotten all thine own righteousness, all the law, all traditions, and all that monkery, and hast believed, then art thou fair; not in thine own beauty, but in the beauty of the King who has adorned thee with his Word; because he has brought unto thee thereby his righteousness, his holiness, truth, and fortitude, and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit...The Holy Spirit uses the most exalted language. *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty*: that is, thou wilt by this faith prevail upon him to do whatever thou desirest: so that, as one urged by the power of love, he will spontaneously follow thee, abide with thee, and take up his abode with thee. For wherever God has given his Word, there he does not leave his work which he has begun in thee; but he brings upon thee first the temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh; that by them he may work upon thee. These are his embraces whereby he embraces his spouse through impatience of love...The sum of the whole therefore, is this: That our beauty does not consist in our own virtues, now even in the gifts which we have received from God, by which we put forth virtues, and do all those things which pertain unto the life of the law; but in this—our apprehending Christ and believing in him. Then it is that we are truly beautiful: and it is this beauty alone that Christ looks upon, and upon no other. *Martin Luther.*

Verse 11. In this Psalm Christ is set forth in all his royalty and majesty; yet he is said *greatly to desire or delight in the beauty* of his queen, that is, the graces of the saints; and that not with an ordinary delight, but he "*greatly* desires; "his desire is increased as her beauty is. For that is there brought in as a motive unto

her to be more holy and conformed unto him, "to incline her ear, and forsake her father's house." *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.* Christ hath a beauty that pleaseth him as well as we have, though of another kind; and, therefore, ceaseth not till he hath got out every spot and wrinkle out of his spouse's face, as the apostle speaks Eph 5:27, "so as to present her glorious unto himself, "that it, delightful and pleasing in his eyes. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 12. *And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.* The daughters of Tyre are the daughters of the Gentiles, the part standing for the whole. Tyre, a city bordering on this country where the prophecy was delivered, typified the nations that were to believe in Christ. Thence came that Canaanitish woman, who was at first called *a dog*; for that ye may know that she was from thence, the gospel speaks thus Mt 15:21-28, "Jesus departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, "with all the rest that is related there. She who at first, at the house of her "father, "and among her "own people, "was but *a dog*, who by coming to, and crying after that "King, "was made beautiful by believing in him, what did she obtain to hear? "*O woman, great is thy faith.*" *The King has greatly desired thy beauty.* *Augustine.*

Verse 12. *With a gift.* Those who sold their property, came with presents to entreat the face of this "queen, "and "laid what they brought at the apostle's feet." Warm then was love in the church. *Augustine.*

Verse 12. *The rich.* They are, indeed, rich in grace, whose graces are not hindered by riches, whose souls prosper when their bodies prosper, as the apostle John speaks in his third Epistle; or, who, as it is prophesied in the verse, being full of worldly blessings, are yet hungry and eager in their pursuit after Christ. *The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour,* saith the psalmist; that is, either the favour of Christ himself, or the favour of the church, by reason of that spiritual excellence and inward glory which she hath received from Christ. Now, to see the rich bring their gifts, and, which is the thing chiefly aimed at here, giving up themselves to Christ, this is a rare sight, and a remarkable work of grace. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within,* etc. When the children of God recollect their glorious and heavenly pedigree, they endeavour to excel others, both in the beautiful disposition of soul and manner of life. *The king's daughter,* that is, the daughter of the heavenly Father, who is also the bride of the king's Son; every believing soul *is all glorious*, adorned with a holiness not only glorious to herself, but also to the Father and the Bridegroom, and is the

beginning of a heavenly glory; and that chiefly *within*, not only when she appears abroad, and presents herself to the view of men, but also when she sits in the inner bed chamber in the secret exercises of religion, in which she in private pleases the Father and the Bridegroom, who having a regard to the inward man, she above all endeavours to keep that pure and chaste. Her clothing is of *gold*; in comparison of which whatever excellency natural men were even possessed of, is but a shining vanity; nay, it was *wrought* gold, curiously beautified with various resemblances, which represents the perfections of God himself; and of different colours, on account of the different yet harmoniously corresponding graces of the Holy Spirit; or of needlework of the Phrygian embroiderers, or rather the work of the cunning workman, mentioned in So 7:1. Nor is the spouse only beautiful within, but also without; "holding forth the word of life," Php 2:16, she practises charity, glorifies Christ, edifies her neighbour, and in this manner she is brought unto the king, worthy to be presented to him. This is the only way by which we are to endeavour to obtain familiarity with him, and the sweetest intercourse of the most chaste love, both on earth and in heaven. *Hermann Witsius*. 1636-1708.

Verse 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within.* The meaning is, either (1.) that her chief glory consisted in this, that she was admitted to such a familiar privacy with the king; or, (2.) that when she sat in the inmost rooms of the king's palace, she was there in her greatest glory, because those rooms were most gorgeously set forth with all kinds of bravery and glorious furniture; or, (3.) that she used to be gloriously attired, not only when she went abroad in public, but also when she stayed within, as being indeed adorned (which may be implied) only for the delight of the king, and not that others might gaze upon her; or, (4.)—which I like best—that the inward virtues and endowments of her mind were her greatest ornament and glory. *Arthur Jackson*.

Verse 13. *All glorious within.* Saints must shine by the comeliness of Christ, as a gracious husband labours to change his spouse into his own image and likeness by kindnesses, precepts, and example, that he may take the more delight in her person; so does our spiritual Solomon change the hue of his Egyptian queen to deem of things and persons as her Lord and husband judges, and frames her spirit to delight in doing his will and pleasure, and take the highest solace in obedience, to enjoy a heavenly freedom, mixed with amiable and joyful reverence. He roots out of her heart all changeable affections and worldly fancies, and hankering longings after the fond fashions of Shechem, and all carnal inclinations to the daughters of Canaan's lineage, and all the beggardly humours of the besotted world, and to pass by with a holy scorn all the pitiful pageantry of this perishing and fading life, and rise to a mean

estimate of the baubles and trifles that enchant a carnal heart. At length she arrives to a noble and generous judgment, counting all but dung and dross that she may win Christ. As her prince of life was crucified by the world for her redemption, so she begins to be crucified to it in token of conformity to him, and at length becomes *all glorious within*. Samuel Lee, in "*The Triumph of Mercy*." 1676.

Verse 13. *Within.* The ark was pitched within by the same pitch with which it was pitched withal; such is the sincere man, within and without alike, inside and outside, all one. Yea, he is rather better than he shows, as the *king's daughter*, whose *outside* might sometimes be *sackcloth*, yet was *all glorious within*, and her *inward garments of wrought gold*. Or as the temple, outwardly nothing but wood and stone to be seen, inwardly all rich and beautiful, especially the *sanctum sanctorum* (when the veil was drawn) was all gold. The very floor, as well as the roof, was overlaid with gold. 1Ki 6:30. John Sheffield.

Verse 13. *Her clothing is of wrought gold.* Some read it *purled* works, or closures of *gold*, *enamelled* gold, such as precious *stones* were set in, which were exceeding *splendid* and glorious; such were the *clothes* of service in the tabernacle, and the garments and robes of the *high priest*, which shadowed forth Christ's *righteousness*. Ex 28:11-14 Ex 39:1-6. William Troughton.

Verse 13. About this time, Father La Combe was called to preach on some public occasion. The new doctrine, as it was termed, was not altogether a secret. Public curiosity had become excited. He choose for his text the passage in Ps 45:13, *The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold*. By the king he understood *Christ*; by the king's daughter, *the church*. His doctrine was, whatever might be true in regard to men's original depravity, that those who are truly given to Christ, and are in full harmony with him, are delivered from it: that is to say, are *all glorious within*. Like Christ, they love God with a love free from selfishness, with *pure* love. Like Christ, they are come to do the will of the Father. Christ is formed in them. They not only have faith in Christ, and faith in God through Christ, but, as the result of this faith, they have Christ's disposition. They are now in a situation to say of themselves individually, in the language of the apostle Paul, "I live, and yet not I, *but Christ liveth in me*." He did not maintain that all Christians are necessarily the subjects of this advanced state of Christian experience, but endeavoured to show that this is a *possible* state; that, however intense human depravity may be, the grace of God has power to overcome it; that the example of Christ, the full and rich promises, and even the commands, give encouragement to effort, and confidence in ultimate victory. *From the "Life, Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame de la Mothe Guyon."*

Verse 14. *The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee.* The highest and most excellent Christian cannot say, *I have no need of thee*: the queen will not be without any of her true *companions*. As it is in the body *natural*, so it is in the church of Christ, or body *mystical*; all the members being fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh *increase* of the body to the edifying of itself in *love*. Eph 4:16 Col 2:19.
William Troughton.

Verse 14. *The virgins her companions that follow her.* These are members of the church, but the figure of a bridal train is employed to sustain the allegory. What bright train the Royal Bride will have as she goes forth to meet the Bridegroom! King's daughters will be there, for every crowned head on earth shall one day bow at the foot of the cross. The daughter of Tyre shall be there—Tyre, the ancient emporium of the nations—to show that the merchandise of the world shall be holiness from the Lord. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Jews and Gentiles will be there—representatives from all peoples, and tongues, and nations. They are *virgins*. They keep themselves unspotted from the world. They are weaned from its idols; they dread its contaminations. Their first care is to preserve the whiteness of their souls by daily washing in the blood of the Lamb...They *follow* the royal Bride. They keep by her side in storm and sunshine. They follow her in the regeneration. They follow her in the search after her Beloved. So 3:2-3. They follow her to the green pastures and the still waters. They follow her without the camp bearing his reproach. Like Ruth, they leave father and mother to follow her. Ru 1:16. Like Caleb, they follow the Lord fully. When a crisis comes, and the question, "Who is on the Lord's side?" involves heavy issues, and hollow hearted professors fly away like swallows before the storm, they follow her. When persecution comes, and Christ's faithful witnesses have to prophesy clothed in sackcloth, and perhaps to pass through a baptism of blood to the crown, they follow her: like Peden, when—the bloodhounds of persecution in full chase after him, and the lone moor his home—he thought of Richard Cameron gone to glory, and sighed "Oh, to be with Richie!" *Duncan Macgregor, M.A., in "The Shepherd of Israel; or, Illustrations of the Inner Life," 1869.*

Verse 15. *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought.* No marriage was ever consummated with that triumphal solemnity as the marriage of Christ and believers shall be in heaven. Among the Jews the marriage house was called *bethillulah*—the house of praise; there was joy on all hands, but not like the joy that will be in heaven when believers, the spouse of Christ, shall be brought

thither. *God the Father* will rejoice to behold the blessed accomplishment and consummation of that glorious design and project of his love. *Jesus Christ the Bridegroom* will rejoice to see the travail of his soul, the blessed birth and issue of all his bitter pangs and agonies. Isa 53:11. *The Holy Spirit* will rejoice to see the complement and perfection of that sanctifying design which was committed to his hand 2Co 5:5; to see those souls, whom he once found as rough stones, now to shine as the bright polished stones of the spiritual temple. *Angels* will rejoice; great was the joy when the foundation of this design was laid, in the incarnation of Christ Lu 2:13; great, therefore, must their joy be when the top stone is set up with shouting, crying, Grace, grace. *The saints* themselves shall rejoice unspeakably, when they shall enter into the king's palace, and be for ever with the Lord. 1Th 4:17. Indeed, there will be joy on all hands, except among the devils and damned, who shall gnash their teeth with envy, at the everlasting advancement and glory of believers. *John Flavel*.

Verse 15. *They shall be brought.* Reader! do not fail to observe the manner of expression, the church is *brought*, she doth not *come* of herself. No, she must be convinced, converted, made willing. No one can come to Christ, except the Father, who hath sent Christ, draw him. Joh 6:44. *Robert Hawker, D.D.*

Verse 15. *They shall enter into the king's palace.* There are two rich palaces mentioned in this Psalm: the one an ivory palace Ps 45:8, whereby is signified the assemblies of the saints, and ordinances of divine worship, in which the Lord manifests himself graciously. Here the presence of the Lord is sweet and amiable. So 1:8 Ps 84:2. The other "palace" is mentioned in this fifteenth verse, and it is a palace of glory, a palace more bright and splendid than the finest gold glorious mansions. Joh 14:2. *William Troughton*.

Verse 16. *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.* O church of God, think not thyself abandoned then, because thou seest not Peter, nor seest Paul—seest not those through whom thou wast born. Out of thine own offspring has a body of "fathers" been raised up to thee. *Augustine*.

Verse 16. *Thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.* The new connexion is glorious to the King. Many were his glorious and royal ancestors down to Jesse, but now there are born to him, the Eternal King, sons as the dew from the womb of the morning Ps 110:3, who shall, as princes, occupy the thrones of the world. So our Lord promised to his disciples, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Mt 19:28. And Paul says, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" 1Co 6:2. *Augustus F. Tholuck*.

Verse 16. *Princes in all the earth.* Others are but princes in their own dominion, but he will make you princes in all lands...Such a kingdom you shall have, if you will come into Christ, you shall have the liberty of kings, the abundance and plenty of kings, the power of kings, the victory of kings, and the glory of kings. *John Preston.*

Verse 17. *Therefore shall the people praise thee.* Christ's espousing unto himself a church, and gathering more and more from age to age by his word and Spirit unto it, his converting souls and bringing them into the fellowship of his family, and giving unto them princely minds and affections, wherever they live, is a large matter of growing and everlasting glory unto his majesty; for in regard of this point, and what is said before in this Psalm, he addeth as the close of all, *Therefore shall the people praise thee.* *David Dickson.*

Verse 17. In the Hebrew text, which is here quoted, there is a particle added to the word *ever*, which in that case intends a proper everlastingness, without any period or end at all, and thereupon translated *for ever and ever.* *William Gouge, D.D.,* on Heb 1:8.

Verse 17. *(last clause):*

"When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awakening cries;
May Jesus Christ be praised."
"When sleep her balm denies,
My silent spirit sighs;
May Jesus Christ be praised."

"In heaven's eternal bliss,
The loveliest strain is this;
May Jesus Christ be praised."

"To God the Word on high.
The hosts of angels cry;
May Jesus Christ be praised."
"Let mortals too, upraise
Their voice in hymns of praise;
May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Let earth's wide circle round,
In joyful notes resound;
May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Let air, and sea, and sky,
From depths to height reply;
May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Be this while life is mine,
My canticles divine;
May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Be this the eternal song
Through all the ages on;
May Jesus Christ be praised."
—*Translated by Edward Caswall, in "Poems." 1861.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. In the preface, the prophet commends the subject he is to treat of, signifying,

1. That it is *a good matter*—*good* as speaking of the Son of God, who is the *chief good*.
2. *Good for us*; for upon the marriage of Christ to his church depends our good. *Bishop Nicholson.*

Verse 1. Character read by heart writing.

1. The true lover of Christ is sincere—*my heart*?
2. He is a man of emotion.
3. A man of holy meditation.
4. A man of experience—*things I have made*.
5. A man who bears witness for his Lord.

Verse 1. Three things requisite for Christian teaching:

1. That the matter be good; and concerning the best of all subjects, *touching the King*.
2. That the language be fluent like the pen, etc.—(a) Partly from nature, (b) Partly from cultivation, (c) Partly from the Spirit of God.
3. That the heart be absorbed in it—*My heart is inditing. G. R.*

Verse 2. In what respects Jesus is fairer than the best of men.

Verse 2. Jesus—his person, his gospel, his fulness of blessing.

Verse 2.

1. We may and ought to praise Christ. Angels do, God does, Scripture does, Old Testament saints and New, so should we. It is the work of heaven begun on earth.

2. For what should we praise him? (a) For his beauty. Is wisdom beauty? Is righteousness? Is love? Is meekness? All are found in him supremely—"All human beauties, all divine, In our Redeemer meet and shine." (b) For his grace. Grace of God treasured up in him.

3. For his blessedness—of God and for ever. *G.R.*

Verses 2-5. In these verses the Lord Jesus is presented,

1. As most amiable in himself.
 2. As the great favourite of heaven.
 3. As victorious over his enemies.
- Matthew Henry.*

Verses 3-5. Messiah's victory predicted and desired. *E. Payson's Sermon.*

Verse 5.

1. Arrows of judicial wrath are sharp.
2. Arrows of providential goodness are sharper still.
3. Arrows of subduing grace are sharpest of all. The quiver of the Almighty is full of these arrows. *G.R.*

Verse 5. Arrows—what they are; whose they are; whom they strike; where they strike; what they do; and what follows.

Verse 6. The God, the King, his throne, its duration, his sceptre. Let us worship, obey, trust, acquiesce, rejoice.

Verses 6-7. Empire, Eternity, Equity, Establishment, Exultation.

Verse 7. *Thou hatest wickedness.* He hated it when it assailed him in his temptation, hated it in others, denounced it, died to slay it, will come to condemn it.

Verse 7. Christ's love and hate.

Verse 8. Christ's garments—his offices, his two natures, his ordinances, his honours, all are full of fragrance.

Verse 8. *Whereby they have made thee glad.* We make Jesus glad by our love, our praise, our service, our gifts, our holiness, our fellowship with him.

Verse 8.

1. The odour of his garments, not of blood and battle, but of sweet perfume.
2. The splendour of his palaces—ivory for rareness, purity, durability, etc.
3. The source of his delight. (a) Himself, the sweet odour of his own graces. (b) His people, the savour of those who are saved. (c) His enemies, "even in them that perish." (d) All holy happy creatures who unite to make him glad. *G.R.*

Verses 9-10. The connections of the Bridegroom are to be remembered, those of the Bride to be forgotten.

Verse 10. "Christ the best husband: or, an earnest invitation to young women to come and see Christ." *George Whitefield's "Sermon, Preached to a Society of Young Women, in Fetter Lane."*

Verse 11. *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.* Christ delighting in the Beauty of the Righteous. *Martin Luther.* (Select Works, by H. Cole. I. 281.)

Verses 13-15.

1. The Bride's *new name*—"The king's daughter." She is the king's daughter for two reasons. (a) She is *born* of God; and (b) She is *espoused* to the Son of God.
2. The Bride's *character*—"All glorious within." (a) Because *Christ reigns on the throne of her heart.* (b) Because *she is the temple of the Holy Ghost.*
3. The Bride's *raiment*—"wrought gold, " "needlework:" this is the *righteousness of Christ*; in other words, His *perfect obedience*, and His *atoning death*.

4. The Bride's *companion*—"Virgins that follow her."

5. The Bride's *home going*—"She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework...With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace." (a) *She shall see the king in his beauty.* (b) *There will be an open declaration of his love to her before all worlds.* Duncan Macgregor, M.A.

Verse 17.

1. Christ is the Father's delight. "I will make, "etc.
2. He is the church's theme—his name shall be remembered; and
3. He is heaven's glory, "Shall praise thee, "etc. G.R.

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-FIFTH PSALM

Exposition of Psalm XLV, in the works of JOHN BOYS, Dean of Canterbury. 1638. Folio edition, pages 920-931.

The Mystery of the Marriage Song, and Mutual Spiritual Embraces *between Christ and his Spouse, opened as an Exposition with practical notes and observations on the whole Forty-fifth Psalm.* By W. TROUGHTON, Minister of the Gospel. 1656.

In "*Christ set forth in all types, figures, and obscure places of the Scripture*, by RICHARD COORE, 1683, "there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

A Treatise of Solomon's Marriage; or, a Congratulation for the happie and hopeful Marriage betweene the most illustrious and Noble Prince, Fredericke the V. Count Palatine of Rhine...and the most gracious and excellent Princisse, the Lady Elizabeth, sole daughter unto the high and mighty Prince James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. Joyfully solemnized on the 14th day of February, 1612...(On Ps 45:10-16. By ANDREW WILLET.)

The Bride Royall; or, the Spirituall Marriage betweene Christ and *his Church*. Delivered by way of congratulation upon the happy and hopeful marriage betweene the two incomparable Princes, the Palsegrave, and the Ladie Elizabeth. In a sermon...By GEORGE WEBBE. 1613...(On Ps 45:13-15)

Psalm XLV applied to Messiah's First Advent, and Psalm XLV *applied to Messiah's Second Advent*, in pages 242-341, of *The Anointed Saviour set forth as the Principal Object of Saving Faith*. By the Rev. DAVID PITCAIRN. 1846.

Five Discourses on *Christ in the Psalms*. An Exposition of the second, forty-fifth and hundred and tenth Psalms. In a series of Discourses. By the Rev. GEORGE HARPUR, B.A. London: Wertheim, Macintosh, and Hunt. 1862.

Psalm 46

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. To the Chief Musician. He who could sing other Psalms so well was fitly entrusted with this noble ode. Trifles may be left to commoner songsters, but the most skilful musician in Israel must be charged with the due performance of this song, with the most harmonious voices and choicest music. For the Sons of Korah. One alone cannot fulfil the praise, there must be picked choristers under him, whose joyful privilege it shall be to celebrate the service of song in the house of the Lord. As to why the sons of Korah were selected, see our remarks at the head of Psalm 42. It may be well to add that they were a division of the Levites who took their turn in serving at the temple. All the works of holy service ought not to be monopolised by one order of talent, each company of believers should in due course enjoy the privilege. None ought to be without a share in the service of God.

A Song upon Alamoth. Which may denote that the music was to be pitched high for the treble or soprano voices of the Hebrew virgins. They went forth in their dances to sing the praises of David when he smote the Philistine, it was meet that they should make merry and be glad when the victories of Jehovah became their theme. We need to praise God upon virgin hearts, with souls chaste towards his fear, with lively and exalted expressions, and happy strains. Or the word Alamoth may refer to shrill sounding instruments, as in 1Ch 15:20, where we read that Zechariah, and Eliab, and Benaiah were to praise the Lord "with psalteries on Alamoth." We are not always, in a slovenly manner, to fall into one key, but with intelligence are to modulate our praises and make them fittingly expressive of the occasion and the joy it creates in our souls. These old musical terms cannot be interpreted with certainty, but they are still useful because they show that care and skill should be used in our sacred music.

SUBJECT. Happen what may, the Lord's people are happy and secure, this is the doctrine of the Psalm, and it might, to help our memories, be called THE SONG OF HOLY CONFIDENCE, were it not that from the great reformer's love to this soul-stirring hymn it will probably be best remembered as LUTHER'S PSALM.

DIVISION. It is divided by inspired authority into three parts, each of which ends with Selah.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *God is our refuge and strength.* Not our armies, or our fortresses. Israel's boast is in Jehovah, the only living and true God. Others vaunt their impregnable castles, placed on inaccessible rocks, and secured with gates of iron, but God is a far better refuge from distress than all these: and when the time comes to carry the war into the enemy's territories, the Lord stands his

people in better stead than all the valour of legions or the boasted strength of chariot and horse. Soldiers of the cross, remember this, and count yourselves safe, and make yourselves strong in God. Forget not the personal possessive word *our*; make sure each one of your portion in God, that you may say, "He is *my* refuge and strength." Neither forget the fact that God is our refuge just now, in the immediate present, as truly as when David penned the word. God alone is our all in all. All other refuges are refuges of lies, all other strength is weakness, for power belongeth unto God: but as God is all sufficient, our defence and might are equal to all emergencies. *A very present help in trouble, or in distress he has so been found*, he has been tried and proved by his people. He never withdraws himself from his afflicted. He is their help, truly, effectually, constantly; he is present or near them, close at their side and ready for their succour, and this is emphasized by the word *very* in our version, he is more present than friend or relative can be, yea, more nearly present than even the trouble itself. To all this comfortable truth is added the consideration that his assistance comes at the needed time. He is not as the swallows that leave us in the winter; he is a friend in need and a friend indeed. When it is very dark with us, let brave spirits say, "Come, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm."

"A fortress firm, and steadfast rock,
Is God in time of danger;
A shield and sword in every shock,
From foe well known or stranger."

Verse 2. *Therefore.* How fond the psalmist is of therefores! his poetry is no poetic rapture without reason, it is as logical as a mathematical demonstration. The next words are a necessary inference from these. *Will not we fear.* With God on our side, how irrational would fear be! Where he is all power is, and all love, why therefore should we quail? *Though the earth be removed*, though the basis of all visible things should be so convulsed as to be entirely changed. *And though the mountains be carried into the middle of the sea*; though the firmest of created objects should fall to headlong ruin, and be submerged in utter destruction. The two phrases set forth the most terrible commotions within the range of imagination, and include the overthrow of dynasties, the destruction of nations, the ruin of families, the persecutions of the church, the reign of heresy, and whatever else may at any time try the faith of believers. Let the worst come to the worst, the child of God should never give way to mistrust; since God remaineth faithful there can be no danger to his cause or people. When the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens and the earth shall pass away in the last general conflagration, we shall serenely behold "the wreck of

matter, and the crash of worlds, "for even then our refuge shall preserve us from all evil, our strength shall prepare us for all good.

Verse 3. *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled.* When all things are excited to fury, and reveal their utmost power to disturb, faith smiles serenely. She is not afraid of noise, nor even of real force, she knows that the Lord stilleth the raging of the sea, and holdeth the waves in the hollow of his hand. *Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.* Alps and Andes may tremble, but faith rests on a firmer basis, and is not to be moved by swelling seas. Evil may ferment, wrath may boil, and pride may foam, but the brave heart of holy confidence trembles not. Great men who are like mountains may quake for fear in times of great calamity, but the man whose trust is in God needs never to be dismayed. *Selah.* In the midst of such a hurly burly the music may well come to a pause, both to give the singers breath, and ourselves time for meditation. We are in no hurry, but can sit us down and wait while earth dissolves, and mountains rock, and oceans roar. Ours is not the headlong rashness which passes for courage, we can calmly confront the danger, and meditate upon terror, dwelling on its separate items and united forces. The pause is not an exclamation of dismay, but merely a rest in music; we do not suspend our song in alarm, but tune our harps again with deliberation amidst the tumult of the storm. It were well if all of us could say, *Selah*, under tempestuous trials, but alas! too often we speak in our haste, lay our trembling hands bewildered among the strings, strike the lyre with a rude crash, and mar the melody of our life song.

Verse 4. *There is a river.* Divine grace like a smoothly flowing, fertilising, full, and never failing river, yields refreshment and consolation to believers. This is the river of the water of life, of which the church above as well as the church below partakes evermore. It is no boisterous ocean, but a placid stream, it is not stayed in its course by earthquakes or crumbling mountains, it follows its serene course without disturbance. Happy are they who know from their own experience that there is such a river of God. *The streams whereof* in their various influences, for they are many, *shall make glad the city of God*, by assuring the citizens that Zion's Lord will unfailingly supply all their needs. The streams are not transient like Cherith, nor muddy like the Nile, nor furious like Kishon, nor treacherous like Job's deceitful brooks, neither are their waters "naught" like those of Jericho, they are clear, cool, fresh, abundant, and gladdening. The great fear of an Eastern city in time of war was lest the water supply should be cut off during a siege; if that were secured the city could hold out against attacks for an indefinite period. In this verse, Jerusalem, which represents the church of God, is described as well supplied with water, to set

forth the fact that in seasons of trial all sufficient grace will be given to enable us to endure unto the end. The church is like a well ordered city, surrounded with mighty walls of truth and justice, garrisoned by omnipotence, fairly built and adorned by infinite wisdom: its burgesses the saints enjoy high privileges; they trade with far off lands, they live in the smile of the King; and as a great river is the very making and mainstay of a town, so is the broad river of everlasting love, and grace their joy and bliss. The church is peculiarly the *City of God*, of his designing, building, election, purchasing and indwelling. It is dedicated to his praise, and glorified by his presence. *The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High*. This was the peculiar glory of Jerusalem, that the Lord within her walls had a place where he peculiarly revealed himself, and this is the choice privilege of the saints, concerning which we may cry with wonder, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" To be a temple for the Holy Ghost is the delightful portion of each saint, to be the living temple for the Lord our God is also the high honour of the church in her corporate capacity. Our God is here called by a worthy title, indicating his power, majesty, sublimity, and excellency; and it is worthy of note that under this character he dwells in the church. We have not a great God in nature, and a little God in grace; no, the church contains as clear and convincing a revelation of God as the works of nature, and even more amazing in the excellent glory which shines between the cherubim overshadowing that mercy seat which is the centre and gathering place of the people of the living God. To have the Most High dwelling within her members, is to make the church on earth like the church in heaven.

Verse 5. *God is in the midst of her.* His help is therefore sure and near. Is she besieged, then he is himself besieged within her, and we may be certain that he will break forth upon his adversaries. How near is the Lord to the distresses of his saints, since he sojourns in their midst! Let us take heed that we do not grieve him; let us have such respect to him as Moses had when he felt the sand of Horeb's desert to be holy, and put off his shoes from off his feet when the Lord spake from the burning bush. *She shall not be moved.* How can she be moved unless her enemies move her Lord also? His presence renders all hope of capturing and demolishing the city utterly ridiculous. The Lord is in the vessel, and she cannot, therefore, be wrecked. *God shall help her.* Within her he will furnish rich supplies, and outside her walls he will lay her foes in heaps like the armies of Sennacherib, when the angel went forth and smote them. *And that right early.* As soon as the first ray of light proclaims the coming day, at the turning of the morning God's right arm shall be outstretched for his people. The Lord is up betimes. We are slow to meet him, but he is never tardy in helping us. Impatience complains of divine delays, but in very deed the Lord is

not slack concerning his promise. Man's haste is often folly, but God's apparent delays are ever wise; and when rightly viewed, are no delays at all. Today the bands of evil may environ the church of God, and threaten her with destruction; but ere long they shall pass away like the foam on the waters, and the noise of their tumult shall be silent in the grave. The darkest hour of the night is just before the turning of the morning; and then, even then, shall the Lord appear as the great ally of his church.

Verse 6. *The heathen raged.* The nations were in a furious uproar, they gathered against the city of the Lord like wolves ravenous for their prey; they foamed, and roared, and swelled like a tempestuous sea. *The kingdoms were moved.* A general confusion seized upon society; the fierce invaders convulsed their own dominions by draining the population to urge on the war, and they desolated other territories by their devastating march to Jerusalem. Crowns fell from royal heads, ancient thrones rocked like trees driven of the tempest, powerful empires fell like pines uprooted by the blast: everything was in disorder, and dismay seized on all who knew not the Lord. *He uttered his voice, the earth melted.* With no other instrumentality than a word the Lord ruled the storm. He gave forth a voice and stout hearts were dissolved, proud armies were annihilated, conquering powers were enfeebled. At first the confusion appeared to be worse confounded, when the element of divine power came into view; the very earth seemed turned to wax, the most solid and substantial of human things melted like the fat of rams upon the altar; but anon peace followed, the rage of man subsided, hearts capable of repentance relented, and the implacable were silenced. How mighty is a word from God! How mighty the Incarnate Word. O that such a word would come from the excellent glory even now to melt all hearts in love to Jesus, and to end for ever all the persecutions, wars, and rebellions of men!

Verse 7. *The Lord of hosts is with us.* This is the reason for all Zion's security, and for the overthrow of her foes. The Lord rules the angels, the stars, the elements, and all the hosts of heaven; and the heaven of heavens are under his sway. The armies of men though they know it not are made to subserve his will. This Generalissimo of the forces of the land, and the Lord High Admiral of the seas, is on our side—our august ally; woe unto those who fight against him, for they shall fly like smoke before the wind when he gives the word to scatter them. *The God of Jacob is our refuge,* Immanuel is Jehovah of Hosts, and Jacob's God is our high place of defence. When this glad verse is sung to music worthy of such a jubilate, well may the singers pause and the players wait awhile to tune their instruments again; here, therefore, fitly stands that solemn, stately, peaceful note of rest, SELAH.

Verse 8. *Come, behold the works of the Lord.* The joyful citizens of Jerusalem are invited to go forth and view the remains of their enemies, that they may mark the prowess of Jehovah and the spoil which his right hand hath won for his people. It were well if we also carefully noted the providential dealings of our covenant God, and were quick to perceive his hand in the battles of his church. Whenever we read history it should be with this verse sounding in our ears. We should read the newspaper in the same spirit, to see how the Head of the Church rules the nations for his people's good, as Joseph governed Egypt for the sake of Israel. *What desolations he hath made in the earth.* The destroyers he destroys, the desolators he desolates. How forcible is the verse at this date! The ruined cities of Assyria, Babylon, Petra, Bashan, Canaan, are our instructors, and in tables of stone record the doings of the Lord. In every place where his cause and crown have been disregarded ruin has surely followed: sin has been a blight on nations, and left their palaces to lie in heaps. In the days of the writer of this Psalm, there had probably occurred some memorable interpositions of God against his Israel's foes; and as he saw their overthrow, he called on his fellow citizens to come forth and attentively consider the terrible things in righteousness which had been wrought on their behalf. Dismantled castles and ruined abbeys in our own land stand as memorials of the Lord's victories over oppression and superstition. May there soon be more of such desolations.

"Ye gloomy piles, ye tombs of living men,
 Ye sepulchres of womanhood, or worse;
 Ye refuges of lies, soon may ye fall,
 And amid your ruins may the owl, and bat,
 And dragon find congenial resting place."

Verse 9. *He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth.* His voice quiets the tumult of war, and calls for the silence of peace. However remote and barbarous the tribe, he awes the people into rest. He crushes the great powers till they cannot provoke strife again; he gives his people profound repose. *He breaketh the bow,* the sender of swift winged death he renders useless. *And cutteth the spear in sunder*—the lance of the mighty man he shivers. *He burneth the chariot in the fire*—the proud war chariot with its death dealing scythes he commits to the flames. All sorts of weapons he piles heaps on heaps, and utterly destroys them. So was it in Judea in the days of yore, so shall it be in all lands in eras yet to come. Blessed deed of the Prince of Peace! when shall it be literally performed? Already the spiritual foes of his people are despoiled of their power to destroy; but when shall the universal victory of peace be celebrated, and instruments of wholesale murder be consigned to ignominious

destruction? How glorious will the ultimate victory of Jesus be in the day of his appearing, when every enemy shall lick the dust!

Verse 10. *Be still, and know that I am God.* Hold off your hands, ye enemies! Sit down and wait in patience, ye believers! Acknowledge that Jehovah is God, ye who feel the terrors of his wrath! Adore him, and him only, ye who partake in the protection of his grace. Since none can worthily proclaim his nature, let "expressive silence muse his praise." The boasts of the ungodly and the timorous forebodings of the saints should certainly be hushed by a sight of what the Lord has done in past ages. *I will be exalted among the heathen.* They forget God, they worship idols, but Jehovah will yet be honoured by them. Reader, the prospects of missions are bright, bright as the promises of God. Let no man's heart fail him; the solemn declarations of this verse must be fulfilled. *I will be exalted in the earth,* among all people, whatever may have been their wickedness or their degradation. Either by terror or love God will subdue all hearts to himself. The whole round earth shall yet reflect the light of his majesty. All the more because of the sin, and obstinacy, and pride of man shall God be glorified when grace reigns unto eternal life in all corners of the world.

Verse 11. *The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.* It was meet to sing this twice over. It is a truth of which no believer wearies, it is a fact too often forgotten, it is a precious privilege which cannot be too often considered. Reader, is the Lord on thy side? Is Emmanuel, God with us, thy Redeemer? Is there a covenant between thee and God as between God and Jacob? If so, thrice happy art thou. Show thy joy in holy song, and in times of trouble play the man by still making music for thy God. SELAH. Here as before, lift up the heart. Rest in contemplation after praise. Still keep the soul in tune. It is easier to sing a hymn of praise than to continue in the spirit of praise, but let it be our aim to maintain the uprising devotion of our grateful hearts, and so end our song as if we intended it to be continued.

SELAH bids the music rest.
 Pause in silence soft and blest;
 SELAH bids uplift the strain,
 Harps and voices tune again;
 SELAH ends the vocal praise,
 Still your hearts to God upraise.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. The LXX referring to the notion of the theme (Mlu), *occultavit*, render it *uper twn krufiwn*, *for the hidden*; and the Latin, *pro arcanis*; and the rest of the ancient interpreters take the same course; the Chaldee referring it to *Coreh*, and those that were *hidden*, i.e., *swallowed up*, by the earth with him, whilst these *sons of Coreh* escaped; as if the mention of the *sons of Coreh* in the title, by whom this song was to be sung, referred the whole Psalm to that story. Accordingly, verse 2, when the Hebrew reads, "*Though the earth be removed*," the paraphrase is, "*When our fathers were changed from the earth.*" Henry Hammond.

Title. The title is peculiar, "*Upon Alamoth*," suggesting "*a choir of virgins*," as if this virgin choir were selected to sing a Psalm that tells of perils and fears and alarms abounding, in order to show that even the feeble virgins may in that day sing without dread, because of "*The Mighty One*" on their side. Andrew A. Bonar.

Title.—"Upon Alamoth." (To be sung) *en soprano*. Armand de Mestral, quoted by Perowne.

Whole Psalm. We sing this Psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us, and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends his church and his word, against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh and sin. Martin Luther.

Whole Psalm. Luther and his companions, with all their bold readiness for danger and death in the cause of truth, had times when their feelings were akin to those of a divine singer, who said, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" But in such hours the unflinching Reformer would cheerily say to his friend Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm; and they could sing it in Luther's own characteristic version":—

A sure stronghold our God is He,
A timely shield and weapon;
Our help he will be, and set us free
From every ill can happen.
And were the world with devils filled,
All eager to devour us,
Our souls to fear shall little yield,

They cannot overpower us.

—S. W. Christophers, in *"Hymn Writers and their Hymns," 1866*

Verse 1. *God is our refuge and strength*, etc. It begins abruptly, but nobly; ye may trust in whom and in what ye please; but GOD (ELOHIM) *is our refuge and strength. A very present help.* A help found to be very powerful and effectual in straits and difficulties. The words are very emphatic: (dam aumn twrub hrze), *ezrah betsaroht nimtsa meod*, "He is found an exceeding, or superlative, help in difficulties." Such we have found him, and therefore celebrate his praise. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2. *Though the earth be removed.* John Wesley preached in Hyde park, on the occasion of the earthquake felt in London, March 8, 1750, and repeated these words. Charles Wesley composed Hymn 67, Wesley's Collection, the following lines of which illustrate this verse:

How happy then are we,
Who build, O Lord, on thee!
What can our foundation shock?
Though the shattered earth remove,
Stands our city on a rock,
On the rock of heavenly love.

Verses 2-3. The earth thrown into a state of wild confusion, the mountains hurled into the mighty deep, the sea tossed into a tempest, and the everlasting hills drifting on its foaming billows, are the vivid images by which the divine judgments on wicked and persecuting nations are described in the language of the prophets. *John Morison.*

Verses 2-3, 5. Palestine was frequently subject to earthquakes, as might have been expected from its physical character and situation; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that although all other parts of the land seem to have been occasionally the scene of those terrible convulsions, the capital was almost wholly free from them. Mount Moriah, or the hill of vision, was so called from its towering height, which made it a conspicuous object in the distance. It stands in the centre of a group of hills, which surround it in the form of an amphitheatre, and it was chiefly to this position, under the special blessing of God, that it stood firm and immovable amid the frequent earthquakes that agitated and ravaged the Holy Land. *Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.*

Verse 4. *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.* What is the *river* that makes glad the city of God? I answer, God himself is the

river, as in the following verse, "*God is in the midst of her.*" 1. God the *Father* is the river: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jer 2:13. 2. God the *Son* is the river, the fountain of salvation: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Zec 13:1. 3. God the *Spirit* is the river: "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Joh 7:38 4:14. What are the *streams* of this river? Answer—the *perfections* of God, the *fulness* of Christ, the *operations* of the Spirit, and these running in the *channel* of the *covenant of promise*. *Ralph Erskine.*

Verse 4. *There is a river*, etc. This is that flood which Ezekiel beheld in vision, the waters that came down from the right side of the house, and rising first to the ankles—then as the prophet passed onward, to the knees—then to the loins—became afterwards a river that he could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. Shall we see in this, with the angelic doctor, the river of grace which burst forth from Mount Calvary? streams branching off hither and thither, the *pelagim* of the Hebrew—"to satisfy the desolate and waste ground, and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth." Job 38:1-41. O "fountain of gardens, ""well of living waters, " "streams from Lebanon, "how do you, the "nether springs" of this world, bring to us something of the everlasting loveliness and peace of those "upper springs, "by which the beautiful flock now feed and lie down, none making them afraid! Or with S. Ambrose and S. Bernard, understand the verse of the "river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb." And then the rivers of that flood shall indeed *make glad the city of God*, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where is the tree of life, that beareth twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth her fruit every month; that country and that river of which the old liturgies say, "They who rest in the bosom of Abraham are in the tabernacle of joy and rest, in the dwellings of light, in the world of pleasure, in the church of the true Jerusalem, where there is no place for affliction, nor way of sadness, where there are no wars with the flesh, and no resistance to temptation, where sin is forgotten, and past danger is only remembered as a present pleasure." *Thomas Aquinas, Ambrose, and Bernard, in Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 4. *There is a river.* The river of God that flows from his throne. No enemy can cut off this stream from the church of Christ. Observe the reference

to Isa 36:2 37:25, compared with 2Ch 32:2-4. These gently flowing, but full streams, are contrasted with the roaring waves of the sea. *T. C. Barth.*

Verse 4. *There is a river*, etc. The allusion is either to the river Kidron, which ran by Jerusalem, or to the waters of Shiloah, which by different courses and branches ran through the city of Jerusalem, and supplied the several parts of it with water, to the joy and comfort of its inhabitants. But the words are to be understood in a figurative sense, as applicable to gospel times; and this river either designs the gospel, the streams of which are its doctrines, which are living waters, that went out from Jerusalem, and which publish glad tidings of great joy to all sensible sinners; or the Spirit and his graces, which are compared to a well and rivers of living water, in the exercises of which the saints have much joy and peace; or else the Lord himself, who is the place of broad rivers and streams to his people, and is both their refreshment and protection; or rather his everlasting love to them is here intended. *John Gill.*

Verse 4. Compared with the waterless deserts around, Judaea and Jerusalem were well watered, and drought pressed more severely on the besiegers than the besieged. The allusion here is to the well known rill and pool of Siloam. So in Isa 8:6, the blessing of God's protection is represented by the waters of Shiloah, which go softly. *From "The psalms Chronologically arranged. By Four Friends," 1867.*

Verse 4. *The city.* The church of God is like a city, 1. Because a city is a place of *security*. 2. A place of *society*: what one wants another supplies; they have mutual fellowship. 3. A place of *unity*, that people may therein live in peace and concord. 4. A place of *trade* and *traffic*. Here is the market of free grace: "Ho, every one that thirsteth," etc. Here is the *pearl of great price* exposed for sale. 5. A place of *freedom* and *liberty*, freedom from the guilt of sin, wrath of God, curse of the law, present evil world, bondage to Satan, etc., etc. 6. A place of *order* and *regularity*; it hath its constitutions and ordinances. 7. A place of *rest*, and commodious to live in, and thus it is opposed to the wilderness. 8. A place of *privileges*. 9. A place of *pomp* and *splendour*; there is the king, the court, the throne. 10. A place of *pleasure* and *beauty*; Ps 48:2.—Ralph Erskine.

Verse 5. *God is in the midst of her.* It is the real presence of Christ, and the supernatural power of his Spirit, which makes the church mighty to the conquest of souls. The church spreads because her *God is in the midst of her*. When at any time she has forgotten her dependence on the invisible intercession of her Head, and the gracious energy of his Spirit, she has found herself shorn of the locks of her great strength, and has become the laughing stock of the Philistines. *William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 5. *God is in the midst of her*, etc. The enemies of the church may toss her as waves, but they shall not split her as rocks. She may be dipped in water as a *feather*, but shall not sink therein as *lead*. He that is a well of water within her to keep her from fainting, will also prove a wall of fire about her to preserve her from falling. *Tried* she may be, but *destroyed* she cannot be. Her foundation is the Rock of Ages, and her defence the everlasting Arms. It is only such fabrics as are bottomed upon the *sand*, that are overthrown by the *wind*. The adversaries of God's people will push at them as far as their horns will go, but when they have scoured them by persecution, as tarnished vessels, then God will throw such wisps into the fire. *William Secker*.

Verse 5. When the Papists were in their ruff, and Melancthon began sometimes to fear lest the infant Reformation should be stifled in the birth, Luther was wont to comfort him with these words: "*Si nos ruemus, ruet Christus und, scilicet ille regnator mundi, esto ruat, malo ego cum Christo rures, quam cum Caesare stare*;" that is, If we perish, Christ must fall too (he is in the midst of us), and if it must be so, be it so; I had rather perish with Christ, that great Ruler of the world, than prosper with Caesar. *John Collings*.

Verse 5. *And that right early*. Therefore, notice that all the great deliverances wrought in Holy Scripture, were wrought *so early*, as to have been brought to pass in the middle of the night. So Gideon, with his pitchers and lamps against the Midianites; so Saul, when he went forth against Nahash, the Ammonite; so Joshua, when he went up to succour Gibeon; so Samson, when he carried off in triumph the gates of Gaza; so also the associate kings, under the guidance of Elisha, in their expedition against the Moabites, when they, according to God's command, filled the wilderness with ditches, and then beheld their enemies drawn to their destruction, by the reflection of the rising sun upon the water. *Michael Ayguan*.

Verse 5. *Right early*. Rather, with the margin, *when the morning appeareth*. The restoration of the Jews will be one of the first things at the season of the second advent. It will be accomplished in the very dawning of that day, "when the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing on his wings." *Samuel Horsley*.

Verse 7. *The Lord of hosts is with us*. There be three sorts of God's special presence, all which may be justly accounted the church's privilege. First, his *glorious* presence, or his presence testified by eminent glory, and the residence thereof. Thus God is said to be in heaven differentially, so as he is not anywhere else; and heaven is therefore called his throne or dwelling place 1Ki 8:39; as a king is nowhere so majestically as upon his throne, or in his chair of state; and this is so great a privilege of the church as that she comes not to

enjoy it, unless she be triumphant in heaven, and therefore is not the presence here intended. Secondly, his *gracious* presence, or his presence testified by tokens of his grace and favour toward a people, whether visible as in the temple where he chose to place his name, and wherein above all places he would be worshipped, in which respect he is said to dwell between the cherubim 2Sa 6:2; or spiritual tokens of his grace, as assistance and acceptance in the duties of his worship, together with enjoyment and benefit of his ordinances. Thus he is present with his church and people in times of the gospel: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Mt 18:20. This kind of presence is a privilege of the church militant, that he will be with her in holy and spiritual administrations and ordinances; yet this is not the presence principally intended here. Thirdly, the *providential* presence, or his presence testified by acts of special providence, wherein the power, wisdom or any other of God's attributes are eminently put forth, either by way of assistance or defence for a people. Thus the Lord was present with Israel in the wilderness by the pillar of fire and of a cloud Ex 13:21; "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light." And as this presence was intended for a guide, so was it also for a defence to his people against their enemies, and at which their enemies the Egyptians were troubled. Ex 15:20. By this kind of presence the Lord is with his church militant, in reference to her external regiment, and more especially in her warfare, standing up for her and with her against her enemies; and this is the church's privilege in these words, *The Lord of hosts is with us. John Strickland, B.D. (1601-1670), in a Sermon, entitled, "Immanuel," 1644.*

Verse 7. *The God of Jacob.* If any shall ask me, Why then the God of Jacob more than the God of Isaac? Though it might suffice that the Spirit of God is pleased so to speak, yet Mr. Calvin gives this reason, the covenant of grace was more solemnly made and publicly ratified with Abraham and Jacob, than it was with Isaac, and therefore when he will be looked upon as a God in covenant with his people, he holds forth himself more frequently by the name of the God of Abraham, and the God of Jacob, than of the God of Isaac; albeit sometimes he is pleased to take upon him that style also. *John Strickland.*

Verse 7. *Our refuge.* Our refuge, or stronghold, where the church, as a ship in quiet haven, may anchor and ride safe; or it may be a metaphor from the dens or burrows, where weaponless creatures find shelter, when they are hunted and pursued by their enemies, as Pr 30:26, "*The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.*" They are safe in the rock if they can get thither, though never so weak in themselves. So the church, though pursued by

bloody enemies, and though weak in herself, if yet she get under the wing of the God of Jacob, she may be fearless, for she is safe there. *He is our refuge*. It were to undervalue God, if we should fear the creatures, when he is with us. Antigonus, when he overheard his soldiers reckoning how many their enemies were, he steps in unto them suddenly, demanding, "And how many do you reckon me for?" *John Strickland*.

Verse 8. *Come, behold the works of the Lord. Venito, videto.* God looks that his works should be well observed, and especially when he hath wrought any great deliverance for his people. Of all things, he cannot abide to be forgotten. *John Trapp*.

Verse 8. *What desolations he hath made in the earth.* We are here first invited to a tragical sight. We are carried into the *camera di morte*, to see the ghastly visage of deaths and desolations all the world over; than which nothing can be more horrible and dreadful. You are called out to see piles of dead carcasses; to see whole basketfuls of heads, as was presented to Jehu: a woeful spectacle, but a necessary one. *See, therefore, what desolation the Lord hath wrought in all the earth.* Desolations by wars: how many fields have been drenched with blood, and composted with carcasses; how many millions of men have been cut off in all ages by the edge of the sword! Desolations by famine; wherein men have been forced to make their bodies one another's sepulchres, and mothers to devour their children of a span long. Desolations by plagues and pestilence; which have swept away, as our story tells us, eight hundred thousand in one city. Desolations by inundations of waters; which have covered the faces of many regions, and rinsed the earth of her unclean inhabitants. Desolations by earthquakes, which have swallowed up whole cities; and those great and populous. Desolations wrought by the hand of his angels; as in Egypt; in the tents of the Assyrians, one hundred and eighty five thousand in one night; in the camp of Israel, in David's pestilence. Desolations wrought by the hand of men, in battles and massacres. Desolations by wild beasts; as in the colonies of Ashur planted in Samaria. Desolations by the swarms of obnoxious and noisome creatures; as in Egypt, and since in Africa: "He spoke the word, and the grasshoppers came, and caterpillars innumerable," Ps 105:34. In so much as, in the consulship of M. Fulvius Flaccus, after the bloody wars of Africa, followed infinite numbers of locusts; which, after devouring of all herbs and fruit, were, by a sudden wind, hoised into the African sea: infection followed upon their putrefaction, and thereupon a general mortality: in number, four score thousand died: upon the sea coast betwixt Carthage and Utica, above two hundred thousand. Desolations every way, and by what variety of means

soever; yet all wrought by the divine hand; *What desolations he hath wrought.* Whoever be the instrument, he is the Author. *Joseph Hall (Bishop.)*

Verse 8. Doth not God make great desolations, when he makes that man that counted himself a most religious man, to confess himself not sufficient for one good thought? As it was with Paul, does he not make wars to cease when he turns the heart of a persecutor, earnestly to seek peace with God and man, yea, with his very enemies? Doth he not break the bow and all weapons of war asunder, and that in all the earth, when he proclaims peace to all that are far off and near, professor and profane, Jews and Gentiles? *Richard Coore.*

Verses 8-10. Come, behold the works of the Lord. What works? ruining works. *What desolations he hath made in the earth.* God made strange work in the world at that time. Those countries which before were as the garden of God, became like a desolate wilderness: who was able to bear this with patience? Yet the Spirit of God saith in the next words, it must be patiently borne. When God lets men strive and war with one another to a common confusion, yet no man may strive with God about it: and the reason given why no man may, is only this (which is indeed all the reason in the world), *He is God.* So it follows in the Psalm; *Be still, and know that I am God;* as if the Lord had said, Not a word, do not strive nor reply; whatever you see, hold your peace; know that I, being God, give no account of any of my matters. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 8-10. Come, behold the works of the Lord.

Verse 10. *Be still, and know that I am God.* The great works of God, wherein his sovereignty appeared, had been described in the foregoing verses. In the awful desolations that he made, and by delivering his people by terrible things, he showed his greatness and dominion. Herein he manifested his power and sovereignty, and so commands all *to be still, and know that he is God.* For says he, *I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.* In the words may be observed, 1. A duty described, to be still before God, and under the dispensations of his providence; which implies that we must be still as to *words*; not speaking against the sovereign dispensations of Providence, or complaining of them; not darkening counsel by words without knowledge, or justifying ourselves and speaking great swelling words of vanity. We must be still as to *actions* and outward behaviour, so as not to oppose God in his dispensations; and as *to the inward frame of our hearts*, cultivating a calm and quiet submission of soul to the sovereign pleasure of God, whatever it may be. 2. We may observe the ground of this duty, namely, *the divinity of God.* His being God is a sufficient reason why we should be *still* before him, in no wise murmuring, or objecting, or opposing, but calmly and humbly submitting to

him. 3. How we must fulfil this duty of being still before God, namely, with a sense of his divinity, as seeing the ground of this duty, in that we *know* him to be God. Our submission is to be such as becomes rational creatures. God doth not require us to submit contrary to reason, but to submit as seeing the reason and ground of submission. Hence, the bare consideration *that God is God* may well be sufficient to still all objections and oppositions against the divine sovereign dispensations. *Jonathan Edwards*.

Verse 10. *Be still, and know that I am God.* This text of Scripture forbids quarrelling and murmuring against God. Now let me apply as I go along. There are very few, and these very well circumstanced, that find themselves in no hazard of quarrelling with God. I think almost that if angels were on earth, they would be in hazard of it. I will assure you, there are none that have corruption, but they have need to be afraid of this. But many give way to this quarrelling, and consider not the hazard thereof. Beware of it, for it is a dreadful thing to quarrel with God: who may say unto him, "What doest thou?" It is a good account of Aaron, that when God made fire to destroy his sons, he held his peace. Let us then, while we bear the yoke, "sit alone and keep silence, and put our mouths in the dust, if so be there may be hope." La 3:28-29. Ye know, the murmuring of the children of Israel cost them very dear. *Be still*, that is, beware of murmuring against me, saith the Lord. God gives not an account of his matters to any; because there may be many things ye cannot see through; and therefore ye may think it better to have wanted them, and much more, for the credit of God and the church. I say, God gives not an account of his matters to any. Beware, then, of drawing rash conclusions. *Richard Cameron's Sermon, preached July 18th, 1680, three days before he was killed at Airmoss.*

Verse 10. *Be still and know that I am God.* Faith gives the soul a view of the Great God. It teacheth the soul to set his almightiness against sin's magnitude, and his infinitude against sin's multitude; and so quenches the temptation. The reason why the presumptuous sinner fears so little, and the despairing soul so much, is for want of knowing God as great; therefore, to cure them both, the serious consideration of God, under this notion, is propounded: *Be still, and know that I am God*; as if he had said, Know, O ye wicked, that I am God, who can avenge myself when I please upon you, and cease to provoke me by your sins to your own confusion; and again, know, ye trembling souls, that I am God; and therefore able to pardon the greatest sins, and cease to dishonour me by your unbelieving thoughts of me. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 10. *Be still, and know that I am the Lord.* Not everyone is a fit scholar for God's school, but such as are purified according to the purification of the sanctuary. Carnal men are drowned in fleshly and worldly cares, and neither

purged nor lifted up to receive the light of God, or else indisposed by prejudice or passion, that they cannot learn at all. We will never savingly know him, till our souls be free of these indispositions. Among all the elements the earth is fitted to receive seed of the sower; if he cast it into the fire, it burneth; if in the air, it withereth; if in the waters, it rots, the instability of that body is for producing monsters, because it closes not straitly the seeds of fishes. Spirits of a fiery temper, or light in inconstancy, or moving as waters, are not for God's lessons, but such as in *stayed humility* do rest under his hand. If waters be mixed with clay in their substance, or their surface be troubled with wind, they can neither receive nor render any image; such unstable spirits in the school of God lose their time and endanger themselves. *William Struther.*

Verse 10. *Be still, and know*, etc. As you must come and *see* Ps 46:8, so come and *hear* what the Lord saith to those enemies of yours. *John Trapp.*

Verse 11. *The Lord of hosts is with us.* On Tuesday Mr. Wesley could with difficulty be understood, though he often attempted to speak. At last, with all the strength he had, he cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us." Again, raising his hand, and waving it in triumph, he exclaimed with thrilling effect, "The best of all is, God is with us." These words seem to express the leading feature of his whole life, God had been with him from early childhood; his providence had guided him through all the devious wanderings of human life; and now, when he was entering the "valley of the shadow of death," the same hand sustained him. *From "Wesley and his Coadjutors. By Rev. W. C. Larrabee, A.M. Edited by Rev. B. F. Tefft, D.D. Cincinnati. 1851."*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The song of faith in troublous times.

1. *Our refuge.* Our only, impregnable, accessible, delightful place of retreat is our God.
2. *Our strength.* Our all sufficient, unconquerable, honourable, and emboldening strength is our God.
3. *Our help.* Ever near, sympathising, faithful, real, and potent is our God.

Verse 1. *A very present help in trouble.* Religion never so valuable as in seasons of trouble, sickness, and death. God is present helping us to bear trouble, to improve it, and to survive it. Present by gracious communications

and sweet manifestations; present most when he seems absent, restraining, overruling, and sanctifying trouble. Trust and wait. *James Smith*.

Verse 2. The reasons, advantages, and glory of holy courage.

Verses 2-3.

1. The great and many causes for fear.

(a) What might come—mountains, waters, etc., persecution, pestilence, etc.

(b) What must come—afflictions, death, judgment.

2. The great and one cause for not fearing. Fearlessness under such circumstances should be well grounded. God himself is our refuge, and we confiding in him are fearless. *G. Rogers*.

Verse 4. Glad tidings in sad times; or, the city of God in the times of trouble and confusion, watered with the river of consolation. *Ralph Erskine*.

Verse 4. What can this *river* be but that blessed covenant to which David himself repaired in the time of trouble? ...And what are *the streams* of this river, but the outgoings and effects of this divine constitution?

1. The blood of Jesus.

2. The influences of the Holy Spirit.

3. The doctrines and promises of the gospel.

4. The ordinances of religion.

5. All the means of grace. *W. Jay*.

Verse 4. *Make glad the city of God.* There are four ways in which the streams of a river would gladden the citizens.

1. The first regards *prospect*.

2. The second regards *traffic*.

3. The third regards *fertility*.

4. The fourth regards *supply*. *W. Jay*.

Verse 4. *City of God.* The church may be called "the city of God" because, 1. He dwells in it (see Ps 44:5). 2. He *founded* it and *built* it. 3. It derives all *privileges* and *immunities* from him. 4. He is the chief Ruler or Governor there. 5. It is his property. 6. He draws the *rent* of it. *Ralph Erskine*.

Verses 4-5. To the church, Joy, Establishment, Deliverance.

Verse 6. What man did and what God did.

Verse 8. *Behold the works of the Lord.*

1. They are worth beholding, for they are like himself; well becoming his infinite power, wisdom, justice,
2. Our eyes were given us for this very purpose—not for the beholding of vanity, not for the ensnaring or wounding of the soul; but for the use and honour of the Creator.
3. The Lord delights to have his works beheld; he knows their excellency and perfection, and that the more they are seen and noted the more honour will accrue to the Maker of them.
4. None but we can do it; there is great reason then that we should carefully *behold*, etc.
5. This shall be of great benefit to ourselves. *Bishop Hall.*

Verse 8. The desolations of the Lord, the consolation of his saints.

1. A declaration of what has happened.
2. A promise of what shall be achieved. *Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 190.*

Verse 9. The Great Peacemaker, or the principle of the gospel our only hope, for the total abolition of war.

Verse 10. *Be still, and know that I am God.* The sole consideration that God is God, sufficient to still all objections to his sovereignty. *Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 10. *I am God.* 1. In that he is God, he is an absolutely and infinitely *perfect* being. 2. As he is God, he is so *great*, that he is infinitely above all comprehension. 3. As he is God, all things are his *own*. 4. In that he is God, he is *worthy* to be sovereign over all things. 5. In that he is God, he *will* be sovereign, and *will* act as such. 6. In that he is God, he is able to *avenge* himself on those who oppose his sovereignty. *Jonathan Edwards.*

Psalm 47

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. To the Chief Musician. Many songs were dedicated to this leader of the chorus, but he was not overloaded thereby. God's service is such delight that it cannot weary us; and that choicest part of it, the singing of his praises, is so pleasurable that we cannot have too much of it. Doubtless, the chief musician, as he was commissioned with so many sacred songs, felt that the more the merrier. A Psalm for the Sons of Korah. We cannot agree with those who think that the sons of Korah were the authors of these Psalms; they have all the indications of David's authorship that one could expect to see. Our ear has grown accustomed to the ring of David's compositions, and we are morally certain that we hear it in this Psalm. Every expert would detect here the autography of the Son of Jesse, or we are greatly mistaken. The Sons of Korah sang these Psalms, but we believe they did not write them. Fit singers were they whose origin reminded them of sin, whose existence was a proof of sovereign grace, and whose name has a close connection with the name of Calvary.

SUBJECT. Whether the immediate subject of this Psalm be the carrying up of the ark from the house of Obadedom to Mount Zion, or the celebration of some memorable victory, it would be hard to decide. As even the doctors differ, who should dogmatise? But it is very clear that both the present sovereignty of Jehovah, and the final victories of our Lord, are here fitly hymned, while his ascension, as the prophecy of them, is sweetly gloried in.

DIVISION. In so short a Psalm, there is no need of any other division than that indicated by the musical pause at the end of Ps 47:4.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *O clap your hands.* The most natural and most enthusiastic tokens of exultation are to be used in view of the victories of the Lord, and his universal reign. Our joy in God may be demonstrative, and yet he will not censure it. *All ye people.* The joy is to extend to all nations; Israel may lead the van, but all the Gentiles are to follow in the march of triumph, for they have an equal share in that kingdom where there is neither Greek nor Jew, but Christ is all and in all. Even now if they did but know it, it is the best hope of all nations that Jehovah ruleth over them. If they cannot all speak the same tongue, the symbolic language of the hands they can all use. All people will be ruled by the Lord in the latter days, and all will exult in that rule; were they wise they would submit to it now, and rejoice to do so; yea, they would clap their hands in rapture at the thought. *Shout,* let your voices keep tune with your hands. *Unto God,* let him have all the honours of the day, and let them be loud, joyous, universal, and undivided. *With the voice of triumph,* with happy sounds, consonant with such splendid victories, so great a King, so excellent a rule, and such happy subjects.

Many are human languages, and yet the nations may triumph as with one voice. Faith's view of God's government is full of transport. The prospect of the universal reign of the Prince of Peace is enough to make the tongue of the dumb sing; what will the reality be? Well might the poet of the seasons bid mountains and valleys raise their joyous hymn—

"For the GREAT SHEPHERD reigns,
And his *unsuffering* kingdom yet will come."

Verse 2. *For the Lord*, or JEHOVAH, the self existent and only God; *Most high*, most great in power, lofty in dominion, eminent in wisdom, elevated in glory. *Is terrible*, none can resist his power or stand before his vengeance; yet as these terrors are wielded on the behalf of his subjects, they are fit reasons for rejoicing. Omnipotence, which is terrible to crush, is almighty to protect. At a grand review of the troops of a great prince, all his loyal subjects are filled with triumph, because their liege lord is so able to defend his own, and so much dreaded by his foes. *He is a great King over all the earth*. Not over Judea only, but even to the utmost isles his reign extends. Our God is no local deity, no petty ruler of a tribe; in infinite majesty he rules the mightiest realm as absolute arbiter of destiny, sole monarch of all lands, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Not a hamlet or an islet is excluded from his dominion. How glorious will that era be when this is seen and known of all; when in the person of Jesus all flesh shall behold the glory of the Lord!

Verse 3. *He*, with whom is infinite power, *shall subdue the people under us*. The battle is not ours but the Lord's. He will take his own time, but he will certainly achieve victory for his church. Truth and righteousness shall through grace climb to the ascendant. We wage no doubtful warfare. Hearts the most rebellious, and wills the most stubborn, shall submit to all conquering grace. All the Lord's people, whether Jews or Gentiles, may clap their hands at this, for God's victory will be theirs; but surely apostles, prophets, ministers, and those who suffer and labour the most, may take the largest share in the joy. Idolatry, infidelity, superstition, we shall yet tread upon, as men tread down the stones of the street. *And the nations under our feet*. The church of God shall be the greatest of monarchies, her victory shall be signal and decisive. Christ shall take to himself his great power and reign, and all the tribes of men shall own at once his glory and the glory of his people in him. How changed will be the position of affairs in coming ages! The people of God have been under the feet of men in long and cruel persecutions, and in daily contempt; but God will reverse the position, and the best in character shall be first in honour.

Verse 4. While as yet we see not all things put under him, we are glad to put ourselves and our fortunes at his disposal. *He shall choose our inheritance for us.* We feel his reign to be so gracious that we even now ask to be in the fullest degree the subjects of it. We submit our will, our choice, our desire, wholly to him. Our heritage here and hereafter we leave to him, let him do with us as seemeth him good. *The excellency of Jacob whom he loved.* He gave his ancient people their portion, he will give us ours, and we ask nothing better; this is the most spiritual and real manner of clapping our hands because of his sovereignty, namely, to leave all our affairs in his hands, for then our hands are empty of all care for self, and free to be used in his honour. He was the boast and glory of Israel, he is and shall be ours. He loved his people and became their greatest glory; he loves us, and he shall be our exceeding joy. As for the latter days, we ask nothing better than to stand in our appointed lot, for if we have but a portion in our Lord Jesus, it is enough for our largest desires. Our beauty, our boast, our best treasure, lies in having such a God to trust in, such a God to love us. *Selah.* Yes, pause, ye faithful songsters. Here is abundant room for holy meditation—

"Muse awhile, obedient thought,
Lo, the theme's with rapture fraught;
See thy King, whose realm extends
Even to earth's remotest ends.
Gladly shall the nations own
Him their God and Lord alone;
Clap their hands with holy mirth,
Hail him MONARCH OF THE EARTH.

Come, my soul, before him bow,
Gladdest of his subjects thou;
Leave thy portion to his choice,
In his sovereign will rejoice,
This thy purest, deepest bliss,
He is thine and thou art his."

Verse 5. *God is gone up with a shout.* Faith hears the people already shouting. The command of the first verse is here regarded as a fact. The fight is over, the conqueror ascends to his triumphant chariot, and rides up to the gates of the city which is made resplendent with the joy of his return. The words are fully applicable to the ascension of the Redeemer. We doubt not that angels and glorified spirits welcomed him with acclamations. He came not without song, shall we imagine that he returned in silence? *The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.* Jesus is Jehovah. The joyful strain of the trumpet betokens the

splendour of his triumph. It was meet to welcome one returning from the wars with martial music. Fresh from Bozrah, with his garments all red from the winepress, he ascended, leading captivity captive, and well might the clarion ring out the tidings of Immanuel's victorious return.

Verse 6. *Sing praises.* What jubilation is here, when five times over the whole earth is called upon to sing *to God!* He is worthy, he is Creator, he is goodness itself. *Sing praises,* keep on with the glad work. Never let the music pause. He never ceases to be good, let us never cease to be grateful. Strange that we should need so much urging to attend to so heavenly an exercise. *Sing praises unto our King.* Let him have all our praise; no one ought to have even a particle of it. Jesus shall have it all. Let his sovereignty be the fount of gladness. It is a sublime attribute, but full of bliss to the faithful. Let our homage be paid not in groans but songs. He asks not slaves to grace his throne; he is no despot; singing is fit homage for a monarch so blessed and gracious. Let all hearts that own his sceptre sing and sing on for ever, for there is everlasting reason for thanksgiving while we dwell under the shadow of such a throne.

Verse 7. *For God is the King of all the earth.* The Jews of our Saviour's time resented this truth, but had their hearts been right they would have rejoiced in it. They would have kept their God to themselves, and not even have allowed the Gentile dogs to eat the crumbs from under his table. Alas! how selfishness turns honey into wormwood. Jehovah is not the God of the Jews only, all the nations of the earth are, through the Messiah, yet to own him Lord. Meanwhile his providential throne governs all events beneath the sky. *Sing praises with understanding.* Sing a didactic Psalm. Sound doctrine praises God. Even under the economy of types and ceremonies, it is clear that the Lord had regard to the spirituality of worship, and would be praised thoughtfully, intelligently, and with deep appreciation of the reason for song. It is to be feared from the slovenly way in which some make a noise in singing, that they fancy any sound will do. On the other hand, from the great attention paid by some to the mere music, we feel sadly sure that the sense has no effect upon them. Is it not a sin to be tickling men's ears with sounds when we profess to be adoring the Lord? What has a sensuous delight in organs, anthems, etc., to do with devotion? Do not men mistake physical effects for spiritual impulses? Do they not often offer to God strains far more calculated for human amusement than for divine acceptance? An understanding enlightened of the Holy Spirit is then and then only fully capable of offering worthy praise.

Verse 8. Now at this moment, over the most debased idolaters, God holds a secret rule; here is work for faith. How we ought to long for the day when this truth shall be changed in its aspect, and the rule now unrecognised shall be

delighted in! The great truth that *God reigneth* in providence is the guarantee that in a gracious gospel sense his promises shall be fulfilled, and his kingdom shall come. *He sitteth upon the throne of his holiness*. Unmoved he occupies an undisputed throne, whose decrees, acts, and commands are holiness itself. What other throne is like this? Never was it stained with injustice, or defiled with sin. Neither is he who sits upon it dismayed, or in a dilemma. He sits in serenity, for he knows his own power, and sees that his purposes will not miscarry. Here is reason enough for holy song.

Verse 9. *The princes of the people are gathered together.* The prophetic eye of the psalmist sees the willing subjects of the great King assembled to celebrate his glory. Not only the poor and the men of low estate are there, but nobles bow their willing necks to his sway. "All kings shall bow down before him." No people shall be unrepresented; their great men shall be good men, their royal ones regenerate ones. How august will be the parliament where the Lord Jesus shall open the court, and princes shall rise up to do him honour! *Even the people of the God of Abraham*. That same God, who was known only to here and there a patriarch like the father of the faithful, shall be adored by a seed as many as the stars of heaven. The covenant promise shall be fulfilled, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Shiloh shall come, and "to him shall the gathering of the people be." Babel's dispersion shall be obliterated by the gathering arm of the Great Shepherd King.

For the shields of the earth belong unto God. The insignia of pomp, the emblems of rank, the weapons of war, all must pay loyal homage to the King of all. Right honourables must honour Jesus, and majesties must own him to be far more majestic. Those who are earth's protectors, the shields of the commonwealth, derive their might from him, and are his. All principalities and powers must be subject unto Jehovah and his Christ, for *He is greatly exalted*. In nature, in power, in character, in glory, there is none to compare with him. Oh, glorious vision of a coming era! Make haste, ye wheels of time! Meanwhile, ye saints, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. Some have applied this Psalm to Christ's ascension; but it speaks of his Second Coming. The Mighty One is seated peacefully on his throne. We are referred back to Ps 45:1-17. *Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verse 1. *O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.* This should be done, 1. Cheerfully, *Clap your hands*, for this is a sign of inward joy, Na 3:19. 2. Universally: "O clap you hands, *all ye people*." 3. Vocally: *Shout unto God with the voice of triumph*. 4. Frequently: "*Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises*", Ps 47:6; and again "*sing praises*", Ps 47:7. It cannot be done too frequently. 5. Knowingly and discreetly: "*Sing ye praises with understanding*"; "know the reason why ye are to praise him. *Adam Clarke*."

Verse 1. *O clap your hands*, etc. Such expressions of pious and devout affection as to some may seem indecent and imprudent, yet ought not to be hastily censured and condemned, much less ridiculed; because if they come from an upright heart, God will accept the strength of the affection, and excuse the weakness of the expressions of it. *Matthew Henry*.

Verse 1. *O clap your hands.* The *voice of melody* is not so much to be uttered with the tongue, as with the hands; that it, it is our deeds not our words, by which God is here to be praised. Even as it was in him whose pattern we are to follow: "Jesus began both to do and to teach." *J. M. Neale*.

Verse 1. *All ye people. Peoples*, in the plural. Here it is used to call both Jews and Gentiles—all nations. *William S. Plumer*.

Verse 1. *Shout unto God. Jubilate Deo: in God, and concerning God, and in honour of God.* He does not excite them to carnal joy. *Martin Geier*.

Verse 2. *For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth.* The church celebrates the ascension of Christ, because then he was "highly exalted; "then he became *terrible* to his enemies, all power in heaven and earth being committed to him; and then he began to display the excellent majesty of his universal kingdom, to which he was then inaugurated, being crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords." *George Horne*.

Verse 2. *The Lord most high is terrible.* Christ is *terrible*, that is, fearful, or meet to be feared, not of his children only for their good, but of the wicked also for their punishment; *terrible* to the devil, as being stronger than he, casting out the prince of darkness by the finger of God. Lu 11:22 Joh 12:31. And therefore so soon as an unclean spirit saw Jesus, he cried out, "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us?" Mr 1:24; or as other devils, Mt 8:29, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" for the devils in believing tremble. *Terrible* to hypocrites, and other impious agents of the devil, as having his fan in his hand to make clean his floor, and to gather his

wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Mt 3:12. Or Christ is *excelsus in potentia, terribilis in justitia*; high in power, and fearful in justice; high in exalting the good, and terrible in humbling the bad. *John Boys.*

Verse 3. *He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.* The consequence of our Lord's ascension was the going forth of the all subduing Word, under the influence and direction of which, the convinced and converted nations renounced their idols and their lusts, and bowed their willing necks to the yoke of Jesus. This is that great conquest, fore showed by the victories of Joshua, David, and all the faithful heroes of old time, and foretold in language borrowed from their history. *George Horne.*

Verse 3. *He shall subdue the people under us, etc., or he shall lead like sheep; or bring unto to fold;* as divers render the word, by comparing Isa 5:17 Mic 2:12. He seems to speak of such a subjugation of them, as was for the good of the people subdued, because this is matter of rejoicing to them, verse 1; which is true both of these people whom David subdued, who thereby had opportunities, obligations, and encouragements to own and worship the true God, which was the only way to their true and lasting happiness; and especially of those Gentiles who were subdued to Christ by the preaching of the gospel. The Gentile converts were in some sort brought under the Jews, because they were subjected to Christ and to his apostles, and to the primitive church, which were Jews. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 3. *And the nations under our feet.* By this manner of speech is meant, that the Gentiles should be *scholars*, and the Jews *schoolmasters*, as it were to them; for *to sit under the feet*, or *at the feet*, is used in Scripture for being a scholar, or learning, as Ac 22:3. *Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 4. *He shall choose.* Futures are variously rendered; and accordingly the vulgar Latin, Syriac, and Arabic, render this word, *He hath chosen.* *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 4. *He shall choose our inheritance for us.* It is reported of a woman who, being sick, was asked whether she was willing to live or die; she answered, "Which God pleases." But, said one, if God should refer it to you, which would you choose? "Truly," replied she, "I would refer it to him again." Thus that man obtains his will of God, whose will is subjected to God. We are not to be troubled that we have no more *from* God, but we are to be troubled that we do no more *for* God. Christians, if the Lord be well pleased with your persons, should not you be well pleased with your conditions? There is more reason that

you should be pleased with them, than that he should be pleased with you. Believers should be like sheep, which change their pastures at the will of the shepherd; or like vessels in a house, which stand to be filled or emptied at the pleasure of their owner. He that sails upon the sea of this world in his own bottom, will sink at last into a bottomless ocean. Never were any their own carvers, but they were sure to cut their own fingers. *William Secker.*

Verse 4. *He shall choose our inheritance for us*, means that he who knows what is better for us than ourselves, *hath chosen*, that is, hath appointed, and that of his own good will and mercy towards us, *our inheritance*; not only things meet for this life, as lands, and houses, and possessions, etc., but even all other things concerning the hope of a better life, to wit, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, an everlasting habitation, and inheritance which is immortal and undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven. *John Boys.*

Verse 4. *The excellency (or glory) of Jacob, whom he loved*; that is, even all those excellent things that he gave and promised to Jacob, wherein he might glory and rejoice. The faithful mean, that they had as great, both abundance and assurance of God's grace and goodness, as ever Jacob had. *Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 4. It may be thou art godly and poor. It is well; but canst thou tell whether, if thou wert not poor, thou wouldst be godly? Surely God knows us better than we ourselves do, and therefore can best fit the estate to the person. *Giles Fletcher.*

Verse 5. *God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.* It is worthy (as Origen suggests) that this mention of the *shout*, and the *voice* of the *trumpet*, serves to connect together past and future events in the history of the church and of the world, and carry our thoughts forward to Christ's coming to judgment. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5. Thou hast great cause, O my soul, to praise him, and to rejoice before him, especially if thou considerest that Christ ascended not for himself, but also for thee: it is God in our nature that is gone up to heaven: whatever God acted on the person of Christ, that he did as in thy behalf, and he means to act the very same on thee. Christ as a public person ascended up to heaven; thy interest is in this very ascension of Jesus Christ; and therefore dost thou consider thy Head as soaring up? O let every member praise his name; let thy tongue (called thy *glory*), glory in this, and trumpet out his praise, that in respect of thy duty it may be verified: "*Christ is gone up with a shout, the Lord with a sound of a trumpet.*" *Isaac Ambrose.*

Verse 7. *For God is the King of all the earth:* as if he had said, "our King, said I? it is too little; he is King of *all the earth*." *John Trapp.*

Verse 7. *Sing ye praises with understanding.* How may we make melody in our hearts to God in singing of Psalms? We must sing *with understanding*. We must not be guided by the *time*, but the *words* of the Psalm; we must mind the matter more than the music, and consider what we sing, as well as how we sing; the tune may affect the fancy, but it is the matter affects the heart, and that God principally eyes. The psalmist advises us in this particular, and so doth the apostle 1Co 14:15. Otherwise this sweet duty would be more the work of a chorister than of a Christian, and we should be more delighted in an anthem of the musician's making, than in a Psalm of the Spirit's making. A. Lapide observes that in the text, 1Co 14:15, the word *understanding* is *maschil*, (lyksm), profound judgment: we must sing *wisely*, if we will sing gratefully; we must relish what we sing. In a word, we must sing as we must pray; now the most rude petitioner will *understand* what he prays. 1Co 14:15. If we do not understand what we sing, it argues carelessness of spirit, or hardness of heart; and this makes the service impertinent. Upon this the worthy Davenant cries out, "Adieu to the bellowing of the Papists, who sing in an unknown tongue." God will not understand us in that service which we understand not ourselves. One of the first pieces of the creation was *light*, and this must break out in every duty. *John Wells*(—1676), in "*Morning Exercises*."

Verse 7. *Sing ye praises with understanding, sing an instructive song.* Let *sense* and *sound* go together. Let your *hearts* and *heads* go with your *voices*. *Understand* what you *sing*, and *feel* what you *understand*. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 7. *Sing ye praises with understanding;* because in the full light of the new dispensation, the darkness of the patriarchal ages, the seeing as through a glass of the Levitical law, are turned into the vision of full and very reality. *Hugo Victorinus.*

Verse 7. *Sing ye praises with understanding.* Mark this, thou who daily redest the Psalms, and yet does not understand them. *Simon de Muis.*

Verse 7. *With understanding.* If they had sung *with understanding*, they had not adored stones. When a man sensible sang to a stone insensible, did he sing "*with understanding*"? But now, brethren, we see not with our eyes whom we adore, and yet correctly we adore. Much more is God commended to us, that with our eyes see him not. *Augustine.*

Verse 9. *The princes of the people are gathered together.* I note from hence, 1. That it is not impossible for great men to be good men; for the heads of a country to be members of Christ; and for princes as well as the people to serve the God of Abraham. It is said by the prophet, "upon my peace came great bitterness; ""a thousand fell on the left hand, but ten thousand at the right hand" Ps 91:7: ten perish in their prosperity, for one that falleth in adversity. *Homo victus in paradiso, victum in stercore*: Adam in the garden of pleasure was overcome by the subtil serpent, whereas Job on the dunghill of misery was more than a conqueror. Woodmen say that deer are more circumspect in fat pastures; so the godly fear most in a rich estate: *nihil timendum video* (saith one), *timeo tamen*. (Seneca.) It is a sweet prayer of our church in the Litany, "Good Lord, deliver us in all time of our wealth, "insinuating that our minds are not so wanton as in abundance: yet, as you see, such is Christ's unspeakable goodness towards all sort of men, in preventing them even with the riches of his mercy, that not only the mean people, but also the mighty princes among the heathen are joined unto the church of the God of Abraham. *John Boys*.

Verse 9. *Gathered together.* Christ's gathering of the saints together unto him will be at his second coming, his coming to judgment, the general and final judgment. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." 2Th 2:1. *James Scott* (— 1773), in *"A Collection of Sermons, "1774*.

Verse 9. *The people of the God of Abraham.* First, touching *the God of Abraham*, it is Christ, whose day Abraham desired to see, and in seeing whereof he did so much rejoice Joh 8:1-59; that is, not only the day of his birth, which he saw, as we learn by the oath which he caused his servant to take Ge 24:1-67 but also the day of his passion, which he saw long ago, and rejoiced in seeing it, when he said to his son Isaac in the mount, "The Lord will provide a sacrifice." Ge 22:8. Secondly, *The people of the God of Abraham*, are his children and posterity: not only that they are the seed of Abraham, coming out of his loins, and are "*the children of the flesh*" Ro 9:9; but "*the children of the promise*"; "for if they that come out of Abraham's loins were only his children, then the Hagarins, the Turks, and Ishmaelites should be the people of God; "*But in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*" They that lay hold of the promise by faith, "They that are of the faith, are the children of Abraham" Ga 3:7, that have the same spirit of faith that Abraham had. As the apostle saith Ro 2:28, "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, but a Jew inwardly is the true Jew." They that worship the Messias by believing in him with the faith of Abraham, they are Abraham's children, and *the people of Abraham's God*, which thing John Baptist affirms Mt 3:1-17, "God can of stones raise up children unto Abraham."

So the Gentiles, which worshipped stones, and therefore were "*like unto them*" Ps 115:1-18, were notwithstanding raised up to be children to Abraham.
Lancelot Andrewes.

Verse 9. *The shields of the earth belong unto God.* There we have the *rulers* of the earth set forth by a double relation; the one *upward*, they are *scuta Deo*, they belong to God; the other *downward*, they are *scuta terae*, "*the shields of the earth*"; "and both these noting two things, their *dignity* and their *duty*. They belong to God, it is their honour that he hath sealed them: they belong to God, it is their duty to be subject to him. They are *shields of the earth*, it is their honour that they are above others: they are *the shields of the earth*, it is their duty to protect others. *Edward Reynolds (Bishop).*

Verse 9. *The shields of the earth are God's*, is understood by many as spoken of princes. I admit that this metaphor is of frequent occurrence in Scripture, nor does this sense seem to be unsuitable to the scope of the passage... Yet the sense will be more simple if we explain the words thus: That, as it is God alone who defends and preserves the world, the high and supreme majesty which is sufficient for so exalted and difficult a work as the preservation of the world, is justly looked upon with admiration. The sacred writer expressly uses the word *shields* in the plural number, for, considering the various and almost innumerable dangers which unceasingly threaten every part of the world, the providence of God must necessarily interpose in many ways, and make use, as it were, of many bucklers. *John Calvin.*

Verse 9. *The shields of the earth.* Magistrates are said to *bear the sword*, not to be swords; and they are said to *be shields*, not to bear shields; and all this to show that protection and preservation are more essential and intrinsical to their office than destruction and punishment are. *Joseph Caryl.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Unusual and enthusiastic expressions of joy when justifiable and even desirable.

Verses 1-4. Joy the true spirit of worship.

1. Joy in God's character.
2. In his reign.
3. In the triumphs of his gospel.
4. In his favour to his saints.

Verse 2. The terrors of the Lord viewed by faith as a subject of joy.

Verse 2 (second clause). The universal reign of Christ as it is and is to be.

Verse 3. The hope of victory to the church. What shall be subdued? By whose instrumentality? Us. By whose power? He. When shall it be accomplished? What is the token of it? The ascension, Ps 47:5.

Verse 3.

1. The final triumph of the saints. All enemies subdued under them in earth and hell, within and without—(a) gradually, (b) completely.

2. The power by which it is accomplished. He shall, etc.

(a) Not without means.

(b) Not by means only.

(c) But by appointed means made potent by divine energy. *G. R.*

Verse 4. This comprehends time and eternity. It is a matter of fact, of holy acquiescence, of desire, of thankfulness.

Verse 4.

1. God is willing to choose our inheritance for us in time and eternity.

2. His choice is better than ours—the excellency of Jacob.

3. He will leave us to the consequences of our own choice.

4. He will help us in obtaining that which he chooses for us. *G. R.*

Verse 5. The ascension. Its publicity, solemnity, triumph, joy. Who went up. Where he went up. To what he went up. For what purpose. With what result.

Verse 6. The importance of holy song. The repetition rebukes our slackness, and implies that earnestness, frequency, delight, and universality should characterise the praises offered.

Verse 7 (*last clause*). The psalmody of the instructed, and instruction by psalmody; praise should be both the fruit and the vehicle of teaching.

Verse 8 (*last clause*). Divine sovereignty always connected with holiness.

Verse 8.

1. God has a throne of holiness, for which he is to be feared by all men.
2. A throne of grace, for which he is to be loved by his redeemed.
3. A throne of glory, for which he is to be praised by his whole creation.

Verse 9.

1. A shield is a *merciful* weapon, none more so.
2. A shield is a *venturous* weapon, a kind of surety, which bears the blows and receives the injuries which were intended for another.
3. A shield is a *strong* weapon, to repel the darts of wickedness and break them in pieces.
4. A shield is an honourable weapon, none more: taking away of shields was a sign of victory; preserving them a sign of glory.
5. Remember, a shield must ever *have an eye to guide it*—you the shields, the law the eye. *Bishop Reynolds*.

WORK UPON THE FORTY-SEVENTH PSALM

In the Works of JOHN BOYS, 1626, folio, pp. 931-937, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

Psalm 48

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. A Song and Psalm for the Sons of Korah. A song for joyfulness and a Psalm for reverence. Alas! every song is not a Psalm, for poets are not all heaven born, and every Psalm is not a song, for in coming before God we have to utter mournful confessions as well as exulting praises. The Sons of Korah were happy in having so large a selection of song; the worship where such a variety of music was used could not become monotonous, but must have given widest scope for all the sacred passions of gracious souls.

SUBJECT AND DIVISION. It would be idle dogmatically to attribute this song to any one event of Jewish history. Its author and date are unknown. It records the withdrawal of certain confederate kings from Jerusalem, their courage failing them before striking a blow. The mention of the ships of Tarshish may allow us to conjecture that the Psalm was written in connection with the overthrow of Ammon, Moab, and Edom in the reign of Jehoshaphat; and if the reader will turn to 2 Chronicles 20, and note especially 2Ch 20:19,25,36, he will probably accept the suggestion. Ps 48:1-3, are in honour of the Lord and the city dedicated to his worship. From Ps 48:4-8 the song records the confusion of Zion's foes, ascribing all the praise to God; Ps 48:9-11 extolling Zion, and avowing Jehovah to be her God for evermore.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Great is the Lord.* How great Jehovah is essentially none can conceive; but we can all see that he is great in the deliverance of his people, great in their esteem who are delivered, and great in the hearts of those enemies whom he scatters by their own fears. Instead of the mad cry of Ephesus, "Great is Diana, "we bear the reasonable, demonstrable, self evident testimony, "Great is Jehovah." There is none great in the church but the Lord. Jesus is "the *great* Shepherd, "he is "a Saviour, and a great one, "our great God and Saviour, our great High Priest; his Father has divided him a portion with the great, and his name shall be great unto the ends of the earth. *And greatly to be praised.* According to his nature should his worship be; it cannot be too constant, too laudatory, too earnest, too reverential, too sublime. *In the city of our God.* He is great there, and should be greatly praised there. If all the world beside renounced Jehovah's worship, the chosen people in his favoured city should continue to adore him, for in their midst and on their behalf his glorious power has been so manifestly revealed. In the church the Lord is to be extolled though all the nations rage against him. Jerusalem was the peculiar abode of the God of Israel, the seat of the theocratic government, and the centre of prescribed worship, and even thus is the church the place of divine manifestation. *In the mountain of his holiness.* Where his holy temple, his holy priests, and his holy sacrifices might continually be seen. Zion was a mount, and as it was the most

renowned part of the city, it is mentioned as a synonym for the city itself. The church of God is a mount for elevation and for conspicuousness, and it should be adorned with holiness, her sons being partakers of the holiness of God. Only by holy men can the Lord be fittingly praised, and they should be incessantly occupied with his worship.

Verse 2. *Beautiful for situation.* Jerusalem was so naturally, she was styled the Queen of the East; the church is so spiritually, being placed near God's heart, within the mountain of his power, upon the hills of his faithfulness, in the centre of providential operations. The elevation of the church is her beauty. The more she is above the world the fairer she is. *The joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion.* Jerusalem was the world's star; whatever light lingered on earth was borrowed from the oracles preserved by Israel. An ardent Israelite would esteem the holy city as the eye of the nations, the most precious pearl of all lands. Certainly the church of God, though despised of men, is the true joy and hope of the world. *On the sides of the north, the city of the great King.* Either meaning that Jerusalem was in the northern extremity of Judah, or it may denote that part of the city that lay to the north of Mount Zion. It was the glory of Jerusalem to be God's city, the place of his regal dwelling, and it is the joy of the church that God is in her midst. The great God is the great King of the church, and for her sake he rules all the nations. The people among whom the Lord deigns to dwell are privileged above all others; the lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places, and they have a goodly heritage. We who dwell in Great Britain in the sides of the north, have this for our chief glory, that the Lord is known in our land, and the abode of his love is among us.

Verse 3. *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.* We worship no unknown God. We know him as our refuge in distress, we delight in him as such, and run to him in every time of need. We know nothing else as our refuge. Though we are made kings, and our houses are palaces, yet we have no confidence in ourselves, but trust in the Lord Protector, whose well known power is our bulwark.

Verse 4. *The kings were assembled, they passed by together.* They came and they went. No sooner together than scattered. They came one way and fled twenty ways. Boastful the gathering hosts with their royal leaders, despairing the fugitive bands with their astonished captains. They came like foam on the angry sea, like foam they melted away. This was so remarkable that the psalmist puts in a note of exclamation, *Lo!* What! have they so suddenly fled! Even thus shall the haters of the church vanish from the field. Papists, Ritualists, Arians, Sceptics, they shall each have their day, and shall pass on to the limbo of forgetfulness.

Verse 5. *They saw it, and so they marvelled.* They came, they saw, but they did not conquer. There was no *veni, vidi, vici* for them. No sooner did they perceive that the Lord was in the Holy City, than they took to their heels. Before the Lord came to blows with them, they were faint hearted, and beat a retreat. *They were troubled and hasted away.* The troublers were troubled. Their haste in coming was nothing to their hurry in going. Panic seized them, horses were not fleet enough; they would have borrowed the wings of the wind. They fled ignominiously, like children in a fright. Glory be to God, it shall be even thus with the foes of his church; when the Lord cometh to our help, our enemies shall be as nothing. Could they foresee their ignominious defeat, they would not advance to the attack.

Verse 6. *Fear took hold upon them there.* They were in Giant Despair's grip. Where they hoped to triumph, there they quivered with dismay. They did not take the city, but fear took hold on them. *And pain, as of a woman in travail.* They were as much overcome as a woman whose fright causes premature delivery; or, as full of pain as a poor mother in her pangs—a strong expression, commonly employed by Orientals to set forth the extremity of anguish. When the Lord arises for the help of his church, the proudest of his foes shall be as trembling women, and their dismay shall be but the beginning of eternal defeat.

Verse 7. *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.* As easily as vessels are driven to shipwreck, dost thou overturn the most powerful adversaries; or it may mean the strength of some nations lies in their ships, whose wooden walls are soon broken; but our strength is in our God, and therefore, it fails not; or there may be another meaning, though thou art our defence, yet thou takest vengeance on our inventions, and while thou dost preserve us, yet our ships, our comforts, our earthly ambitions, are taken from us that we may look alone to thee. God is seen at sea, but he is equally present on land. Speculative heresies, pretending to bring us wealth from afar, are constantly assailing the church, but the breath of the Lord soon drives them to destruction. The church too often relies on the wisdom of men, and these human helps are soon shipwrecked; yet the church itself is safe beneath the care of her God and King.

Verse 8. *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God.* Our father's stories are reproduced before our very eyes. We heard the promise, and we have seen the fulfilment. The records of Zion, wonderful as they are, are proved to be truthful, because present facts are in perfect harmony therewith. Note how the Lord is first spoken of as *Lord of hosts*, a name of power and sovereignty, and then as *our God*, a name of covenant relation and condescension. No wonder that since the Lord bears both

titles, we find him dealing with us after the precedents of his lovingkindness, and the faithfulness of his promises. *God will establish it for ever.* The true church can never be disestablished. That which kings establish can last for time only, that which God establishes endures to all eternity. *Selah.* Here is a fit place to pause, viewing the past with admiration, and the future with confidence.

Verse 9. *We have thought.* Holy men are thoughtful men; they do not suffer God's wonders to pass before their eyes and melt into forgetfulness, but they meditate deeply upon them. *Of thy lovingkindness, O God.* What a delightful subject! Devout minds never tire of so divine a theme. It is well to think of past lovingkindness in times of trial, and equally profitable to remember it in seasons of prosperity. Grateful memories sweeten sorrows and sober joys. *In the midst of thy temple.* Fit place for so devout a meditation. Where God is most seen he is best loved. The assembled saints constitute a living temple, and our deepest musings when so gathered together should have regard to the lovingkindness of the Lord, exhibited in the varied experiences of each of the living stones. Memories of mercy should be associated with continuance of praise. Hard by the table of show bread commemorating his bounty, should stand the altar of incense denoting our praise.

Verse 10. *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth.* Great fame is due to his great name. The glory of Jehovah's exploits overleaps the boundaries of earth; angels behold with wonder, and from every star delighted intelligences proclaim his fame beyond the ends of the earth. What if men are silent, yet the woods, and seas, and mountains, with all their countless tribes, and all the unseen spirits that walk them, are full of the divine praise. As in a shell we listen to the murmurs of the sea, so in the convolutions of creation we hear the praises of God. *Thy right hand is full of righteousness.* Thy sceptre and thy sword, thy government and thy vengeance, are altogether just. Thy hand is never empty, but full of energy, of bounty, and of equity. Neither saint nor sinner shall find the Lord to be an empty handed God; he will in both cases deal out righteousness to the full: to the one, through Jesus, he will be just to forgive, to the other just to condemn.

Verse 11. *Let mount Zion rejoice.* As the first of the cities of Judah, and the main object of the enemies' attack, let her lead the song. *Let the daughters of Judah be glad,* let the smaller towns join the chorus, for they join in the common victory. Let the women, who fare worst in the havoc of war, be among the gladdest of the glad, now that the spoilers have fled. All the church, and each individual member, should rejoice in the Lord, and magnify his name. *Because of thy judgments.* The righteous acts of the Lord are legitimate subjects

for joyful praise. However it may appear on earth, yet in heaven the eternal ruin of the wicked will be the theme of adoring song. Re 19:1,3: "Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Justice which to our poor optics now seems severe, will then be perceived to be perfectly consistent with God's name of love, and to be one of the brightest jewels of his crown.

Verse 12. *Walk about Zion;* often beat her bounds, even as Israel marched around Jericho. With leisurely and careful inspection survey her. *And go round about her.* Encircle her again and again with loving perambulations. We cannot too frequently or too deeply consider the origin, privileges, history, security, and glory of the church. Some subjects deserve but a passing thought; this is worthy of the most patient consideration. *Tell the towers thereof.* See if any of them have crumbled, or have been demolished. Is the church of God what she was in doctrine, in strength and in beauty? Her foes counted her towers in envy first, and then in terror, let us count them with sacred exultation. The city of Lucerne, encircled by its ancient walls, adorned with a succession of towers, is a visible illustration of this figure; and as we have gone around it, and paused at each picturesque tower, we have realised the loving lingering inspection which the metaphor implies.

Verse 13. *Mark ye well her bulwarks.* Consider most attentively how strong are her ramparts, how safely her inhabitants are entrenched behind successive lines of defence. The security of the people of God is not a doctrine to be kept in the background, it may be safely taught, and frequently pondered; only to base hearts will that glorious truth prove harmful; the sons of perdition make a stumbling stone even of the Lord Jesus himself, it is little wonder that they pervert the truth of God concerning the final perseverance of the saints. We are not to turn away from inspecting Zion's ramparts, because idlers skulk behind them. *Consider her palaces.* Examine with care the fair dwellings of the city. Let the royal promises which afford quiet resting places for believers be attentively inspected. See how sound are the defences, and how fair are the pleasaunces of "that ancient citie," of which you are citizens. A man should be best acquainted with his own home; and the church is our dear and blest abode. Would to God professors were more considerate of the condition of the church; so far from telling the towers, some of them scarcely know what or where they are; they are too busy counting their money, and considering their ledgers. Freehold and copyhold, and leasehold, men measure to an inch, but heaven

hold and grace hold are too often taken at peradventure, and neglected in sheer heedlessness. *That ye may tell it to the generation following.* An excellent reason for studious observation. We have received and we must transmit. We must be students that we may be teachers. The debt we owe to the past we must endeavour to repay by handing down the truth to the future.

Verse 14. *For this God is our God for ever and ever.* A good reason for preserving a record of all that he has wrought. Israel will not change her God so as to wish to forget, nor will the Lord change so as to make the past mere history. He will be the covenant God of his people world without end. There is no other God, we wish for no other, we would have no other even if there were. There are some who are so ready to comfort the wicked, that for the sake of ending their punishment they weaken the force of language, and make *for ever and ever* mean but a time; nevertheless, despite their interpretations we exult in the hope of an eternity of bliss, and to us "everlasting, " and "for ever and ever" mean what they say. *He will be our guide even unto death.* Throughout life, and to our dying couch, he will graciously conduct us, and even after death he will lead us to the living fountains of waters. We look to him for resurrection and eternal life. This consolation is clearly derivable from what has gone before; hitherto our foes have been scattered, and our bulwarks have defied attack, for God has been in our midst, therefore all possible assaults in the future shall be equally futile.

"The church has all her foes defied
And laughed to scorn their rage;
Even thus for aye she shall abide
Secure from age to age."

Farewell, fear. Come hither, gratitude and faith, and sing right joyously.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. A Song and Psalm. Wherein both voice and instrument were used; the voice began first and the instrument after: and where the inscription is a Psalm and Song, there likely the instrument began and the voice followed. *John Richardson.*

Whole Psalm. According to Dr. Lightfoot, the constant and ordinary Psalm for the second day of the week was the forty-eighth.

Verse 1. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, etc.* The prophet, being about to praise a certain edifice, commences by praising the architect, and says that in the holy city the wonderful skill and wisdom of God, who built it, is truly displayed. *Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;* and so he is, whether we look at his essence, his power, his wisdom, his justice, or his mercy, for all are infinite, everlasting, and incomprehensible; and thus, so much is God *greatly to be praised*, that all the angels, all men, even all his own works would not suffice thereto; but of all things revealed, there is no one thing can give us a greater idea of his greatness, or for which we should praise and thank him more, than the establishment of his church; and therefore, the prophet adds, *in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness;* that is to say, the greatness of God, and for which he deserves so much praise, is conspicuous in the foundation and construction of his church. *Robert Bellarmine (Cardinal).*

Verse 1. *Great is the Lord.* Greater, Job 33:12. Greatest of all, Ps 95:3. Greatness itself, Ps 145:3. A degree he is above the superlative. *John Trapp.*

Verse 1. *Mountain of his holiness.* The religion in it holy, the people in it a holy people. *William Nicholson.*

Verse 2. *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.* What is there, or was there, about Zion to justify the high eulogium of David? The situation is indeed eminently adapted to be the platform of a magnificent citadel. Rising high above the deep valley of Gihon and Hinnom, on the west and south, and the scarcely less deep one of the Cheesemongers on the east, it could only be assailed from the northwest; and then *on the sides of the north* it was magnificently beautiful, and fortified by walls, towers, and bulwarks, the wonder and terror of the nations: *"For the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away."* At the thought of it the royal psalmist again bursts forth in triumph: *"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."* Alas! her towers have long since fallen to the ground, her bulwarks have been overthrown, her palaces have crumbled to dust, and we who now walk about Zion can tell no other story than this to the generation following. There is another Zion, however, whose towers are still more glorious, and shall never be overthrown. *"God is known in her palaces for a refuge."* And *"this God is our God for ever and ever."* How often is this name synonymous with the church of the living God! and no other spot but one can divide with it the affection of his people—no other name but one can awaken such joyful hopes

in the Christian's heart. The temporal Zion is now in the dust, but the true Zion is rising and shaking herself from it, and putting on her beautiful garments to welcome her King when he comes to reign over the whole earth. *W. M.*

Thompson, D.D.

Verse 2. When I stood that morning on the brow of Olivet, and looked down on the city, crowning those battlemented heights, encircled by those deep and dark ravines, I involuntarily exclaimed, *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.* And as I gazed, the red rays of the rising sun shed a halo round the top of the castle of David; then they tipped with gold each tapering minaret, and gilded each dome of mosque and church, and at length, bathed in one flood of ruddy light the terraced roofs of the city, and the grass and foliage, the cupolas, pavements, and colossal walls of the Haram. No human being could be disappointed who first saw Jerusalem from Olivet. *J. L. Porter.*

Verse 2. (*first clause*). *Beautiful in climate*, that is, Mount Zion is situated in a fair and lovely climate. This is the view taken by Montanus and Ainsworth. Bate and Parkhurst read, "*Beautiful in extension, i.e., in the prospect which it extends to the eye.*" *Editorial Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 2. *Beautiful for situation.* This earth is, by sin, covered with deformity, and therefore justly might that spot of ground, which was thus beautified with holiness, be called *the joy of the whole earth*, i.e., what the whole earth had reason to rejoice in, because God would thus in very deed dwell with man upon the earth. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 2. *Beautiful for situation.*

—Fair Jerusalem
The holy city, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious temple reared
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topped with golden spires.
—*John Milton in "Paradise Regained."*

Verse 2. *On the sides of the north.* Jerusalem, that is the upper and best part of it, was built on the north side of Mount Zion. *Hadrian Reland, 1676-1718.*

Verse 2. Jerusalem lay to the north of Sion, and this circumstance is mentioned as a proof of Mount Zion's greatest security, for it was almost inaccessible on

any other side except the north, and there is was defended by Jerusalem, which was very strong. *Samuel Burder.*

Verse 2. *The great King.* God is named the *great King* in opposition to the kings in Ps 48:4. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4. They were many and powerful: kings and a plurality of them. They were confederate kings. *The kings were assembled.* Forces united are the more powerful. But all the endeavours of these confederate kings came to nothing. *They passed by together*—together they came, and together they vanished. *William Nicholson.*

Verses 5-6. The potentates of the world saw the miracles of the apostles, the courage and constancy of the martyrs, and the daily increase of the church, notwithstanding all their persecutions; they beheld with astonishment the rapid progress of the faith through the Roman empire; they called upon their gods, but their gods could not help themselves; idolatry expired at the foot of the victorious cross. *George Horne.*

Verse 6. *Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.* Nothing is more unaccountable than panic. No man, no body of men can adequately guard against such terror. He who made the ears can easily make them to tingle. He who holds the winds in his fist, can easily make them whisper alarm, or roar dismay. This is specially to be expected when men so act as to have their own conscience against them. Job 15:21. But God can at any time so forsake men as that they shall be unmanned, and play the fool exceedingly. Le 26:36. Men have fought bravely several battles, and then played the coward. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 7. *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.* It is only by her Lord that the church gained "the true riches; "when she enters into traffick with the world, she takes the means of the world for her resources; and when she trusts in her wealth, in her political power, in earthly cunning, to make merchandise, the instruments she adopts come to nothing in her hands, and leave her helpless and poor. *From "A Plain Commentary on the Book of Psalms (The Prayer Book Version), chiefly founded on the Fathers, "1859.*

Verse 7. *With an east wind,* which, in Judea, is a very violent and destructive wind. Kennicot renders the verse thus, *As the east wind dasheth in pieces the ships of Tarshish;* founding his conjecture upon the similarity in form of two Hebrew letters, signifying the one *in*, and the other *as*. *Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 9. *We have thought.* The Hebrew (Mwd) and (Mmd) and (hmd) belong all to the same signification, of *quiet, rest, silence, patient expecting, thinking, considering*, and must be determined to any of these senses by the context. And here that of *expecting* or *patient waiting*, with *affiance* in him, and without all *distrust* or *repining* at his *delays*, seems to be most proper for it. For coming to the sanctuary to pray for mercy, it is most agreeable to say *we wait for it there*, as in the place where he hath promised to afford it, in return to *prayers*. *Henry Hammond.*

Verses 12-13. In a spiritual sense *the towers* and *bulwarks* of Sion are those doctrines of the true faith, which are the strength and glory of the church, which are to be maintained in their soundness and stability against the assaults of heretical teachers, so that they may be transmitted unimpaired to following generations. *Origen and Theodoret, quoted by Wordsworth.*

Verse 13. *Mark ye well her bulwarks.* Margin as in the Hebrew, "*Set your heart to her bulwarks.*" That is, pay close attention to them; make the investigation with care, not as one does whose heart is not in the thing, and who does it negligently. The word rendered *bulwarks*, (lyx), *khail*—means properly, a host or army, and then a fortification or entrenchment, especially the *ditch* or *trench*, with the low wall or breastwork which surrounds it. 2Sa 20:15 Isa 26:1. (*Gesenius, Lex.*)—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 13. *Mark ye well: set your heart*, mind earnestly, set your affections on. *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 13. *Her bulwarks.*

1. The designation and constitution of Jesus Christ to be King of the church, King of Zion, is the great bulwark of Zion.
2. The second bulwark of Zion is the promises of God, which are innumerable.
3. The watchful providence of God over the church.
4. Another bulwark is God's special presence. God is in a special manner present in his church.
5. The last bulwark unto which all others may be reduced, is the covenant of God: "For this God is our God." *John Owen.*

Verse 14. *This God is our God for ever and ever.* What a portion then is that of the believer! The landlord cannot say of his fields, these are mine for ever and ever. The king cannot say of his crown, this is mine for ever and ever. These possessions shall soon change masters; these possessors shall soon mingle with the dust, and even the graves they shall occupy may not long be theirs; but it is the singular, the supreme happiness of every Christian to say, or have a right to say, "This glorious God with all his divine perfections is my God, for ever and ever, and even death itself shall not separate me from his love." *George Burder.*

Verse 14. *This God is our God.* The people of God are sometime represented as so taken with this apprehension of their peculiar relation to God, that they cannot be content to know, but they proclaim it; nor was it enough the present age should know, but they must have it told the following generation: "Let Mount Zion rejoice, " etc. Mark, "That ye may tell the generation following, *"For this is our God.* See their ostentation of him! This God; *q.d.*, Behold what a God have we! view him well, and take notice how glorious a God he is. And as they glory in the greatness of the God to whom they were related, so they do in the eternity of the relation. "This God is our God *for ever and ever.*" *John Howe.*

Verse 14. God is not only a satisfying portion, filling every crevice of thy soul with the light of joy and comfort; and a sanctifying portion, elevating thy soul to its primitive and original perfection; and a universal portion; not health, or wealth, or friends, or honours, or liberty, or life, or house, or wife, or child, or pardon, or peace, or grace, or glory, or earth, or heaven, but all these, and infinitely more, but also he is an eternal portion. This God would be thy God *for ever and ever.* Oh, sweet word *ever!* thou art the crown of the saints' crown, and the glory of their glory. Their portion is so full that they desire no more; they enjoy variety and plenty of delights above what they are able to ask or think, and want nothing but to have it fixed. May they but possess it in peace without interruption or cessation, they will trample all kingdoms of the earth as dirt under their feet; and lo! thou art the welcome dove to bring this olive branch in thy mouth. *This God is our God for ever and ever.* All the arithmetical figures of days, and months, and years, and ages, are nothing to this infinite cipher *ever*, which, though it stand for nothing in the vulgar account, yet contains all our millions; yea, our millions and millions of millions are less than drops in this ocean *ever.* *George Swinnoek.*

Verse 14. Some expositors have strangely found a difficulty in the last verse, deeming such a profession of personal faith as inappropriate termination for a national song. Even Dr. Delitzsch, a wise and devout interpreter, shares in this notion; going, indeed, so far as to throw out the surmise, that some word must

have been lost from the Hebrew text. To me it seems that the verse, as it stands, is admirably in harmony with the song, and is its crowning beauty. When the Lord does great things for church or nation, he means that all the faithful, however humble their station, should take courage from it, should repose in him fresh confidence, and cling to him with a firmer hope, and say, *This God shall be our God for ever; he will guide us even unto death.* William Binnie.

Verse 14. *Unto death*, or as some explain it, *at death*, i.e., he will save us from it; others, *over death*, beyond it. But the most obvious explanation, and the one most agreeable to usage, is that which makes the phrase mean even to the end of life, or as long as we live. The idea of a future state, though not expressed, is not excluded. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 14. (*last clause*). The last clause is much misunderstood. It is not, "Our guide *unto* death," for the words are, (twm-le wngny), "shall lead us *over* death." Surely it means, "It is he who leads *over death to resurrection*"—over Jordan to Canaan. The (Heb.) is used in Le 15:25, for "*beyond*," "in regard to time, and is not this the sense here? "*Beyond* the time of death"? Till death is to us over? Till we have *stood upon the grace of death*? Yes; he it is who leads us on to this last victory; he swallows up death in victory, and leads us to *trample on death*. And so viewed, we easily discern the beautiful link of thought that joins this Psalm to that which follows. Such is the celebration of *The Mighty One become the glory of Jerusalem.* Andrew A. Bonar.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

All the suggestions under this Psalm except those otherwise designated, are by our beloved friend, Rev. George Rogers, Tutor of the Pastor's College.

Verse 1.

1. *What the church is to God.*

(a) His "*city*:" not a lawless rabble, but a well organised community.

(b) A mountain of holiness, for the display of justifying righteousness, of sanctifying grace.

2. *What God is to the church.*

(a) Its inhabitant. It is *his* city, his mountain. There he is great. There was no room for the whole of God in Paradise, there is no room for him in his law, no room for him in the heaven of angels: in the church only is there room for all his perfections, for a triune Jehovah. Great everywhere, he is peculiarly great here.

(b) The object of its praises. As he is greatest here, so are his praises, and through the universe on this account.

Verse 2.

1. *Was the ancient Zion beautiful for situation?* So is the New Testament church founded upon a rock, upon eternal purpose and grace.

2. *Was it the joy of the whole earth?* So the New Testament church will become.

3. *Was it the special joy of the tribes of Israel* that were almost entirely to the north of Jerusalem? So the church is to the saints.

4. *Was it a royal as well as a holy city?* So is the church. "Yet I have set, "etc.

Verse 3.

1. God is a refuge in his church. The church is a city of refuge, but the refuge is not in its church, but its God.

(a) For sinners from wrath.

(b) For saints from trials and fears.

(c) God is there known as such, known to thousands, not known as such elsewhere. "They that know thy name, "etc.

Verses 4-7.

1. The opposition of worldly powers to the church. "The kings, "etc.

2. The manner in which they are subdued—by their own fears; conscience has persecuted those who have persecuted the church of God. They who have seized the ark of God have been glad to return it with an offering.

3. The completeness of their overthrow, As a fleet of ships of Tarshish, dispersed, broken, and engulfed by the east wind.

Verse 8.

1. God has ever been to his people what he now is; the same *heard* as *seen*.
2. He is now what he ever has been: the same *seen* as *heard*.
3. He will ever be what he now is. "Will establish it for ever."

Verse 9.

1. What are the lovingkindnesses of God? Pity to the wretched, pardon to the penitent, help to the prayerful, comfort to the afflicted, etc.
2. Where are they to be found? "In the midst of, "etc.
 - (a) Here they are revealed.
 - (b) Here they are dispensed.
 - (c) Here they are sought.
 - (d) Here they are enjoyed.

Verse 10. As the name of God, so his praises are—

1. Supreme.
2. Unqualified.
3. Universal.
4. Everlasting.

Verse 10. *Thy right hand*, etc.

1. The justice of omnipotence.
2. Omnipotence controlled by justice.
3. The omnipotence of justice.

Verse 11.

1. The subjects of his peoples' joy. Not mercies merely, but judgments
2. Reasons: (a) Because they are holy—needful to the purity of moral government; (b) Just—needful to vindicate law; (c) Good—needful for the greatest amount of good.

Verse 12.

1. What is to be understood by the preservation and protection of the church?
2. What is meant by searching into, and considering of, these causes and means of the church's preservation?
3. What are those causes and means of the church's preservation, those towers and bulwarks which will not fail?
4. What reason is there why we should thus search into and consider these causes of the church's preservation and protection?
5. What is the testimony which we have to give concerning this matter to the ensuing generation? *John Owen's Sermon.*

Verse 14. (*first clause*). This is the language of a *proprietary* in God: 1. Of an *assured* proprietary—"This God is *our* God." 2. Of a *permanent* proprietary—*for ever and ever*. 3. Of an *exulting* proprietary. *W. Jay.*

Verse 14.

1. The language of discrimination. *This* God. *This* God in Christ, in the church.
2. The language of Faith—*our* God.
3. Of Hope—*For ever and ever*.
4. Of Resignation—*He will be our guide*, etc.

Psalm 49

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. To the Chief Musician, a Psalm for the sons of Korah. This is precisely the same as on former occasions, and no remark is needed.

DIVISION. The poet musician sings, to the accompaniment of his harp, the despicable character of those who trust in their wealth, and so he consoles the oppressed believer. The first four verses are a preface; from Ps 49:5-12 all fear of great oppressors is removed by the remembrance of their end and their folly; Ps 49:13 contains an expression of wonder at the perpetuity of folly; Ps 49:14-15 contrast the ungodly and the righteous in their future; and from Ps 49:16-20 the lesson from the whole is given in an admonitory form. Note the chorus in Ps 49:2,20, and also the two Selahs.

EXPOSITION

Verses 1-4. In these four verses the poet prophet calls universal humanity to listen to his didactic hymn.

Verse 1. *Hear this, all ye people.* All men are concerned in the subject, it is *of* them, and therefore *to* them that the psalmist would speak. It is not a topic which men delight to consider, and therefore he who would instruct them must press them to give ear. Where, as in this case, the theme claims to be wisdom and understanding, attention is very properly demanded; and when the style combines the sententiousness of the proverb with the sweetness of poesy, interest is readily excited. *Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.* "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Men dwelling in all climes are equally concerned in the subject, for the laws of providence are the same in all lands. It is wise for each one to feel I am a man, and therefore everything which concerns mortals has a personal interest to me. We must all appear before the judgment seat, and therefore we all should give earnest heed to holy admonition which may help us to prepare for that dread event. He who refuses to receive instruction by the ear, will not be able to escape receiving destruction by it when the Judge shall say, "Depart, ye cursed."

Verse 2. *Both low and high, rich and poor, together.* Sons of great men, and children of mean men, men of large estate, and ye who pine in poverty, ye are all bidden to hear the inspired minstrel as he touches his harp to a mournful but instructive lay. The low will be encouraged, the high will be warned, the rich will be sobered, the poor consoled, there will be a useful lesson for each if they

are willing to learn it. Our preaching ought to have a voice for all classes, and all should have an ear for it. To suit our word to the rich alone is wicked sycophancy, and to aim only at pleasing the poor is to act the part of a demagogue. Truth may be so spoken as to command the ear of all, and wise men seek to learn that acceptable style. Rich and poor must soon meet together in the grave, they may well be content to meet together now. In the congregation of the dead all differences of rank will be obliterated, they ought not now to be obstructions to united instructions.

Verse 3. *My mouth shall speak of wisdom.* Inspired and therefore lifted beyond himself, the prophet is not praising his own attainments, but extolling the divine Spirit which spoke in him. He knew that the Spirit of truth and wisdom spoke through him. He who is not sure that his matter is good has no right to ask a hearing. *And the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.* The same Spirit who made the ancient seers eloquent, also made them thoughtful. The help of the Holy Ghost was never meant to supersede the use of our own mental powers. The Holy Spirit does not make us speak as Balaam's ass, which merely uttered sounds, but never meditated; but he first leads us to consider and reflect, and then he gives us the tongue of fire to speak with power.

Verse 4. *I will incline mine ear to a parable.* He who would have others hear, begins by hearing himself. As the minstrel leans his ear to his harp, so must the preacher give his whole soul to his ministry. The truth came to the psalmist as a parable, and he endeavoured to unriddle it for popular use; he would not leave the truth in obscurity, but he listened to its voice till he so well understood it as to be able to interpret and translate it into the common language of the multitude. Still of necessity it would remain a problem, and a dark saying to the unenlightened many, but this would not be the songster's fault, for, saith he, *I will open my dark saying upon the harp.* The writer was no mystic, delighting in deep and cloudy things, yet he was not afraid of the most profound topics; he tried to open the treasures of darkness, and to uplift pearls from the deep. To win attention he cast his proverbial philosophy into the form of song, and tuned his harp to the solemn tone of his subject. Let us gather round the minstrel of the King of kings, and hear the Psalm which first was led by the chief musician, as the chorus of the sons of Korah lifted up their voices in the temple.

Verse 5. *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?* The man of God looks calmly forward to dark times when those evils which have dogged his heels shall gain a temporary advantage over him. Iniquitous men, here called in the abstract *iniquity*, lie in wait for the righteous, as serpents that aim at the heels of travellers: the iniquity of our heels is that evil which aims to trip us up or impede us. It was an old

prophecy that the serpent should wound the heel of the woman's seed, and the enemy of our souls is diligent to fulfil that premonition. In some dreary part of our road it may be that evil will wax stronger and bolder, and gaining upon us will openly assail us; those who followed at our heels like a pack of wolves, may perhaps overtake us, and compass us about. What then? Shall we yield to cowardice? Shall we be a prey to their teeth? God forbid. Nay, we will not even fear, for what are these foes? What indeed, but mortal men who shall perish and pass away? There can be no real ground of alarm to the faithful. Their enemies are too insignificant to be worthy of one thrill of fear. Doth not the Lord say to us, "I, even I, am he that comforteth thee; who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?" Scholars have given other renderings of this verse, but we prefer to keep to the authorised version when we can, and in this case we find in it precisely the same meaning which those would give to it who translate *my heels*, by the words "*my supplanters*."

Verse 6. What if the good man's foes be among the great ones of the earth! yet he need not fear them. *They that trust in their wealth.* Poor fools, to be content with such a rotten confidence. When we set our rock in contrast with theirs, it would be folly to be afraid of them. Even though they are loud in their brags, we can afford to smile. What if they glory *and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches?* yet while we glory in our God we are not dismayed by their proud threatenings. Great strength, position, and estate, make wicked men very lofty in their own esteem, and tyrannical towards others; but the heir of heaven is not overawed by their dignity, nor cowed by their haughtiness. He sees the small value of riches, and the helplessness of their owners in the hour of death, and therefore he is not so mean as to be afraid of an ephemera, a moth, a bubble.

Verse 7. *None of them can by any means redeem his brother.* With all their riches, the whole of them put together could not rescue a comrade from the chill grasp of death. They boast of what they will do with us, let them see to themselves. Let them weigh their gold in the scales of death, and see how much they can buy therewith from the worm and the grave. The poor are their equals in this respect; let them love their friend ever so dearly, they cannot *give to God a ransom for him*. A king's ransom would be of no avail, a Monte Rosa of rubies, an America of silver, a world of gold, a sun of diamonds, would all be utterly condemned. O ye boasters, think not to terrify us with your worthless wealth, go ye and intimidate death before ye threaten men in whom is immortality and life.

Verse 8. *For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*

Too great is the price, the purchase is hopeless. For ever must the attempt to redeem a soul with money remain a failure. Death comes and wealth cannot bribe him; hell follows and no golden key can unlock its dungeon. Vain, then, are your threatenings, ye possessors of the yellow clay; your childish toys are despised by men who estimate the value of possessions by the shekel of the sanctuary.

Verse 9. No price could secure for any man *that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.* Mad are men now after gold, what would they be if it could buy the elixir of immortality? Gold is lavished out of the bag to cheat the worm of the poor body by embalming it, or enshrining it in a coffin of lead, but it is a miserable business, a very burlesque and comedy. As for the soul, it is too subtle a thing to be detained when it hears the divine command to soar through tracks unknown. Never, therefore, will we fear those base nibblers at our heels, whose boasted treasure proves to be so powerless to save.

Verse 10. *For he seeth that wise men die.* Every one sees this. The proud persecuting rich man cannot help seeing it. He cannot shut his eyes to the fact that wiser men than he are dying, and that he also, with all his craft, must die. *Likewise the fool and the brutish person perish.* Folly has no immunity from death. Off goes the jester's cap, as well as the student's gown. Jollity cannot laugh off the dying hour; death who visits the university, does not spare the tavern. Thoughtlessness and brutishness meet their end as surely as much care and wasting study. In fact, while the truly wise, so far as this world is concerned, *die*, the fool has a worse lot, for he *perishes*, is blotted out of remembrance, bewailed by none, remembered no more. *And leave their wealth to others.* Not a farthing can they carry with them. Whether heirs male of their own body, lawfully begotten, inherit their estates, or they remain unclaimed, it matters not, their hoardings are no longer theirs; friends may quarrel over their property, or strangers divide it as spoil, they cannot interfere. Ye boasters, hold ye your own, before ye dream of despoiling the sons of the living God. Keep shoes to your own feet in death's dark pilgrimage, ere ye seek to bite our heels.

Verse 11. *Their inward thought is, their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations.* He is very foolish who is more a fool in his inmost thought than he dare to be in his speech. Such rotten fruit, rotten at the core, are worldlings. Down deep in their hearts, though they dare not say so, they fancy that earthly goods are real and enduring. Foolish dreamers! The frequent dilapidation of their castles and manor houses should teach them better, but still they cherish the delusion. They cannot tell the mirage from the true streams of water; they fancy rainbows to be stable, and clouds to be the

everlasting hills. *They call their lands after their own names.* Common enough is this practice. His grounds are made to bear the groundling's name, he might as well write it on the water. Men have even called countries by their own names, but what are they the better for the idle compliment, even if men perpetuate their nomenclature?

Verse 12. *Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not.* He is but a lodger for the hour, and does not stay a night: even when he dwells in marble halls his notice to quit is written out. Eminence is evermore in imminence of peril. The hero of the hour lasts but for an hour. Sceptres fall from the paralysed hands which once grasped them, and coronets slip away from skulls when the life is departed. *He is like the beasts that perish.* He is not like the sheep which are preserved of the Great Shepherd, but like the hunted beast which is doomed to die. He lives a brutish life and dies a brutish death. Wallowing in riches, surfeited with pleasure, he is fatted for the slaughter, and dies like the ox in the shambles. Alas! that so noble a creature should use his life so unworthily, and end it so disgracefully. So far as this world is concerned, wherein does the death of many men differ from the death of a dog? They go down—

"To the vile dust from whence they sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

What room is there, then, for fear to the godly when such natural brute beasts assail them? Should they not in patience possess their souls? We make a break here, because this stanza appears to be the refrain of the song, and as such is repeated in Ps 49:20.

Verse 13. Their vain confidences are not casual aberrations from the path of wisdom, but *their way*, their usual and regular course; their whole life is regulated by such principles. Their life path is essential *folly*. They are fools ingrain. From first to last brutishness is their characteristic, grovelling stupidity the leading trait of their conduct. *Yet their posterity approve their sayings.* Those who follow them in descent follow them in folly, quote their worldly maxims, and accept their mad career as the most prudent mode of life. Why do they not see by their father's failure their father's folly? No, the race transmits its weakness. Grace is not hereditary, but sordid worldliness goes from generation to generation. The race of fools never dies out. No need of missionaries to teach men to be earthworms, they crawl naturally to the dust. *Selah.* Well may the minstrel pause, and bid us muse upon the deep seated madness of the sons of Adam. Take occasion, reader, to reflect upon thine own.

Verse 14. *Like sheep they are laid in the grave.* As dumb driven cattle, they are hurried to their doom, and are penned in within the gates of destruction. As sheep that go whither they are driven, and follow their leader without thought, so these men who have chosen to make this world their all, are urged on by their passions, till they find themselves at their journey's end, that end the depths of Hades. Or if we keep to our own translation, we have the idea of their dying peaceably, and being buried in quiet, only that they may wake up to be ashamed at the last great day. *Death shall feed on them.* Death like a grim shepherd leads them on, and conducts them to the place of their eternal pasturage, where all is barrenness and misery. The righteous are led by the Good Shepherd, but the ungodly have death for their shepherd, and he drives them onward to hell. As the power of death rules them in this world, for they have not passed from death unto life, so the terrors of death shall devour them in the world to come. As grim giants, in old stories, are said to feed on men whom they entice to their caves, so death, the monster, feeds on the flesh and blood of the mighty. *The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.* The poor saints were once the tail, but at the day break they shall be the head. Sinners rule till night fall; their honours wither in the evening, and in the morning they find their position utterly reversed. The sweetest reflection to the upright is that "the morning" here intended begins an endless, changeless, day. What a vexation of spirit to the proud worldling, when the Judge of all the earth holds his morning session, to see the man whom he despised, exalted high in heaven, while he himself is cast away! *And their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.* Whatever of glory the ungodly had shall disappear in the tomb. Form and comeliness shall vanish from them, the worm shall make sad havoc of all their beauty. Even their last dwelling place, the grave, shall not be able to protect the relics committed to it; their bodies shall dissolve, no trace shall remain of all their strong limbs and lofty heads, no vestige of remaining beauty shall be discoverable. The beauty of the righteous is not yet revealed, it waits its manifestations; but all the beauty the wicked will ever have is in full bloom in this life; it will wither, fade, decay, rot, and utterly pass away. Who, then, would envy or fear the proud sinner?

Verse 15. *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.* Forth from that temporary resting place we shall come in due time, quickened by divine energy. Like our risen Head we cannot be holden by the bands of the grave; redemption has emancipated us from the slavery of death. No redemption could man find in riches, but God has found it in the blood of his dear Son. Our Elder Brother has given to God a ransom, and we are the redeemed of the Lord: because of this redemption by price we shall assuredly be redeemed by power out of the hand of the last enemy. *For he shall receive*

me. He shall take me out of the tomb, take me up to heaven. If it is not said of me as of Enoch, "He was not, for God took him, "yet shall I reach the same glorious state. My spirit God will receive, and my body shall sleep in Jesus till, being raised in his image, it shall also be received into glory. How infinitely superior is such a hope to anything which our oppressors can boast! Here is something which will bear meditation, and therefore again let us pause, at the bidding of the musician, who inserts a *Selah*.

Verse 16. In these last verses the psalmist becomes a preacher, and gives admonitory lessons which he has himself gathered from experience. *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich*. Let it not give thee any concern to see the godless prosper. Raise no questions as to divine justice; suffer no foreboding to cloud thy mind. Temporal prosperity is too small a matter to be worth fretting about; let the dogs have their bones, and the swine their draff. *When the glory of his house is increased*. Though the sinner and his family are in great esteem, and stand exceedingly high, never mind; all things will be righted in due time. Only those whose judgment is worthless will esteem men the more because their lands are broader; those who are highly estimated for such unreasonable reasons will find their level ere long, when truth and righteousness come to the fore.

Verse 17. *For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away*. He has but a leasehold of his acres, and death ends his tenure. Through the river of death man must pass naked. Not a rag of all his raiment, not a coin of all his treasure, not a joy of all his honour, can the dying worldling carry with him. Why then fret ourselves about so fleeting a prosperity? *His glory shall not descend after him*. As he goes down, down, down for ever, none of his honours or possessions will follow him. Patents of nobility are invalid in the sepulchre. His worship, his honour, his lordship, and his grace, will alike find their titles ridiculous in the tomb. Hell knows no aristocracy. Your dainty and delicate sinners shall find that eternal burnings have no respect for their affectations and refinements.

Verse 18. *Though while he lived he blessed his soul*. He pronounced himself happy. He had his good things in this life. His chief end and aim were to bless himself. He was charmed with the adulation of flatterers. *Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself*. The generality of men worship success, however it may be gained. The colour of the winning horse is no matter; it is the winner, and that is enough. "Take care of Number One, "is the world's proverbial philosophy, and he who gives good heed to it is "a clever fellow, ""a fine man of business, ""a shrewd common sense tradesman, ""a man with his head put on the right way." Get money, and you will be "respectable, ""a

substantial man, "and your house will be "an eminent firm in the city, "or "one of the best county families." To do good wins fame in heaven, but to do good *to yourself* is the prudent thing among men of the world. Yet not a whisper of worldly congratulation can follow the departing millionaire; they say he died worth a mint of money, but what charm has that fact to the dull cold ear of death? The banker rots as fast as the shoeblack, and the peer becomes as putrid as the pauper. Alas! poor wealth, thou art but the rainbow colouring of the bubble, the tint which yellows the morning mist, but adds not substance to it.

Verse 19. *He shall go to the generation of his fathers.* Where the former generations lie, the present shall also slumber. The sires beckon to their sons to come to the same land of forgetfulness. Mortal fathers beget not immortal children. As our ancestors have departed, so also must we. *They shall never see light.* To this upper region the dead worldling shall never return again to possess his estates, and enjoy his dignities. Among the dead he must lie in the thick darkness, where no joy or hope can come to him. Of all his treasures there remains not enough to furnish him one poor candle; the blaze of his glory is out for ever, and not a spark remains to cheer him. How then can we look with fear or envy upon a wretch doomed to such unhappiness?

Verse 20. The song ends with the refrain, *Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.* Understanding differences men from animals, but if they will not follow the highest wisdom, and like beasts find their all in this life, then their end shall be as mean and dishonourable as that of beasts slain in the chase, or killed in the shambles. From the loftiest elevation of worldly honour to the uttermost depths of death is but a step. Saddest of all is the reflection, that though men are like beasts in all the degradation of perishing, yet not in the rest which animal perishing secures, for, alas! it is written, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." So ends the minstrel's lay. Comforting as the theme is to the righteous, it is full of warning to the worldly. Hear ye it, O ye rich and poor. Give ear to it, ye nations of the earth.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. Strange it is that two Psalms so near together, as this and the forty-fifth should, and should alone imitate, or be the forerunners of, two works of David's son; this—Ecclesiastes, the former—the Canticles. *J. M. Neale.*

Verse 2. In this Psalm David, as it were, summons and divides mankind. In the first verse he summons: "*Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of*

the world." In the second verse he divides: *Both low and high, rich and poor, together.* The word in the Hebrew for *high* is (vya ynb), *bene ish, sons of Ish*, and the word for *low* is (Mda ynb) *bene Adam, sons of Adam*. If we should translate the text directly, according to the letter, the words must run, *sons of men and sons of men*; for, sons of *Adam* and sons of *Ish* are both translated *sons of men*. Yet when they are set together in a way of opposition, the one signifieth *low* and the other *high*; and so our translators render it according to the sense, not sons of men and sons of men, but *low* and *high*. Junius translates to this sense, though in more words, as well they who are born of mean men, as they who are born of the honourable. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 4. *I will incline mine ear to a parable*, i.e, I will diligently attend, that I may not sing anything ungracefully; a metaphor taken from musicians who bring their ear close to the harp, that they may ascertain the harmony of the sound. *Victorinus Bythner*.

Verse 5. *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?* Those that are full of years are approaching the nearer to their happiness. They have finished their voyage, and now are in sight of the haven. Nature's provision is spent, her stock is exhausted, and now the good man doth not so much descend as fall into the grave, and from thence he rises to heaven and eternal bliss. And shall he be disturbed at this? shall he be afraid to be made happy? If I mistake not, this is the meaning of the psalmist's words. They are generally interpreted concerning *his ways* in general, but they seem to me to refer particularly to the calamity which his old age was incident to: for *the days of evil* are old age, and are so called by the wise man Ec 12:1; and as the *heel* is the extreme part of the body, so it is here applied to the last part of man's life, his declining age; and *iniquity* (as the word is sometimes used among the Hebrews) signifies here penal evil, and denotes the infirmities and decays of the concluding part of a man's life. So that the true meaning of the psalmist's words is this—I will not now in my last days be dejected with fear and trouble of mind, for I am coming towards my happiness, my declining years shall deliver me up to death, and that shall consign me to everlasting life. This certainly is matter of joy rather than of fear. For this reason I account my last days to be the most eligible part of my whole life. *John Edwards, D.D.* (1637-1716), in "*The Theologia Reformata*."

Verse 5. *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?* That is, when my sins or failings in what I have done, come to my remembrance, or are chastened upon me. Every man's heels hath some iniquity: as we shall have some dirt cleaving to our heels while we

walk in a dirty world, so there is some dirt, some defilement, upon all our actions, which we may call, *the iniquity of our heel*. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 5. *When the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?* With Bishop Lowth, the celebrated Michaelis, Bishop Hare, and a host of other critics, I decidedly incline to the idea, that (ybqe), rendered "*my heels*" is to be regarded as the present participle of the verb (bqe), *to supplant, to act deceitfully, to deceive, to hold one by the heel*, etc., etc. If this be correct, then the proper translation will be:—

Wherefore should I fear in the days of adversity,
The iniquity of my supplanters who surround me?
The Syriac and Arabic read, as does also Dr. Kennicott:
Why should I fear in the evil day,
When the iniquity of my enemies compasses me about? *John Morison*.

Verses 5-9.

Why should I fear the evil hour,
When ruthless foes in ambush lie,
Who revel in their pride of power,
And on their hoarded wealth rely?
A brother's ransom who can pay,
Or alter God's eternal doom?
What hand can wrest from death his prey,
Its banquet from the rotten tomb?

From "The Psalter, or Psalms of David, in English verse. By a member of the University of Cambridge." (*Benjamin Hall Kennedy, D.D.*) 1860.

Verse 6. They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches. Here we have the rich man trusting and boasting; surely this is a very confident trusting which issues itself into boasting! That man is ascended to the highest step of faith in God, who makes his boast of God; such faith have they in fine gold who boast in it. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 6. They that trust in their wealth. "THE COVETOUS MAN'S SOLILOQUY." Believe me, the times are hard and dangerous; charity is grown cold, and friends uncomfortable; an empty purse is full of sorrow, and hollow bags make a heavy heart. Poverty is a civil pestilence, which frights away both friends and kindred, and leaves us to a "Lord, have mercy upon us." It is a sickness very catching and infectious, and more commonly abhorred than

cured. The best antidote against it is Angelica and providence, and the best cordial is *aurum potabile*. Gold taking fasting is an approved sovereign. Debts are ill humours, and turn at last to dangerous obstructions. Lending is mere consumption of the radical humour, which, if consumed, brings a patient to nothing. Let others trust to courtiers' promises, to friends' performances, to princes' favours; give me a toy called gold, give me a thing called money. O blessed Mammon, how extremely sweet is thy all commanding presence to my thriving soul! In banishment thou art my dear companion; in captivity thou art my precious ransom; in trouble and vexation thou art my dainty rest; in sickness thou art my health; in grief my only joy; in all extremity my only trust. Virtue must veil to thee; nay, grace itself, not relished with thy sweetness, would even displease the righteous palates of the sons of men. Come, then, my soul, advise, contrive, project; go, compass sea and land; leave no exploit untried, no path untrod, no time unspent; afford thine eyes no sleep, thy head no rest; neglect thy ravenous belly, unclothe thy back; deceive, betray, swear, and forswear, to compass such a friend. If thou be base in birth, it will make thee honourable; if weak in power, it will make thee formidable. Are thy friends few? It will make them numerous. Is thy cause bad? It will gain thee advocates. True, wisdom is an excellent help, in case it bend this way; and learning is a genteel ornament, if not too chargeable; yet, by your leave, they are but estates for the term of life: but everlasting gold, if well advantaged, will not only bless thy days, but thy surviving children from generation to generation. Come, come, let others fill their brains with dear bought wit, turn their pence into expensive charity, and store their bosoms with unprofitable piety; let them lose all to save their imaginary consciences, and beggar themselves at home to be thought honest abroad: fill thou thy bags and barns, and lay up for many years, and take thy rest. *Francis Quarles, in "The Covetous Man's Care."*

Verse 6. The form of money agreeth well with the condition of it; for it is stamped round, because it is so apt to run from a man. Fire, thieves, waters, and infinite causes there are of consuming riches, and impoverishing their possessors, though they have even millions and mountains of gold; but suppose that contrary to their nature they stay by a man, yet cannot *he* stay by them, but must leave them in spite of his teeth, as the psalmist saith Ps 49:17, "The rich man shall take away nothing when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow after him." Thus death makes a violent divorce between the rich man and his goods, when it is said unto him, "Thou fool, this night shall they take away thy soul." The rich man sleeps (saith Job very elegantly), and when he openeth his eyes there is nothing. It fares with a rich man at his death, as it doth with a sleeping man when he wakes out of his dream. A man that dreams of the finding or

fruition of some rich bounty is wonderful glad, yet when he awaketh he findeth nothing, but seeth it was only a dream, and he is sorry; so the rich man seemed in the time of his life, to have somewhat, but in the days of his death all vanisheth like the idea of a dream, and it vexes him. *J. D., in "The Threefold Resolution,"* 1608.

Verse 6. Who knocks more boldly at heaven gate to be let in than they whom Christ will reject as workers of iniquity? Oh, what delusion is this! Caligula never made himself more ridiculous than when he would be honoured as a God, while he lived more like a devil. Before you would have others take you for Christians, for God's sake prove yourselves men and not beasts, as you do by your brutish lives. Talk not of your hopes of salvation so long as the marks of damnation are seen upon your flagitious lives. If the way to heaven were thus easy, I promise you the saints in all ages have been much overseen, to take so great pains in mortifying their lusts, in denying to satisfy their sensual appetite. To what purpose did they make so much waste of their sweat in their zealous serving God? and of their tears that they could serve him no better, if they might have gone to heaven as these men hope to do? That friar was far more sound in his judgment in this point, who, preaching at Rome one Lent, when some cardinals and many other great ones were present, began his sermon thus abruptly and ironically, Saint Peter was a fool, Saint Paul was a fool, and all the primitive Christians were fools; for they thought the way to heaven was by prayers and tears, watchings and fastings, severities of mortification, and denying the pomp and glory of this world; whereas you here in Rome spend your time in balls and masks, live in pomp and pride, lust and luxury, and yet count yourselves good Christians, and hope to be saved; but at last you will prove the fools, and they will be found to have been the wise men. *William Gurnall's Funeral Sermon for Lady Mary Vere,* 1671.

Verses 6-10. David speaks of some *that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches*. Rich men can do great things, but here is a thing that they cannot do: *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him*. From what cannot a rich man redeem his brother? It is true of spiritual redemption; yea, that is furthest out of the rich man's reach, money will not do it: "We are not redeemed with corrupt things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God." 1Pe 1:18-19. But the psalmist speaks of a lower redemption, to which all the riches of man cannot reach: *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul* (that is, of their person from the grave), *is precious, and it ceaseth for ever*. And that he speaks of their redemption from the grave, is more clearly

expressed in Ps 49:9: *That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.* Jesus Christ did not redeem us that we should live for ever, and not see corruption. It was the privilege of Jesus Christ the Redeemer not to see corruption; but Jesus Christ hath not redeemed us that we should not see corruption. He hath redeemed us that we should live for ever in heaven, but he hath not redeemed us from corruption, that we should live for ever on earth, or not see corruption in the grave; for, as it is said in Ps 49:10 of the Psalm, we see *that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others;* as if he had said, Neither the one nor the other sort of men could make this use or improvement of their wealth, to deliver themselves from going to the grave, for if they could they would have laid all out on that purchase; but they could not do it, therefore, *they leave their wealth to others.* *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 7. *None of them can by any means redeem his brother,* etc. Some animals devoted to God could be redeemed at a price, but no price could be assigned to the ransom of a soul. That such a ransom was to be provided, the faith of the church had always anticipated: "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Ps 130:8. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 8. *For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.* In this judgment tears will not prevail, prayers will not be heard, promises will not be admitted, repentance will be too late, and as for riches, honourable titles, sceptres, and diadems, these will profit much less, and the inquisition shall be so curious and diligent, that not one light thought, not one idle word (not repented of in thy life past) shall be forgotten, for truth itself hath said, not in jest, but in earnest, of every idle word which men have spoken, they shall give an account in the day of judgment. Oh, how many which now sin with great delight, yea, even with greediness (as if we served a god of wood or of stone which seeth nothing nor can do nothing) will be then astonished, ashamed, and silent. Then shall the days of thy mirth be ended, and thou shalt be overwhelmed with everlasting darkness, and instead of thy pleasures thou shalt have everlasting torments. *Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 8. *For it cost more to redeem their souls: so that he must let that alone forever.* *Prayer book Version.*

Verse 8. *It ceaseth for ever.* That is, wealth for ever comes short of the power necessary to accomplish this. It has always been insufficient; it always *will* be. There is no hope that it *ever* will be sufficient, that by any increase in the amount, or by any change in the conditions of the bargain, property or riches can avail for this. The whole matter is perfectly *hopeless* as to the power of

wealth is saving one human being from the grave. It must always *fail* in saving a man from death. The word rendered *ceaseth*—(ldx), *khadal*, means *to leave off, to desist, to fail*. Ge 11:8 Ex 9:34 Isa 2:22. *Albert Barnes*.

Verse 11. *Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever.*

This is the interpretation of our actions, when we do not make God our portion, but trust in the abundance of our riches; this is our *inward thought*, the saying of our heart, Ye are my god. We do in effect say, Thou art my confidence, my hope, and my joy, and will stand by me when all things cease and fail, and wilt not suffer me to want, or to be wrong, as long as you last: these are the secret speeches of our hearts. Christians! many may (orator like), declaim against the vanity of the creature, and speak as basely of money as others do, and say, We know it is but a little refined earth; but their hearts close with it, they are loathe to part with it for God's sake, or upon God's declared will. As he that speaketh good words of God, is not said to trust in God; so speaking bad words of worldly riches doth not exempt us from trusting them. There is a difference between declaiming as an orator, and acting like a Christian. *Thomas Manton*.

Verse 11. *Their inward thought.* If *good* thoughts be thy *deep* thoughts, if, as we say, the best be at the bottom, thy thoughts are then right, and thou art righteous; for as the deep thoughts of worldlings are worldly thoughts, and the deep thoughts of wicked men are wicked thoughts, so the deep thoughts of good men are good thoughts. It is a notable observation of the Holy Ghost's concerning worldly men, that *their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever*, etc. Why? is there any thought that is not an *inward* thought? No, but the meaning is, though they have some floating thoughts of their mortality, and the vanity and transitoriness of all worldly things, swimming, as it were, on the top; yet they do not suffer such thoughts *to sink into their hearts*, or to go to the bottom; but the thoughts that lodge there are such as his, who is said by our Saviour to have thought within himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Lu 12:19. Note the phrase, "he thought within himself." There are other kinds of thoughts that sometimes knock at the door of the worldling's heart, nay, sometimes look in at his windows, as Paul's sermon began to press in upon Felix his heart, and to set him trembling; but there are other *thoughts within*, which if they cannot keep good thoughts quite out, they will keep them off from making any due or deep impression upon the heart. Now, these thoughts that nestle themselves as it were at the very heart roots, to keep others out from reaching thither, these *deep thoughts* are they which the Scriptures call the *inward thoughts*, according to that of the psalmist Ps 64:6, "The inward thought

of every one of them and the heart, is deep." *Faithful Teat in "Right Thoughts the Righteous man's Evidence,"* 1666.

Verse 11. *They call their lands after their own names.* God makes fools of them, for how few have you that go beyond the third generation? How few houses have you that the child or the grandchild can say, "This was my grandfather's and my great grandfather's"? How few houses have you that those that are now in them can say, "My ancestor dwelt here, and these were his lands"? Go over a whole country, few can say so. Men when they build, together with building in the earth they build castles in the air; they have conceits. Now I build for my child, and for my child's child. God crosses them. Either they have no posterity, or by a thousand things that fall out in the world, it falls out otherwise. The time is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away; that is, the buildings pass away, the owning passeth away, all things here pass away; and, therefore, buy as if you possessed not, buy, so as we neglect not the best possession in heaven, and so possess these things, as being not possessed and commanded of them. *Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 11. Mr. A was a wealthy farmer in Massachusetts, about sixty years of age, and it had been his ruling, and almost only passion in life to acquire property. His neighbour B owned a small farm, which came too near the centre of A's extended domain, was quite a blot in his prospect, destroyed the regularity of his lands, and on the whole it was really necessary, in his opinion, that he should add it to his other property. B became embarrassed, and was sued; judgments were obtained, and executions issued. A now thought he should obtain the land, but one execution after another was arranged, and finally the debt was paid off without selling the land. When A heard of the payment of the last execution, which put an end to his hopes of obtaining the land, he exclaimed, "Well, B is an old man, and cannot live long, and when he dies I can buy the lot." B was fifty-eight, A was sixty! Reader, do you ever expect to die? *K. Arvine's Cyclopaedia of Moral and Religious Anecdotes.*

Verse 11. I have purchased, saith one, such lands, and I have got so good a title to them, that certainly they will remain mine and my heirs for ever; never considering how all things here below are subject to ebbings and flowings, to turns and vicissitudes every day. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 11. The fleeting nature of all earthly possessions is well illustrated in the life of William Beckford, and the unenduring character of gorgeous fabrics in the ruin of his famous Babel, Fonthill Abbey. Byron sang of Beckford's palace in Spain, in language most applicable to Fonthill:

"There, too, thou Vathek! England's wealthiest son—
 Once formed thy Paradise, as not aware
 When wanton wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
 Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun.
 Here didst thou dwell; here schemes of pleasure plan,
 Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow.
 But now, as if a thing unblessed by man,
 Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
 Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow,
 To halls deserted, portals gaping wide;
 Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
 Vain are the pleasures on earth supplied,
 Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide!" *C. H. S.*

Verses 11-12. *"They call their GROUNDS after their names. But the GROUNDLING, in the midst of splendour, endureth not."* In Ps 49:11, we have (twmra), *"grounds."* In Ps 49:12, it is (Mra), *"groundling,"* "with a designed iteration and play upon the word; for want of an attention to which the passage has not been fully understood. *John Mason Good.*

Verse 12. *Man being in honour abideth not.* The Rabbins read it thus: "Adam being in honour, *lodged not one night.*" The Hebrew word for *abide* signifies "to stay or lodge all night." Adam, then, it seems, did not take up one night's lodging in Paradise. *Thomas Watson's Body of Divinity.*

Verse 13. *This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings.* Master Baxter speaks very well of this in his "Saints Everlasting Rest," which is a very choice book. The gentry teach their children to follow pleasure, and the commonalty their children to follow profit, and young ones are ready to follow old ones. *This their way is their folly.* The very heathens condemn this, and yet Christians mind it not. Crates the philosopher said, that if possible he might, he would willingly mount to the highest place of the city, and there cry aloud in this manner, "What mean you, my masters, and whither run you headlong? carking and caring all that ever you can, to gather goods and make riches as you do, whiles in the meantime you make little or no reckoning at all of your children, unto whom you are to leave all your riches? Do not most care more for the wealth of their children's outward man, than for the health of their inward man?" *J. Votier's Survey of Effectual Calling, 1652.*

Verse 13. *This their way is their folly.* The folly of man seldom appears more than in being very busy about nothing, in making a great cry where there is little wool; like that empty fellow that showed himself to Alexander—having

spent much time, and taken much pains at it beforehand—and boasted that he could throw a pea through a little hole, expecting a great reward; but the king gave him only a bushel of peas, for a recompense suitable to his diligent negligence, or his busy idleness. Things that are vain and empty are unworthy of our care and industry. The man that by hard labour and hazard of his life did climb up to the top of the steeple to set an egg on end, was deservedly the object of pity and laughter. We shall think him little better than mad that should make as great a fire for the roasting of an egg as for the roasting of an ox.

George Swinnock.

Verse 13. *Their folly: yet their posterity approve.* Dr. Leifchild, in his "*Remarkable Facts*," records the following incident, of a person of property, who had been accustomed regularly to attend his ministry, but who had always manifested a covetous disposition: "I was sent for to offer to him the consolation of religion as he lay upon his dying bed. What was my surprise, after having conversed and prayed with him, to find that he was unwilling to take my hand, muttering that he knew that he had not done what was right in reference to the support and furtherance of religion, but intended to amend in that respect. He then requested me to say what I thought would become of him. How could I reply, but by exhorting him to repent, and relinquishing all further thoughts of a worldly nature, to betake himself to the sacrifice and mediation of the Son of God for pardon, safety, and salvation in that world which he was to all appearance soon about to enter. He gazed at me with a look of disappointment. Upon a hint being given me to inquire into his thought at that moment, I questioned him very pointedly, and to my astonishment and horror, he reluctantly disclosed to me the fact that while thus seemingly about to breathe his last, his hands were under the bed clothes grasping the keys of his cabinet and treasures, lest they should be taken from him! Soon after he departed this life, and there was, alas! reason to fear that, together with his property, he had transmitted somewhat of his fatal passion to those who survived him. It was distressing to me to reflect that a hearer of mine should quit this world with his fingers stiffened in death around the keys of his treasures. How strong, how terrible, was the ruling passion in the death of this man!"

Verse 14. *Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling, or as we put in the margin, The grave being an habitation to every one of them, shall consume their beauty.* Some may object, Is not this true of godly men too? are not they thus handled by death and the grave? doth not death feed on them? and doth not the grave

consume their beauty? I answer, Though it doth, yet it hath not to feed upon, nor consume them, as it feeds upon and consumes wicked men. For the psalmist speaks here of death as it were triumphing over the wicked, whereas the godly triumph over death. For, first, he saith, The wicked are *laid in the grave like sheep*: they lived like *wolves* or *lions*, but they are laid in the grave like *sheep*. If it be asked, Why *like sheep*? I answer, not for the innocency of their lives, but for their impotency in death; as if it had been said, when once death took them in hand to lay them in the grave, they could make no more resistance than a sheep can against a lion or a wolf. And when death hath thus laid them in the grave, then secondly, saith the psalmist, *Death shall feed on them*, as a lion doth upon a sheep, or any wild beast upon his prey, which is a further degree of death's triumph over the wicked. And, thirdly, *Their beauty shall consume in the grave*, that is, all their bodily and natural beauty (and this is all the beauty which they have) shall consume in the grave, whereas the godly have a beauty (and they count it their only beauty) which the grave cannot consume, and that is the beauty of their graces, the beauty of holiness, the spiritual beauty of the inner man, yea, and the spiritual beauty of their outward holy actings shall not consume in the grave; for, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Re 19:13. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 14. *Death shall feed on them*: rather, *Death shall be their shepherd*. (*Sept.*) At the end of the foregoing Psalm, the psalmist had said in the name of his people, that, "God is our God, for ever and ever; he will lead us as a shepherd over death," and here he takes up the same pastoral figure, and contrasts with their case the case of the proud and prosperous worldly men, who trust in their earthly riches and power. *They will not* be led in safety, under the pastoral care of God, *over death*. No; *death* itself will be *their Shepherd*, and the grave will be their sheepfold; where they will be laid together like sheep in a pen. As Augustine says, "Death is the shepherd of the infidel. Life (*i.e.*, Christ) is the Shepherd of the faithful." "*In inferno sunt oves quibus pastor Mors est; in caelo sunt oves quibus pastor Vita est.*" And so Keble

Even as a flock arrayed are they
For the dark grave; Death guides their way,
Death is their Shepherd now.
—*Christopher Wordsworth*.

Verse 14. *In the morning*, that is, saith Dathe, in the *time of judgment*. He thinks there is here an allusion to the usual time of holding courts of justice, which was in the morning. See Ps 73:14 101:8 Jer 21:12. *Editorial note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 14. *Their beauty shall consume in the grave,* And now if we do but consider a little of the tombs and sepulchres of princes and noblemen, whose glory and majesty we have seen when they lived here on earth, and do behold the horrible forms and shapes which they now have, shall we not cry out as men amazed, Is this that glory? Is this that highness and excellency? Whither now are the degrees of their waiting servants gone? Where are their ornaments and jewels? Where is their pomp, their delicacy and niceness? All these things are vanished away like the smoke, and there is now nothing left but dust, horror, and stink. The soul being dissolved, there lieth upon the ground not a human body, but a dead carcase without life, without sense, without strength, and so fearful to look upon, that the sight thereof may hardly be endures. To be sure, it is a little better (as touching the substance) than the body of a horse, or a dog, which lieth dead in the fields, and all that pass by stop their noses and make haste away, that they be not annoyed with the sight and stink thereof. Such is man's body now become; yea, and though it were the body of a monarch, emperor, or a king. Where is that majesty, that excellency, that authority which he had aforetime when all men trembled to behold it, and might not come in presence thereof without all reverence and obeisance? what are all those things become? were they a dream or shadow? After those things the funeral is prepared, the which is all that men can carry with them, of all their riches and kingdom, and this also they should not have, if in their lifetime they did not appoint it for their dignity and honour. For the prophet David saith truly Ps 49:16, *"Be not thou afraid though one be made rich, or, if the glory of his house be increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away with him, neither shall his pomp follow him."* Thomas Tymme.

Verse 14. When we look to a charnel-house, and take a view of the grave, what amazing and dismal scenes present themselves! How many great and important images appear! Distracting horrors strike our imagination, and hideous sounds of diseases, destruction, and death, with all their woeful and black train, terrify us. Ah! the melancholy confused heap of the ruins of mankind, what a terrible carnage is made of the human race! and what a solemn and awful theatre of mortality, covered with the disordered remains of our fellow creatures, presents itself to our minds! There lie the bones of a proud monarch, who fancied himself a little god, mingled with the ashes of his poorest subjects! Death seized him in the height of his vanity, he was just returning from a conquest, and his haughty mind was swelled with his power and greatness, when one of these fatal arrows pierced his heart, and at once finished all his perishing thoughts and contrivances, then the dream of glory vanished, and all his empire was confined to the grave. Look how pale that victorious general appears, how dead, and cold, and lifeless these arms that were once accustomed to war; see if

you can discern any difference betwixt his dust and that of the most despicable slave. Yonder, a numerous army, once fierce and resolute, whose conquests were rapid as lightning, and made all the nations to shake for fear of them, are now so weak that they lie a prey, exposed to the meanest animals, the loathsome worms, who crawl in triumph over them, and insult their decayed ruins. There is a body that was so much doted on, and solicitously cared for, and the beauty and shape whereof were so foolishly admired, now noisome and rotten, nothing but vermin are now fond of it, so affecting a change hath death made upon it. Look, next to this, upon the inglorious ashes of a rich, covetous wretch, whose soul was glued to this world, and hugged itself in its treasures; with what mighty throes and convulsions did death tear him from this earth! How did his hands cling to his gold! with what vehement desires did he fasten on his silver, all of them weak and fruitless! Look now if riches saved him in that day, if you can perceive any of his useless treasures lying beside him in the grave, or if the glory of his house have descended after him! Yonder, an ambitious statesman, his rotten bones are scarce to be discerned: how did he applaud his artful schemes! how securely did he think them laid, and flattered himself with the hopes of an established greatness! but death stepped in, blew them all up at once; this grave is the whole result of his counsels. And lo, there, what horrid and suffocating stink ascends from these many hellish sacrifices of lust and impurity, who wasted their strength in debauch, and carried down with them nothing but the shame of beastly pleasures to the grave. But there is no end to the corpses, nor can we survey this terrible field of death's conquests.

William Dunlop.

Verse 15. (*last clause*). *For he shall take me.* This short half verse is, as Bottcher remarks, the more weighty, from its very shortness. The same expression occurs again, Ps 73:24, "Thou shalt take me," the original of both being Ge 5:24, where it is used of the translation of Enoch, "He was not, for God *took* him." *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 17. *For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away.* The form of money agrees well with the condition of it; it is stamped round, because it is so apt to run away. Could we be rich so long as we live, yet that were uncertain enough for life itself is but a dream, a shadow, but a dream of a shadow. (Augustine.) Rich men are but like hailstones; they make a noise in the world, as the other rattle on the tiles of a house; down they fall, lie still, and melt away. So that if riches could stay by a man, yet he cannot stay by them. Spite of his teeth, *he shall carry away nothing when he dies.* Life and goods are both in a vessel, both cast away at once; yea, of the two, life hath the more likelihood of continuance. Let it fly never so fast away, riches have eagles' wings, and will

outfly it. There be thieves in the highways, that will take our moneys and spare our lives. In our penal laws, there be not so many ways to forfeit our lives as our goods. Rich Job lived to see himself poor to a proverb. How many in this city reputed rich, yet have broken for thousands! There are innumerable ways to be poor; a fire, a thief, a false servant, suretyship, trusting of bad customers, an unfaithful factor, a pirate, an unskilful pilot, hath brought rich men to poverty. One gale of wind is able to make merchants rich or beggars. Man's life is like the banks of a river, his temporal estate is the stream: time will moulder away the banks, but the stream stays not for that, it glides away continually. Life is the tree, riches are the fruit, or rather the leaves; the leaves will fall, the fruit is plucked, and yet the tree stands. Some write of the pine tree, that if the bark be pulled off, it lasts long; being on it rots. If the worldling's bark were stripped off, he might perhaps live the longer, there is great hope he would live the better. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 17. *He shall carry nothing away.* It is with us in this world, as it was in the Jewish fields and vineyards: *pluck and eat* they might what they would while they were there; but they might not pocket or put up ought to carry with them. De 23:24. *Thomas Gataker.*

Verse 17. *He shall carry nothing away.* "He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly." Job 20:15.

Verse 17. *Descend.* Death takes the sinner by the throat, and "hauls him down stairs to the grave." The indulgence in any sinful propensity has this downward, deathly tendency. Every lust, whether for riches or honours, for gambling, wine or women, leads the deluded wretched votary step by step to the chambers of death. There is no hope in the dread prospect; trouble and anguish possess the spirit. Hast thou escaped, O my soul, from the net of the infernal fowler? Never forget that it is as a brand *snatched* from the burning. Oh, to grace how great a debtor! *George Offor's note in "The Works of John Bunyan."*

Verse 17. You will carry none of your riches, fool, to the waters of Acheron. You will be ferried over quite naked in the infernal boat. —*Propertius.*

Verse 18. How foolish is it to account thyself a better man than another, only because thy dunghill is a little bigger than his! These things are not at all to be reckoned into the value and worth of a man; they are all without thee, and concern thee no more than fine clothes do the health or strength of the body. It is wealth, indeed, that makes all the noise and bustle in the world, and challengeth all the respect and honour to itself; and the ignorant vulgar, whose eyes are dazzled with pomp and bravery, pay it with a stupid and astonished

reverence. Yet know, that it is but thy silks and velvet, thy lands, or thy retinue and servants, they venerate, not thee: and if thou thinkest otherwise, thou art as justly ridiculous as that ass in the apologue, that grew very gravely proud, and took state, when the people fell prostrate before him, adoring, not him, but to the idol he carried. *Ezekiel Hopkins.*

Verse 20. *Like the beasts that perish.* My lords, it is no wonder at all, if men that affect beastly pleasures, and dote upon perishing honours, become *like the beasts that perish*. It is no miracle if he that lives like a beast dies like a beast. Take a man that hath lived like the fool in the gospel, and tell me, what hath this man done for his immortal soul more than a beast doth for its perishing soul? Soul, soul, cease from care, eat, drink, and take thine ease; this is the constant ditty of most men in honour: they have studied clothes and victuals, titles and offices, ways of gain and pleasure. Am I not yet at highest? They have, it may be, studied the black art of flattery and treachery; they understand the humour of the times, the compliances and dependences of this and other statesman, the projects of divers princes abroad, and the main design here at home. Is this all? Why, then be it known unto you, that the men of this strain have made no better provision for their precious souls, than if they had the soul, the vanishing soul of a beast within them; and certainly, if we were to judge of the substance of men's souls by their unworthy and sensual conversation, we might easily fall into that heresy, that dangerous dream of some who conceive that their souls are mortal. *Francis Cheynell, in a Sermon entitled, "The Man of Honour, "... preached before the Lords of Parliament, 1645.*

Verse 20. *Like the beasts that perish.* Sin is both *formaliter* and *effective* vile. As it is so in itself, so it has made man vile. No creature so debased as man, being in this respect become viler than any creature. There is no such depravation in the nature of any creature, except in the diabolical nature. No creature ever razed God's image out of its nature, but only man. There is no aversions to the will of God, no inclination to what offends him, in any creature on earth but man. Man, then, who was once the glory of the creation, is become the vilest of all creatures, for that is vilest which is most contrary to the infinite glory, but so is our nature, "Man being in honour, abideth not, "is now *like the beast that perish*; nay, worse than they, if the greatest evil can make him worse. Man was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory, advanced to be lord and governor of all the works of his hands; and all creatures in this world were put under his feet. Ps 8:5-6. But by this natural corruption he that was but a little lower than the angels is now something below the beasts. He was to have dominion, but is made baser than those over whom he rules. They

were put under his feet, but now he is as low as they. This is the sad issue of natural corruption. *David Clarkson.*

Verse 20. *Like the beasts.* Man is so much a beast, that he cannot know himself to be one till God teach him. And we never learn to be men till we have learned that we were beasts...It is not said he is like this or that beast, but *he is like the beasts that perish.* Take any beast, or all beasts, the worst of beasts, he is the picture of them all, and he daily exemplifies the vilest of their qualities in his own. *Joseph Caryl.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 2.

1. The common needs of rich and poor men.
2. The common privileges of rich and poor saints.
3. Their common service.
4. Their common heaven.

Verse 3. The deep things of God are intended,

1. To exercise our minds to understand them.
2. To try our faith by believing them—"incline" implies a submissive mind.
3. To excite our joy as we grasp them—"upon the harp."
4. To employ our faculties in explaining them to others.

Verse 5.

1. The effects of our sin remain—(a) In ourselves, (b) In others.
2. In a time of conviction they *compass us about*: better to do so in this life, than to haunt us as ghosts for ever.
3. When they are pardoned we have nothing to fear. *G.R.*

Verse 7.

1. *Implied.* The soul needs redeeming.
2. *Denied.* Wealth, power, learning, none can redeem.

3. *Supplied*—a ransom by Jesus.
4. *Applied*—by the Spirit to our actual deliverance.

Verse 12. (*last clause*). Wherein the ungodly are like beasts, and wherein different.

Verse 12. Here is a twofold thwarting or crossing of the purposes of the ungodly worldling.

1. The first is, *he shall not be that which he ever wished to be*: he shall not continue in honour.
2. The other is this, *he shall be that which he never desired to be*: he shall be like the beasts that die. He shall miss of that which he sought for, and he shall have that which he looked not for. —*S. Hieron.*

Verse 13.

1. In secular things men imitate the *wisdom* of others.
2. In spiritual things they imitate *their folly*. *G. R.*

Verse 14.

1. In proportion to the prosperity of the ungodly here, will be their misery hereafter: as sheep from the fat pasture led to the slaughterhouse.
2. In proportion to the luxury here, will be their corruption hereafter—*Death shall feed on them*: they have become well fed for death to feed on them.
3. In proportion to their dignity here, will be their degradation hereafter—*The upright shall have*, etc. Oh, what a contrast between the rich man and Lazarus then!
4. In proportion to their beauty here, will be their deformity hereafter. "Art thou become like one of us?" *G. R.*

Verse 14. Sheep, how far they image the wicked.

Verse 14. *In the morning*. See the various Biblical prophecies of what will happen "in the morning."

Verse 15.

1. *Return* to the dust I shall.
2. *Redeem* from the dust he will.
3. *Receive* into heaven he will.
4. *Rejoice* for ever I shall.

Verse 17. The loaded and unloaded sinner.

Verse 20.

1. Men of spiritual understanding without worldly honour are higher than the angels of God in heaven.
2. Men in worldly honour without the true wisdom are worse than the beasts that perish. *G. R.*

Psalm 50

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. A Psalm of Asaph. This is the first of the Psalms of Asaph, but whether the production of that eminent musician, or merely dedicated to him, we cannot tell. The titles of twelve Psalms bear his name, but it could not in all of them be meant to ascribe their authorship to him, for several of these Psalms are of too late a date to have been composed by the same writer as the others. There was an Asaph in David's time, who was one of David's chief musicians, and his family appear to have continued long after in their hereditary office of temple musicians. An Asaph is mentioned as a recorder or secretary in the days of Hezekiah 2Ki 18:18, and another was keeper of the royal forests under Artaxerxes. That Asaph did most certainly write some of the Psalms is clear from 2Ch 29:30, where it is recorded that the Levites were commanded to "sing praises unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer," but that other Asaphic Psalms were not of his composition, but were only committed to his care as a musician, is equally certain from 1Ch 16:7, where David is said to have delivered a Psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. It matters little to us whether he wrote or sang, for poet and musician are near akin, and if one composes words and another sets them to music, they rejoice together before the Lord.

DIVISION. The Lord is represented as summoning the whole earth to hear his declaration, Ps 50:1-6; he then declares the nature of the worship which he accepts, Ps 50:7-15, accuses the ungodly of breaches of the precepts of the second table, Ps 50:16-21, and closes the court with a word of threatening, Ps 50:22, and a direction of grace, Ps 50:23.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *The mighty God, even the Lord.* El, Elohim, Jehovah, three glorious names for the God of Israel. To render the address the more impressive, these august titles are mentioned, just as in royal decrees the names and dignities of monarchs are placed in the forefront. Here the true God is described as Almighty, as the only and perfect object of adoration and as the self-existent One. *Hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof.* The dominion of Jehovah extends over the whole earth, and therefore to all mankind is his decree directed. The east and the west are bidden to hear the God who makes his sun to rise on every quarter of the globe. Shall the summons of the great King be despised? Will we dare provoke him to anger by slighting his call?

Verse 2. *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.* The Lord is represented not only as speaking to the earth, but as coming forth to reveal the glory of his presence to an assembled universe. God of old dwelt in Zion among his chosen people, but here the beams of his splendour are described as

shining forth upon all nations. The sun was spoken of in the first verse, but here is a far brighter sun. The majesty of God is most conspicuous among his own elect, but is not confined to them; the church is not a dark lantern, but a candlestick. God shines not only in Zion, but out of her. She is made perfect in beauty by his indwelling, and that beauty is seen by all observers when the Lord shines forth from her. Observe how with trumpet voice and flaming ensign the infinite Jehovah summons the heavens and the earth to hearken to his word.

Verse 3. *Our God shall come.* The psalmist speaks of himself and his brethren as standing in immediate anticipation of the appearing of the Lord upon the scene. "He comes," they say, "our covenant God is coming; "they can hear his voice from afar, and perceive the splendour of his attending train. Even thus should we await the long promised appearing of the Lord from heaven. *And shall not keep silence.* He comes to speak, to plead with his people, to accuse and judge the ungodly. He has been silent long in patience, but soon he will speak with power. What a moment of awe when the Omnipotent is expected to reveal himself! What will be the reverent joy and solemn expectation when the poetic scene of this Psalm becomes in the last great day an actual reality! *A fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.* Flame and hurricane are frequently described as the attendants of the divine appearance. "Our God is a consuming fire." "At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hailstones and coals of fire." Ps 18:12. "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind." "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." 2Th 1:7-8. Fire is the emblem of justice in action, and the tempest is a token of his overwhelming power. Who will not listen in solemn silence when such is the tribunal from which the judge pleads with heaven and earth?

Verse 4. *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth.* Angels and men, the upper and the lower worlds, are called to witness the solemn scene. The whole creation shall stand in court to testify to the solemnity and the truth of the divine pleading. Both earth beneath and heaven above shall unite in condemning sin; the guilty shall have no appeal, though all are summoned that they may appeal if they dare. Both angels and men have seen the guilt of mankind and the goodness of the Lord, they shall therefore confess the justice of the divine utterance, and say "Amen" to the sentence of the supreme Judge. Alas, ye despisers! What will ye do and to whom will ye fly? *That he may judge his people.* Judgment begins at the house of God. The trial of the visible people of God will be a most awful ceremonial. He will thoroughly purge his

floor. He will discern between his nominal and his real people, and that in open court, the whole universe looking on. My soul, when this actually takes place, how will it fare with thee? Canst thou endure the day of his coming?

Verse 5. *Gather my saints together unto me.* Go, ye swift winged messengers, and separate the precious from the vile. Gather out the wheat of the heavenly garner. Let the long scattered, but elect people, known by my separating grace to be my sanctified ones, be now assembled in one place. All are not saints who seem to be so—a severance must be made; therefore let all who profess to be saints be gathered before my throne of judgment, and let them hear the word which will search and try the whole, that the false may be convicted and the true revealed. *Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice;* this is the grand test, and yet some have dared to imitate it. The covenant was ratified by the slaying of victims, the cutting and dividing of offerings; this the righteous have done by accepting with true faith the great propitiatory sacrifice, and this the pretenders have done in merely outward form. Let them be gathered before the throne for trial and testing, and as many as have really ratified the covenant by faith in the Lord Jesus shall be attested before all worlds as the objects of distinguishing grace, while formalists shall learn that outward sacrifices are all in vain. Oh, solemn assize, how does my soul bow in awe at the prospect thereof!

Verse 6. *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness.* Celestial intelligences and the spirits of just men made perfect, shall magnify the infallible judgment of the divine tribunal. Now they doubtless wonder at the hypocrisy of men; then they shall equally marvel at the exactness of the severance between the true and the false. *For God is judge himself.* This is the reason for the correctness of the judgment. Priests of old, and churches of later times, were readily deceived, but not so the all discerning Lord. No deputy judge sits on the great white throne; the injured Lord of all himself weighs the evidence and allots the vengeance or reward. The scene in the Psalm is a grand poetical conception, but it is also an inspired prophecy of that day which shall burn as an oven, when the Lord shall discern between him that feareth and him that feareth him not. *Selah.* Here we may well pause in reverent prostration, in deep searching of heart, in humble prayer, and in awe struck expectation.

Verses 7-15. The address which follows is directed to the professed people of God. It is clearly, in the first place, meant for Israel; but is equally applicable to the visible church of God in every age. It declares the futility of external worship when spiritual faith is absent, and the mere outward ceremonial is rested in.

Verse 7. *Hear, O my people, and I will speak.* Because Jehovah speaks and they are avowedly his own people, they are bound to give earnest heed. "Let me speak," saith the great I AM. The heavens and earth are but listeners, the Lord is about both to testify and to judge. *O Israel, and I will testify against thee.* Their covenant name is mentioned to give point to the address; it was a double evil that the chosen nation should become so carnal, so unspiritual, so false, so heartless to their God. God himself, whose eyes sleep not, who is not misled by rumour, but sees for himself, enters on the scene as witness against his favoured nation. Alas! for us when God, even our fathers' God, testifies to the hypocrisy of the visible church. *I am God, even thy God.* He had taken them to be his peculiar people above all other nations, and they had in the most solemn manner avowed that he was their God. Hence the special reason for calling them to account. The law began with, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," and now the session of their judgment opens with the same reminder of their singular position, privilege, and responsibility. It is not only that Jehovah is God, but *thy* God, O Israel; this is that makes thee so amenable to his searching reproofs.

Verse 8. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been ever before me.* Though they had not failed in maintaining his outward worship, or even if they had, he was not about to call them to account for this: a more weighty matter was now under consideration. They thought the daily sacrifices and the abounding burnt offerings to be everything: he counted them nothing if the inner sacrifice of heart devotion had been neglected. What was greatest with them was least with God. It is even so today. Sacraments (so called) and sacred rites are their main concern with unconverted but religious men, but with the Most High the spiritual worship which they forget is the sole matter. Let the external be maintained by all means, according to the divine command, but if the secret and spiritual be not in them, they are a vain oblation, a dead ritual, and even an abomination before the Lord.

Verse 9. *I will take no bullock out of thy house.* Foolishly they dreamed that bullocks with horns and hoofs could please the Lord, when indeed he sought for hearts and souls. Impiously they fancied that Jehovah needed these supplies, and that if they fed his altar with their fat beasts, he would be content. What he intended for their instruction, they made their confidence. They remembered not that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." *Nor he goats out of thy folds.* He mentions these lesser victims as if to rouse their common sense to see that the great Creator could find not satisfaction in mere animal offerings. If he needed these, he would not appeal to their scanty stalls and folds; in fact, he here refuses to take so much as one, if they brought

them under the false and dishonouring view, that they were in themselves pleasing to him. This shows that the sacrifices of the law were symbolical of higher and spiritual things, and were not pleasing to God except under their typical aspect. The believing worshipper looking beyond the outward was accepted, the unspiritual who had no respect to their meaning was wasting his substance, and blaspheming the God of heaven.

Verse 10. *For every beast of the forest is mine.* How could they imagine that the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, had need of beasts, when all the countless hordes that find shelter in a thousand forests and wildernesses belong to him? *And the cattle upon a thousand hills.* Not alone the wild beasts, but also the tamer creatures are all his own. Even if God cared for these things, he could supply himself. Their cattle were not, after all, their own, but were still the great Creator's property, why then should he be beholden to them. From Dan to Beersheba, from Nebaioth to Lebanon, there fed not a beast which was not marked with the name of the great Shepherd; why, then, should he crave oblations of Israel? What a slight is here put even upon sacrifices of divine appointment when wrongly viewed as in themselves pleasing to God! And all this to be so expressly stated under the law! How much more is this clear under the gospel, when it is so much more plainly revealed, that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"? Ye Ritualists, ye Sacramentarians, ye modern Pharisees, what say ye to this?

Verse 11. *I know all the fowls of the mountain.* All the winged creatures are under my inspection and near my hand; what then can be the value of your pairs of turtledoves, and your two young pigeons? The great Lord not only feeds all his creatures, but is well acquainted with each one; how wondrous is this knowledge! *And the wild beasts of the fields are mine.* The whole population moving over the plain belongs to me; why then should I seek you beeves and rams? In me all things live and move; how mad are you to suppose that I desire your living things! A spiritual God demands other life than that which is seen in animals; he looks for spiritual sacrifice; for the love, the trust, the praise, the life of your hearts.

Verse 12. *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee.* Strange conception, a hungry God! Yet if such an absurd ideal could be truth, and if the Lord hungered for meat, he would not ask it of men. He could provide for himself out of his own possessions; he would not turn suppliant to his own creatures. Even under the grossest ideal of God, faith in outward ceremonies is ridiculous. Do men fancy that the Lord needs banners, and music, and incense, and fine linen? If he did, the stars would emblazon his standard, the winds and the waves become his orchestra, ten thousand times ten thousand flowers would breathe forth

perfume, the snow should be his alb, the rainbow his girdle, the clouds of light his mantle. O fools and slow of heart, ye worship ye know not what! *For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.* What can he need who is owner of all things and able to create as he wills? Thus overwhelmingly does the Lord pour forth his arguments upon formalists.

Verse 13. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?* Are you so infatuated as to think this? Is the great I AM subject to corporeal wants, and are they to be thus grossly satisfied? Heathens thought thus of their idols, but dare ye think thus of the God who made the heavens and the earth? Can ye have fallen so low as to think thus of me, O Israel? What vivid reasoning is here! How the fire flashes dart into the idiot faces of trusters in outward forms! Ye dupes of Rome, can ye read this and be unmoved? The expostulation is indignant; the questions utterly confound; the conclusion is inevitable; heart worship only can be acceptable with the true God. It is inconceivable that outward things can gratify him, except so far as through them our faith and love express themselves.

Verse 14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving.* No longer look at your sacrifices as in themselves gifts pleasing to me, but present them as the tributes of your gratitude; it is then that I will accept them, but not while your poor souls have no love and no thankfulness to offer me. The sacrifices, as considered in themselves, are contemned, but the internal emotions of love consequent upon a remembrance of divine goodness, are commended as the substance, meaning, and soul of sacrifice. Even when the legal ceremonials were not abolished, this was true, and when they came to an end, this truth was more than ever made manifest. Not for want of bullocks on the altar was Israel blamed, but for want of thankful adoration before the Lord. She excelled in the visible, but in the inward grace, which is the one thing needful, she sadly failed. Too many in these days are in the same condemnation. *And pay thy vows unto the most High.* Let the sacrifice be really presented to the God who seeth the heart, pay to him the love you promised, the service you covenanted to render, the loyalty of heart you have vowed to maintain. O for grace to do this! O that we may be graciously enabled to love God, and live up to our profession! To be, indeed, the servants of the Lord, the lovers of Jesus, this is our main concern. What avails our baptism, to what end our gatherings at the Lord's table, to what purpose our solemn assemblies, if we have not the fear of the Lord, and vital godliness reigning within our bosoms?

Verse 15. *And call upon me in the day of trouble.* Oh blessed verse! Is this then true sacrifice? Is it an offering to ask an alms of heaven? It is even so. The King himself so regards it. For herein is faith manifested, herein is love proved, for

in the hour of peril we fly to those we love. It seems a small thing to pray to God when we are distressed, yet is it a more acceptable worship than the mere heartless presentation of bullocks and he goats. This is a voice from the throne, and how full of mercy it is! It is very tempestuous round about Jehovah, and yet what soft drops of mercy's rain drop from the bosom of the storm! Who would not offer such sacrifices? Troubled one, haste to present it now! Who shall say that Old Testament saints did not know the gospel? Its very spirit and essence breathes like frankincense all around this holy Psalm. *I will deliver thee*. The reality of thy sacrifice of prayer shall be seen in its answer. Whether the smoke of burning bulls be sweet to me or no, certainly thy humble prayer shall be, and I will prove it so by my gracious reply to thy supplication. This promise is very large, and may refer both to temporal and eternal deliverances; faith can turn it every way, like the sword of the cherubim. *And thou shalt glorify me*. Thy prayer will honour me, and thy grateful perception of my answering mercy will also glorify me. The goats and bullocks would prove a failure, but the true sacrifice never could. The calves of the stall might be a vain oblation, but not the calves of sincere lips. Thus we see what is true ritual. Here we read inspired rubrics. Spiritual worship is the great, the essential matter; all else without it is rather provoking than pleasing to God. As helps to the soul, outward offerings were precious, but when men went not beyond them, even their hallowed things were profaned in the view of heaven.

Verses 16-21. Here the Lord turns to the manifestly wicked among his people; and such there were even in the highest places of his sanctuary. If moral formalists had been rebuked, how much more these immoral pretenders to fellowship with heaven? If the lack of heart spoiled the worship of the more decent and virtuous, how much more would violations of the law, committed with a high hand, corrupt the sacrifices of the wicked?

Verse 16. *But unto the wicked God saith.* To the breakers of the second table he now addresses himself; he had previously spoken to the neglectors of the first. *What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?* You violate openly my moral law, and yet are great sticklers for my ceremonial commands! What have you to do with them? What interest can you have in them? Do you dare to teach my law to others, and profane it yourselves? What impudence, what blasphemy is this! Even if you claim to be sons of Levi, what of that? Your wickedness disqualifies you, disinherits you, puts you out of the succession. It should silence you, and would if my people were as spiritual as I would have them, for they would refuse to hear you, and to pay you the portion of temporal things which is due to my true servants. You count up your holy days, you contend for rituals, you fight for externals, and yet the weightier matters of the law ye

despise! Ye blind guides, ye strain out gnats and swallow camels; your hypocrisy is written on your foreheads and manifest to all. *Or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth.* Ye talk of being in covenant with me, and yet trample my holiness beneath you feet as swine trample upon pearls; think ye that I can brook this? Your mouths are full of lying and slander, and yet ye mouth my words as if they were fit morsels for such as you! How horrible and evil it is, that to this day we see men explaining doctrines who despise precepts! They make grace a coverlet for sin, and even judge themselves to be sound in the faith, while they are rotten in life. We need the grace of the doctrines as much as the doctrines of grace, and without it an apostle is but a Judas, and a fair spoken professor is an arrant enemy of the cross of Christ.

Verse 17. *Seeing thou hatest instruction.* Profane professors are often too wise to learn, too besotted with conceit to be taught of God. What a monstrosity that men should declare those statutes which with their hearts they do not know, and which in their lives they openly disavow! Woe unto the men who hate the instruction which they take upon themselves to give. *And castest my words behind thee.* Despising them, throwing them away as worthless, putting them out of sight as obnoxious. Many boasters of the law did this practically; and in these last days there are pickers and choosers of God's words who cannot endure the practical part of Scripture; they are disgusted at duty, they abhor responsibility, they disembowel texts of their plain meanings, they wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. It is an ill sign when a man dares not look a Scripture in the face, and an evidence of brazen impudence when he tries to make it mean something less condemnatory of his sins, and endeavours to prove it to be less sweeping in its demands. How powerful is the argument that such men have no right to take the covenant of God into their mouths, seeing that its spirit does not regulate their lives!

Verse 18. *When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him.* Moral honesty cannot be absent where true grace is present. Those who excuse others in trickery are guilty themselves; those who use others to do unjust actions for them are doubly so. If a man be ever so religious, if his own actions do not rebuke dishonesty, he is an accomplice with thieves. If we can acquiesce in anything which is not upright, we are not upright ourselves, and our religion is a lie. *And hast been partaker with adulterers.* One by one the moral precepts are thus broken by the sinners in Zion. Under the cloak of piety, unclean livers conceal themselves. We may do this by smiling at unchaste jests, listening to indelicate expressions, and conniving at licentious behaviour in our presence; and if we thus act, how dare we preach, or lead public prayer, or wear the

Christian name? See how the Lord lays righteousness to the plummet. How plainly all this declares that without holiness no man shall see the Lord! No amount of ceremonial or theological accuracy can cover dishonesty and fornication: these filthy things must be either purged from us by the blood of Jesus, or they will kindle a fire in God's anger which will burn even to the lowest hell.

Verse 19. *Thou givest thy mouth to evil.* Sins against the ninth commandment are here mentioned. The man who surrenders himself to the habit of slander is a vile hypocrite if he associates himself with the people of God. A man's health is readily judged by his tongue. A foul mouth, a foul heart. Some slander almost as often as they breathe, and yet are great upholders of the church, and great sticklers for holiness. To what depths will not they go in evil, who delight in spreading it with their tongues? *And thy tongue frameth deceit.* This is a more deliberate sort of slander, where the man dexterously elaborates false witness, and concocts methods of defamation. There is an ingenuity of calumny in some men, and, alas! even in some who are thought to be followers of the Lord Jesus. They manufacture falsehoods, weave them in their loom, hammer them on their anvil, and then retail their wares in every company. Are these accepted with God? Though they bring their wealth to the altar, and speak eloquently of truth and of salvation, have they any favour with God? We should blaspheme the holy God if we were to think so. They are corrupt in his sight, a stench in his nostrils. He will cast all liars into hell. Let them preach, and pray, and sacrifice as they will; till they become truthful, the God of truth loathes them utterly.

Verse 20. *Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother.* He sits down to it, makes it his meat, studies it, resolves upon it, becomes a master of defamation, occupies the chair of calumny. His nearest friend is not safe, his dearest relative escapes not. *Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.* He ought to love him best, but he has an ill word for him. The son of one's own mother was to the Oriental a very tender relation; but the wretched slanderer knows no claims of kindred. He stabs his brother in the dark, and aims a blow at him who came forth of the same womb; yet he wraps himself in the robe of hypocrisy, and dreams that he is a favourite of heaven, an accepted worshipper of the Lord. Are such monsters to be met with nowadays? Alas! they pollute our churches still, and are roots of bitterness, spots on our solemn feasts, wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. Perhaps some such may read these lines, but they will probably read them in vain; their eyes are too dim to see their own condition, their hearts are waxen gross, their ears are dull of hearing; they are given up to a strong delusion to believe a lie, that they may be damned.

Verse 21. *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence.* No swift judgment overthrew the sinner—longsuffering reigned; no thunder was heard in threatening, and no bolt of fire was hurled in execution. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* The inference drawn from the Lord's patience was infamous; the respited culprit thought his judge to be one of the same order as himself. He offered sacrifice, and deemed it accepted; he continued in sin, and remained unpunished, and therefore he rudely said, "Why need believe these crazy prophets? God cares not how we live so long as we pay our tithes. Little does he consider how we get the plunder, so long as we bring a bullock to his altar." What will not men imagine of the Lord? At one time they liken the glory of Israel to a calf, and anon unto their brutish selves. *But I will reprove thee.* At last I will break silence and let them know my mind. *And set them in order before thine eyes.* I will marshall thy sins in battle array. I will make thee see them, I will put them down item by item, classified and arranged. Thou shalt know that if silent awhile, I was never blind or deaf. I will make thee perceive what thou hast tried to deny. I will leave the seat of mercy for the throne of judgment, and there I will let thee see how great the difference between thee and me.

Verse 22. *Now or oh!* it is a word of entreaty, for the Lord is loath even to let the most ungodly run on to destruction. *Consider this;* take these truths to heart, ye who trust in ceremonies and ye who live in vice, for both of you sin in that *ye forget God.* Bethink you how unaccepted you are, and turn unto the Lord. See how you have mocked the eternal, and repent of your iniquities. *Lest I tear you in pieces,* as the lion rends his prey, *and there be none to deliver,* no Saviour, no refuge, no hope. Ye reject the Mediator: beware, for ye will sorely need one in the day of wrath, and none will be near to plead for you. How terrible, how complete, how painful, how humiliating, will be the destruction of the wicked! God uses no soft words, or velvet metaphors, nor may his servants do so when they speak of the wrath to come. O reader, consider this.

Verse 23. *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.* Praise is the best sacrifice; true, hearty, gracious thanksgiving from a renewed mind. Not the lowing of bullocks bound to the altar, but the songs of redeemed men are the music which the ear of Jehovah delights in. Sacrifice your loving gratitude, and God is honoured thereby. *And to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.* Holy living is a choice evidence of salvation. He who submits his whole way to divine guidance, and is careful to honour God in his life, brings an offering which the Lord accepts through his dear Son; and such a one shall be more and more instructed, and made experimentally to know the Lord's salvation. He needs salvation, for the best ordering of the life cannot save us,

but *that salvation* he shall have. Not to ceremonies, not to unpurified lips, is the blessing promised, but to grateful hearts and holy lives. O Lord, give us to stand in the judgment with those who have worshipped thee aright and have seen thy salvation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The exordium or beginning of this Psalm is the most grand and striking that can possibly be imagined—the speaker GOD, the audience an assembled world! We cannot compare or assimilate the scene here presented to us with any human resemblance; nor do I imagine that earth will ever behold such a day till that hour when the trumpet of the archangel shall sound and shall gather all the nations of the earth from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other; when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead that are in them. *Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 1. *El, Elohim, Jehovah has spoken!* So reads the Hebrew. *Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1. (*first clause*). Some have observed that these three names, *El, Elohim, Jehovah*, here mentioned, have three very distinct accents set to them, and which being joined to a verb singular (dbd), *hath spoken*, contains the mystery of the trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine Essence. *John Gill.*

Verse 1. *And called the earth, etc., i.e., all the inhabitants of the earth* he has commanded to come as witnesses and spectators of the judgment. *Simon de Muis.*

Verses 1-5.

No more shall atheists mock his long delay;
His vengeance sleeps no more; behold the day!
Behold!—the Judge descends; his guards are nigh,
Tempests and fire attend him down the sky.
When God appears, all nature shall adore him.
While sinners tremble, saints rejoice before him.
Heaven, earth and hell, draw near; let all things come,
To hear my justice, and the sinner's doom;
But gather first my saints (the Judge commands),
Bring them, ye angels, from their distant lands.

When Christ returns, wake every cheerful passion,
And shout, ye saints; he comes for your salvation.
—*Isaac Watts.*

Verse 5. *Gather*, etc. To whom are these words addressed? Many suppose to the angels, as the ministers of God's will; but it is unnecessary to make the expression more definite than it is in the Psalm. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 5. *My saints*, the objects of my mercy, those whom I have called and specially distinguished. The term is here descriptive of a relation, not of an intrinsic quality. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 5. *Gather my saints together unto me.* There is a double or twofold gathering to Christ. There is a gathering unto Christ by faith, a gathering within the bond of the covenant, a gathering into the family of God, a gathering unto the root of Jesse, standing up for an ensign of the people. "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." Isa 11:10. This is the main end of the gospel, the great work of ministers, the gathering of sinners unto Christ. But then there is a gathering at the general judgment; and this is the fathering that is here spoken of. This gathering is consequential to the other. Christ will gather none to him at the last day but those that are gathered to him by faith here; he will give orders to gather together unto him all these, and none but these, that have taken hold of his covenant.

I would speak of Christ's owning and acknowledging the saints at his second coming. His owning and acknowledging them is imported in his giving these orders: *Gather my saints together unto me.* ... Now upon this head I mention the things following:—1. Saintship will be the only mark of distinction in that day. There are many marks of distinction now; but these will all cease, and this only will remain. 2. Saintship will then be Christ's badge of honour. Beware of mocking at saintship, or sanctity, holiness and purity; for it is Christ's badge of honour, the garments with which his followers are clothed, and will be the only badge of honour at the great day. 3. Christ will forget and mistake none of the saints. Many of the saints are forgotten here, it is forgotten that such persons were in the world, but Christ will forget and mistake none of them at the great day; he will give forth a list of all his saints, and give orders to gather them all unto him. 4. He will confess, own, and acknowledge them before his Father, and his holy angels. Mt 10:32 Lu 12:8 Re 3:5. They are to go to my Father's house, and they are to go thither in my name, in my right, and at my back; and so it is necessary I should own and acknowledge them before my Father. But what need is there for his owning them before the angels? *Answer.* They are to

be the angel's companions, and so it is necessary he should own them before the angels. This will be like a testimonial for them unto the angels. Lastly. The evidences of his right to and propriety in them, will then be made to appear. Mal 3:17: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." It is too late for persons to become his then; so the meaning is, they shall evidently appear to be mine. *James Scot, 1773.*

Verse 5. *Gather my saints together unto me.* Our text may be considered as the commission given by the great Judge to his angels—those ministering spirits who do his will, hearkening to the voice of his power. The language of the text is in accordance with that which was uttered by our Lord when, alluding to the coming of the Son of Man, he says, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." But previous to this final, this *general* gathering together of his saints to judgment, Jehovah gathers them together in various ways, in various places, and by various means, both of providence and of grace. Previous to his being seated on a throne of judgment, we behold him sitting on a throne of mercy, and we hear him saying, *Gather my saints together unto me.* These words lead us to notice—I. The characters described, *My saints.* II. The command issued, *Gather my saints together unto me.*

1. THE CHARACTERS HERE DESCRIBED—*my saints*, we are to understand *my holy ones*—those who have been sanctified and set apart by God. None of us possess this character by *nature*. We are born sinners, and there is no difference; but by divine *grace* we experience a change of nature, and consequently a change of name. The title of saint is frequently given to the people of God in derision. "Such an one," says a man of the world, "is one of your saints." But, my brethren, no higher honour can be conferred upon us than to be denominated saints, if we truly deserve that character; but in what way do we become saints? We become saints—1. *By divine choice.* The saints are the objects of everlasting love; their names are written in the Lamb's book of life; and it is worthy of remark that wherever the people of God are spoken of in sacred Scripture, as the objects of that everlasting love, it is in connection with their *personal sanctification*. Observe, they are not chosen because they *are* saints, nor because it is foreseen that they *will* be so, but they are chosen *to be* saints; sanctification is the effect and the only evidence of election. We become saints—2. *By a divine change which is the necessary consequence of this election.* An inward, spiritual, supernatural, universal change is effected in the saints by the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus they are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and made partakers of a divine nature...Remember, then, this important truth, that Christians are called by the gospel to be saints; that you

are Christians, not so much by your *orthodoxy* as by your *holiness*; that you are saints no further than as you are holy in all manner of conversation. 3. *The people of God furnish an evidence of being saints by their godly conduct.* "By their fruits, "not by their feelings; not by their lips, not by their general profession, but, "by their fruits shall ye know them." 4. The character of the saints is evidenced *by divine consecration*. The people of God are called holy inasmuch as they are dedicated to God. It is the duty and the privilege of saints to consecrate themselves to the service of God. Even a heathen philosopher could say, "I *lend* myself to the *world*, but I *give* myself to the *gods*. But we possess more light and knowledge, and are therefore laid under greater obligation than was Seneca."

2. THE COMMAND ISSUED. *Gather my saints together unto me.* Jehovah gathers his saints to himself in various ways. 1. *He gathers them to himself in their conversion.* The commission given by Christ to his ministers is, "Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, "or in other words, *Gather my saints together unto me.* The gospel is to be preached to *sinners* in order that they may become *saints*. 2. *Saints are gathered together by God in public worship.* 3. *He gathers his saints together to himself in times of danger.* When storms appear to be gathering around them, he is desirous to screen them from the blast. He say to them, in the language of Isaiah, "Come, my people, and enter into thy chamber—the chamber of my perfections and my promises—enter into thy chamber and shut the doors about thee, and hide thyself until the calamity is overpast."

Verse 4. *God gathers his saints together in the service of his church.* Thus Christ collected his apostles together to give them their apostolic commission to go and teach all nations. At the period of the Reformation, the great Head of the church raised up Luther and Calvin, together with other eminent reformers, in order that they might light up a flame in Europe, yea, throughout the world, that the breath of popery should never be able to blow out. 5. *God gathers his saints together in death, and at the resurrection.* "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." This is the commission which death is habitually receiving—"Go, death, and gather such and such of my saints unto me." As the gardener enters the garden, and plucks up the full blown flower and the ripened fruit, so Jesus Christ enters the garden of his church and gathers his saints to himself; for he says, "Father, I will that all they whom thou hast given me may be with me, where I am, and behold my glory." *Condensed from J. Sibree's "Sermon preached at the reopening of Surrey Chapel, August 29th, 1830."*

Verse 5. (*second clause*). *Made, or ratifying a covenant*; literally, *cutting*, striking, perhaps in allusion to the practice of slaying and dividing victims as a religious rite, accompanying solemn compacts. (See Ge 15:10-18.) The same usage may be referred to in the following words, *over sacrifice, i.e.*, standing over it: or *on sacrifice, i.e.*, founding the engagement on a previous appeal to God. There is probably allusion to the great covenant transaction recorded in Ex 24:4-8. This reference to sacrifice shows clearly that what follows was not intended to discredit or repudiate that essential symbol of the typical or ceremonial system. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 5. *Made a covenant with me.* Formerly soldiers used to take an oath not to flinch from their colours, but faithfully to cleave to their leaders; thus they called *sacramentum militare*, a military oath; such an oath lies upon every Christian. It is so essential to the being of a saint, that they are described by this, *Gather together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me.* We are not Christians till we have subscribed this covenant, and that without any reservation. When we take upon us the profession of Christ's name, we enlist ourselves in his muster roll, and by it do promise that we will live and die with him in opposition to all his enemies ...He will not entertain us till we resign up ourselves freely to his disposal, that there may be no disputing with his commands afterwards, but, as one under his authority, go and come at his word. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 6. *The heavens shall declare his righteousness.* It is the manner of Scripture to commit the teaching of that which it desires should be most noticeable and important to *the heavens and the earth*: for *the heavens* are seen by all, and their light discovers all things. Here it speaks of *the heavens*, not *the earth*, because these are everlasting, but not the earth. *Geier and Muis, in Poole's Synopsis.*

Verse 8. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices*; i.e., for thy neglect of them, but for thy resting in them, sticking in the bark, bringing me the bare shell without the kernel, not referring to the right end and use, but satisfying thyself in the work done. *John Trapp.*

Verse 8. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings continually before me.* Those words *to have been*, which our translators supply, may be left out, and the sense remain perfect: or if those words be continued, then the negative particle *not*, is to be reassumed out of the first part of the verse, and the whole read thus, *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt offerings not to have been continually before me.* That is, I will not charge thee with a neglect of outward duty or worship, the inward or spiritual

(of which he speaks, Ps 50:14), being that which is most pleasing unto me.
Joseph Caryl.

Verses 8-9. It is the very remonstrance which our Lord himself makes against the Pharisees of his days, for laying so much stress on the outward observance of their own traditions, the washing of pots and cups and other such like things; the paying of tithes of anise and mint and cummin; the ostentatious fulfilment of all ceremonious observances in the eyes of men, the exalting the shadow to the exclusion of the substance. And have we not seen the like in our own days, even to the very vestment of the minister, the obeisance of the knee, and the posture of the body? as if the material church were all in all, and God were not Spirit, that demanded of those that worshipped him that they should worship him in spirit and in truth; as if the gold and ornaments of the temple were far beyond the hidden man of the heart in that which is incorruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.
Barton Bouchier.

Verse 10. *"For to me (belongs) every beast of the forest, the cattle in hills of a thousand."* This last idiomatic phrase may either mean a thousand hills, or hills where the cattle rove by thousands, with probable allusion to the hilly grounds of Bashan beyond Jordan. According to etymology, the noun in the first clause means an *animal*, and that in the second *beasts* or *brutes* in general. But when placed in antithesis, the first denotes a wild beast, and the second domesticated animals or cattle. Both words were necessary to express God's sovereign propriety in the whole animal creation. Thus understood, the verse assigns a reason for the negative assertion in the one before it. Even if God could stand in need of animal oblations, for his own sake, or for their sake, he would not be under the necessity of coming to man for them, since the whole animal creation is his property and perfectly at his disposal. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verses 11-12. We show our scorn of God's sufficiency, by secret thoughts of meriting from him by any religious act, as though God could be indebted to us, and obliged by us. As though our devotions could bring a blessedness to God more than he essentially hath; when indeed "our goodness extends not to him." Ps 16:2. Our services to God are rather services to ourselves, and bring a happiness to us, not to God. This secret opinion of merit (though disputed among the Papists, yet) is natural to man; and this secret self pleasing, when we have performed any duty, and upon that account expect some fair compensation from God, as having been profitable to him; God intimates this: "The wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." He implies, that they wronged his infinite fulness, by thinking that he stood in need of their sacrifices and

services, and that he was beholden to them for their adoration of him. All merit implies a moral or natural insufficiency in the person of whom we merit, and our doing something for him, which he could not, or at least so well do for himself. It is implied in our murmuring at God's dealing with us as a course of cross providences, wherein men think they have deserved better at the hands of God by their service, than to be cast aside and degraded by him. In our prosperity we are apt to have secret thoughts that our enjoyments were the debts God owes us, rather than gifts freely bestowed upon us. Hence it is that men are more unwilling to part with their righteousness than with their sins, and are apt to challenge salvation as a due, rather than beg it as an act of grace. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 12. *If I were hungry,* etc. Pagan sacrifices were considered as feasts of the gods. *Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 13. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?* That is, did I want anything I would not tell thee; but hast thou indeed such gross notions of me, as to imagine that I have appointed and required the blood and flesh of animals for their own sake and not with some design? Dost thou think I am pleased with these, when they are offered without faith, love, and gratitude? Nay, offer the sacrifice of praise, etc. Render to me a spiritual and reasonable service, performing thy engagements, and then thou wilt find me a very present help in trouble. *B. Boothroyd.*

Verse 15. *Call upon me,* etc. Prayer is like the ring which Queen Elizabeth gave to the Earl of Essex, bidding him if he were in any distress send that ring to her, and she would help him. God commandeth his people if they be in any perplexity to send this ring to him: *Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* *George Swinnock.*

Verse 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble,* etc. Who will scrape to a keeper for a piece of venison who may have free access to the master of the game to ask and have? Hanker not after other helpers, rely on him only, fully trusting him in the use of such means as he prescribes and affords. God is jealous, will have no co-rival, nor allow thee (in this case) two strings to thy bow. He who worketh all in all must be unto thee all in all; of, through, and to whom are all things, to him be all praise for ever. Ro 11:36. *George Gipps, in "A Sermon preached (before God, and from him) to the Honourable House of Commons," 1645.*

Verse 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble,* etc. The Lord hath promised his children supply of all good things, yet they must use the means of impetration;

by prayer. He feed the young ravens when they call upon him. Ps 147:9. He feeds the young ravens, but first they call upon him. God withholds from them that ask not, lest he should give to them that desire not. (Augustine.) David was confident that by God's power he should spring over a wall; yet not without putting his own strength and agility to it. Those things we pray for, we must work for. (Augustine.) The carter in Isidore, when his cart was overthrown, would needs have his god Hercules come down from heaven, to help him up with it; but whilst he forbore to set his own shoulder to it, his cart lay still. Abraham was as rich as any of our aldermen, David as valiant as any of our gentlemen, Solomon as wise as any of our deepest naturians, Susanna as fair as any of our painted pieces. Yet none of them thought that their riches, valour, policy, beauty, or excellent parts could save them; but they stirred the sparks of grace, and bestirred themselves in pious work. And this is our means, if our meaning be to be saved. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 15. *I will deliver thee: properly, I will draw forth with my own mighty hand, and plant thee in liberty and prosperity. Hermann Venema.*

Verse 16. *Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? etc.* "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool." Is it not? No wonder then that divine wisdom requires us ourselves to put off the old man (as snakes put off their skins) before we take on us the most honourable office of reproving sin; a duty which above any other brings praise to God, and profit to men; insomuch that God hath not a more honourable work that I know of to set us about. And what think you? Are greasy scullions fit to stand before kings? Are dirty kennel rakers fit to be plenipotentiaries or ambassadors? Are unclean beasts fit to be made lord almoners, and sent to bestow the king's favours? Are swine fit to cast pearl, and the very richest pearl of God's royal word? No man dreams it; consequently none can believe himself qualified or commissioned to be a reprover of sin "till he is washed, till he is sanctified, till he is justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God." A lunatick beggar in Athens would not believe but that all the ships in the harbour were his. His mistake exceeded not theirs, who persuade themselves that this richer office is theirs, before they are "alive from the dead, "and "born of the Spirit, "before they are returned to God or to themselves. The Duke of Alva is said to have complained that 'his king sent him in fetters to fight for him; 'because without his pardon given him, and while he was a prisoner, he employed him in war. But the Supreme King is a more merciful one, and orders our charity to begin at home; making it our first duty to break off our sins; and then when we have put off these our

shackles, go to fight his battles. *Daniel Burgess (1645—1712-13) in "The Golden Sufferers."*

Verse 16. *The wicked.* By whom are meant, not openly profane sinners; but men under a profession of religion, and indeed who were teachers of others, as appears from the following expostulations with them: the Scribes, Pharisees, and doctors among the Jews, are designed, and so Kimchi interprets it of their wise men, who learnt and taught the law, but did not act according to it. *John Gill.*

Verse 16. *What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?* etc. All the medieval writers teach us, even from the Mosaic law, concerning the leper, how the writer of this Psalm only put in words what those statutes expressed in fact. For so it is written: "The leper in whom the plague is, ...he shall put a covering upon his upper lip." As they all, following Origen, say: Let them who are themselves of polluted lips, take good heed not to teach others. Or, to take it in the opposite way, see how Isaiah would not speak to his people, because he was a man of polluted lips, and he dwelt among a people of polluted lips, till they had been touched with the living coal from the altar; and by that, as by a sacrament of the Old Testament, a sentence of absolution had been pronounced upon them. *J. M. Neale.*

Verse 16. *(second clause).* Emphasis is laid on the phrase, *to declare God's statutes*, which both denotes such an accurate knowledge of them as one may obtain by *numbering* them, and a diligent and public review of them. Properly speaking the word is derived from the Arabic, and signifies *to reckon in dust*, for the ancients were accustomed to calculate in *dust* finely sprinkled over tablets of the Abacus. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 16. *But unto the wicked God saith, What has thou to do...to take my covenant into thy mouth?* For whom is the covenant made but for the wicked? If men were not wicked or sinful what needed there a covenant of grace? The covenant is for the wicked, and the covenant brings grace enough to pardon those who are most wicked; why, then, doth the Lord say to the wicked, *What hast thou to do to take my covenant unto thy mouth?* Observe what follows, and his meaning is expounded: *Seeing thou hatest to be reformed.* As if God had said, You wicked man, who protects you sin, and holds it close, refusing to return and hating to reform; what hast thou to do to meddle with my covenant? Lay off thy defiled hands. He that is resolved to hold his sin takes hold of the covenant in vain, or rather he lets it go, while he seems to hold it. Woe unto them who sue for mercy while they neglect duty. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 16. When a minister does not do what he teaches, this makes him a vile person; nay, this makes him ridiculous, like Lucian's apothecary, who had medicines in his shop to cure the cough, and told others that he had them, and yet was troubled with it himself. With what a forehead canst thou stand in a pulpit and publish the laws of God, and undertake the charge of souls, that when thine own nakedness appears, when thy tongue is of a larger size than thy hands, thy ministry is divided against itself, thy courses give thy doctrine the lie; thou sayest that men must be holy, and thy deeds do declare thy mouth's hypocrisy; thou doest more mischief than a hundred others. *William Fenner.*

Verse 17. *And castest my words behind thee. Thou castest away contemptuously,* with disgust and detestation, as idols are cast out of a city; or as Moses indignantly dashed to the earth the tables of the law. *Martin Geier.*

Verse 17. *My words:* apparently the ten commandments, accustomed to be called the *ten words*, by which God is often said to have made his covenant with Israel. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 18. *When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him; or didst run with him.* This was literally true of the Scribes and Pharisees; they devoured widow's houses, and robbed them of their substance, under a pretext of long prayers; they consented to the deeds of Barabbas, a robber, when they preferred him to Jesus Christ; and they joined with the thieves on the cross in reviling him; and, in a spiritual sense, they stole away the word of the Lord, every man from his neighbour; took away the key of knowledge from the people, and put false glosses upon the sacred writings. *John Gill.*

Verse 18. *Thou consentedst with him; became his accomplice. Sunetreces. LXX, i.e.,* you helped him to carry off his booty and to make his escape. *Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 18. *Thou consentedst with him.* Or, thou runnest along with him. *Hast been partaker with;* namely, thou art his companion; a term taken from commerce of merchants, or from banquets made after the ancient manner, to which divers did contribute, and had their shares therein. *John Diodati.*

Verse 18. *(last clause).* To give entertainment to them we know to be dissolute, is to communicate with their sins. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 19. *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, etc. Thou givest.* Hebrew, *thou sendest forth;* to wit, free; for the word is used of men dismissing their wives or their servants, whom they left to their freedom. Thou hast an unbridled tongue, and

castest off all restraints of God's law, and of thine own conscience, and givest thy tongue liberty to speak what you please, though it be offensive and dishonourable to God, and injurious to thy neighbour, or to thy own soul; which is justly produced as an evidence of their hypocrisy. *To evil*, either to sinful or mischievous speeches. *Frameth deceit*, i.e., uttereth lies or fair words, wherewith to circumvent those who deal with them. *Matthew Poole*.

Verse 19. The ninth commandment is now added to the other two, as being habitually violated by the person here addressed. *J. A. Alexander*.

Verse 20. *Thou sittest and speakest*, etc. A man may both speak and do evil while he sits still and doth nothing; an idle posture may serve the turn for such work as that. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 20. *Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother*, etc. When you are sitting still, and have nothing else to do, you are ever injuring your neighbour with your slanderous speech. Your table talk is abuse of your nearest friends. *Samuel Horsley*.

Verse 20. *Thine own mother's son*. To understand the force of this expression, it is necessary to bear in mind that polygamy was allowed amongst the Israelites. Those who were born to the same father were all brethren, but a yet more intimate relationship subsisted between those who had the same mother, as well as the same father. *French and Skinner*.

Verse 21. *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence*. Neither sleep nor slumber, nor connivance, nor neglect of anything can be incident to God. Because he doth not execute present judgment and visible destruction upon sinners, therefore blasphemy presumptuously infers—will God trouble himself about such petty matters? So they imagined of their imaginary Jupiter. *Non vacat exiguis rebus adesse Jovem*. What a narrow and finite apprehension this is of God! He that causes and produces every action—shall he not be present at every action? What can we do without him, that cannot move but in him? He that taketh notice of sparrows, and numbers the seeds which the very ploughman thrusts in the ground, can any action of man escape his knowledge, or slip from his contemplation? He may seem to wink at things, but never shuts his eyes. He doth not always manifest a reprehensive knowledge, yet he always retains an apprehensive knowledge. Though David smote not Shimei cursing, yet he heard Shimei cursing. As judges often determine to hear, but do not hear to determine; so though God does not see to like, yet he likes to see. *Thomas Adams*.

Verse 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* Such is the blindness and corruption of our nature, that we have very deformed and misshapen thoughts of him, till with the eye of faith we see his face in the glass of the word; and therefore Mr. Perkins affirms, that all men who ever came of Adam (Christ alone excepted) are by nature atheists; because at the same time that they acknowledge God, they deny his power, presence, and justice, and allow him to be only what pleaseth themselves. Indeed, it is natural for every man to desire to accommodate his lusts with a conception of God as may be most favourable to and suit best with them. God charges some for this: *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* Sinners do with God as the Ethiopians do with angels, whom they picture with black faces that they may be like themselves. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* This men do when they plead for sins as little, as venial, as that which is below God to take notice of; because they themselves think it so, therefore God must think it so too. Man, with a giant like pride, would climb into the throne of the Almighty, and establish a contradiction to the will of God by making his own will, and not God's, the square and rule of his actions. This principle commenced and took date in Paradise, where Adam would not depend upon the will of God revealed to him, but upon himself and his own will, and thereby makes himself as God. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 21. *I will set them in order before thine eyes.* This is to be understood *more militari*, when sins shall be set in rank and file, in bloody array against thy soul; or *more forensi*, when they shall be set in order as so many indictments for thy rebellion and treason. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 21. *And set them in order before thine eyes:* as if he should say, Thou thoughtest all thy sins were scattered and dispersed; that there was not a sin to be found; that they should never be rallied and brought together; but I assure thee I will make an army of those sins, a complete army of them, I will set them in rank and file before thine eyes; and see how thou canst behold, much less contend with, such an host as they. Take heed therefore you do not levy war against your own souls; that's the worst of all civil or intestine wars. If an army of divine terrors be so fearful, what will an army of black, hellish sins be? when God shall bring whole regiments of sins against you—here a regiment of oaths, there a regiment of lies, there a third of false dealings, here a troop of filthy actions, and there a legion of unclean or profane thoughts, all at once fighting against thy life and everlasting peace. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 21. Atheists do mock at those Scriptures which tell us that we shall give account of all our deeds; but God shall make them find the truth of it in that day of their reckoning. It is as easy for him to make their forgetful minds remember as to create the minds in them. When he applies his register to their forgetful spirits they shall see all their forgotten sins. When the printer presseth clean paper upon his oiled irons, it receiveth the print of every letter: so when God shall stamp their minds with his register, they shall see all their former sins in a view. The hand was ever writing against Belshazzar, as he was ever sinning, though he saw it not till the cup was filled: so is it to the wicked; their sins are numbered, and themselves weighed, and see not till they be divided by a fearful wakening. *William Struther.*

Verse 21. (*last clause*). *God setteth his sins in order before his eyes. Imprimis*, the sin of his conception. *Item*, the sins of his childhood. *Item*, of his youth. *Item*, of his man's estate, etc. Or, *Imprimis*, sins against the first table. *Item*, sins against the second; so many of ignorance, so many of knowledge, so many of presumption, severally sorted by themselves. He committed sins confusedly, huddling them up in heaps; but God *sets them in order*, and methodizes them to his hands. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 22. *Now consider this, ye that forget God*, etc. What is less than a grain of sand? Yet when it comes to be multiplied, what is heavier than the sands of the sea? A little sum multiplied rises high; so a little sin unrepented of will damn us, as one leak in the ship, if it be not well looked to, will drown us. "Little sins" as the world calls them, but great sins against the majesty of God Almighty, whose majesty, against which they are committed, doth accent and enhance them, if not repented of, will damn. One would think it no great matter *to forget God*, yet it has a *heavy doom* attending on it. The non improvement of talents, the non exercise of grace, the world looks upon as a small thing; yet we read of him who *hid* his talent in the earth—he had not spent it, only not trading it is sentenced. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 22. *Lest I tear you in pieces.* This is a metamorphic expression, taken from the strength and irresistible fury of a lion, from which the interference of the shepherd can supply no protection, or defence, for his flock. *William Walford.*

Verse 23. *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.* Thanksgiving is a God exalting work. Though nothing can add the least cubit to God's essential glory, yet praise exalts him in the eyes of others. Praise is a setting forth of God's honour, a lifting up of his name, a displaying the trophy of his goodness, a proclaiming his excellency, a spreading his renown, a breaking open the box of ointment,

whereby the sweet savour and perfume of God's name is sent abroad into the world. *To him that ordereth his conversation aright.* Though the main work of religion lies within, yet "our light must so shine, "that others may behold it; the foundation of sincerity is in the heart, yet its beautiful front piece appears in the conversation. The saints are called "jewels, "because they cast a sparkling lustre in the eyes of others. An upright Christian is like Solomon's temple, gold within and without: sincerity is a holy leaven, which if it be in the *heart* will work itself into the life, and make it swell and rise as high as heaven. Php 3:20.

Thomas Watson.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. It unspeakably concerns *all* men to know what God has spoken. *W. S. Plumer.*

Verse 1.

1. Who has spoken? The Mighty, not men or angels, but God himself.
2. To whom has he spoken? To all nations—all ranks—all characters. This calls for,
 - (a) Reverence—it is the voice of God.
 - (b) Hope—because he condescends to speak to rebels.
3. Where has he spoken?
 - (a) In creation.
 - (b) In providence.
 - (c) In his word. *G. R.*

Verses 1-6.

1. The court called in the name of the King of kings.
2. The judgment set, and the judge taking his seat; Ps 50:2-3.
3. The parties summoned; Ps 50:8.
4. The issue of this solemn trial foretold; Ps 50:6. —*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 1-15.

1. God's call to man.
2. Man's call to God.

Verse 2.

1. The internal beauty of Zion.
 - (a) *Positive* beauty of wisdom—holiness—love.
 - (b) *Comparative* with the beauty of Paradise and the heaven of angels.
 - (c) *Superlative*—all the perfections of God combined.
2. Its external glory. Out of it God hath shined.
 - (a) On this world.
 - (b) On gracious souls.
 - (c) On angels who desire to look, etc.
 - (d) On the universe. "All the creatures heard I, "etc.

Verse 4.

1. What God will do for his people. He will judge them. (a) Deliver. (b) Defend. (c) Uphold.
2. The means at his disposal for this purpose. "He shall call, "etc.—Heaven and earth are subservient to him for the good of his church. *G. R.*

Verse 4. The judgment of the visible church. It will be by God himself, public, searching—with fire and wind, exact, final.

Verse 5. The great family gathering.

- (a) Who are gathered.
- (b) How they are gathered.
- (c) To whom.
- (d) When they are gathered.

Verse 5 (*last clause*).

1. The covenant.
2. The sacrifice which ratifies it.
3. How we may be said to make it.

Verse 6 (*last clause*). Then slander will not pervert the sentence, undue severity will not embitter it, partiality will not excuse, falsehood will not deceive, justice will surely be done.

Verse 7. Sins of God's people specially against God, and only known to God. A searching subject.

Verses 13-15. What sacrifices are not, and what are acceptable with God.

Verse 15.

1. The occasion—"trouble."
2. The command—"call upon me."
3. The promise—"I will deliver thee."
4. The design—"Thou shalt, "etc. *G. R.*

Verse 15. *Thou shalt glorify me.* This we do by praying, and by praising when prayer is heard; as also by confidence in his promises, submission to his chastisements, concern for his honour, attachment to his cause, affection to his people, and by continual obedience to his commands.

Verse 15.

1. A special invitation as to person and time.
2. Special promise to those accepting it.
3. Special duty involved when the promise is fulfilled.

Verses 16-17.

1. The prohibition given.

(a) The prohibited *things*—"declare my statutes." "Take my covenant, "etc. (1.) Preaching. (2.) Teaching, as in Sunday schools. (3.) Praying. (4.) Attending ordinances.

(b) Prohibited *persons*. Wicked preachers, etc., while they continue in wickedness.

2. The reason assigned; Ps 50:17.

- (a) No self application of the truth.
- (b) Inward hatred of it.
- (c) Outward rejection. —*G. R.*

Verse 17.

1. *The fatal sign.* (a) Hating to be taught. (b) Hating what is taught.
2. *What it indicates:* (a) Pride. (b) Contempt of God. (c) Indifference to truth. (d) Atheism at heart. (e) Deadness of conscience.
3. *What it leads to.* See Ps 50:22.

Verses 17-18. Rejection of salutary instruction leads sooner or later to open transgression. Instances, reasons, inferential warnings.

Verses 20-21.

1. Man speaking and God silent.
2. God speaking and man silent.

Verse 21.

1. God leaves men for a time to themselves.
2. They judge of God on this account by themselves.
3. He will in due time reveal their whole selves to themselves. "I will reprove, "etc. *G. R.*

Verses 21, 23. Note the alternative; a life rightly ordered now, or sins set in order hereafter.

Verse 22.

1. The accusation—"Ye that forget God, "his omniscience, his power, his justice, his goodness, his mercy, his word, his great salvation.
2. The admonition—"Consider this, "rouse yourselves from your forgetfulness into serious reflection.
3. The condemnation—"Lest, "etc. (a) The awfulness. "Tear, "as a lion or eagle its prey—tear body and soul. (b) Its irresistibility—"None to deliver." —*G. R.*

Verses 21, 23. Note the alternative; a life rightly ordered now, or sins set in order hereafter.

Verse 23.

1. Salvation is the work of God.
2. The evidence of salvation is holiness of heart and life.
3. The effect of that evidence is praise.
4. The tendency of that praise is to glorify God. God is not glorified by the doubts, and fears, and murmurings of his people, but by their praise. *G. R.*

Verse 23. (*last clause*). The true order of life.

1. That first which is first.
2. That most which is most.
3. That ever which is ever.
4. That all which is all.

WORK UPON THE FIFTIETH PSALM

In the old quarto edition (1634) of "*Mr. Paul Bayne's Commentary on Colossians*", "among the "*divers places of Scripture briefly explained*", "there is an exposition of Ps 50:21-23, of this Psalm, entitled, "*The Terror of God displayed against carnal security*."

Psalm 51

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. To the Chief Musician. Therefore not written for private meditation only, but for the public service of song. Suitable for the loneliness of individual penitence, this matchless Psalm is equally well adapted for an assembly of the poor in spirit. A Psalm of David. It is a marvel, but nevertheless a fact, that writers have been found to deny David's authorship of this Psalm, but their objections are frivolous, the Psalm is David like all over. It would be far easier to imitate Milton, Shakespeare, or Tennyson, than David. His style is altogether sui generis, and it is as easily distinguished as the touch of Raphaëlle or the colouring of Rubens. "When Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba." When the divine message had aroused his dormant conscience and made him see the greatness of his guilt, he wrote this Psalm. He had forgotten his psalmody while he was indulging his flesh, but he returned to his harp when his spiritual nature was awakened, and he poured out his song to the accompaniment of sighs and tears. The great sin of David is not to be excused, but it is well to remember that his case has an exceptional collection of specialities in it. He was a man of very strong passions, a soldier, and an Oriental monarch having despotic power; no other king of his time would have felt any compunction for having acted as he did, and hence there were not around him those restraints of custom and association which, when broken through, render the offence the more monstrous. He never hints at any form of extenuation, nor do we mention these facts in order to apologize for his sin, which was detestable to the last degree; but for the warning of others, that they reflect that the licentiousness in themselves at this day might have even a graver guilt in it than in the erring King of Israel. When we remember his sin, let us dwell most upon his penitence, and upon the long series of chastisements which rendered the after part of his life such a mournful history.

DIVISION. It will be simplest to note in the first twelve verses the penitent's confessions and plea for pardon, and then in the last seven his anticipatory gratitude, and the way in which he resolves to display it.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Have mercy upon me, O God.* He appeals at once to the mercy of God, even before he mentions his sin. The sight of mercy is good for eyes that are sore with penitential weeping. Pardon of sin must ever be an act of pure mercy, and therefore to that attribute the awakened sinner flies. "*According to thy lovingkindness.*" Act, O Lord, like thyself; give mercy like thy mercy. Show mercy such as is congruous with thy grace.

"Great God, thy nature hath no bound:
So let thy pardoning love be found."

What a choice word is that of our English version, a rare compound of precious things: love and kindness sweetly blended in one—"lovingkindness."
According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies. Let thy most loving

compassions come to me, and make thou thy pardons such as these would suggest. Reveal all thy gentlest attributes in my case, not only in their essence but in their abundance. Numberless have been thine acts of goodness, and vast is thy grace; let me be the object of thine infinite mercy, and repeat it all in me. Make my one case an epitome of all thy tender mercies. By every deed of grace to others I feel encouraged, and I pray thee let me add another and a yet greater one, in my own person, to the long list of thy compassions. *Blot out my transgressions.* My revolts, my excesses, are all recorded against me; but, Lord, erase the lines. Draw thy pen through the register. Obliterate the record, though now it seems engraven in the rock for ever; many strokes of thy mercy may be needed, to cut out the deep inscription, but then thou has a multitude of mercies, and therefore, I beseech thee, erase my sins.

Verse 2. *Wash me thoroughly.* It is not enough to blot out the sin; his person is defiled, and he fain would be purified. He would have God himself cleanse him, for none but he could do it effectually. The washing must be thorough, it must be repeated, therefore he cries, "Multiply to wash me." The dye is in itself immovable, and I, the sinner, have lain long in it, till the crimson is ingrained; but, Lord, wash, and wash, and wash again, till the last stain is gone, and not a trace of my defilement is left. The hypocrite is content if his garments be washed, but the true suppliant cries, "wash *me*." The careless soul is content with a nominal cleansing, but the truly awakened conscience desires a real and practical washing, and that of a most complete and efficient kind. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity.* It is viewed as one great pollution, polluting the entire nature, and as all his own; as if nothing were so much his own as his sin. The one sin against Bathsheba, served to show the psalmist the whole mountain of his iniquity, of which that foul deed was but one falling stone. He desires to be rid of the whole mass of his filthiness, which though once so little observed, had then become a hideous and haunting terror to his mind. *And cleanse me from my sin.* This is a more general expression; as if the psalmist said, "Lord, if washing will not do, try some other process; if water avails not, let fire, let anything be tried, so that I may but be purified. Rid me of my sin by some means, by any means, by every means, only do purify me completely, and leave no guilt upon my soul." It is not the punishment he cries out against, but the sin. Many a murderer is more alarmed at the gallows than at the murder which brought him to it. The thief loves the plunder, though he fears the prison. Not so David: he is sick of sin as sin; his loudest outcries are against the evil of his transgression, and not against the painful consequences of it. When we deal seriously with our sin, God will deal gently with us. When we hate what the Lord hates, he will soon make an end of it, to our joy and peace.

Verse 3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions.* Here he sees the plurality and immense number of his sins, and makes open declaration of them. He seems to say, I make a full confession of them. Not that this is my plea in seeking forgiveness, but it is a clear evidence that I need mercy, and am utterly unable to look to any other quarter for help. My pleading guilty has barred me from any appeal against the sentence of justice: O Lord, I must cast myself on thy mercy, refuse me not, I pray thee. Thou hast made me willing to confess. O follow up this work of grace with a full and free remission! *And my sin is ever before me.* My sin as a whole is never out of my mind; it continually oppresses my spirit. I lay it before thee because it is ever before me: Lord, put it away both from thee and me. To an awakened conscience, pain on account of sin is not transient and occasional, but intense and permanent, and this is no sign of divine wrath, but rather a sure preface of abounding favour.

Verse 4. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned.* The virus of sin lies in its opposition to God: the psalmist's sense of sin towards others rather tended to increase the force of this feeling of sin against God. All his wrong doing centred, culminated, and came to a climax, at the foot of the divine throne. To injure our fellow men is sin, mainly because in so doing we violate the law of God. The penitent's heart was so filled with a sense of the wrong done to the Lord himself, that all other confession was swallowed up in a broken hearted acknowledgment of offence against him. *And done this evil in thy sight.* To commit treason in the very court of the king and before his eye is impudence indeed: David felt that his sin was committed in all its filthiness while Jehovah himself looked on. None but a child of God cares for the eye of God, but where there is grace in the soul it reflects a fearful guilt upon every evil act, when we remember that the God whom we offend was present when the trespass was committed. *That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* He could not present any argument against divine justice, if it proceeded at once to condemn him and punish him for his crime. His own confession, and the judge's own witness of the whole transaction, places the transgression beyond all question or debate; the iniquity was indisputably committed, and was unquestionably a foul wrong, and therefore the course of justice was clear and beyond all controversy.

Verse 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity.* He is thunderstruck at the discovery of his inbred sin, and proceeds to set it forth. This was not intended to justify himself, but it rather meant to complete the confession. It is as if he said, not only have I sinned this once, but I am in my very nature a sinner. The fountain of my life is polluted as well as its streams. My birth tendencies are out of the square of equity; I naturally lean to forbidden things. Mine is a constitutional

disease, rendering my very person obnoxious to thy wrath. *And in sin did my mother conceive me.* He goes back to the earliest moment of his being, not to traduce his mother, but to acknowledge the deep tap roots of his sin. It is a wicked wresting of Scripture to deny that original sin and natural depravity are here taught. Surely men who cavil at this doctrine have need to be taught of the Holy Spirit what be the first principles of the faith. David's mother was the Lord's handmaid, he was born in chaste wedlock, of a good father, and he was himself, "the man after God's own heart; "and yet his nature was as fallen as that of any other son of Adam, and there only needed the occasion for the manifesting of that sad fact. In our shaping we were put out of shape, and when we were conceived our nature conceived sin. Alas, for poor humanity! Those who will may cry it up, but he is most blessed who in his own soul has learned to lament his lost estate.

Verse 6. Behold. Here is the great matter for consideration. God desires not merely outward virtue, but inward purity, and the penitent's sense of sin is greatly deepened as with astonishment he discovers this truth, and how far he is from satisfying the divine demand. The second "Behold" is fitly set over against the first; how great the gulf which yawns between them! *Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.* Reality, sincerity, true holiness, heart fidelity, these are the demands of God. He cares not for the pretence of purity, he looks to the mind, heart, and soul. Always has the Holy One of Israel estimated men by their inner nature, and not by their outward professions; to him the inward is as visible as the outward, and he rightly judges that the essential character of an action lies in the motive of him who works it. *And in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom.* The penitent feels that God is teaching him truth concerning his nature, which he had not before perceived. The love of the heart, the mystery of its fall, and the way of its purification—this hidden wisdom we must all attain; and it is a great blessing to be able to believe that the Lord will "make us to know it." No one can teach our innermost nature but the Lord, but he can instruct us to profit. The Holy Spirit can write the law on our heart, and that is the sum of practical wisdom. He can put the fear of the Lord within, and that is the beginning of wisdom. He can reveal Christ in us, and he is essential wisdom. Such poor, foolish, disarranged souls as ours, shall yet be ordered aright, and truth and wisdom shall reign within us.

Verse 7. Purge me with hyssop. Sprinkle the atoning blood upon me with the appointed means. Give me the reality which legal ceremonies symbolise. Nothing but blood can take away my blood stains, nothing but the strongest purification can avail to cleanse me. Let the sin offering purge my sin. Let him who was appointed to atone, execute his sacred office on me; for none can need

it more than I. The passage may be read as the voice of faith as well as a prayer, and so it runs—"Thou wilt purge me with hyssop, *and I shall be clean.*" Foul as I am, there is such power in the divine propitiation, that my sin shall vanish quite away. Like the leper upon whom the priest has performed the cleansing rites, I shall again be admitted into the assembly of thy people and allowed to share in the privileges of the true Israel; while in thy sight also, through Jesus my Lord, I shall be accepted. *Wash me.* Let it not merely be in type that I am clean, but by a real spiritual purification, which shall remove the pollution of my nature. Let the sanctifying as well as the pardoning process be perfected in me. Save me from the evils which my sin has created and nourished in me. *And I shall be whiter than snow.* None but thyself can whiten me, but thou canst in grace outdo nature itself in its purest state. Snow soon gathers smoke and dust, it melts and disappears; thou canst give me an enduring purity. Though snow is white below as well as on the outer surface, thou canst work the like inward purity in me, and make me so clean that only an hyperbole can set forth my immaculate condition. Lord, do this; my faith believes thou wilt, and well she knows thou canst. Scarcely does Holy Scripture contain a verse more full of faith than this. Considering the nature of the sin, and the deep sense the psalmist had of it, it is a glorious faith to be able to see in the blood sufficient, nay, all sufficient merit entirely to purge it away. Considering also the deep natural inbred corruption which David saw and experienced within, it is a miracle of faith that he could rejoice in the hope of perfect purity in his inward parts. Yet, be it added, the faith is no more than the word warrants, than the blood of atonement encourages, than the promise of God deserves. O that some reader may take heart, even now while smarting under sin, to do the Lord the honour to rely thus confidently on the finished sacrifice of Calvary and the infinite mercy there revealed.

Verse 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness.* He prays about his sorrow late in the Psalm; he began at once with his sin; he asks to hear pardon, and then to hear joy. He seeks comfort at the right time and from the right source. His ear has become heavy with sinning, and so he prays, "Make me to hear." No voice could revive his dead joys but that which quickeneth the dead. Pardon from God would give him double joy—"joy and gladness." No stinted bliss awaits the forgiven one; he shall not only *have* a double blooming joy, but he shall *hear* it; it shall sing with exultation. Some joy is felt but not heard, for it contends with fears; but the joy of pardon has a voice louder than the voice of sin. God's voice speaking peace is the sweetest music an ear can hear. *That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* He was like a poor wretch whose bones are crushed, crushed by no ordinary means, but by omnipotence itself. He groaned under no mere flesh wounds; his firmest and yet most tender

powers were "broken in pieces all asunder; "his manhood had become a dislocated, mangled, quivering sensibility. Yet if he who crushed would cure, every wound would become a new mouth for song, every bone quivering before with agony would become equally sensible of intense delight. The figure is bold, and so is the suppliant. He is requesting a great thing; he seeks joy for a sinful heart, music for crushed bones. Preposterous prayer anywhere but at the throne of God! Preposterous there most of all but for the cross where Jehovah Jesus bore our sins in his own body on the tree. A penitent need not ask to be an hired servant, or settle down in despairing content with perpetual mourning; he may ask for gladness and he shall have it; for if when prodigals return the father is glad, and the neighbours and friends rejoice and are merry with music and dancing, what need can there be that the restored one himself should be wretched?

Verse 9. *Hide thy face from my sins.* Do not look at them; be at pains not to see them. They thrust themselves in the way; but, Lord, refuse to behold them, lest if thou consider them, thine anger burn, and I die. *Blot out all mine iniquities.* He repeats the prayer of the first verse with the enlargement of it by the word "all." All repetitions are not "vain repetitions." Souls in agony have no space to find variety of language: pain has to content itself with monotonies. David's face was ashamed with looking on his sin, and no diverting thoughts could remove it from his memory; but he prays the Lord to do with his sin what he himself cannot. If God hide not his face from our sin, he must hide it forever from us; and if he blot not out our sins, he must blot our names out of his book of life.

Verse 10. *Create.* What! has sin so destroyed us, that the Creator must be called in again? What ruin then doth evil work among mankind! *Create in me.* I, in my outward fabric, still exist; but I am empty, desert, void. Come, then, and let thy power be seen in a new creation within my old fallen self. Thou didst make a man in the world at first; Lord, make a new man in me! *A clean heart.* In the seventh verse he asked to be clean; now he seeks a heart suitable to that cleanliness; but he does not say, "Make my old heart clean; " he is too experienced in the hopelessness of the old nature. He would have the old man buried as a dead thing, and a new creation brought in to fill its place. None but God can create either a new heart or a new earth. Salvation is a marvellous display of supreme power; the work *in* us as much as that *for* us is wholly of Omnipotence. The affections must be rectified first, or all our nature will go amiss. The heart is the rudder of the soul, and till the Lord take it in hand we steer in a false and foul way. O Lord, thou who didst once make me, be pleased to new make me, and in my most secret parts renew me. *Renew a right spirit within me.* It was there once, Lord, put it there again. The law on my heart has

become like an inscription hard to read: new write it, gracious Maker. Remove the evil as I have entreated thee; but, O replace it with good, lest into my swept, empty, and garnished heart, from which the devil has gone out for a while, seven other spirits more wicked than the first should enter and dwell. The two sentences make a complete prayer. *Create* what is not there at all; *renew* that which is there, but in a sadly feeble state.

Verse 11. *Cast me not away from thy presence.* Throw me not away as worthless; banish me not, like Cain, from thy face and favour. Permit me to sit among those who share thy love, though I only be suffered to keep the door. I deserve to be forever denied admission to thy courts; but, O good Lord, permit me still the privilege which is dear as life itself to me. *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.* Withdraw not his comforts, counsels, assistances, quickenings, else I am indeed as a dead man. Do not leave me as thou didst Saul, when neither by Urim, nor by prophet, nor by dream, thou wouldst answer him. Thy Spirit is my wisdom, leave me not to my folly; he is my strength, O desert me not to my own weakness. Drive me not away from thee, neither do thou go away from me. Keep up the union between us, which is my only hope of salvation. It will be a great wonder if so pure a spirit deigns to stay in so base a heart as mine; but then, Lord, it is all wonder together, therefore do this, for thy mercy's sake, I earnestly entreat thee.

Verse 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.* Salvation he had known, and had known it as the Lord's own; he had also felt the joy which arises from being saved in the Lord, but he had lost it for a while, and therefore he longed for its restoration. None but God can give back this joy; he can do it; we may ask it; he will do it for his own glory and our benefit. This joy comes not first, but follows pardon and purity: in such order it is safe, in any other it is vain presumption or idiotic delirium. *And uphold me with thy free Spirit.* Conscious of weakness, mindful of having so lately fallen, he seeks to be kept on his feet by power superior to his own. That royal Spirit, whose holiness is true dignity, is able to make us walk as kings and priests, in all the uprightness of holiness; and he will do so if we seek his gracious upholding. Such influences will not enslave but emancipate us; for holiness is liberty, and the Holy Spirit is a free Spirit. In the roughest and most treacherous ways we are safe with such a Keeper; in the best paths we stumble if left to ourselves. The praying for joy and upholding go well together; it is all over with joy if the foot is not kept; and, on the other hand, joy is a very upholding thing, and greatly aids holiness; meanwhile, the free, noble, royal Spirit is at the bottom of both.

Verse 13. *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways.* It was his fixed resolve to be a teacher of others; and assuredly none instruct others so well as those who

have been experimentally taught of God themselves. Reclaimed poachers make the best gamekeepers. Huntingdon's degree of S.S., or Sinner Saved, is more needful for a soul winning evangelist than either M.A. or D.D. The pardoned sinner's matter will be good, for he has been taught in the school of experience, and his manner will be telling, for he will speak sympathetically, as one who has felt what he declares. The audience the psalmist would choose is memorable—he would instruct transgressors like himself; others might despise them, but, "a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind." If unworthy to edify saints, he would creep in along with the sinners, and humbly tell them of divine love. The mercy of God to one is an illustration of his usual procedure, so that our own case helps us to understand his "ways," or his general modes of action: perhaps, too, David under that term refers to the preceptive part of the word of God, which, having broken, and having suffered thereby, he felt that he could vindicate and urge upon the reverence of other offenders. *And sinners shall be converted unto thee.* My fall shall be the restoration of others. Thou wilt bless my pathetic testimony to the recovery of many who, like myself, have turned aside unto crooked ways. Doubtless this Psalm and the whole story of David, have produced for many ages the most salutary results in the conversion of transgressors, and so evil has been overruled for good.

Verse 14. *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness.* He had been the means of the death of Uriah, the Hittite, a faithful and attached follower, and he now confesses that fact. Besides, his sin of adultery was a capital offence, and he puts himself down as one worthy to die the death. Honest penitents do not fetch a compass and confess their sins in an elegant periphrasis, but they come to the point, call a spade a spade, and make a clean breast of all. What other course is rational in dealing with the Omniscient? *O God, thou God of my salvation.* He had not ventured to come so near before. It had been, *O God*, up till now, but here he cries, *Thou God of my salvation.* Faith grows by the exercise of prayer. He confesses sin more plainly in this verse than before, and yet he deals with God more confidently: growing upward and downward at the same time are perfectly consistent. None but the King can remit the death penalty, it is therefore a joy to faith that God is King, and that he is the author and finisher of our salvation. *And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.* One would rather have expected him to say, I will sing of thy mercy; but David can see the divine way of justification, that righteousness of God which Paul afterwards spoke of by which the ungodly are justified, and he vows to sing, yea, and to sing lustily of that righteous way of mercy. After all, it is the righteousness of divine mercy which is its greatest wonder. Note how David would preach in the last verse, and now here he would sing. We can never do too much for the Lord to whom we owe more than all. If we could be preacher, precentor, doorkeeper,

pew opener, foot washer, and all in one, all would be too little to show forth all our gratitude. A great sinner pardoned makes a great singer. Sin has a loud voice, and so should our thankfulness have. We shall not sing our own praises if we be saved, but our theme will be the Lord our righteousness, in whose merits we stand righteously accepted.

Verse 15. *O Lord, open thou my lips.* He is so afraid of himself that he commits his whole being to the divine care, and fears to speak till the Lord unstops his shame silenced mouth. How marvellously the Lord can open our lips, and what divine things can we poor simpletons pour forth under his inspiration! This prayer of a penitent is a golden petition for a preacher, Lord, I offer it for myself and my brethren. But it may stand in good stead any one whose shame for sin makes him stammer in his prayers, and when it is fully answered, the tongue of the dumb begins to sing. *And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* If God opens the mouth he is sure to have the fruit of it. According to the porter at the gate is the nature of that which comes out of a man's lips; when vanity, anger, falsehood, or lust unbar the door, the foulest villainies troop out; but if the Holy Spirit opens the wicket, then grace, mercy, peace, and all the graces come forth in tuneful dances, like the daughters of Israel when they met David returning with the Philistine's head.

Verse 16. *For thou desirest not sacrifice.* This was the subject of the last Psalm. The psalmist was so illuminated as to see far beyond the symbolic ritual; his eye of faith gazed with delight upon the actual atonement. *Else would I give it.* He would have been glad enough to present tens of thousands of victims if these would have met the case. Indeed, anything which the Lord prescribed he would cheerfully have rendered. We are ready to give up all we have if we may but be cleared of our sins; and when sin is pardoned our joyful gratitude is prepared for any sacrifice. *Thou delightest not in burnt offering.* He knew that no form of burnt sacrifice was a satisfactory propitiation. His deep soul need made him look from the type to the antitype, from the external rite to the inward grace.

Verse 17. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.* All sacrifices are presented to thee in one, by the man whose broken heart presents the Saviour's merit to thee. When the heart mourns for sin, thou art better pleased than when the bullock bleeds beneath the axe. "A broken heart" is an expression implying deep sorrow, embittering the very life; it carries in it the idea of all but killing anguish in that region which is so vital as to be the very source of life. So excellent is a spirit humbled and mourning for sin, that it is not only a sacrifice, but it has a plurality of excellences, and is preeminently God's *sacrifices*. *A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* A heart crushed is a

fragrant heart. Men condemn those who are contemptible in their own eyes, but the Lord seeth not as man seeth. He despises what men esteem, and values that which they despise. Never yet has God spurned a lowly, weeping penitent, and never will he while God is love, and while Jesus is called the man who receiveth sinners. Bullocks and rams he desires not, but contrite hearts he seeks after; yea, but one of them is better to him than all the varied offerings of the old Jewish sanctuary.

Verse 18. *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion.* Let blessings according to thy wont be poured upon thy holy hill and chosen city. Zion was David's favourite spot, whereon he had hoped to erect a temple. The ruling passion is so strong on him, that when he has discharged his conscience he must have a word for Zion. He felt he had hindered the project of honouring the Lord there as he desired, but he prayed God still to let the place of his ark be glorious, and to establish his worship and his worshipping people. *Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.* This had been one of David's schemes, to wall in the holy city, and he desires to see it completed; but we believe he had a more spiritual meaning, and prayed for the prosperity of the Lord's cause and people. He had done mischief by his sin, and had, as it were, pulled down her walls; he, therefore, implores the Lord to undo the evil, and establish his church. God can make his cause to prosper, and in answer to prayer he will do so. Without his building we labour in vain; therefore are we the more instant and constant in prayer. There is surely no grace in us if we do not feel for the church of God, and take a lasting interest in its welfare.

Verse 19. In those days of joyful prosperity thy saints shall present in great abundance the richest and holiest thank offerings to thee, and thou shalt be pleased to accept them. A saved soul expects to see its prayers answered in a revived church, and then is assured that God will be greatly glorified. Though we bring no more sacrifices for sin, yet as priests unto God our solemn praises and votive gifts are thank offerings acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We bring not the Lord our least things—our doves and pigeons; but we present him with our best possessions—our bullocks. We are glad that in this present time we are able to fulfil in person the declaration of this verse: we also, forecasting the future, wait for days of the divine presence, when the church of God, with unspeakable joy, shall offer gifts upon the altar of God, which will far eclipse anything beheld in these less enthusiastic days. Hasten it, O Lord.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. "*After he had gone in to Bathsheba.*" This was the devil's nest egg that caused many sins to be laid, one to, and upon another. See the woeful chain of David's lust, 2Sa 11:1-27 12:1-31. *John Trapp.*

Title. "*When Nathan the prophet came unto him as he (i.e., David) had come unto Bathsheba.*" The significant repetition of the phrase *came unto*, is lost in the English and most other versions. "*As*" is not a mere particle of time, simple equivalent to *when*, but suggests the idea of analogy, proportion, and retaliation. *J. A. Alexander.*

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is the brightest gem in the whole book, and contains instruction so large, and doctrine so precious, that the tongue of angels could not do justice to the full development. *Victorinus Strigelius*, 1524-1569.

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is often and fitly called THE SINNER'S GUIDE. In some of its versions it often helps the returning sinner. Athanasius recommends to some Christians, to whom he was writing, to repeat it when they awake at night. All evangelical churches are familiar with it. Luther says, "There is no other Psalm which is oftener sung or prayed in the church." This is the first Psalm in which we have the word *Spirit* used in application to the Holy Ghost. *William S. Plumer.*

Whole Psalm. I cannot doubt the prophetic bearing of this Psalm upon the nation of Israel. In the latter day they shall consider their ways: repentance and self loathing will be the result. Blood guiltiness heavier than that of David has to be removed from that nation. They will become the teachers of the Gentiles, when first the iniquity of their own transgressions has been purged away. *Arthur Pridham.*

Whole Psalm. This is the most deeply affecting of all the Psalms, and I am sure the one most applicable to me. It seems to have been the effusion of a soul smarting under the sense of a recent and great transgression. My God, whether recent or not, give me to feel the enormity of my manifold offences, and remember not against me the sins of my youth. What a mine of rich matter and expression for prayer! Wash, cleanse me, O Lord, and let my sin and my sinfulness be ever before me. Let me feel it chiefly as sin against thee, that my sin may be of the godly sort. Give me to feel the virulence of my native corruption, purge me from it thoroughly, and put truth into my inward parts, that mine may be a real turning from sin unto the Saviour. Create me anew, O God. Withdraw not thy Spirit. Cause me to rejoice in a present salvation.

Deliver me, O God, from the blood guiltiness of having offended any of thy little ones; and so open my lips that I may speak of the wondrous things thou hast done for my soul! May I offer up spiritual sacrifices; and oh! let not any delinquencies of mine bring a scandal upon thy church; but do thou so purify and build her up, that even her external services, freed from all taint of corruption or hypocrisy, may be well pleasing in thy sight. *Thomas Chalmers.*

Verse 1. *Have mercy upon me, O God.* I tremble and blush to mention my name, for my former familiarities with thee only make me more confounded at being recognized by thee after my guilt. I therefore say not, "Lord, remember David," as on a happier occasion; nor as propitiating thee, I used to say, to thy "servant," or, "to the son of thy handmaid." I suggest nothing that should recall my former relation to thee, and so enhance my wickedness. Ask not, then, Lord, who I am, but only forgive me who confess my sin, condemn my fault, and beseech thy pity. *Have mercy upon me, O God.* I dare not say *my* God, for that were presumption. I have lost thee by sin, I have alienated myself from thee by following the enemy, and therefore am unclean. I dare not approach thee, but standing afar off and lifting up my voice with great devotion and contrition of heart, I cry and say, *Have mercy upon me, O God.* From "*A Commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms, chiefly from ancient sources.*" By the Right Rev. A. P. Forbes, Bishop of Brechin, 1857.

Verse 1. *Have mercy.* The Hebrew word here translated *have mercy*. signifieth without cause or desert; Ps 35:19 69:4 Eze 14:23; and freely, without paying any price, Ex 21:11. And it is made use of in Le 6:8, where Noah is said to have found *grace* in the eyes of the Lord, that is, special favour, such as the Lord beareth to his chosen in Christ Jesus. *Charles D. Coetlogon, A.M., in "The Portraiture of the Christian Penitent," 1775.*

Verse 1. *Mercy, lovingkindness, tender mercies.* I cannot but observe here, the gradation in the sense of the three words made use of, to express the divine compassion, and the propriety of the order in which they are placed, which would be regarded as a real excellence and beauty in any classical writer. The first (yngx), denotes that kind of affection which is expressed by moaning over any object that we love and pity—that *otorge*, natural affection and tenderness, which even brute creatures discover to their young ones, by the several noises which they respectively make over them; and particularly the shrill noise of the camel, by which it testifies its love to its foal. The second, (Kdoxk), denotes a strong proneness, a ready, large, and liberal disposition to goodness and compassion powerfully prompting to all instances of kindness and bounty; flowing as freely and plentifully as milk into the breasts, or as waters from a perpetual fountain. This denotes a higher degree of goodness than the former.

The third, (Kymxr), denotes what the Greeks express by *oplagnizeoyai*; that most tender pity which we signify by the moving of the heart and bowels, which argues the highest degree of compassion of which human nature is susceptible. And how reviving is the belief and consideration of these abundant and tender compassions of God to one in David's circumstances, whose mind laboured under the burden of the most heinous complicated guilt, and the fear of the divine displeasure and vengeance! *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 1. *According to the multitude.* Men are greatly terrified at the multitude of their sins, but here is a comfort—our God hath multitude of mercies. If our sins be in number as the hairs of our head, God's mercies are as the stars of heaven; and as he is an infinite God, so his mercies are infinite; yea, so far are his mercies above our sins, as he himself is above us poor sinners. By this the Psalmist seeketh for multitude of mercies, he would show how deeply he was wounded with his manifold sins, that one seemed a hundred. Thus it is with us, so long as we are under Satan's guiding, a thousand seem but one; but if we betake ourselves to God's service, one will seem a thousand. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 1. *Tender mercies,* or, according to Zanchy in his treatise upon the attributes of God, such a kind of affection as parents feel when they see their children in any extremity. 1Ki 3:26. *Charles D. Coetlogon.*

Verse 1. *Blot out my transgressions.* (hxm), *mecheh*, *wipe out*. There is reference here to an *indictment*: the Psalmist knows what it contains; he pleads guilty, but begs that the writing may be *defaced*; that a proper fluid may be applied to the parchment, *to discharge the ink*, that no record of it may ever appear against him: and this only the *mercy, lovingkindness, and tender compassions*, of the Lord can do. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1. *Blot out my transgressions.* What the psalmist alludes is not, as Mr. Leclerc imagines, *debts entered into a book*, and so blotted out of it when forgiven; but the wiping or cleansing of a dish, so as nothing afterwards remains in it. The meaning of the petition is, that God would entirely and absolutely forgive him, so as that no part of the guilt he had contracted might remain, and the punishment of it might be wholly removed. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 1. *Blot out*, or, as it is used in Ex 17:14, *utterly extirpate*, so as that there shall not be any remembrance of them forever. Isa 43:25 44:22. *Charles de Coetlogon.*

Verse 1. *MY transgressions.* Conscience, when it is healthy, ever speaks thus: "MY *transgressions*." It is not the guilt of them that tempted you: they have

theirs; but each as a separate agent, has his own degree of guilt. Yours is your own: the violation of your own and not another's sense of duty; solitary, awful, unshared, adhering to you alone of all the spirits of the universe. *Frederick William Robertson.*

Verses 1, 5. Transgressions...iniquity...sin.

1. It is *transgressions*, (evp), *pesha*, rebellion.
2. It is *iniquity*, (Nwe), *avon*, crooked dealing.
3. It is *sin*, (tajx), *chattath*, error and wandering. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2. *Wash me.* David prays that the Lord would *wash* him; therefore sin defiles, and he was made foul and filthy by his sin; and to wash him much, and to rinse and bathe him, to show that sin had exceedingly defiled him and stained him both in soul and body, and made him loathsome, and therefore he desireth to be washed, and cleansed, and purged from the pollution of sin. Hence we may learn what a vile, filthy and miserable thing sin is in the sight of God: it stains a man's body, it stains a man's soul, it makes him more vile than the vilest creature that lives: no toad is so vile and loathsome in the sight of man, as a sinner, stained and defiled with sin, is in the sight of God, till he be cleansed and washed from it in the blood of Christ. *Samuel Smith.*

Verse 2. *Wash me*, etc. (Mbk) is peculiarly applied to the washing and cleansing of garments, as fullers wash and cleanse their cloths. 2Ki 18:7 Ex 19:10 Le 17:15. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 2. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity.* No other washing will do but *lava tu*, wash thou; so foul as it will need his washing *thoroughly*. *Samuel Page, in "David's Broken Heart," 1646.*

Verse 2. *Was me thoroughly.* Hebrew *multiply to wash me*; by which phrase he implies the greatness of his guilt, and the insufficiency of all legal washings, and the absolute necessity of some other and better thing to wash him, even of God's grace, and the blood of Christ. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 2. *Wash me...cleanse me.* But why should David speak so superfluously? use two words when one would serve? For if we be cleansed, what matter is it whether it be by washing or no? Yet David had great reason for using both words; for he requires not that God would cleanse him by miracle, but by the ordinary way of cleansing, and this was washing; he names therefore washing as the means, and cleansing as the end: he names washing as the work a doing, and cleansing as the work done; he names washing as considering the agent,

and cleansing as applying it to the patient; and indeed, as in the figure of the law there was not, so in the verity of the gospel there is not any ordinary means of cleansing, but only by washing; and therefore out of Christ our Saviour's side there flowed water and blood. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 2. *Cleanse me from my sin.* Observe, it is from the guilt, and not from the punishment, that he thus asked deliverance. That the sword should never depart from his house; that the sin, begun, not only secretly even in its full accomplishment, but far more secretly in the recesses of David's heart, should be punished before all Israel and before the sun; that the child so dear to David should be made one great punishment of his offence; these things, so far as this Psalm is concerned, might, or might not be. It is of the offence against God; of the defiling, although it were not then so expressly declared, God's temple by impurity, that David speaks. *Ambrose, in J. M. Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 2. *Sin.* The original word signifies to miss an aim, as an archer does who shoots short of his mark, beyond, or beside it. It is also used for treading aside, or tripping, in the act of walking. In a spiritual sense it denotes deviation from a rule, whether by omission or commission. *Thomas T. Biddulph, A.M., in Lectures on the Fifty-first Psalm, 1835.*

Verse 2. Sin is filthy to think of, filthy to speak of, filthy to hear of, filthy to do; in a word, there is nothing in it but vileness. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions, etc.* To acknowledge our transgressions, there's confession; and to have our sin ever before us, there's conviction and contrition. To acknowledge our transgressions, I say, is to confess our sins; to call them to mind, to bring them back to our remembrance what we can; to own them with shame, and to declare them with sorrow; to reckon them up one by one, to give in a particular account of them, as far as our memory will serve, and to spread them before the Lord, as Hezekiah did Rabshakah's letter, and in a humble sense of our own vileness to implore his goodness, that he would multiply his mercies over us, as we have multiplied our transgressions against him, in their free and full forgiveness of them all. To have our sin ever before us, is thoroughly to be convinced of it, to be continually troubled in mind about it, to be truly humbled under the sense of it, and to be possessed of those dreads and terrors of conscience which may never let us rest or enjoy any quiet within our own breast till we have reconciled ourselves to a gracious God for it. *Adam Littleton.*

Verse 3. *I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.* There cannot be *agnitio* if there be not *cognitio peccati*, and acknowledging, unless

there precede a knowledge of sin. David puts them together. If our sins be not before us, how can we set them before God? And therefore, to the right exercise of this duty, there is required a previous examination of our hearts, inspection into our lives, that we may be enabled to see our sins. He that hath not yet asked himself that question, *Quid feci?* What have I done? can never make the confession, *si feci*, thus and thus have I done; and in this respect I would, thought not require, yet advise it as a pious and prudent practice, and that which I doubt not but many Christians have found benefit by, to keep a constant daily catalogue, as of mercies received, so of sins committed.

Nathaneal Hardy.

Verse 3. *I, my, my.* David did not think it sufficient to acknowledge that the whole human race were sinners; but as if he stood alone in the world, and was the only offender in it, he says, "I acknowledge *my* transgressions; and *my* sin is ever before me." *Charles de Coetlogon.*

Verse 3. *MY sin.* David owneth his sin, and confesseth it his own. Here is our natural wealth: what can we call our own but sin? Our food and raiment, the necessities of life, are borrowings. We came hungry and naked into the world, we brought none of these with us, and we deserved none of them here. Our sin came with us, as David after confesseth. We have right of inheritance in sin, taking it by traduction and transmission from our parents: we have right of possession. So Job: "Thou makest me to possess the sins of my youth." *Samuel Page.*

Verse 3. *My SIN.* It is sin, as sin, not its punishment here, not hereafter, not simply any of its evil consequences; but sin, the sin against God, the daring impiety of my breaking the good and holy law of this living, loving God. *Thomas Alexander, D.D., in "The Penitent's Prayer," 1861.*

Verse 3. *Ever before me.* Sorrow for sin exceeds sorrow for suffering, in the continuance and durableness thereof: the other, like a landlord, quickly come, quickly gone; this is a continual dropping or running river, keeping a constant stream. *My sins*, saith David, *are ever before me*; so also is the sorrow for sin in the soul of a child of God, morning, evening, day, night, when sick, when sound, fasting, at home, abroad, ever within him. This grief begins at his conversion, continues all his life, ends only at his death. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 3. *Before me.* *Coram populo*, before the people; shame to him: *coram ecclesia*, before the church; grief to them: *coram inimicis*, before the enemies; joy to them: *coram Deo*, before God; anger against him: *coram Nathane*, before Nathan; a chiding. But if any hope of repentance and amendment, it is

peccatum meum coram me, my sin before me. Here is the distress of a sinner, he never discerneth how unhappy he is, till his sin is before him. *Samuel Page.*

Verse 4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* This verse is differently expounded by different persons, and it has ever been considered, that this one little point is the greatest difficulty that is met with in the whole Psalm. Although, therefore, I leave it to others to go according to their own interpretations, yet I have a good hope that I shall be enabled to give the true and genuine meaning of the text. This, then, I would first of all advise the reader to do—to bear in mind that which I observed at the beginning of the Psalm, that David is here speaking in the person of all the saints, and not in his own person only, not in his own person as an adulterer. Although I do not say it might not be, that it was this fall which, as a medium, brought him under the knowledge of himself and of his whole human nature, and made him think thus: "Behold! I, so holy a king, who have with so much pious devotedness observed the law and the worship of God, have been so tempted and overcome by the inbred evil and sin of my flesh, that I have murdered an innocent man, and have for adulterous purposes taken away his wife! And is not this an evident proof that my nature is more deeply infected and corrupted by sin than ever I thought it was? I who was yesterday chaste am today an adulterer! I who yesterday had hands innocent of blood, am today a man of blood guiltiness!" And it might be that in this way he derived the feeling sense of his entire sinfulness, from his fall into adultery and murder, and from thence drew his conclusion—that neither the tree nor the fruit of human nature were good, but that the whole was so deformed and lost by sin, that there was nothing sound left in the whole of nature. This I would have the reader bear in mind, first of all, if he desire to have the pure meaning of this passage. In the next place, the grammatical construction is to be explained, which seems to be somewhat obscure. For what the translator has rendered by the *preterperfect*, ought to be the *present*: *Against thee only do I sin*; that is, I know that before thee I am nothing but a sinner; or, before thee I do nothing but evil continual; that is, my whole life is evil and depraved on account of sin. I cannot boast before thee of merit or of righteousness, but am evil altogether, and in thy sight this is my character—I do evil. I have sinned, I do sin, and shall sin to the end of the chapter. *Martin Luther.*

Verse 4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.* Is there not matter here to make us at a stand? For, to say, "Against thee have I sinned," is most just and fit; but to say, *Against THEE ONLY I have sinned*, seems something hard. It had perhaps been a fit speech in the mouth of our first parent Adam; he might justly have said to God, *Against thee only have I sinned*, who never sinned against

any other; but for us to say it, who commit sins daily against our neighbours, and especially for David to say it, who had committed two notorious sins against his neighbour and faithful friend Uriah, what more unfit speech could possibly be devised? But is it not that these actions of David were great wrongs indeed, and enormous iniquities against Uriah; but can we properly say they were *sins* against Uriah? For what is sin, but a transgression of God's law? And how then can sin be committed against any but against him only whose law we transgress? Or is it, that it may justly be said, *Against thee only have I sinned*, because against others perhaps in a base *tenure*, yet only against God in *capite*? Or is it, that David might justly say to God, "*Against thee only have I sinned*; "because from others he might appeal, as being a king and having no superior; but no appealing from God, as being King of kings and supreme Lord over all? Or is it that we may justly say, *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned*, seeing that Christ hath taken and still takes all our sins upon him; and every sin we commit is as a new burden laid upon his back and upon his back only? Or is it, lastly, that I may justly say, *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned*, because in thy sight only I have done it? For from others I could hide it, and did conceal it? But what can be hidden from the All-seeing eye? And yet if this had been the worst, that I had sinned only against thee, though this had been bad enough, and infinitely too much, yet it might perhaps have admitted reconciliation; but to do this evil *in thy sight*, as if I should say, I would do it though thou stand thyself and look on, and as if in defiance; what sin so formidable? what sin can be thought of so unpardonable? A sin of infirmity may admit apology; a sin of ignorance may find out excuse; but a sin of defiance can find no defence. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.* There is a godly sorrow which leads a man to life; and this sorrow is wrought in a man by the Spirit of God, and in the heart of the godly; that he mourns for sin because it has displeased God, who is so dear and so sweet a Father to him. And suppose he had neither a heaven to lose, nor a hell to gain, yet he is sad and sorrowful in heart because he has grieved God. *John Welch, 1576-1622.*

Verse 4. *Have I sinned. Me, me, adsum, qui feci:* Here, here am I that did it. I whom thou tookest from following the ewes great with lambs, whose sheep hook thou hast changed for a sceptre, whose sheep for thine own people Israel, upon whose head thou hast set a crown of pure gold. I whom thou didst lately invest in the full monarchy of thy people; to whom thou gavest the possession of Jerusalem from the Jebusites; I who settled peace, religion, and courts of justice in Jerusalem, that thou mightest be served and honoured, and I would fain have built thee an house there; *Ego, I, to whom God committed the trust of*

government to rule others, the trust of judgment to punish others, as king over his inheritance. I, to whom God committed the care of others' souls to guide them by his word, to direct them by good counsel, to allure them by his gracious promises, to terrify them by his threatenings, as the Lord's holy prophet. I, who both ways as king and prophet should have been an example of holiness and righteousness to all Israel. Nathan said, *Tu es homo*, thou art the man, in just accusation, and now David saith, *Ego sum homo*, I am the man, in humble confession. *Samuel Page*.

Verse 4. *I have done this evil.* We may find this in experience, that there be many who will not stick at a general speech that they be sinners, and yet will scarcely be known of one special evil to account for. If you fall with them into the several commandments, they will be ready to discover a conceit that there is scarce one that they are faulty in. In the first commandment they acknowledge no God but one; in the second, they do not worship images; in the third, they swear as little as any, and never but for the truth; in the fourth, they keep their church on Sundays as well as most; in the second table, there is neither treason, nor murder, nor theft, nor whoredom, nor the like gross sin, but concerning it they are ready to protest their innocency. He that shall hear them in particular, I do not see how he shall believe them in the general, when they say they be sinners; for when you arraign them at the several commandments they are ready to plead *not guilty* to them all. So long as men are thus without sense and apprehension of particulars, there is no hope of bringing them ever unto good. Happy is he that is pricked to the heart with the feeling of *this evil*. The truth of repentance for that one, will bring him to a thorough repentance for his whole estate. *This one evil* thoroughly understood, brought David on his knees, brake his heart, melted his soul, made him cry for pardon, beg for purging, and importune the Lord for a free spirit to establish him. *Samuel Hieron, in "David's Penitential Psalm opened,"* 1617.

Verse 4. *In thy sight.* David was so bent upon his sin, as that the majesty and presence of God did not awe him at all: this is a great aggravation of sin, and which makes it to be so much the more heinous. For a thief to steal in the very sight of the judge, is the highest piece of impudence that may be; and thus it is for any man to offend in the sight of God and not to be moved with it. *Thomas Horton*.

Verse 4. *That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* But hath not David a defence for it here, and that a very just one? For, in saying, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, *that thou mightest be justified in thy saying,*" doth he not speak as though he had sinned to do God a pleasure? therefore sinned that God might be justified? And what can be more

said for justifying of God? But far is it from David to have any such meaning; his words import not a lessening but an aggravating of his sin, as spoken rather thus: Because a judge may justly be taxed of injustice if he lay a greater punishment upon an offender than the offence deserves; therefore to clear thee, O God, from all possibility of erring in this kind, I acknowledge my sins to be so heinous, my offences so grievous, that thou canst never be unmerciful in punishing though thy punishment should be never so unmerciful. For how can a judge pass the bounds of equity where the delinquent hath passed all bounds of iniquity? and what error can there be in thy being severe when the greatness of my fault is a justification of severity? That thou canst not lay so heavy a doom upon me, which I have not deserved? Thou canst not pronounce so hard a sentence against me, which I am not worthy of. If thou judge me to torture, it is but mildness; if to die the death, it is but my due; if to die everlastingly, I cannot say it were unjust. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity*, etc. He said not, "Behold, this evil have I done," but, *Behold, I was conceived in sin*, etc. He says not, "Behold, I, David, a king, that have received such and such mercies from God, who would have given me more (as God told him), who had that entire communion with him, and graces from him, I, even I, have done this evil. No; he keeps it in till he came to this, and then his heart could hold no longer: *Oh, behold I was conceived in sin*. His debasement was at his *auge* here. And to whom is it he utters this *behold*? What, to men? No; his meaning is not to call on men, *q.d.*, O ye sons of men, behold! That is but his secondary aim, arising out of his having penned it, and delivered it unto the church; but when he uttered it, it was to God, or rather afore God, and yet not as calling on God to behold, for that needed not. David had elsewhere said, "God looked down," etc., "and beheld the sons of men," when speaking of this very corruption. He therefore knew God beheld it sufficiently; but he utters it afore God, or, as spoken of himself between God and himself, thereby to express his own astonishment and amazement at the sight and conviction of this corruption, and at the sight of what a monster he saw himself to be in the sight of God in respect of this sin. It was a *behold* of astonishment at himself, as before the great and holy God; and therefore it was he seconds and follows it with another *behold* made unto God: "*Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.*" And it is as if he had said in both, Oh, how am I in every way overwhelmed, whilst with one eye cast on myself I see how infinitely corrupt I am in the very constitution of my nature; and with the other eye I behold and consider what an infinite holy God thou art in thy nature and being, and what an holiness it is which thou requirest. I am utterly overwhelmed in the intuition of both these, and able to behold no more, nor look up unto thee, O holy God! *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity*, etc. We are not to suppose that David here reflects upon his parents as the medium of transmitting to him the elements of moral evil; and that by the introduction of the doctrine of original sin he intended to extenuate the enormity of his own crimes. On the contrary, we are to regard him as afflicting himself by the humbling consideration that his very nature was fallen, that his transgressions flowed from a heart naturally at enmity with God; that he was not a sinner by accident, but by a depravity of purpose extending to the innermost desires and purposes of the soul; and that there was "a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death" Ro 7:23; and that he was one of a race of guilty beings, none of whom could plead an exemption from an evil heart of unbelief, ready at all times to depart from the living God. Till we see sin in the fountain of the heart, we shall never truly mourn over it in the life and conversation. *John Morison.*

Verse 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity.* He is not low enough down yet, he must come lower. It is not enough for him to confess that the water is filthy at the pool; he goes back to the source, and confesses that the whole river is polluted up to its head. The source is unclean; the very spring wells forth foul waters. *Thomas Alexander.*

Verse 5. *I was shapen in iniquity.* I shall not easily be persuaded to think that parents who are sinners themselves and too much under the influence of bad affections and passions, will be very likely to produce children without transmitting to them some of those disorders and corruptions of nature with which they themselves are infected. And if this be a difficulty, I would beg leave to observe that it is a difficulty which affects natural as well as revealed religion. Since we must take human nature as it is, and if it be really in a state of disorder and corruption, and cannot be otherwise, considering the common law of its production, the difficulty must have been as ancient as the first man that was born; and therefore can be no objection against the truth of revelation, but it must be equally so against natural religion, which must equally allow the thing, if it be in reality a fact, with revelation itself. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 5. Infants are no innocents, being born with original sin, the first sheet wherein they are wrapped is woven of sin, shame, blood, and filth. Eze 16:4, etc. They are said to sin as they were in the loins of Adam, just as Levi is said to pay tithes to Melchizedek, even in the loins of his forefather Abraham Heb 7:9-10; otherwise infants would not die, for death is the wages of sin Ro 6:23; and the reign of death is procured by the reign of sin, which hath reigned over all mankind except Christ. All are sinners, infected with the guilt and filth of sin; the rot (according to the vulgar saying) over runs the whole flock. Hence

David reflects upon original sin as the cause of all his actual, saying, *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*. Thus man's malady beginneth betimes, even in our conception; this subtle serpent sowed his tares very early, so that we are all "born in sin." Joh 9:34. *Christopher Ness's "Divine Legacy," 1700.*

Verse 5. Notwithstanding all that Grotius and others have said to the contrary, I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called *original sin*; the propensity to evil which every man brings into the world with him, and which is the fruitful source whence all transgression proceeds. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6. *Behold.* Before he entereth on any of the parts of the verse he useth the particle of admiration, *Behold*; which he never useth but in some remarkable manner, thereby the more to raise us up to the contemplation of such great matters to be told. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 6. *Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.* Thou lovest truth, not shadows or images, but realities; thou lovest truth *in the inward parts*, inside truth, a true heart, a pure conscience: he is a Christian who is one inwardly. Ro 2:29. *John Bull.*

Verse 6. *Truth in the inward parts.* A great French pear is called *le bon hretien*, the good Christian, because they say it is never rotten at the core. *George Swinnock.*

Verse 6. *In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.* Piscator, in his annotations on this Psalm, puts this sense upon it, that David should bless God for having made him to know this special wisdom in this hidden thing or matter, and had brought the knowledge thereof home, as a point of saving wisdom, to the hidden man of his heart, so as to see fully and clearly this native corruption as the cause of all sin, and on that account to cause him to lay it to heart. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 6. *In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.* It is one thing to be wise headed and wise tongued, and another to be wise hearted, and therefore in Scripture nothing more ordinary than to set forth wisdom that is true indeed by the heart. God himself is said *to be wise of heart*. Foolish creatures are like Ephraim, "a silly dove without heart." They may have *head* enough, notion enough, *flashing light*, appearing to others enough, but they are without a heart; they have not the great work there, a *new head* and an *old heart*, a *full head* and an *empty heart*, a *light and burning profession*, and a

dark, dead, and cold heart; he that takes up in such a condition is a fool and an errant fool. *John Murcot, 1657.*

Verse 6. *And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.* Some read it, "In the hidden part thou *hadst* made me to know wisdom; "*that* thou hadst done it, but I have fallen from my high state, marred thy handiwork. "By one plunge into lust I have fallen and fouled myself." *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 6. The copulative particle which connects the two clauses, implies the correspondence between the revelation of the divine will on the one part and the desire and prayer of the penitent heart on the other. *Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.* "What I want thou hast promised to give." Repentance and faith are the gifts of God, and the awakened mind is conscious that they are so. *Thomas T. Biddulph.*

Verses 6-8. The right conviction of sin comprehends its being acknowledged not only in our *works*, but also in our entire *being*. *Agustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness.* This is the exceeding great love of the Lord toward his children, that he hath not only provided a sure salvation for them through the remission of their sins in Christ Jesus, but also seals up in their heart the testimony thereof by his Holy Spirit of adoption, that for their present consolation, lest they should be swallowed up of heaviness through continual temptations. Though he speak not to all his children as he did to Daniel, by an angel, "O man, greatly beloved of God, "nor as he did to the blessed Virgin Mary, "Hail, Mary, freely beloved, "yet doth he witness the same to the hearts of his children by an inward testimony: when they hear it they are alive; when they want it they are but dead; their souls refuse all other comforts whatsoever. *William Cowper.*

Verse 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness.* As a Christian is the most sorrowful man in the world, so there is none more glad than he. For the cause of his joy is greatest. In respect his misery was greatest, his delivery greatest, therefore his joy greatest. From hell and death is he freed, to life in heaven is he brought...The person from whom he seeketh this joy is God: *Make me to hear*, saith he; whereby he would teach us that this joy cometh only from God; it is he who is the fountain of joy and all pleasure, for "all good things come from above." Natural joys proceed from a natural and fleshly fountain; spiritual joys spring only from God: so he who seeketh those joys beneath seeketh hot water under cold ice. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness.* Another reference to the expiation of the leper, whose ear was to be touched with the blood of the trespass offering and the oil, as well as thumb and toe, to show that his faculties were now prepared for the service of God; so David prays that his ears may be sanctified to the hearing of joy and gladness; this an unsanctified heart can never receive. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 8. *The bones which thou hast broken.* God, in favour to his children, doth afflict them for sin; and the very phrase of breaking his bones, though it express extremity of misery and pain, yet it hath hope in it, for broken bones by a cunning hand may be set again and return to their former use and strength; so that a conscience distressed for sins is not out of hope; yet upon that hope no wise man will adventure upon sin, saying, though I am wounded, yet I may be healed again; though I am broken, I may be repaired; for let him consider—1. Who breaks his bones—*Thou*; he that made us our bones and put them in their several places, and tied them together with ligaments, and covered them with flesh; he that keepeth all our bones from breaking; it must be a great matter that must move him to break the bones of any of us. The God of all consolation, that comforteth us in all our distresses, when he cometh to distress us, this makes affliction weigh heavy...2. The pain of the affliction expressed so feelingly in the breaking of bones, which, as is said, is the anguish of the soul for sin, and fear of the consuming fire of God's wrath, and the tempest, as Job calls it, of anger. 3. The pain of setting these bones again: for, though bones dislocated may be put in joint, and though bones broken may be set again, yet this is not done without pain and great extremity to the patient. Repentance setteth all our broken, pained bones; it recovers the soul from the anguish thereof; but he that once feels the smart of a true repentance, will say, the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, are as hard a bargain as ever he made, and as dear bought; they cost tears, which are *sanguis vulnerati cordis*, the blood of a wounded heart; they cost sighs and groans which cannot be expressed; they cost watching, fasting, taming of the body to bring it in subjection, even to the crucifying of the flesh with the lusts thereof. Therefore, let no man adventure his bones in hope of setting them again. *Samuel Page.*

Verse 8. *That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* The displeasure which God expressed against the sins he had been guilty of, and the deep sense he had of the aggravated nature of them, filled him with those pains and agonies of mind, as that he compares them to that exquisite torture he must have felt had all his bones been crushed, for the original word (*tykd*), signifies more than broken, namely, being entirely mashed; and he compares the joy that God's declaring himself fully reconciled to him would produce in his mind, to

that inconceivable pleasure, which would arise from the instantaneous restoring and healing those bones, after they had been thus broken and crushed to pieces. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 9. *Hide thy face from my sins.* The verb (rtk) properly signifies *to veil*, or hide with a veil. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 9. *Hide thy face from my sins.* He said in the third verse, that his sin was always in his sight; and now he prays that God would put it out of his sight. This is a very good order. If we hold our sins in our eyes to pursue them, God will cast them behind his back to pardon them: if we remember them and repent, he will forget them and forgive: otherwise, *peccatum unde homo non advertit Deus: et si advertit, animadvertit*—the sin from which man turns not, God looks to it; and if he look to it, sure he will punish it. *William Cowper.*

Verse 9. *All mine iniquities.* See how one sin calleth to mind many thousands, which though they lie asleep a long time, like a sleeping debt, yet we know not how soon they may be reckoned for. Make sure of a general pardon, and take heed of adding new sins to the old. *John Trapp.*

Verse 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God.* O you that created the first heaven and the first earth of nothing! O you that will create the *new heaven* and the *new earth* (wherein dwells righteousness), when sin had made the creature worse than nothing! O you that creates the *new creature*, the new man, fit to be an inhabitant of the new world, of the new Jerusalem! O thou that hast said, "Behold, I make all things new:" *create* thou in me, even in me, *a clean heart; and renew a right spirit within me.* *Matthew Lawrence.*

Verse 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God,* etc. David prayeth the Lord *to create him a new heart*, not to correct his old heart, but to create him a new heart; showing that his heart was like an old garment, so rotten and tattered that he could make no good of it by patching or piecing, but even must cut it off, and take a new. Therefore Paul saith, "Cast off the old man; "not pick him and wash him till he be clean, but cast him off and begin anew, as David did. Will ye know what this renewing is? It is the repairing of the image of God, until we be like Adam when he dwelt in Paradise. As there is a whole old man, so there must be a whole new man. The old man must change with the new man, wisdom for wisdom, love for love, fear for fear; his worldly wisdom for heavenly wisdom, his carnal love for spiritual love, his servile fear for Christian fear, his idle thoughts for sanctified works. *Henry Smith.*

Verse 10. *Create in me a clean heart.* *Creating*, to speak properly, is to make of nought, and is here used improperly. The prophet speaketh according to his own feeling and present judgement of himself, as though he had lost all, and had no goodness in himself. No doubt the prophet's heart was in part clean, though not so much as he desired. These things thus opened, here cometh a question first to be answered. *Quest.* Whether David could have lost the cleanness of heart, having once had it? *Ans.* No. The gifts and calling of God, that is (as I take it), the gifts of effectual calling, are such as God never repenteth of or taketh away. Faith, hope, and charity are abiding gifts, as sure as the election of God, which is unchangeable. Indeed, the children of God, if we only considered them in themselves with their enemies, might fall away, but being founded upon the unchangeable nature of God, and immutability of his counsel, they cannot, the gates of hell shall not prevail against them, the elect cannot be deceived or plucked out of Christ's hands. Nay, certain it is that David did not actually leave his former cleanness. For sure it is, his heart smiting him (as here it did), so doing before in less matters, it was not wholly void of cleanness. And again, it could not pray for cleanness if it were not somewhat clean. This is most sure, that by grievous sins much filthiness cometh to the soul, as by a boisterous wind a tree may lose his leaves and some branches, so as that the party sinning may be brought into as great passions almost as if he had lost all, but the desire of grace is an infallible certainty of some grace of that kind. The prophet therefore desireth not a clean heart because he had it not in any sort, but because he could not so well perceive it in himself, and take such comfort in it as he had done before, and for that he desired it a great deal more than now he had it. So learned, so rich men, think themselves not learned, not rich, in respect of that which they do desire, and when the sun is up, the moon seemeth to have no light. *George Estey, in "Certain Godly and Learned Expositions," 1603.*

Verse 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, etc.* This "creation" is from nothing. David uses the same word of our creation which Moses uses of "the creation of the heaven and the earth." Our creation "in Jesus Christ" is no mere strengthening of our powers, no mere aiding of our natural weakness by the might of the grace of God, it is not a mere amendment, improvement of our moral habits; it is a creation out of nothing, of that which we had not before. There was nothing in us whereof to make it. We were decayed, corrupt, dead in trespasses and sins. What is dead becometh not alive, except by the infusion of what it had not. What is corrupt receiveth not soundness, save by passing away itself and being replaced by a new production. "The old man" passeth not into the new man, but is "put off." It is not the basis of the new life, but a hindrance

to it. It must be "put off" and the new man "put on, "created in Christ Jesus. *E. B. Pusey, D.D., 1853.*

Verse 10. (*first clause*). He used the word *creat* (Heb. *Bara*), a word only used of the work of God, and showing that the change in him could be wrought only by God. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 10. *A clean heart.* The priest was required to make a strict examination of the skin of the leper before he could pronounce him clean; David prays God to make his heart clean. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 10. *A right spirit. A steadfast spirit, i.e.,* a mind steady in following the path of duty. *French and Skinner.*

Verses 10-12. Who was to do this work? Not *himself*; God alone. Therefore, he prays: "O God, create—O lord, renew; uphold by thy Spirit." *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 11. *Cast me not away from thy presence.* David lamented before that sin had slain him, and made him like a dead man, wanting a heart or quickening spirit; and now he fears lest, as the dead are abhorred by the living, so the Lord should cast him as a dead and abominable thing out of his presence. Whereof we learn this is one of the just punishments of sin; it procures the casting out of a man from the face of God; and it may let us see how dear bought are the pleasures of sin when a man to enjoy the face of the creature deprives himself of the comfortable face of the Creator; as David here, for the carnal love of the face of Bathsheba, puts himself in danger to be cast out forever from the presence of the Lord his God. If a man could remember this in all Satan's temptations, what it is that the deceiver offers, and what it is again that he seeks, he would be loath to buy the perishing pleasures of sin upon such a price as Satan selleth them, but would answer him as the apostle did Simon Magus, "Thy money, with thyself, go into perdition; "thy gain, thy glory, thy pleasure, and whatever thou wouldst give me to offend the Lord my God, go with thyself into perdition, for what canst thou offer me comparable to that which thou wouldst steal from me? But how is it that he prays, *Cast me not out from thy presence?* May a man be cast any way from it? Saith he not himself, "What way can I flee from thy presence?" This is soon answered by distinguishing his twofold presence—one in mercy, wherewith he refresheth and comforteth his own, and this without intermission they enjoy who are in heaven; another, in wrath, whereby he terrifies and torments without intermission the damned in hell. As to them who are upon the earth, certain it is he is displeased with many, who, because they see not his angry face, regard it not, borne out with temporal recreations of the creature, which will fail them; and there are many,

again, to whom he looks as a loving father in Christ, and yet they see not his merciful face by reason of many interjected veils; but to them who once have felt the sweetness of his favourable face it is death to want it. *William Cowper.*

Verse 11. *Cast me not away from thy presence.* Like the leper who is banished from society till cleansed, or as Saul was rejected from being king, because he obeyed not the word of the Lord. 1Sa 15:23. David could not but feel that his transgression would have deserved a similar rejection. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 11. *Cast me not away.* Lord, though I, alas! have cast thee from me, yet cast me not away: hide not thy face from me, although I so often have refused to look at thee; leave me not without help, to perish in my sins, though I have aforetime left thee. *Fra Thomé de Jesu.*

Verse 11. *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.* The words of this verse imply that the Spirit had not altogether been taken away from him, however much his gifts had been temporarily obscured...Upon one point he had fallen into a deadly lethargy, but he was not "given over to a reprobate mind; "and it is scarcely conceivable that the rebuke of Nathan the prophet should have operated so easily and suddenly in arousing him had there been no latent spark of godliness still remaining...The truth on which we are now insisting is an important one, as many learned men have been inconsiderately drawn into the opinion that the elect, by falling into mortal sin, may lose the Spirit altogether, and be alienated from God. The contrary is clearly declared by Peter, who tells us that the word by which we are born again is an incorruptible seed 1Pe 1:23; and John is equally explicit in informing us that the elect are preserved from falling away altogether. 1Jo 3:9. However much they may appear for a time to have been cast off by God, it is afterwards seen that grace must have been alive in their breasts even during that interval when it seemed to be extinct. Nor is there any force in the objection that David speaks as if he feared that he might be deprived of the Spirit. It is natural that the saints, when they have fallen into sin, and have thus done what they could to expel the grace of God, should feel an anxiety upon this point; but it is their duty to hold fast the truth, that grace is the incorruptible seed of God, which never can perish in any heart where it has been deposited. This is the spirit displayed by David. Reflecting upon his offence, he is agitated with fears, and yet rests in the persuasion that, being a child of God, he would not be deprived of what, indeed, he had justly forfeited. *John Calvin.*

Verse 12. *Restore.* It is no small comfort to a man that hath lost his receipt for a debt paid when he remembers that the man he deals with is a good and just man, though his discharge is not presently to be found. That God whom thou

hast to deal with is very gracious; what thou hast lost he is ready to restore (the evidence of thy grace I mean). David begged this, and obtained it. Yea, saith faith, if it were true what thou fearest, that thy grace was never true, there is mercy enough in God's heart to pardon all thy former hypocrisy if thou comest in the sincerity of thy heart; and so faith persuades the soul by an act of adventure to cast itself upon God in Christ. Wilt not thou, saith faith, expect to find as much mercy at God's hands, as thou canst look for at a man's? It is not beyond the line of created mercy to forgive many unkindnesses, much falseness and unfaithfulness, upon an humble, sincere acknowledgment of the same. The world is not so bad but it abounds with parents who can do thus much for their children, and masters for their servants; and is that hard for God to do which is so easy in his creature? Thus faith vindicates God's name. And so long as we have not lost sight of God's merciful heart, our head will be kept above water, though we want the evidence of our own grace. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation*, etc. How can God restore that which he took not away? For, can I charge God with the taking away the joy of his salvation from me? O gracious God, I charge not thee with taking it, but myself with losing it; and such is the miserable condition of us poor wretches, that if thou shouldest restore no more to us than what thou takest from us, we should quickly be at a fault in our estates, and our ruin would be as sudden as inevitable. But what am I so earnest for restoring? for what good will restoring do me? and how shall I more keep it being restored, than I kept it before being enjoyed? and if I so enjoy it, as still to fear to lose it, what joy can there be in such enjoying? O therefore, not restore it only, but *establish me with thy free spirit*; that as by thy restoring I may enjoy it entirely, so by thy establishing I may enjoy it securely. *Sir Richard Baker*.

Verse 12. *Uphold me*. I am tempted to think that I am now an established Christian, that I have overcome this or that lust so long that I have got into the habit of the opposite grace, so that there is no fear; I may venture very near the temptation, nearer than other men. This is a lie of Satan. I might as well speak of gunpowder getting by habit a power of resisting fire, so as not to catch the spark. As long as powder is wet it resists the spark, but when it becomes dry it is ready to explode at the first touch. As long as the Spirit dwells in my heart, he deadens me to sin, so that if lawfully called through temptation I may reckon upon God carrying me through. But when the Spirit leaves me, I am like dry gunpowder. Oh, for a sense of this! *Robert Murray Macheyne*.

Verse 12. *Uphold me with thy free spirit*. A loving mother chooses a fitting place, and a fitting time, to let her little child fall; it is learning to walk, it is getting over confident, it may come to a dangerous place, and if possessed of

all this confidence, may fall and destroy itself. So she permits it to fall at such a place, and in such a way as that it may be hurt, wholesomely hurt, but not dangerously so. It has now lost its confidence, and clings all the more fondly and trustingly to the strong hand that is able to hold up all its goings. So this David, this little child of the great God, has fallen; it is a sore fall, all his bones are broken, but it has been a precious and a profitable lesson to him; he has no confidence any longer in himself, his trust is not now in an arm of flesh. "Uphold me with thy free spirit." *Thomas Alexander*.

Verse 12. (*last clause*). *Let a free spirit sustain me*; that is, let me not be enslaved, as I have been, by my sinful passions. *Henry Dimock, M.A., 1791*.

Verse 13. *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways*, etc. We see our duty craves that when we have received mercy from God for ourselves, we should make vantage of it for the edification of others. Every talent received from God should be put to profit, but specially the talent of mercy; as it is greatest, so the Lord requires greater fruit of it, for his own glory, and for the edification of our brethren. Seeing we are vessels of mercy, should not the scent and sweet odour of mercy go from us to others? This duty Christ craved from Peter: "And thou, when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren." And this duty, as David here promises, so we may read how he did perform it: "Come unto me, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." The property of a Christian is, *fides per delectionem efficax*, faith worked by love. What availeth it to pretend faith toward God, where there is no love toward thy neighbour? and wherein can thy love be declared more than in this, to draw thy neighbour to the participation of that same merit whereunto God hath called thee? By the law a man was bound to bring home his neighbour's wandering beast if he had met with it before; how much more, then, to turn again his neighbour himself when he wanders from the Lord his God? If two men walking on the way should both fall into one pit, and the one being relieved out of it should go his way and forget his neighbour, might it not justly be called a barbarous and inhuman cruelty? We have all fallen into one and the same mire of iniquity; since the Lord hath put out his merciful hand to draw us out of this prison of sin, shall we refuse to put out our hand to see if possibly we may draw up our brethren with us? *William Cowper (Bishop)*.

Verse 14. (*first clause*). *Deliver me from bloods*. The term *bloods* in Hebrew may denote any capital crime; and in my opinion he is here to be considered as alluding to the sentence of death, to which he felt himself to be obnoxious, and from which he requests deliverance. *John Calvin*.

Verse 14. (*first clause*). The Chaldee reads, *Deliver me from the judgment of murder.*

Verse 14. *O God, thou God of my salvation. O God,* is a good invocation, for he heareth prayers. Yet to distinguish him from all false gods he is so particular as to single him from all other: *Thou God.* And to magnify him, and to reenforce his petition, he calleth him *Deum salutis*, "*the God of my salvation*," which expresses him able to deliver him; for it is his nature, and his love, and his glory, to be a preserver of men. And to bring home this joy and comfort into his own heart, he addeth, *salutis meae*, "*of my salvation.*" So it is *oratio fervens*, and the apostle telleth us that such a prayer prevaieth much with God. For God may be a Saviour and a deliverer, and yet we may escape his saving hand, his right hand may skip us. We can have no comfort in the favours of God, except we can apply them at home; rather we may "think on God and be troubled." *Samuel Page.*

Verse 14. *And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.* Hierom, Basil, Euthymius, and other ancient doctors observe that natural corruptions and actual sins are the very rampiers which stop the free passage of song Ps 51:15. So David doth himself expound himself: *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.* His lack of thankfulness did cry, his adultery cry, his murder cry unto the Lord for revenge; but alas! himself was mute, till God in exceeding great mercy did stop the mouths of his clamorous adversaries, and gave him leave to speak. *John Boys.*

Verse 14. *Aloud.* This for God, for himself, for the church. 1. *For God*, that his honour may be proclaimed, therefore they borrowed the voice of still and loud instruments...2. *For himself.* Having received such a benefit, he cannot contain himself, this new wine of spiritual joy which filleth his vessel must have a vent. All passions are loud. Anger chides loud, sorrow cries loud, fear shrieks loud, and joy sings loud. So he expresses the vehemency of his affection; for to whom much is forgiven, they love much. 3. *For others.* Iron sharpens iron—examples of zeal and devotion affect much, and therefore solemn and public assemblies do generally tender the best service to God, because one provoketh another. *Samuel Page.*

Verse 15. *O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* As man is a little world in the great, so the tongue is a great world in the little. *Nihil habet medium; aut grande malum est, aut grande bonum.* (Jerome.) It has no mean; it is either a great evil, or a great good. If good (as Eunapius said of that famous rhetorician) *a walking library*, a whole university of edifying knowledge; but if bad (as St. James doth tell us, Jas 3:6), "*a world of*

wickedness." No better dish for God's public service, when it is we; seasoned; again, none worse, when ill handled. So that if we desire to be doorkeepers in God's house, let us entreat God first to be a doorkeeper in our house, that he would shut the wicket of our mouth against unsavoury speeches, and open the door of our lips, *that our mouth may shew forth his praise.* This was David's prayer, and ought to be thy practice, wherein observe three points especially: who, *the Lord*; what, *open my lips*; why, *that my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* For the first—man of himself cannot untie the strings of his own stammering tongue, but it is God only which opened "a door of utterance." Col 4:3. When we have a good thought, it is (as the school doth speak) *gratia infusa*; when a good word, *gratia effusa*; when a good work, *gratia diffusa*. Man is a lock, the Spirit of God has a key, "which openeth and no man shutteth; "again, "shutteth and no man openeth." Re 3:7. He did open the heart of Lydia to conceive well, the ears of the prophet to hear well, the eyes of Elisha servant to see well, and here the lips of David to speak well. Ac 16:1-40 Isa 50:1-11 2Ki 6:1-33. And therefore, whereas in the former verse he might seem too peremptory, saying, *My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness*; he doth, as it were, correct himself by this later edition and second speech: O Lord, I find myself most unable to sing or say, but *open thou my lips*, and touch thou my tongue, and then I am sure *my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* John Boys.

Verse 15. *O Lord, open thou my lips*, etc. Again he seems to have the case of the leper before his mind, with the upper lip covered, and only crying unclean, unclean; and he prays as a spiritual leper to be enabled, with freedom and fulness, to publish abroad the praise of his God. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 15. (*first clause*). He prays that *his lips may be opened*; in other words, that God would afford him matter of praise. The meaning, usually attached to the expression is, that God would so direct his tongue by the Spirit as to fit him for singing his praises. But though it is true that God must supply us with words, and that if he do not, we cannot fail to be silent in his praise, David seems rather to intimate that his mouth must be shut until God called him to the exercise of thanksgiving by extending pardon. *John Calvin.*

Verse 16. *For thou desirest not sacrifice*; etc. There may be another reason why David here affirms that God would not accept of a sacrifice, nor be pleased with a burnt offering. No particular sacrifices were appointed by the law of Moses to expiate the guilt of murder and adultery. The person who had perpetrated these crimes was, according to the divine law, to be punished with death. David therefore may be understood as declaring, that it was utterly vain for him to think of resorting to sacrifices and burnt offerings with a view to the

expiation of his guilt; that his criminality was of such a character, that the ceremonial law made no provision for his deliverance from the doom which his deeds of horror deserved; and that the only sacrifices which would avail were those mentioned in the succeeding verse, "*The sacrifice of a broken heart.*" *John Calvin.*

Verse 16. *Else would I give it thee.* And good reason it is, that we who lie daily at the beautiful gate of the temple begging alms of him, and receiving from his open hand, who openeth his hand, and filleth with his plenty every living thing, should not think much to return to him such offerings of our goods as his law requireth. *Samuel Page.*

Verses 16-17. And now I was thinking what were fit *to offer to God* for all his lovingkindness he has showed me; and I thought upon *sacrifices*, for they have sometimes been pleasing to him, and he hath oftentimes smelt a sweet odour from them; but I considered that sacrifices were but shadows of things to come, are not now in that grace they have been; for *old things are past, and new are now come*; the shadows are gone, the substances are come in place. The bullocks that are to be sacrificed now are our hearts; it were easier for me to give him bullocks for sacrifice, than to give him my heart. But why should I offer him that he care not for? my heart, I know, he cares for; and if it be broken, and offered up by penitence and contrition, it is the only sacrifice that now he delights in. But can we think God to be so indifferent that he will accept of a broken heart? Is a thing that is broken good for anything? Can we drink in a broken glass? Or can we lean upon a broken staff? But though other things may be the worse for breaking, yet a heart is never at the best till it be broken; for till it be broken we cannot see what is in it; till it be broken, it cannot send forth its sweetest odour; and therefore, though God loves a whole heart in affection, yet he loves a broken heart in sacrifice. And no marvel, indeed, seeing it is himself that breaks it; for as nothing but goat's blood can break the adamant, so nothing but the blood of our scapegoat, Jesus Christ, is able to break our adamantine hearts. Therefore, accept, O God, my broken heart, which I offer thee with a whole heart; seeing thou canst neither except against it for being whole, which is broken in sacrifice, nor except against it for being broken, which is whole in affection. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 17. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart,* etc. When speaking of *thankfulness*, we might have expected him to say, "*a joyful heart, or a thankful heart,*" but instead of that he says, "*a contrite heart.*" For the joy of forgiveness does not banish sorrow and contrition for sin: this will still continue. And the deeper the sense of sin, and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and

reconciliation. The tender, humble, broken heart, is therefore the best thank offering. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 17. It may be observed that the second word, (xkbn) which we render *contrite*, denotes the being bruised and broken to pieces, as a thing is bruised in a mortar (See Nu 11:8), and therefore, in a moral sense, signifies such a weight of sorrow as must wholly crush the mind without some powerful and seasonable relief. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 18. *In thy good pleasure.* Whatever we seek must ever be sought under this restriction, *Thy good pleasure.* Build thou, but do it in thine own wise time, in thine own good way. Build thou the walls of separation that divide the church from the world; let them be *in* it, not *of* it; keep them from its evil. Build thou the walls that bind, that unite thy people into one city, under one polity, that they all may be one. Build thou, and raze thou; raze all the inner walls that divide thy people from thy people; hasten that day when, as there is but one Shepherd, so shall there be but one sheepfold. *Thomas Alexander.*

Verses 18-19. Some few learned Jewish interpreters, while they assign the Psalm to the occasion mentioned in the title, conjecture that the 18th and 19th verses were added by some Jewish bard, in the time of the Babylonish captivity. This opinion is also held by Venema, Green, Street, French and Skinner. There does not, however, seem to be any sufficient ground for referring the poem, either in whole or part, to that period. Neither the walls of Jerusalem, nor the buildings of Zion, as the royal palace and the magnificent structure of the temple, which we know David had already contemplated for the worship of God (2Sa 7:1, etc.), were completed during his reign. This was only effected under the reign of his son Solomon. 1Ki 3:1.

The prayer, then, in the 18th verse might have a particular reference to the completion of these buildings, and especially to the rearing of the temple, in which sacrifices of unprecedented magnitude were to be offered. David's fears might easily suggest to him that his crimes might prevent the building of the temple, which God had promised should be erected. 2Sa 7:13. "The king forgets not," observes Bishop Horne, "to ask mercy for his people as well as for himself; that so neither his own nor their sins might prevent either the building and flourishing of the earthly Jerusalem, or, what was of infinitely greater importance, the promised blessing of Messiah, who was to descend from him, and to rear the walls of the New Jerusalem." *James Anderson's Note to Calvin, in loc.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

The Psalm is upon its surface so full of suggestions for sermons that I have not attempted to offer any of my own, but have merely inserted a selection from Mr. G. Rogers and others.

Verse 1.

1. The Prayer.

(a) For mercy, not justice. Mercy is the sinner's attribute—as much a part of the divine nature as justice. The possibility of sin is implied in its existence. The actual commission of sin is implied in its display.

(b) For pardon, not pity merely, but forgiveness.

2. The plea.

(a) For the pardon of great sins on account of great mercies, and lovingkindness.

(b) Many sins on account of multitude of mercies.

3. Hell deserving sins on account of tender mercies. We who have sinned are human, he who pardons is divine.

"Great God, thy *nature* hath no bound,
So let thy pardoning love be found."

Verse 3.

1. Confession. "I acknowledge, "etc.

2. Humiliation, not a mere confession with the lips, but ever before me—in its guilt—defilement—consequences in this life and hereafter.

Verses 3-4, 11-12, 17.

1. Scripture estimate of sin.

(a) Personal accountability—*My sin*.

(b) Estimated as hateful to God—*Against thee*, etc.

(c) Sin estimated as separation from God.

2. Spiritual restoration. First step—Sacrifice of a broken spirit. Last step—Spirit of liberty. *Thy free spirit. F. W. Robertson.*

Verse 6. See T. Goodwin's Treatise, entitled, "An Unregenerate Man's Guiltiness before God, in respect of Sin and Punishment." Book 9 cap. 1-2. (Nichol's edition, Vol. X., p. 324 *et seq.*)

Verse 7. Here is,

1. Faith in the act of an atonement for sin. "I shall be clean."
2. Faith in the method of its application. "Purge me, "etc. Sprinkled as the blood of sacrifices.
3. Faith in its efficacy. "I shall be whiter, "etc.

Verse 10.

1. The change to be effected.
 - (a) A clean heart.
 - (b) A right spirit.
2. The power by which it is accomplished.
 - (a) A creative power, such as created the world at first.
 - (b) A renewing power, such as continually renews the face of the earth.
 - (c) The acquirement of these blessings. The prayer, "Create, "etc.

Verses 12-13. A threefold desire.

1. To be *happy*—"Restore," etc.
2. To be *consistent*—"Uphold," etc.
3. To be *useful*—"Then will I teach," etc. —*W. Jackson.*

Verse 13.

1. It is not our duty to seek the conversion of others until we are converted ourselves.

2. The greater enjoyment we have in the ways of God, the more faithfully and earnestly we shall make them known to others.

3. The more faithfully and earnestly we make them known to others the more they will be influenced by them.

Verse 15.

1. Confession. His lips are sealed on account—

- (a) Of his fall—and well they might be.
- (b) Of natural timidity.
- (c) Of want of zeal.

2. Petition, "Open thou, "etc. Not my understanding merely and heart, but "lips."

3. Resolution. Then he would speak freely in God's praise.

Verse 15.

1. When God does not open our lips we had better keep them closed.

2. When he does open them we ought not to close them.

3. When he opens them it is not to speak in our own praise, and seldom in praise of others, but always in his own praise.

4. We should use this prayer whenever we are about to speak in his name. "O Lord, open, "etc.

Verses 16-17.

1. Men would gladly do something towards their own salvation if they could. "Thou desirest not, "etc., else would I give it.

2. All that they can do is not of the least avail. All the ceremonial observances of Jewish or Gentile churches could not procure pardon for the least transgression of the moral law.

3. The only offering of man which God will not despise is a broken and a contrite heart.

4. All other requirement for his salvation God himself will provide.

Verse 18.

1. For whom is the prayer offered—for the church or Zion?

(a) Next to our own welfare we should seek the welfare of Zion.

(b) All should seek it by prayer.

2. For what is the prayer offered?

(a) The kind of good, not worldly or ecclesiastical, but spiritual.

(b) The measure of good. "In thy good pleasure." Thine own love to it, and what thou hast already done for it.

(c) The continuance of good. "Build, "etc. Its doctrines, graces, zeal.

Verse 19.

1. When we are accepted of God our offerings are accepted." Then," etc.

2. We should then make the richest offerings in our power, our time, talents, influence, etc.

(a) Holy obedience.

(b) Self sacrifices, not half offerings, but whole "burnt offerings; "not lambs merely, but "bullocks."

(c) Zeal for divine ordinances. "Upon thine altar."

3. God will take pleasure in such services. "Then shalt thou be pleased."

1. Because from his own redeemed.

2. Because given in the name of the Redeemer. With such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Exposition of the Fifty-first Psalm, by MARTIN LUTHER, in "Select works of Martin Luther, translated by REV. HENRY COLE." Vol. I., pp. 51-197.

"An Exposition upon the 51 Psalm, "in *"Certain Godly and learned Expositions upon divers parts of Scripture.* As they were preached and afterwards more briefly penned by that worthy man of God, Maister GEORGE ESTEY...Late preacher of the word of God in St. Edmund's Burie." 1603. (4to.)

"David's Penitential Psalm opened: in thirtie severall Lectures *thereon.* By SAM. HIERON. 1617." (4to.)

"Good News from Canaan; or, An Exposition on the 51 Psalm, "in "The Workes of Mr. William Cowper, late Bishop of Galloway." 1629. (Folio.)

"David's Repentance; or, A plaine and familiar Exposition of the *LI. Psalm:* first preached, and now published for the benefit of God's church. Wherein euery faithful Christian may set before his eyes the Patterne of vnfeigned Repentance, whereby we may take heed of the falling into sin again. The eighth edition, newly revised and profitably amplified by the author, SAMVEL SMITH, preacher of the word of God at Prittlewell in Essex...1630." (12mo.)

"A Godly and Fruitful Exposition of the Fifty-one Psalm, the fifth *of the Penitential,* "in ARCHIBALD SYMSON'S "Sacred Septenarie." 1638.

"Meditations and Disquisitions upon the 51 Psalm of David, "in *"Meditations and Disquisitions upon the seven Psalms of David, commonly called the Penitential Psalmes."* By SIR RICHARD BAKER, Knight. 1639.

"CLII. Lectures upon Psalm LI. Preached at Ashby Delazovch, in Leicester Shire. By the late faithful, and worthy Minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. ARTHUR HILDERSAM. 1642." (Folio.)

"An Exposition of the one-and-fiftieth Psalm, "in pp. 51-239, of "Sermons with some religious and divine Meditations. By the Right Reverend Father in God, ARTHVRE LAKE, late Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells." 1639. (Folio.)

"David's Broken Heart; or, an Exposition upon the whole Fifty-one *Psalm.* By that Reverend divine Doctor SAMUEL PAGE, late Pastour of Deptford Stroud, in Kent...1646." (4to.)

Exposition of Psalm LI., in "Chandler's Life of David." Vol. 2 pg 254-273.

"The Portraiture of the Christian Penitent: attempted in a course of *Sermons upon Psalm LI* ...By the Rev. CHA. DE COETLOGON, A.M. 1775."

"Lectures on the Fifty-first Psalm, delivered in the Parish Church of *St. James', Bristol.* By the Rev. THOMAS T. BIDDULPH, A.M. 1835."

"The Penitent's Prayer: a Practical Exposition of the Fifty-first *Psalm.* By the Rev. THOMAS ALEXANDER, M.A., Chelsea."

Psalm 52

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician.* Even short Psalms, if they record but one instance of the goodness of the Lord, and rebuke but briefly the pride of man, are worthy of our best minstrelsy. When we see that each Psalm is dedicated to "the chief musician," it should make us value our psalmody, and forbid us to praise the Lord carelessly. *Maschil.* An Instructive. Even the malice of a Doeg may furnish instruction to a David. *A Psalm of David.* He was the prime object of Doeg's doggish hatred, and therefore the most fitting person to draw from the incident the lesson concealed within it. *When Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and saith unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.* By this deceitful tale bearing, he procured the death of all the priests at Nob: though it had been a crime to have succoured David as a rebel, they were not in their intent and knowledge guilty of the fault. David felt much the villany of this arch enemy, and here he denounces him in vigorous terms; it may be also that he has Saul in his eye.

DIVISION. We shall follow the sacred pauses marked by the Selahs of the poet.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Why boasteth thyself in mischief, O mighty man?* Doeg had small matter for boasting in having procured the slaughter of a band of defenceless priests. A mighty man indeed to kill men who never touched a sword! He ought to have been ashamed of his cowardice. He had no room for exultation! Honourable titles are but irony where the wearer is mean and cruel. If David alluded to Saul, he meant by these words pityingly to say, "How can one by nature fitted for nobler deeds, descend to so low a level as to find a theme for boasting in a slaughter so heartless and mischievous?" *The goodness of God endureth continually.* A beautiful contrast. The tyrant's fury cannot dry up the perennial stream of divine mercy. If priests be slain their Master lives. If Doeg for awhile triumphs the Lord will outlive him, and right the wrongs which he has done. This ought to modify the proud exultations of the wicked, for after all, while the Lord liveth, iniquity has little cause to exalt itself.

Verse 2. *Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs.* Thou speakest with an ulterior design. The information given was for Saul's assistance apparently, but in very deed in his heart the Edomite hated the priests of the God of Jacob. It is a mark of deep depravity, when the evil spoken is craftily intended to promote a yet greater evil. *Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.* David represents the false tongue as being effectual for mischief, like a razor which, unawares to the person operated on, is making him bald; so softly and deftly do Oriental barbers

perform their work. Or he may mean that as with a razor a man's throat may be cut very speedily, under the pretence of shaving him, even thus keenly, basely, but effectually Doeg destroyed the band of the priests. Whetted by malice, and guided by craft, he did his cruel work with accursed thoroughness.

Verse 3. *Thou lovest evil more than good.* He loved not good at all. If both had been equally profitable and pleasant, he would have preferred evil. *And lying rather than to speak righteousness.* He was more at home at lying than at truth. He spake not the truth except by accident, but he delighted heartily in falsehood. *SELAH.* Let us pause and look at the proud blustering liar. Doeg is gone, but other dogs bark at the Lord's people. Saul's cattle master is buried, but the devil still has his drovers, who fain would hurry the saints like sheep to the slaughter.

Verse 4. *Thou lovest.* Thou hast a taste, a gusto for evil language. *All devouring words.* There are words that, like boa constrictors, swallow men whole, or like lions, rend men to pieces; these words evil minds are fond of. Their oratory is evermore furious and bloody. That which will most readily provoke the lowest passions they are sure to employ, and they think such pandering to the madness of the wicked to be eloquence of a high order. *O thou deceitful tongue.* Men can manage to say a great many furious things, and yet cover all over with the pretext of justice. They claim that they are jealous for the right, but the truth is they are determined to put down truth and holiness, and craftily go about it under this transparent pretence.

Verse 5. *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever.* Fain would the persecutor destroy the church, and therefore God shall destroy him, pull down his house, pluck up his roots, and make an end of him. *He shall take thee away.* God shall extinguish his coal and sweep him away like the ashes of the hearth; he would have quenched the truth, and God shall quench him. *And pluck thee out of thy dwelling place,* like a plant torn from the place where it grew, or a captive dragged from his home. Ahimelech and his brother priests were cut off from their abode, and so should those be who compassed and contrived their murder. *And root thee out of the land of the living.* The persecutor shall be eradicated, stubbed up by the root, cut up root and branch. He sought the death of others and death shall fall upon him. He troubled the land of the living, and he shall be banished to that land where the wicked cease from troubling. Those who will not "let live" have no right to "live." God will turn the tables on malicious men, and mete to them a portion with their own measure. "SELAH." Pause again, and behold the divine justice proving itself more than a match for human sin.

Verse 6. *The righteous*—the object of the tyrant's hatred—shall outlive his enmity, and *also shall see*, before his own face, the end of the ungodly oppressor. God permits Mordecai to see Haman hanging on the gallows. David had brought to him the tokens of Saul's death on Gilboa. *And fear.* Holy awe shall sober the mind of the good man; he shall reverently adore the God of providence. *And shall laugh at him.* If not with righteous joy, yet with solemn contempt. Schemes so far reaching all baffled, plans so deep, so politic, all thwarted. Mephistopheles outwitted, the old serpent taken in his own subtlety. This is a good theme for that deep seated laughter which is more akin to solemnity than merriment.

Verse 7. *Lo.* Look ye here, and read the epitaph of a mighty man, who lorded it proudly during his little hour, and set his heel upon the necks of the Lord's chosen. *This is the man that made not God his strength.* Behold the man! The great vainglorious man. He found a fortress, but not in God; he gloried in his might, but not in the Almighty. Where is he now? How has it fared with him in the hour of his need? Behold his ruin, and be instructed. *But trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.* The substance he had gathered, and the mischiefs he had wrought, were his boast and glory. Wealth and wickedness are dreadful companions; when combined they make a monster. When the devil is master of money bags, he is a devil indeed. Beelzebub and Mammon together heat the furnace seven times hotter for the child of God, but in the end that shall work out their own destruction. Wherever we see today a man great in sin and substance, we shall do well to anticipate his end, and view this verse as the divine *in memoriam*.

Verse 8. *But I,* hunted and persecuted though I am, *am like a green olive tree.* I am not plucked up or destroyed, but am like a flourishing olive, which out of the rock draws oil, and amid the drought still lives and grows. *In the house of God.* He was one of the divine family, and could not be expelled from it; his place was near his God, and there was he safe and happy, despite all the machinations of his foes. He was bearing fruit, and would continue to do so when all his proud enemies were withered like branches lopped from the tree. *I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.* Eternal mercy is my present confidence. David knew God's mercy to be eternal and perpetual, and in that he trusted. What a rock to build on! What a fortress to fly to!

Verse 9. *I will praise thee for ever.* Like thy mercy shall my thankfulness be. While others boast in their riches I will boast in my God; and when their glorying is silenced for ever in the tomb, my song shall continue to proclaim the lovingkindness of Jehovah. *Because thou hast done it.* Thou hast vindicated the righteous, and punished the wicked. God's memorable acts of providence,

both to saints and sinners, deserve, and must have our gratitude. David views his prayer as already answered, the promise of God as already fulfilled, and therefore at once lifts up the sacred Psalm. *And I will wait on thy name.* God shall still be the psalmist's hope; he will not in future look elsewhere. He whose name has been so gloriously made known in truth and righteousness, is justly chosen as our expectation for years to come. *For it is good before thy saints.* Before or among the saints David intended to wait, feeling it to be good both for him and them to look to the Lord alone, and wait for the manifestation of his character in due season. Men must not too much fluster us; our strength is to sit still. Let the mighty ones boast, we will wait on the Lord; and if their haste brings them present honour, our patience will have its turn by and by, and bring us the honour which excelleth.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. That *Maschil* means a sacred composition, is evident from Ps 47:7, where the passage which we render, "Sing ye praises with understanding," is literally, "Sing ye a *Maschil*," or song of instruction. This word occurs as a title in thirteen places; and six times is prefixed to compositions of David's. In several instances it occurs in consecutive Psalms; *i.e.*, in the 42nd (of which the 43rd is the sequel), the 44th and 45th, the 52nd, 53rd, 54th, and 55th, the 88th and 89th. A circumstance which favours the notion that the term was one peculiarly used by some particular editor or collector of a certain portion of the Psalter. *John Jebb.*

Verse 1. (*first clause*). *Why doth he glory in malice that is mighty?* that is, he that in malice is mighty, why doth he glory? There is need that a man be mighty, but in goodness, not in malice. Is it any great thing to glory in malice? To build a house belong to few men, any ignorant man you please can pull down. To sow wheat, to dress the crop, to wait until it ripen, and in that fruit on which one has laboured to rejoice, doth belong to few men: with one spark any man you please can burn all the crop. . . . What art thou about to do, O, mighty man, what are thou about to do, boasting thyself much? Thou art about to kill a man: this thing also a scorpion, this also a fever, this also a poisonous fungus can do. To this is thy mightiness reduced, that it be made equal to a poisonous fungus! *Augustine.*

Verse 1. By *mischief* is understood not simply what evil he had done, but the prosperity which he now enjoyed, obtained through mischief; as is clear both from the word *boasting* and from the seventh verse...Formerly he was the chief of Saul's shepherds 1Sa 21:8, but by that wicked destruction of the priests of

God by Saul, and the execution of the cruel sentence, he obtained the chief place near to the king 1Sa 22:9. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 1. *O mighty man.* These words may be added by way of irony, as if he had said, A great deal of valour and prowess you have shown in slaying a company of unarmed men, the priests of the Lord, yea, women and children, no way able to resist you or else to imply the ground of his vain boasting, to wit, either his present greatness, as being a man in great place, and of great power with Saul; or the great preferments he expected from Saul. *Arthur Jackson*.

Verse 1. *The goodness of God endureth continually.* He contrasts the *goodness* of God with the wealth and might of Doeg, and the foundation of his own confidence as widely different from that of Doeg, his own placed upon the goodness of God, enduring for ever and showing itself effectual. It is as if he had said, The *goodness* of God to which I trust, is most powerful and the same throughout all time, and in it I shall at all times most surely rejoice that *goodness* of God, since now it sustains me, so it will exalt me in its own good time; it therefore *is*, and *will be above me*. . . . Not without emphasis does he say the goodness la *of the strong God*, a contrast to Doeg the *hero*, and the ruinous foundation of his fortune. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 2. *Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.* Thus our version. But I do not very well understand the propriety of *the tongue's devising mischief*, and devising it *like a sharp razor*. But we may easily avoid this harsh comparison by rendering the words: *You contrive mischiefs with thy tongue, as with a sharp razor, O thou dealer in deceit: i.e., you contrive with thy smooth and flattering tongue to wound the reputation and character of others, as though thou wast cutting their throats with a smooth razor.* *Samuel Chandler*.

Verse 2. *Like a sharp razor*, that instead of shaving the hair lances the flesh; or missing the beard cutteth the throat. *John Trapp*.

Verse 2. The smooth adroit manner of executing a wicked device neither hides not abates its wickedness. Murder with *a sharp razor* is as wicked as murder with a meat axe or bludgeon. A lie very ingeniously framed and rehearsed in an oily manner, is as great a sin, and in the end will be seen to be as great a folly as the most bungling attempt at deception. *William S. Plumer*.

Verse 3. *Thou lovest evil more than good.—Thou hast loved evil*, he says, *more than good*, not by simply preferring it, but by substituting it; so that in the stead of good he hath done evil, and that from the inmost love of his soul, bent upon

evil; wherefore he does not say that he *admitted*, but *loved* evil, not *moral* only, but *physical*, for the destruction of his neighbours; so *to have loved* it, that he willed nothing but *evil*, being averse to all good. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 4. *Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.* He was all *tongue*; a man of words; and these the most deceitful and injurious. *Adam Clarke*.

Verse 5. *God shall destroy thee forever*, etc. There are four words the psalmist makes us of to denote the utter vengeance that awaited this deceitful and bloody wretch, all of them having a very strong meaning. The first, *ksty* from *stn*, signifies *to pull down*, and break utterly into pieces; as when an altar is demolished. (Jud 6:30 8:9.) The second, *kth* from the root *hrh*, which signifies *to twist* anything, or *pluck it up by twisting it round*, as trees are sometimes twisted up. The third, *khmy* from *hmg*, which properly signifies *utterly to sweep away anything like dust or chaff*; and the expression *lhm khm* means not *sweep thee away from thy tent*, but *sweep thee away, that thou mayest be no longer a tent*; thyself, thy family, thy fortune, shall be wholly and entirely swept away, and dissipated forever; to which the fourth word, *ksrs*, answers, *eradicabit te*, he shall root thee out *from the land of the living*. It is impossible words can express a more entire and absolute destruction. *Samuel Chandler*.

Verse 5. *God shall likewise destroy thee forever.* Here are *quot verba tot tonotrua*, so many words, so many thunderclaps. As thou hast destroyed the Lord's priests, and their whole city, razing and harassing it; so God will demolish and destroy thee utterly, as an house pulled down to the ground, so that one stone is not left upon another (Le 14:45); so shall God pull down Doeg from that high preferment, which he by sycophancy hath got at court. *John Trapp*.

Verse 5. Wonderful is the force of the verbs in the original, which convey to us the four ideas of *laying prostrate*, *dissolving as by fire*, *sweeping away as with a besom*, and *totally extirpating root and branch*, as a tree is eradicated from the spot on which it grew. If a farther comment be wanted, it may be found in the history of David's enemies, and the crucifiers of the son of David; but the passage will be fully and finally explained by the destruction of the world of the ungodly at the last day. *George Horne*.

Verse 5. The poet accumulates dire and heavy words, and mingles various metaphors that he might paint the picture of this man's destruction in more lively colours. Three metaphors appear to be joined together, the first taken

from a *building*, the second from a *tent*, the third from a *tree*, if attention is given to the force and common acceptation of the words. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 5. *He shall take thee away; or, seize thee*, as coals are taken with the tongs. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 6. *The righteous also shall see*, etc. That is, to use the apt words of Gejerus, "*This shall not be a secret judgment, or known only to a few, but common fame shall spread abroad throughout the kingdom, or city, the notable punishments of the ungodly. The righteous also shall not pass by such an event with indifference, but with earnest eyes shall contemplate it*," etc. I add, and hence shall they take joy, and turn it to their own use, to the greater fearing of God... *The righteous*, upon whose destruction the ungodly man was intent, shall survive and spend their lives safe in the favour of God; *they shall see* with attentive mind, they shall consider; nor, as worldlings are accustomed, shall they pass it by without reflection or improvement, they shall see and *fear*, namely, God the just judge; and instructed in his judgment by this instance, they shall be the more careful to abstain from all designs and crimes of this kind. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 6. *And shall laugh at him; or, over him*—over the wicked man thus cast down—*they shall laugh*. Such exultation, to our modern sensibilities, seems shocking, because we can hardly conceive of it, apart from the gratification of personal vindictiveness. But there is such a thing as a righteous hatred, as a righteous scorn. There is such a thing as a shout of righteous joy at the downfall of the tyrant and the oppressor, at the triumph of righteousness and truth over wrong and falsehood. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 7. *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength*. David having showed (Ps 52:5-6) the wicked man, by the righteous judgment of God rooted out of the land of the living, shows us in the next verse, the righteous man at once fearing and laughing at this sight, as also pointing at him saying, *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength*. The words are a divine but cutting sarcasm. The original is *geber*, which signifieth a strong, valiant man: as we say in English, Lo, this is the brave and gallant man you wot of! But who was this for a man? He was one, saith he, that *trusted in the abundance of his riches*. Oh! It is hard to abound in riches and not to trust in them. Hence that caution (Ps 62:10): *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them*. Now, what is the setting the heart upon riches but our rejoicing and trusting in them? And because the heart of man is so easily persuaded into this sinful trust upon riches, therefore the apostle is urgent with Timothy to persuade all rich men—not only mere worldly rich men, but godly rich men—against it; yea, he urges

Timothy to persuade rich men against two sins, which are worse than all the poverty in the world, yet the usual attendants of riches—pride and confidence: *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded.* 1Ti 6:17. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 7-8. Perhaps some of you have been long professors, and yet come to little growth in love to God, humility, heavenly mindedness, mortification; and it is worth the digging to see what lies at the root of your profession, whether there be not a legal principle that hath too much influenced you. Have you not thought to carry all with God from your duties and services, and too much laid up your hopes in your own actings? Alas! this is as so much dead earth, which must be thrown out, and gospel principles laid in the room thereof. Try but this course, and try whether the spring of thy grace will not come on apace. David gives an account how he came to stand and flourish when some that were rich and mighty, on a sudden withered and came to nothing. *Lo, saith he, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches. But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.* While others trust in the riches of their own righteousness and services, and make not Christ their strength, do thou renounce all, and trust in the mercy of God in Christ, and thou shalt be like a green olive when they fade and wither. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 8. (first clause):

"But I am olive charged with fruit
In fertile soil that grows."

This appears to express of the Hebrew words, which our translators render, *like a green olive tree*, but which in reality have no reference to the colour, but to the flourishing, vigorous, and thriving state of the plant; just as Homer gives it the epithet of "luxuriant," and "flourishing;" and Ovid that of "ever flourishing." The fact is, the colour of the leaves of this tree is not a bright lively green; but a dark, disagreeable, or yellowish one. Scheuchzer describes the leaves, as "*superne coloris atrovirentis, vel in viridi flavescentis.*" An English traveller, writing from Italy, thus expresses his disappointment about the olive tree:—"The fields, and indeed the whole face of Tuscany, are in a manner covered with olive trees; but the olive tree does not answer the character I have conceived of it. The royal psalmist and some of the sacred writers, speak with rapture of the 'green olive tree,' so that I expected a beautiful green; and I confess to you, I was wretchedly disappointed to find its hue resembling that of our hedges when they are covered with dust." I have heard other travellers express the same feeling of disappointment. "The true

way of solving the difficulty, "as Harmer properly remarks, "is to consider the word translated 'green, 'not as descriptive of colour, but of some other property; youthfulness, vigour, prosperity, or the like." *Richard Mant*.

Verse 8. *Green olive tree in the house of God.* Several expositors fancifully imagine that olive trees grow in certain of the courts of the Tabernacle; but the notion must not be endured, it would have been too near an approach to the groves of the heathen to have been tolerated, at least in David's time. The text should surely be read with some discretion; the poet does not refer to olive trees in God's house, but compares *himself in the house of God* to an olive tree. This reminds us of the passage, "Thy children like olive plants around thy table, "where some whose imaginations have been more lively than their judgments, have seen a table surrounded, not with children, but with olive plants. Whoever, in the realms of common sense, ever heard of olive plants round a table? If, as Thrupp supposes, Nob was situated upon the Mount of Olives, we can, without any conjecture, see a reason for the present reference to a flourishing olive tree. *C. H. S.*

Verse 9. He compares himself

1. With an *olive tree*, a tree a ways green, lasting long and fruitful, whose fruit is most useful and grateful: so he paints his future state as joyful, glorious, lasting, and useful and pleasing to men: plainly a reference is made to the *royal* and prophetic office, in both of which he represents himself as an *olive tree*, by supplying others with oil through his rule and instruction:
2. With *the olive* growing luxuriantly, and abounding in spreading bough, and so, spacious and large...
3. But why does he add *in the house of God*? That he might indicate, unless I am deceived:
 - (a) That he should possess a dwelling in that place where the *house of God* was, whence he was now exiled through the calumnies of Doeg and the attacks of Saul stirred up thereby:
 - (b) That he should perform distinguished service to the house of God, by adorning it, and by restoring religion, now neglected, and practising it with zeal:
 - (c) That he should derive from God and his favour, whose that house was, all his prosperity:

(d) That he, like a son of God, should rejoice in familiarity with him, and should become heir to his possessions and promises. *Hermann Venema.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The confidence of faith.

1. *The circumstances were distressing.*

- (a) David was misjudged.
- (b) David exiled.
- (c) A bad man in power.
- (d) God's priests slain.

2. *The consolation was abiding.*

- (a) There is a God.
- (b) He is good.
- (c) His goodness continues.
- (d) Good will therefore overcome.

3. *The rejoinder was triumphant. Why boasteth thou?*

- (a) The mischief did not touch the main point.
- (b) It would be overruled.
- (c) It would recoil.
- (d) It would expose the perpetrators to scorn.

Verse 3. In what cases men clearly love evil more than good.

Verses 7-8. The worldling like an uprooted tree, the believer a vigorous well planted olive.

Verse 8. The believer's character, position, confidence, and continuance.

Verse 9. The double duty, and the double reason: the single heart and its single object.

Verse 9. What God has done, what we will do, and why.

CHANDLER'S *"Life of David,"* contains an Exposition of this Psalm. Vol. 1., pp. 140-143.

Psalm 53

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician.* If the leader of the choir is privileged to sing the jubilates of divine grace, he must not disdain to chant the miseries of human depravity. This is the second time he has had the same Psalm entrusted to him (*see Psalm 14.*), and he must, therefore, be the more careful in singing it. *Upon Mahalath.* Here the tune is chosen for the musician, probably some mournfully solemn air; or perhaps a musical instrument is here indicated, and the master of the choir is requested to make it the prominent instrument in the orchestra; at any rate, this is a direction not found in the former copy of the Psalm, and seems to call for greater care. The word "*Mahalath*" appears to signify, in some forms of it, "disease," and truly this Psalm is *THE SONG OF MAN'S DISEASE*—the mortal, hereditary taint of sin. *Maschil.* This is a second additional note not found in Psalm 14, indicating that double attention is to be given to this most instructive song. *A Psalm of David.* It is not a copy of the fourteenth Psalm, emended and revised by a foreign hand; it is another edition by the same author, emphasised in certain parts, and rewritten for another purpose.

SUBJECT. The evil nature of man is here brought before our view a second time, in almost the same inspired words. All repetitions are not vain repetitions. We are slow to learn, and need line upon line. David after a long life, found men no better than they were in his youth. Holy Writ never repeats itself needlessly, there is good cause for the second copy of this Psalm; let us read it with more profound attention than before. If our age has advanced from fourteen to fifty-three, we shall find the doctrine of this Psalm more evident than in our youth. The reader is requested to peruse Psalm 14, "Treasury of David," Vol. 1.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* And this he does because he is a fool. Being a fool he speaks according to his nature; being a great fool he meddles with a great subject, and comes to a wild conclusion. The atheist is, morally as well as mentally, a fool, a fool in the heart as well as in the head; a fool in morals as well as in philosophy. With the denial of God as a starting point, we may well conclude that the fool's progress is a rapid, riotous, raving, ruinous one. He who begins at impiety is ready for anything.

No God, being interpreted, means no law, no order, no restraint to lust, no limit to passion. Who but a fool would be of this mind? What a Bedlam, or rather what an Aceldama, would the world become if such lawless principles came to be universal! He who heartily entertains an irreligious spirit, and follows it out to its legitimate issues is a son of Belial, dangerous to the commonwealth, irrational, and despicable. Every natural man is, more or less a denier of God. Practical atheism is the religion of the race.

Corrupt are they. They are rotten. It is idle to compliment them as sincere doubters, and amiable thinkers—they are putrid. There is too much dainty dealing nowadays with atheism; it is not a harmless error, it is an offensive, putrid sin, and righteous men should look upon it in that light. All men being more or less atheistic in spirit, are also in that degree corrupt; their heart is foul, their moral nature is decayed.

And have done abominable iniquity. Bad principles soon lead to bad lives. One does not find virtue promoted by the example of your Voltaires and Tom Paines. Those who talk so abominably as to deny their Maker will act abominably when it serves their turn. It is the abounding denial and forgetfulness of God among men which is the source of the unrighteousness and crime which we see around us. If all men are not outwardly vicious it is to be accounted for by the power of other and better principles, but left to itself the "No God" spirit so universal in mankind would produce nothing but the most loathsome actions.

There is none that doeth good. The one typical fool is reproduced in the whole race; without a single exception men have forgotten the right way. This accusation twice made in the Psalm, and repeated a third time by the inspired apostle Paul, is an indictment most solemn and sweeping, but he who makes it cannot err, he knows what is in man; neither will he lay more to man's charge than he can prove.

Verse 2. *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men.* He did so in ages past, and he has continued his steadfast gaze from his all surveying observatory. To see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Had there been one understanding man, one true lover of his God, the divine eye would have discovered him. Those pure heathens and admirable savages that men talk so much of, do not appear to have been visible to the eye of Omniscience, the fact being that they live nowhere but in the realm of fiction. The Lord did not look for great grace, but only for sincerity and right desire, but these he found not. He saw all nations, and all men in all nations, and all hearts in all men, and all motions of all hearts, but he saw neither a clear head nor a clean heart among them all. Where God's eyes see no favourable sign we may rest assured there is none.

Verse 3. *Every one of them is gone back.* The whole mass of manhood, all of it, is gone back. In the fourteenth Psalm it was said to turn aside, which was bad enough, but here it is described as running in a diametrically opposite direction. The life of unregenerate manhood is in direct defiance of the law of God, not merely apart from it but opposed to it. They are altogether become filthy. The

whole lump is soured with an evil leaven, fouled with an all pervading pollution, made rank with general putrefaction. Thus, in God's sight, our atheistic nature is not the pardoned thing that we think it to be. Errors as to God are not the mild diseases which some account them, they are abominable evils. Fair is the world to blind eyes, but to the all seeing Jehovah it is otherwise. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. How could there be, when the whole mass was leavened with so evil a leaven? This puts an end to the fictions of the innocent savage, the lone patriarch, "the Indian whose untutored mind, "etc. Pope's verse—

"Father of all, in every age;
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, or by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord, "

—evaporates in smoke. The fallen race of man, left to its own energy, has not produced a single lover of God or doer of holiness, nor will it ever do so. Grace must interpose, or not one specimen of humanity will be found to follow after the good and true. This is God's verdict after looking down upon the race. Who shall gainsay it?

Verse 4. *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?* They have no wisdom, certainly, but even so common a thing as knowledge might have restrained them. Can they not see that there is a God? that sin is an evil thing? that persecution recoils upon a man's own head? Are they such utter fools as not to know that they are their own enemies, and are ruining themselves? Who eat up my people as they eat bread. Do they not see that such food will be hard to digest, and will bring on them a horrible vomit when God deals with them in justice? Can they imagine that the Lord will allow them to devour his people with impunity? They must be insane indeed. They have not called upon God. They carry on their cruel enterprises against the saints, and use every means but that which is essential to success in every case, namely, the invocation of God. In this respect persecutors are rather more consistent than Pharisees who devoured widow's houses, and prayed too. The natural man, like Ishmael, loves not the spiritual seed, is very jealous of it, and would fain destroy it, because it is beloved of God; yet the natural man does not seek after the like favour from God. The carnal mind envies those who obtain mercy, and yet it will not seek mercy itself. It plays the dog in the manger. Sinners will out of a malicious jealousy devour those who pray, but yet they will not pray themselves.

Verse 5. *There were they in great fear, where no fear was.* David sees the end of the ungodly, and the ultimate triumph of the spiritual seed. The rebellious

march in fury against the gracious, but suddenly they are seized with a causeless panic. The once fearless boasters tremble like the leaves of the aspen, frightened at their own shadows. In this sentence and this verse, this Psalm differs much from the fourteenth. It is evidently expressive of a higher state of realisation in the poet, he emphasises the truth by stronger expressions. Without cause the wicked are alarmed. He who denies God is at bottom a coward, and in his infidelity he is like the boy in the churchyard who "whistles to keep his courage up." For God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against *thee*. When the wicked see the destruction of their fellows they may well quail. Mighty were the hosts which besieged Zion, but they were defeated, and their unburied carcasses proved the prowess of the God whose being they dared to deny. Thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them. God's people may well look with derision upon their enemies since they are the objects of divine contempt. They scoff at us, but we may with far greater reason laugh them to scorn, because the Lord our God considers them as less than nothing and vanity.

Verse 6. *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion.* Would God the final battle were well over. When will the Lord avenge his own elect? When will the long oppression of the saints come to its close, and glory crown their heads? The word *salvation* is in the plural, to show its greatness. When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall *rejoice, and Israel shall be glad*. Inasmuch as the yoke has been heavy, and the bondage cruel, the liberty will be happy, and the triumph joyous. The second advent and the restoration of Israel are our hope and expectation. We have attempted to throw into rhyme the last two verses of this Psalm:

The foes of Zion quake for fright.
Where no fear was they quail;
For well they know that sword of might
Which cuts through coats of mail.

The Lord of old defiled their shields,
And all their spears he scorned;
Their bones lay scattered over the fields,
Unburied and unmourned.

Let Zion's foes be filled with shame;
Her sons are blessed of God;
Though scoffers now despise their name,
The Lord shall break the rod.

Oh! would our God to Zion turn,
 God with salvation clad;
 Then Judah's harps should music learn,
 And Israel be glad.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. Probably the two Psalms *refer to different periods*; the fourteenth to the earlier portion of the world, or of Jewish history; the fifty-third to a later, perhaps a still future time. Jehovah, through Christ, is frequently said to turn to the world to see what its condition is, and always with the same result. "All flesh had corrupted its way" in the days of Noah, and, "when the Son of Man cometh" again, it is intimated that he will scarcely "find faith on the earth." The two Psalms also *apply to different persons*. The former refers to the enemies of God, who tremble when his presence is made known; *they are in great fear*, because vengeance is about to be inflicted on them for their sins. Here the Supreme Being is called Jehovah. In the fifty-third Psalm the interests of God's people are principally kept in view. The ungodly are regarded as plotting against the righteous, and it is in this relation their case is considered. The fear that was just and reasonable in the fourteenth Psalm, because it concerned the unrighteous under a sense of impending judgment, is said to be unfounded in the fifty-third, because God was in the midst of his people, *scattering the bones of their enemies*, and showing himself, not as Jehovah, but as the Elohim of his redeemed children. The fourteenth Psalm contemplates judgment; the fifty-third deliverance; and thus, though seemingly alike, a different lesson is conveyed in each. The Psalm, then, descriptive of the universal and continuous corruption of man's nature, very properly occupies an introductory place in a series intended to represent the enemies of Messiah, who oppose his church during his absence, and who are to attempt to resist his power when he comes again. Before entering upon an examination of the character of these opponents, this Psalm teaches that, until changed by grace, all are gone astray; "there is none righteous, no, not one," and that for all there is but one remedy, *the Deliverer coming out of Zion, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob*. R. H. Ryland, M.A., in "*The Psalms restored to Messiah*," 1853.

Whole Psalm. The state of earth ought to be deeply felt by us. The world lying in wickedness should occupy much of our thoughts. The enormous guilt, the inconceivable pollution, the ineffably provoking Atheism of this fallen province of God's dominion, might be a theme for our ceaseless meditation and mourning. To impress it the more on us, therefore, the Psalm repeats what has

been already sung in Psalm 14. It is the same Psalm, with only a few words varied; it is "line upon line, precept upon precept; "the harp's most melancholy, most dismal notes again sounded in our ear. Not that the Lord would detain us always, or disproportionately long, amid scenes of sadness; for elsewhere he repeats in like manner that most triumphant melody, Ps 40:6-12 108:6-13; but it is good to return now and then to the open field on which we all were found, cast out in loathsome degradation. *Andrew A. Bonar, in "Christ and his Church in the Book of Psalms," 1859.*

Whole Psalm. A second edition of the fourteenth Psalm, with variations more or less important, in each verse. That either of these compositions is an incorrect copy of the other is highly improbable, because two such copies of the same Psalm would not have been retained in the collection, and because the variations are too uniform, consistent, and significant, to be the work of chance or mere traditional corruption. That the changes were deliberately made by a later writer is improbable, because such a liberty would hardly have been taken with a Psalm of David, and because the latter form, in that case, would either have been excluded from the Psalter or substituted for the first form, or immediately connected with it. The only satisfactory hypothesis is, that the original author afterwards rewrote it, with such modifications as were necessary to bring out certain points distinctly, but without any intention to supersede the use of the original composition, which therefore still retains its place in the collection. Thus supposition is confirmed by the titles, which ascribe both Psalms to David... As a general fact, it may be stated, that the variations in the Psalm before us are such as render the expression stronger, bolder, and in one or two cases more obscure and difficult. *J. A. Alexander, 1850.*

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is a variation of Psalm 14. In each of these two Psalms the *name* of God occurs seven times. In Psalm 14, it is three times *Elohim*, and four times *Jehovah*; in the present Psalm it is seven times *Elohim*. *Christopher Wordsworth, 1868.*

Whole Psalm. God, in this Psalm, "speaketh twice, "for this is the same almost verbatim with the fourteenth Psalm. The scope of it is to convince us of our sins, to set us blushing, and to set us trembling because of them: there is need of "line upon line" to this purpose. God, by the psalmist, here shows—

1. The *fact* of sin. God is a witness to it. He looks down from heaven and sees all the sinfulness of men's hearts and lives. All this is open and naked before him.

2. The *fault* of sin. It is iniquity (Ps 53:1,4); it is an unrighteous thing; it is that in which there is no good (Ps 53:1,3); it is going back from God (Ps 53:3).

3. The *fountain* of sin. How comes it that men are so bad? Surely, it is because there is no fear of God before their eyes; they say in their hearts, there is no God at all to call us to account, none that we need to stand in awe of. Men's bad practices flow from their bad principles.

4. The *folly* of sin. He is a *fool* (in the account of God, whose judgment we are sure is right) who harbours such corrupt thoughts. The "workers of iniquity, "whatever they pretend to, "have no knowledge; "they may truly be said to know nothing that do not know God. Ps 53:4.

5. The *filthiness* of sin. Sinners are "corrupt" (Ps 53:1); their nature is vitiated and spoiled; their iniquity is "abominable; "it is odious to the holy God, and renders them so; whereas, otherwise he "hates nothing that he has made." What neatness soever proud sinners pretend to, it is certain that wickedness is the greatest nastiness in the world.

6. The *fruit* of sin. See to what a degree of barbarity it brings men at last! See their cruelty to their brethren! They "eat them up as they eat bread." As if they had not only become beasts, but beasts of prey. See their contempt of God at the same time—they have not called upon him, but scorn to be beholden to him.

7. The *fear and shame* that attends sin (Ps 53:5). "There were they in great fear" who had made God their enemy; their own guilty consciences frightened them and filled them with horror. This enables the virgin, the daughter of Zion, to put them to shame and expose them, "because God hath despised them."

8. The *faith* of the saints, and their hope and power touching this great evil (Ps 53:6). There will come a Saviour, a great salvation, a salvation from sin. O that it might be hastened! for it will bring in glorious and joyful times. There were those in Old Testament times that looked and hoped, that prayed and waited for this redemption. Such salvations were often wrought, and all typical of the everlasting triumphs of the glorious church. *Condensed from Matthew Henry, 1662-1714.*

Verse 1. *The fool hath said in his heart*, etc. It is in his heart he says this; this is the secret desire of every unconverted bosom. If the breast of God were within the reach of men, it would be stabbed a million of times in one moment. When God was manifest in the flesh, he was altogether lovely; he did no sin; he went

about continually doing good: and yet they took him and hung him on a tree; they mocked him and spat upon him. And this is the way men would do with God again. Learn—First. The fearful depravity of your heart. I venture to say there is not an unconverted man present, who has the most distant idea of the monstrous wickedness that is now within his breast. Stop till you are in hell, and it will break out unrestrained. But still let me tell you what it is—you have a heart that would kill God if you could. If the bosom of God were nor within your reach, and one blow would rid the universe of God, you have a heart fit to do the deed. Second. The amazing love of Christ—"While we were enemies, Christ died for us." *Robert Murray Macheyne*, 1813-1843.

Verse 1. *There is no God.* ny'is properly a noun, and means nonentity, or nonexistence: "nothing of God, "or "no such thing as God." It cannot be explained as a wish—"No God!" *i.e.*, O that there were no God!—because ny'in usage always includes the substantive verb, and denies the existence, or at least the presence, of the person or thing to which it is prefixed. This is also clear from the use of the same word in the last clause, where its sense is unambiguous. *J. A. Alexander on Psalm XIV.*

Verse 1. *There is no God.* Thus denying the agency of Providence, for the word *Elohim*, here translated *God*, means *judge* (compare Ex 22:28), and has reference not to the *essence*, but to the *providence* of the Deity. *Daniel Cresswell*, 1776-1844.

Verse 1. It is to be noted that Scripture saith, *The fool hath said in his heart*, and not *"thought* in his heart; "that is to say, he doth not so fully think it in judgment, as he hath a good will to be of that belief; for seeing that it makes not for him that there should be a God, he doth seek by all means accordingly to persuade and resolve himself, and studies to affirm, prove, and verify it to himself as some theme or position, all which labour, notwithstanding that sparkle of our creation light, whereby men acknowledge a Deity, burneth still within; and in vain doth he strive utterly to alienate it or put it out, so that it is out of the corruption of his heart and will, and not out of the natural apprehension of his brain and conceit, that he doth set down his opinion, as the comical poet saith, "Then came my mind to be of my opinion, "as if himself and his mind had been two diverse things; therefore, the atheist hath rather said, and held it in his heart, than thought or believed in his heart that there is no God. *Francis Bacon (1560-1626), in "Thoughts on Holy Scripture".*

Verse 2. *That did seek God.* Although all things are full of God, yet is he to be *sought for* of godly men, by reason of the darkness which compasseth our minds through original sin. For both the flesh, and the senses, and earthly

affections do hinder us from knowing of him, yea, though he be present. *Peter Martyr*, 1500-1562.

Verses 2-3. Their sin is described in gradation. They do *not understand*, because a true knowledge of things divine forms the basis of proper conduct towards God; they do *not ask for God*, because they only care for him whose clear and sure insight apprehends him as their highest possession; they are *gone aside*, because he who cares not for him is sure to get estranged from him, and to deviate from his paths; and they are *altogether become filthy* (i.e., worthless), because man's proper strength and fitness for virtue must well from the fountain of communion with God. *Agustus F. Tholuck*.

Verse 3. *They are altogether become filthy.* wxlag *neelachu*. They are become *sour and rancid*; a metaphor taken from milk that has fermented and turned sour, rancid, and worthless. *Adam Clarke*, 1760-1832.

Verse 3. (*second clause*). The word wxlag, rendered *they are become filthy*, might be read, *they have become rotten or putrid*. *John Morison*, 1829.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). Evil men are not only guilty of sins of commission, having done abominable iniquity, but they are guilty of many sins of omission. In fact, they have never done one holy act. They may be moral, decent, amiable, they may belong to the church; but *there is none that doeth good, no, not one*. *William S. Plumer*.

Verse 4. *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?* Conscience is a means to curb and restrain, control and rebuke corrupt nature, and the swelling forms of it. It is not there as a native inhabitant, but as a garrison planted in a rebellious town by the great Governor of the world, to keep the rebellion of the inhabitants within compass, who else would break forth into present confusion. David, speaking of the corruption of man by nature, after this question, Whether there be not some knowledge to discover their evil doings to them? yes, says he, *Have they no knowledge, who eat up my people as bread* Yes; and therefore (Ps 53:5) *They are often in fear*, God having placed this there to overcome them with fear; and by that to restrain them from many outrages against God's people, whom in their desires, and sometimes practice, they eat up as bread Therefore this knowledge is put in as a bridle to corrupt nature, as a hook was put into Sennacherib's nostrils (Isa 37:29) to rule and tame men, and overcome them with fear. If they had no knowledge they would eat up one another, and the church, as bread; but there is their fear, says he, that is, thence it comes to pass they are kept in awe *Thomas Goodwin*, 1600-1679.

Verse 4. *Who eat up my people as they eat bread C'est, n'en font non plus de conscience, que de manger un morceau de pain.* (That is, they have no more scruple in doing this than in eating a morsel of bread.) *French Margin.*

Verse 4. *My people.* David may call the serious *his people*, because of his regard for them, and because they were his supporters and friends. They adhered to him in all his afflictions. ("Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God, " Ru 1:16.) *Benjamin Boothroyd, 1836.*

Verse 5. *There were they in great fear, where no fear was.* There is a fond and superstitious fear, when men are afraid of their shadows, as Pisander was afraid of meeting his own soul; and Antenor would never go forth of the doors, but either in a coach closed upon all sides, or with a target borne over his head, fearing, I guess, lest the sky should fall down upon it, according to that in the Psalm, *They fear where no fear is.* *John King, 1559-1621.*

Verse 5. *There were they in great fear, where no fear was.* Behold how fearful a hell a wounded conscience is! For why is Cain afraid to be killed, seeing there is none living to perform it, but his father and mother, and perhaps some women children, which the Scripture nameth not? It is God's just judgment, that they that will not fear the Lord who is only to be feared, should stand in fear of them who are justly no cause of fear. He that lately feared not to kill his brother, is now made a terror to himself. Hereby also we may consider what is the repentance of the wicked; they see perhaps the fault together with the punishment, but they admit the fault and lament the punishment. *Nicholas Gibbens, 1602.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

See the hints on Psalm 14.

Verse 1. The fool's inside and outside.

Verse 1.

1. The folly of atheism. He who says there is no God is a fool.

(a) No reason for the assertion.

(b) All reason against it.

2. The seat of atheism is the heart; it is a moral unbelief not an intellectual, the language of the will not of the understanding.

3. Cause of atheism.

(a) Loving evil.

(b) Hating good. *G. R.*

Verse 2.

1. God has not left the world to itself.

2. He takes particular notice of all that is in it.

3. The only thing he values in it is the knowledge of himself. *G. R.*

Verse 4. How far knowledge is and is not a restraint upon ungodliness.

Verse 4. It is a sin not to call upon God.

1. What is it to call upon God? Three things required in it.

(a) A drawing near to him.

(b) A speaking to him. 1Sa 1:12-13.

(c) A praying to him.

2. How should we call upon God?

(a) Reverently, considering (1) God's holiness and greatness; (2) our own sin and weakness. Ge 18:27.

(b) Understandingly. 1Co 14:15. (1) Of what we ask. (2) Of whom we ask it.

(c) Submissively.

(d) Believingly. Mr 11:24 Jas 1:6.

(e) Sincerely. Jas 4:3.

(f) Constantly. (1) So as to be always in a praying frame. (2) So as to take all occasions of pouring forth our souls in prayer to God. (3) So as to let no day slip without prayer.

3. How it appears to be a sin not to call upon God.

(a) He hath commanded it. Isa 55:6 1Ti 2:8.

(b) Because praying is one of the principal parts of worship we owe to God.

4. Who are guilty of this sin?

(a) All who pray to any one else but God.

(b) All who neglect either public, private, or family prayer.

(c) All who pray, but not aright. *William Beveridge* (1636-1708), in "*Thesaurus Theologicus*."

Verse 5.

1. What persecutors are to themselves—their own tormentors, full even of groundless fears.

2. What they are to one another—though in concert here, their bones are scattered hereafter.

3. What they are to those whom they persecute—made ashamed before them.

4. What they are to God—a contempt and derision. *G. R.*

Verse 6.

1. There is salvation for Israel.

2. That salvation is in Zion.

3. Their salvation remains there when they are banished from it.

4. Their joy becomes greater when they return. *G. R.*

Psalm 54

Exposition
 Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
 Hints to the Village Preacher
 Other Works

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician on Neginoth.* The music was to be that of stringed instruments. Variety is to be studied in our tunes, and in all other matters relating to sacred song. Monotony is often the death of congregational praise. Providence is varied, and so should our recording songs be. *Maschil.* We are to learn and to teach by what we sing. Edification must not be divorced from psalmody. *A Psalm of David.* David's productions were as plentiful as they are profitable. His varied life was for our benefit, for from it we derive these hymns, which at this hour are as fresh and as precious as when he wrote them. *When the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?* To curry favour with Saul they were guilty of gross inhospitality. What cared they what innocent blood was shed so that they earned the graceless monarch's smile! David came quietly among them, hoping for a little rest in his many flights, but they deserted him in his solitary abode, and betrayed him. He turns to God in prayer, and so strong was his faith that he soon sang himself into delightful serenity.

DIVISION. From Ps 54:1-3, where the Selah makes a pause for us, the psalmist pleads with God, and then in the rest of the song, laying aside all doubt, he chants a hymn of joyful triumph. The vigour of faith is the death of anxiety, and the birth of security.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Save me, O God.* Thou art my Saviour; all around me are my foes and their eager helpers. No shelter is permitted me. Every land rejects me and denies me rest. But thou, O God, wilt give me refuge, and deliver me from all my enemies. By thy name, by thy great and glorious nature. Employ all thine attributes for me. Let every one of the perfections which are blended in thy divine name work for me. Is not thine honour pledged for my defence? And judge me by thy strength. Render justice to me, for none else will or can. Thou canst give me efficient justice, and right my wrongs by thine omnipotence. We dare not appeal to God in a bad cause, but when we know that we can fearlessly carry our cause before his justice we may well commit it to his power.

Verse 2. *Hear my prayer, O God.* This has ever been the defence of saints. As long as God hath an open ear we cannot be shut up in trouble. All other weapons may be useless, but all prayer is evermore available. No enemy can spike this gun. Give ear to the words of my mouth. Vocal prayer helps the supplicant, and we keep our minds more fully awake when we can use our tongues as well as our hearts. But what is prayer if God hear not? It is all one whether we babble nonsense or plead arguments if our God grant us not a hearing. When his case had become dangerous, David could not afford to pray

out of mere custom, he must succeed in his pleadings, or become the prey of his adversary.

Verse 3. *For strangers are risen up against me.* Those who had no cause for ill will had gone against him; persons to whom he could have given no offence, for they were strangers to him. They were aliens to his God also, and should these be allowed to worry and destroy him. A child may well complain to his father when strangers come in to molest him. What right have they to interfere? Let them leave off meddling and mind their own concerns. And oppressors seek after my soul. Saul, that persecuting tyrant, had stamped his own image on many more. Kings generally coin their own likeness. He led the way, and others followed seeking David's soul, his blood, his life, his very existence. Cruel and intense were they in their malice, they would utterly crush the good man; no half measure would content them. They have not set God before them. They had no more regard for right and justice than if they knew no God, or cared for none. Had they regarded God they would not have betrayed the innocent to be hunted down like a poor harmless stag. David felt that atheism lay at the bottom of the enmity which pursued him. Good men are hated for God's sake, and this is a good plea for them to urge in prayer. Selah. As if he said, "Enough of this, let us pause." He is out of breath with indignation. A sense of wrong bids him suspend the music awhile. It may also be observed, that more pauses would, as a rule, improve our devotions: we are usually too much in a hurry: a little more holy meditation would make our words more suitable and our emotions more fervent.

Verse 4. *Behold, God is mine helper.* He saw enemies everywhere, and now to his joy as he looks upon the band of his defenders he sees one whose aid is better than all the help of men; he is overwhelmed with joy at recognizing his divine champion, and cries, Behold. And is not this a theme for pious exultation in all time, that the great God protects us, his own people: what matters the number or violence of our foes when HE uplifts the shield of his omnipotence to guard us, and the sword of his power to aid us? Little care we for the defiance of the foe while we have the defence of God. The Lord is with them that uphold my soul. The reigning Lord, the great Adonai is in the camp of my defenders. Here was a greater champion than any of the three mighties, or than all the valiant men who chose David for their captain. The psalmist was very confident, he felt so thoroughly that his heart was on the Lord's side that he was sure God was on *his* side. He asked in the first verse for deliverance, and here he returns thanks for upholding: while we are seeking one mercy which we have not, we must not be unmindful of another which we have. It is a great mercy to have some friends left us, but a greater mercy still to see the Lord

among them, for like so many cyphers our friends stand for nothing till the Lord sets himself as a great unit in the front of them.

Verse 5. *He shall reward evil unto mine enemies.* They worked for evil, and they shall have their wages. It cannot be that malice should go unavenged. It were cruelty to the good to be lenient to their persecutors. It is appointed, and so it must ever be, that those who shoot upward the arrows of malice shall find them fall upon themselves. The recoil of their own gun has often killed oppressors. Cut them off in thy truth. Not in ferocious revenge is this spoken, but as an Amen to the sure sentence of the just Judge. Let the veracity of thy threatenings be placed beyond dispute, the decree is right and just, let it be fulfilled. It is not a private desire, but the solemn utterance of a military man, a grossly injured man, a public leader destined to be a monarch, and a man well trained in the school of Moses, whose law ordains eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.

Verse 6. *I will freely sacrifice unto thee.* Spontaneously will I bring my freewill offerings. So certain is he of deliverance that he offers a vow by anticipation. His overflowing gratitude would load the altars of God with victims cheerfully presented. The more we receive, the more we ought to render. The spontaneousness of our gifts is a great element in their acceptance; the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. I will praise thy name, O Lord. As if no amount of sacrifice could express his joyful feelings, he resolves to be much in vocal thanksgiving. The name which he invoked in prayer (Ps 54:1), he will now magnify in praise. Note how roundly he brings it out: O Jehovah. This is ever the grand name of the revealed God of Israel, a name which awakens the most sublime sentiments, and so nourishes the most acceptable praise. None can praise the Lord so well as those who have tried and proved the preciousness of his name in seasons of adversity. The psalmist adds, for it is good, and surely we may read this with a double nominative, God's name is good, and so is his praise. It is of great use to our souls to be much in praise; we are never so holy or so happy as when our adoration of God abounds. Praise is good in itself, good to us, and good to all around us. If David's enemies are described in Ps 54:3 as not setting God before them, he here declares that he is of a different mind from them, for he resolves to have the Lord in perpetual remembrance in his sacrifices and praises.

Verse 7. *For he hath delivered me out of all trouble.* Up to that time deliverance had come, and for that danger also he felt that rescue was near. David lived a life of dangers and hair breadth escapes, yet he was always safe. In the retrospect of his very many deliverances he feels that he must praise

God, and looking upon the mercy which he sought as though it were already received, he sang this song over it—

"And a new song is in my mouth,
To long loved music set,
Glory to thee for all the grace
I have not tasted yet."

Out of all trouble our covenant God is pledged to bring us, and therefore even now let us uplift the note of triumph unto Jehovah, the faithful preserver of them that put their trust in him. Thus far have we proved his promise good; he changes not, and therefore in all the unknown future he will be equally our guardian and defence, "showing himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

And mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies. He knew that yet he should look on his haughty foes, gazing down on them in triumph as now they looked on him in contempt. He desired this as a matter of justice, and not of personal pique. His righteous soul exulted because he knew that unprovoked and gratuitous malice would meet with a righteous punishment. Could we keep out of our hearts all personal enmity as fully as the psalmist did in this Psalm, we might yet equally feel with him a sacred acquiescence and delight in that divine justice which will save the righteous and overthrow the malicious. In closing, let us trust that if we are as friendless as this man of God, we may resort in prayer as he did, exercise the like faith, and find ourselves ere long singing the same joyous hymn of praise.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. From the inscription, learn,

1. Particular straits and particular deliveries should be particularly remarked: as David here remembereth the danger he was in by the treachery of the *Ziphims*.
2. Mighty men will find readily more friends in an evil cause, than the godly do find in a good cause: as Saul has the Ziphims to offer their service to his cruelly, when David was in straits.
3. The wicked are very hearty to do an ill turn, and glad to find occasion of it. "*Doth not David, "saith they, "hide himself with us?"*" as if this had been good

and blessed news. *David Dickson (1583-1662), in "A Brief Explication upon the Psalms."*

Whole Psalm. The church has taken a clear view in appointing this as one of the Psalms in commemoration of the passion of Jesus. It is seen with greatest effect as a simple prophecy of Christ. Read thus, it is very plain and intelligible; requiring little more than the first idea to exhibit a perfect correspondence with the life and feelings of the Messiah. *William Hill Tucker, in "The Psalms... with Notes," 1840.*

Whole Psalm. In the first three verses, David being sought for by his enemies, prays against them. That was his course, he always began his conflict with God, contending and wrestling with him for a blessing and assistance. He durst not lift up his hands even against the enemies of God (yet what durst not David do?) till he had first lifted them up in humble supplication to the Lord his strength. "Who taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight." Ps 144:1. This being done, his courage breaks out like lightning, he doubts not of slaying his thousands and ten thousands. So in the fourth and fifth verses, he becomes his own prophet, promising himself victory. For who can resist him who hath Omnipotence for his second? Or how can any enemy maintain a fight against that captain who hath beforehand defeated and broken their forces by his prayers? assured his conquest before he puts on his armour? Then in the last verses, David concludes where he began, thankfully acknowledgeth God's goodness in his deliverance, and the dissipation of his enemies, obliging himself to a return of dutiful affectionate service, in consideration of so great mercies received. *J. Dolben, in a Thanksgiving Sermon, 1665.*

Whole Psalm. Blessed Redeemer! give me grace to eye thee, and to call to my recollection thine exercises amidst the false friends and open foes, which in the days of thy flesh surrounded thee. Lord! help me so to consider thee, who didst endure such a contradiction of sinners against thyself, that I may not be weary and faint in mind. And while the Ziphims of the present hour harass and distress me, and would deliver my soul up into the hand of the enemy: oh! for grace to be looking unto thee, and deriving strength from thee, that I may discover thy gracious hand delivering me out of all my troubles, and making me more than conqueror in thy strength, and in the power of thy might. *Robert Hawker, D.D., 1753-1827.*

Verse 1. *Save me, O God.* As David was at this time placed beyond the reach of human assistance, he must be understood as praying to be saved by the *name and the power of God*, in an emphatic sense, or by these in contradistinction to the usual means of deliverance. Though all help must ultimately come from

God, there are ordinary methods by which he generally extends it. When these fail, and every earthly stay is removed, he must then take the work into his own hands. It was such a situation that David here fled to the saints' last asylum, and sought to be saved by a miracle of divine power. *John Calvin*.

Verse 1. *Judge me by thy strength*, or power, *i.e.*, determine, decide my cause by thy mighty power. Saul, in the cause between him and David, was resolved to end it by force only, and to arbitrate in no other way than by a javelin, a sword, or his forces. The psalmist well knew that Saul, in this respect, would be too hard for him; and therefore applies for protection and justice to one whose power he knew was infinitely superior to his adversaries, and who, he was assured, could and would defend him. *Samuel Chandler (1693-1766), in "A Critical History of the Life of David."*

Verse 2. (*second clause*). Let *the words of my mouth* with which I have defended my cause, be pleasing and acceptable to thee. For in this way can *prayers* and *words of the mouth* be correctly distinguished, unless any one should wish simply to understand by them *prayers uttered by the mouth*; but, as I have said, the phrase is more emphatic. *Hermann Venema, 1697-1787*.

Verse 3. *Strangers*: aliens to his truth, men who from unbelief have estranged themselves from all lot and portion in his covenants—oppress and persecute. *William Hill Tucker*.

Verse 3. (*first clause*). The Chaldee interpreter reads, *proud men*, instead of *strangers*, a reading which also is found in eight of Kennicott's Codices. So also Ps 86:14. *William Walford, in "The Book of Psalms. A New Translation," etc., 1837*.

Verse 3. (*first clause*). There is a great mistake made by rendering the word *oyrz (zarim) strangers*. The Ziphites surely were Israelites, and not strangers. The fact is this, that word is taken from *hrz (zarah)* the primary meaning of which is "to scatter, "to "disperse, "also "to sift, "as grain. Hence it signifies, likewise figuratively, to sift a matter, to investigate, to search out, to trace out. So here, David complains of the new and dangerous enemies he had got in the Ziphites, who became Saul's spies. When he pleads, therefore, for deliverance, saying, "Save me, O God, " etc., he describes the danger he was in: *For spies have risen against me. Benjamin Weiss, in "New Translation, Exposition, and Chronological Arrangement of the Psalms," 1858*.

Verse 3. *Oppressors seek after my soul; i.e., my life at least; my soul also they would destroy, if it lay in their power, as the Papists delivered up John Huss to the devil. John Trapp, 1611-1662.*

Verse 4. *Behold*, says he, I produce a certain fact, well known, demonstrated by a new proof, and worthy of all attention; for the particle *behold*, contains this breadth of meaning. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 4. Christ sees with the utmost clearness, that God will be his *own helper*, and of them—the disciples and believers—that *uphold his soul*. In the same moment, does he foresee the destruction of his enemies. He views, in thought, the armies of Titus, the fall of the Jewish nation, and the dispersion of the remnant. He beholds the avenging hand of God, stretched in fury over the destroyers. *William Hill Tucker.*

Verse 4. (second clause). Such as take part with the persecuted saints, God will take part with them! *The Lord is with them that uphold my soul. David Dickson.*

Verses 4-5. He is assured of help to himself and to his friends, and of vengeance to his enemies. Whence learn,

1. Fervent prayer hath readily a swift answer, and sometimes wonderfully swift, even before a man have ended speech, as here David findeth in experience. *Behold*, saith he, *God is my helper.*

2. The sight of faith is very clear and piercing through all clouds when God holds forth the light of his Spirit unto it, it can demonstrate God present in an instant; ready to help in greatest straits: *Behold, God is my helper.*

3. There is more joy in God's felt presence than grief in felt trouble; for, *Behold, God is mine helper*, was more comfortable to David than his friends' unkindness, and strangers' malice was grievous. *David Dickson.*

Verse 5. *Cut them off.* He desires that God would destroy them with a *death dealing blow*, which is the force the word *tmu* contains; its primitive sense is *to be silent, to keep silence*, whence it is transferred to a stroke penetrating deeply and striking fatally, such as is called a *silent blow*, opposed to a *sounding one*, which is wont to rebound and not pierce deeply. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 6. *I will freely sacrifice unto thee.* He would *sacrifice freely*: by which he does not allude to the circumstance, that sacrifices of thanksgiving were at

the option of worshippers, but to the alacrity and cheerfulness with which he would pay his vow when he had escaped his present dangers. *John Calvin.*

Verse 7. *Mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies. Or, mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies;* that is, he was able to meet them without terror. *Samuel Davidson, D.D., 1852.*

Verse 7. The reader will note that the words *his desire* are supplied by our translators, and are not in the original text. *C. H. S.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. In the deliverance of the saints the honour and power of God are concerned.

1. Their failure would dishonour both.
2. Their salvation glorifies both.
3. Both are immutable, therefore we have a sure plea at all times.

Verse 2. Our main concern in prayer.

1. What is meant by God's hearing prayer.
2. How we may know that he has done so.
3. What is to be done when this is doubtful.
4. What is due to him when the hearing is given.

Verse 3. Strange trials.

1. They are not altogether strange.
 - (a) Not so to God.
 - (b) Not so in the history of the church.
 - (c) Not so to the provisions of grace wherein they are anticipated.
2. Wherein they are strange.
 - (a) They reveal God anew.
 - (b) Endear forgotten promises.
 - (c) Train unused graces.
 - (d) Being new praises, etc.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). The root of sin: if they remembered his authority they dared not, if they tasted his love they would not, if they were conformed to his nature they could not.

Verse 4. A theme for wonder.

1. At his unmerited grace, that he should side with *me*.
2. At his gracious power, for who can resist him?
3. At his practical help, for he has upheld my soul.

Verse 6. We should sacrifice voluntarily, liberally, joyfully, continuously, with pure motive.

Verse 6. The goodness of praising the good name.

Verse 7. (*first clause*). The exclamation of the newly pardoned penitent, the cry of the delivered saint, the song of the ripe Christian, the shout of the glorified believer.

WORK UPON THE FIFTY-FOURTH PSALM

In CHANDLER'S *"Life of David,"* pp. 152-4, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

Psalm 55

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician on Neginoth.* Another song to be accompanied by stringed instruments. The strain is at one time mournful, and at another softly sweet. It needed the chief musician's best care to see that the music was expressive of the sentiment. *Maschil.* It is not a mere personal hymn, there is teaching in it for us all, and where our Lord shines through David, his personal type, there is a great deep of meaning. *Of David.* The man of many conditions, much tried, and much favoured, persecuted but delivered and exalted, was from experience enabled to write such precious verses in which he sets forth not only the sorrows of common pilgrims, but of the Lord of the way himself.

SUBJECT. It would be idle to fix a time, and find an occasion for this Psalm with any dogmatism. It reads like a song of the time of Absalom and Ahithophel. It was after David had enjoyed peaceful worship (Ps 55:14), when he was or had just been a dweller in a city (Ps 55:9-11), and when he remembered his former roamings in the wilderness. Altogether it seems to us to relate to that mournful era when the King was betrayed by his trusted counsellor. The spiritual eye ever and anon sees the Son of David and Judas, and the chief priests appearing and disappearing upon the glowing canvas of the Psalm.

DIVISION. From Ps 55:1-8, the suppliant spreads his case in general before his God; in Ps 55:9-11, he portrays his enemies; in Ps 55:12-14, he mentions one special traitor, and cries for vengeance, or foretells it in Ps 55:15. From Ps 55:16-19 he consoles himself by prayer and faith; in Ps 55:20-21 he again mentions the deceitful covenant breaker, and closes with a cheering exhortation to the saints (Ps 55:22), and a denunciation of destruction upon the wicked and deceitful (Ps 55:22).

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Give ear to my prayer, O God.* The fact is so commonly before us, otherwise we should be surprised to observe how universally and constantly the saints resort to prayer in seasons of distress. From the Great Elder Brother down to the very least of the divine family, all of them delight in prayer. They run as naturally to the mercyseat in time of trouble as the little chickens to the hen in the hour of danger. But note well that it is never the bare act of prayer which satisfies the godly, they crave an audience with heaven, and an answer from the throne, and nothing less will content them. Hide not thyself from my supplication. Do not stop thine ear, or restrain thy hand. When a man saw his neighbour in distress, and deliberately passed him by, he was said to hide himself from him; and the psalmist begs that the Lord would not so treat him. In that dread hour when Jesus bore our sins upon the tree, his Father did hide himself, and this was the most dreadful part of all the Son of David's agony. Well may each of us deprecate such a calamity as that God should refuse to hear our cries.

Verse 2. *Attend unto me, and hear me.* This is the third time he prays the same prayer. He is in earnest, in deep and bitter earnest. If his God do not hear, he feels that all is over with him. He begs for his God to be a listener and an answerer. I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise. He gives a loose to his sorrows, permits his mind to rehearse her griefs, and to pour them out in such language as suggests itself at the time, whether it be coherent or not. What a comfort that we may be thus familiar with our God! We may not complain *of* him, but we may complain *to* him. Our rambling thoughts when we are distracted with grief we may bring before him, and that too in utterances rather to be called a noise than language. He will attend so carefully that he will understand us, and he will often fulfil desires which we ourselves could not have expressed in intelligible words. "Groanings that cannot be uttered," are often prayers which cannot be refused. Our Lord himself used strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared.

Verse 3. *Because of the voice of the enemy.* The enemy was vocal and voluble enough, and found a voice where his godly victim had nothing better than a "noise." Slander is seldom short of expression, it prates and prattles evermore. Neither David, nor our Lord, nor any of the saints were allowed to escape the attacks of venomous tongues, and this evil was in every case the cause of acute anguish. Because of the oppression of the wicked: the unjust pressed and oppressed the righteous; like an intolerable burden they crushed them down, and brought them to their knees before the Lord. This is a thrice told story, and to the end of time it will be true; he that is born after the flesh will persecute him that is born after the Spirit. The great seed of the woman suffered from a bruised heel. For they cast iniquity upon me, they black me with their soot bags, throw the dust of their lying over me, cast the vitriol of their calumny over me. They endeavour to trip me up, and if I do not fall they say I do. And in wrath they hate me. With a hearty ill will they detested the holy man. It was no sleeping animosity, but a moral rancour which reigned in their bosoms. The reader needs not that we show how applicable this is to our Lord.

Verse 4. *My heart is sore pained within me.* His spirit writhed in agony, like a poor worm; he was mentally as much in pain as a woman in travail physically. His inmost soul was touched; and a wounded spirit who can bear? If this were written when David was attacked by his own favourite son, and ignominiously driven from his capital, he had reason enough for using these expressions. And the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Mortal fears seized him, he felt like one suddenly surrounded with the glooms of the shadow of death, upon whom the eternal night suddenly descends. Within and without he was afflicted, and his chief terror seemed to come from above, for he uses the expression, "Fallen

upon me." He gave himself up for lost. He felt that he was as good as dead. The inmost centre of his nature was moved with dismay. Think of our Lord in the garden, with his "soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death," and you have a parallel to the griefs of the psalmist. Perchance, dear reader, if as yet thou hast not trodden this gloomy way, thou wilt do soon; then be sure to mark the footprints of thy Lord in this miry part of the road.

Verse 5. *Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me.* Like house breakers these robbers were entering his soul. Like one who feels a fainting fit coming over him, so the oppressed suppliant was falling into a state of terror. His fear was so great as to make him tremble. He did not know what would happen next, or how soon the worst should come. The sly, mysterious whisperings of slander often cause a noble mind more fear than open antagonism; we can be brave against an open foe, but cowardly, plotting conspiracies bewilder and distract us. And horror hath overwhelmed me. He was as one enveloped in a darkness that might be felt. As Jonah went down into the sea, so did David appear to go down into deeps of horror. He was unmanned, confounded, brought into a hideous state of suspense and mortal apprehension.

Verse 6. *And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.* If he could not resist as an eagle, he would escape as a dove. Swiftly, and unobserved, on strong, untiring pinions would he h away from the abodes of slander and wickedness. His love of peace made him sigh for an escape from the scene of strife.

"O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit
Might never reach me more."

We are all too apt to utter this vain desire, for vain it is; no wings of doves or eagles could bear us away from the sorrows of a trembling heart. Inward grief knows nothing of place. Moreover, it is cowardly to shun the battle which God would have us fight. We had better face the danger, for we have no armour for our backs. He had need of a swifter conveyance than doves' pinions who would outfly slander; he may be at rest who does not fly, but commends his case to his God. Even the dove of old found no rest till she returned to her ark, and we amid all our sorrow may find rest in Jesus. We need not depart; all will be well if we trust in him.

Verse 7. *Lo, then would I wander far off.* Yet when David was far off, he sighed to be once more near Jerusalem; thus, in our ill estate we ever think the

past to be better than the present. We shall be called to fly far enough away, and perchance we shall be loath to go; we need not indulge vain notions of premature escape from earth.

And remain in the wilderness. He found it none such a dear abode when there, yet resolves now to make it his permanent abode. Had he been condemned to receive his wish he would ere long have felt like Selkirk, in the poet's verse—

"O solitude, where are the charms
That sages have found in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place."

Our Lord, while free from all idle wishes, found much strength in solitude, and loved the mountain's brow at midnight, and the quiet shade of the olives of Gethsemane. It is better practically to use retirement than pathetically to sigh for it. Yet it is natural, when all men do us wrong, to wish to separate ourselves from their society; nature, however, must yield to grace, and we must endure the contradiction of sinners against ourselves, and not be weary and faint in our minds. Selah. After such a flight well may the mind rest. When we are going too fast, and giving way too freely to regrets, it is well to cry, "halt," and pause awhile, till more sober thoughts return.

Verse 8. *I would hasten my escape.* He tried to pause but could not, like a horse which when pulled up slips on a little because of the speed at which he was going. David declares that he would not waste a moment, or stay to bid adieu to his friends, but up and away at once, for fear he should be too late, and because he could bear the clamour of his foes no longer. From the windy storm and tempest. A storm was brewing, and, like a dove, he would outfly it and reach a calmer region. Swifter than the storm cloud would he fly, to avoid the deluge of rain, and the flash of the lightning. Alas! poor soul, no such wings are thine, as yet thou must tarry here and feel the tempest; but be of good cheer, thou shalt stretch thy wings ere long for a bolder flight, heaven shall receive thee, and there thy sorrows shall have a finis of felicity among the birds of paradise.

Verse 9. *Destroy, O Lord.* Put mine enemies to the rout. Let them be devoured by the sword, since they have unsheathed it against me. How could we expect the exiled monarch to offer any other prayer than this against the rebellious bands of Absalom, and the crafty devices of Ahithophel? Divide their tongues. Make another Babel in their debates and councils of war. Set them at cross purposes. Divide the pack that the hunted one may escape. The divisions of error are the hope of truth. For I have seen violence and strife in the city. The

rabble and their leaders were plotting and planning, raging and contending against their king, running wild with a thousand mad projects: anarchy had fermented among them, and the king hoped that now it might come to pass that the very lawlessness which had exiled him would create weakness among his foes. Revolution devours its own children. They who are strong through violence, will sooner or later find that their strength is their death. Absalom and Ahithophel may raise the mob, but they cannot so easily rule it, nor so readily settle their own policy as to remain firm friends. The prayer of David was heard, the rebels were soon divided in their councils; Ahithophel went his way to be hanged with a rope, and Absalom to be hanged without one.

Verse 10. *Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof.* The city, the holy city had become a den of wickedness; conspirators met in the dark, and talked in little knots in the streets even in broad daylight. Meanwhile the country was being roused to revolt, and the traitors without threatened to environ the city, and act in concert with the rebels within. No doubt there was a smothered fire of insurrection which Absalom kindled and fanned, which David perceived with alarm some time before he left Jerusalem; and when he quitted the city it broke out into an open flame. Mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it. Unhappy capital to be thus beset by foes, left by her monarch, and filled with all those elements of turbulence which breed evil and trouble. Unhappy king to be thus compelled to see the mischief which he could not avert laying waste the city which he loved so well. There was another King whose many tears watered the rebellious city, and who said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Verse 11. *Wickedness is in the midst thereof.* The very heart of the city was base. In her places of authority crime went hand in hand with calamity. All the wilder and more wicked elements were uppermost; the *canaille* were commanders; the scum floated uppermost; justice was at a discount; the population was utterly demoralized; prosperity had vanished and order with it. Deceit and guile depart not from her streets. In all the places of concourse crafty tongues were busy persuading the people with cozening phrases. Crafty demagogues led the people by the nose. Their good king was defamed in all ways, and when they saw *him* go away, they fell to reviling the governors of their own choosing. The forum was the fortress of fraud, the congress was the convention of cunning. Alas, poor Jerusalem, to be thus the victim of sin and shame! Virtue reviled and vice regnant! Her solemn assemblies broken up, her priests fled, her king banished, and troops of reckless villains parading her streets, sunning themselves on her walls, and vomiting their blasphemies in her

sacred shrines. Here was cause enough for the sorrow which so plaintively utters itself in these verses.

Verse 12. The reader will do well to observe how accurately the psalmist described his own Psalm when he said, "I mourn in my complaint, "or rather "give loose to my thoughts, "for he proceeds from one point of his sorrow to another, wandering on like one in a maze, making few pauses, and giving no distinct intimations that he is changing the subject. Now from the turbulent city his mind turns to the false hearted councillor. For is was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne *it*. It was not an open foe, but a pretended friend; he went over to the other camp and tried to prove the reality of his treachery by calumniating his old friend. None are such real enemies as false friends. Reproaches from those who have been intimate with us, and trusted by us, cut us to the quick; and they are usually so well acquainted with our peculiar weaknesses that they know how to touch us where we are most sensitive, and to speak so as to do us most damage. The slanders of an avowed antagonist are seldom so mean and dastardly as those of a traitor, and the absence of the elements of ingratitude and treachery renders them less hard to bear. We can bear from Shimei what we cannot endure from Ahithophel. Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; *then I would have hid myself from him*. We can find a hiding place from open foes, but who can escape from treachery? If our enemies proudly boast over us we nerve our souls for resistance, but when those who pretended to love us leer at us with contempt, whither shall we go? Our blessed Lord had to endure at its worst the deceit and faithlessness of a favoured disciple; let us not marvel when we are called to tread the road which is marked by his pierced feet.

Verse 13. *But it was thou.* He sees him. The poetic fury is upon him, he sees the traitor as though he stood before him in flesh and blood. He singles him out, he points his finger at him, he challenges him to his face. But thou. *Et tu, Brute.* And thou, Ahithophel, art thou here? Judas, betrayest *thou* the Son of Man? A man mine equal. Treated by me as one of my own rank, never looked upon as an inferior, but as a trusted friend. My guide, a counsellor so sage that I trusted thine advice and found it prudent to do so. And mine acquaintance, with whom I was on most intimate terms, who knew me even as I knew him by mutual disclosures of heart. No stranger occasionally conversed with, but a near and dear friend admitted to my secret fellowship. It was fiendish treason for such a one to prove false hearted. There was no excuse for such villainy. Judas stood very much in this relation to our Lord, he was treated as an equal, trusted as treasurer, and in that capacity often consulted with. He knew the place where the Master was wont to spend his solitude; in fact, he knew all the Master's

movements, and yet he betrayed him to his remorseless adversaries. How justly might the Lord have pointed at him and said, But thou; but his gentler spirit warned the son of perdition in the mildest manner, and had not Iscariot been tenfold a child of hell he would have relinquished his detestable purpose.

Verse 14. *We took sweet counsel together.* It was not merely the counsel which men take together in public or upon common themes, their fellowship had been tender and confidential. The traitor had been treated lovingly, and trusted much. Solace, mutual and cheering, had grown out of their intimate communings. There were secrets between them of no common kind. Soul had been in converse with soul, at least on David's part. However feigned might have been the affection of the treacherous one, the betrayed friend had not dealt with him coldly, or guarded his utterance before him. Shame on the wretch who could belie such fellowship, and betray such confidence! And walked unto the house of God in company. Religion had rendered their intercourse sacred, they had mingled their worship, and communed on heavenly themes. If ever any bonds ought to be held inviolable, religious connections should be. There is a measure of impiety, of a detestable sort, in the deceit which debases the union of men who make profession of godliness. Shall the very altar of God be defiled with hypocrisy? Shall the gatherings of the temple be polluted by the presence of treachery? All this was true of Ahithophel, and in a measure of Judas. His union with the Lord was on the score of faith, they were joined in the holiest of enterprises, he had been sent on the most gracious of errands. His cooperation with Jesus to serve his own abominable ends stamped him as the firstborn of hell. Better had it been for him had he never been born. Let all deceitful professors be warned by his doom, for like Ahithophel he went to his own place by his own hand, and retains a horrible preeminence in the calendar of notorious crime. Here was one source of heart break for the Redeemer, and it is shared in by his followers. Of the serpent's brood some vipers still remain, who will sting the hand that cherished them, and sell for silver those who raised them to the position which rendered it possible for them to be so abominably treacherous.

Verse 15. Not thus would Jesus pray, but the rough soldier David so poured out the anguish of his spirit, under treachery and malice seldom equalled and altogether unprovoked. The soldier, as such, desires the overthrow of his foes, for this very end he fights; and viewed as a matter of law and justice, David was right in his wish; he was waging a just, defensive war against men utterly regardless of truth and justice. Read the words as a warrior's imprecation. Let death seize upon them. Traitors such as these deserve to die, there is no living with them, earth is polluted by their tread; if spies are shot, much more these

sneaking villains. Let them go down quick into hell. While in the vigour of life into *sheol* let them sink, let them suddenly exchange the enjoyment of the quick or living for the sepulchre of the dead. There is, however, no need to read this verse as an imprecation, it is rather a confident expectation or prophecy: God would, he was sure, desolate them, and cast them out of the land of the living into the regions of the dead. For wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them. They are too bad to be spared, for their houses are dens of infamy, and their hearts fountains of mischief. They are a pest to the commonwealth, a moral plague, a spiritual pestilence, to be stamped out by the laws of men and the providence of God. Both Ahithophel and Judas soon ended their own lives; Absalom was hanged in the oak, and the rebels perished in the wood in great numbers. There is justice in the universe, love itself demands it; pity to rebels against God, as such, is no virtue—we pray for them as creatures, we abhor them as enemies of God. We need in these days far more to guard against the disguised iniquity which sympathises with evil, and counts punishment to be cruelty, than against the harshness of a former age. We have steered so far from Scylla that Charybdis is absorbing us.

Verse 16. *As for me, I will call upon God.* The psalmist would not endeavour to meet the plots of his adversaries by counterplots, or imitate their incessant violence, but in direct opposition to their godless behaviour would continually resort to his God. Thus Jesus did, and it has been the wisdom of all believers to do the same. As this exemplifies the contrast of their character, so it will foretell the contrast of their end—the righteous shall ascend to their God, the wicked shall sink to ruin. And the Lord shall save me. Jehovah will fulfil my desire, and glorify himself in my deliverance. The psalmist is quite sure. He knows that he will pray, and is equally clear that he will be heard. The covenant name is the pledge of the covenant promise.

Verse 17. *Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray.* Often but none too often. Seasons of great need call for frequent seasons of devotion. The three periods chosen are most fitting; to begin, continue, and end the day with God is supreme wisdom. Where time has naturally set up a boundary, there let us set up an altar stone. The psalmist means that he will always pray; he will run a line of prayer right along the day, and track the sun with his petitions. Day and night he saw his enemies busy (Ps 55:10), and therefore he would meet their activity by continuous prayer. And cry aloud. He would give a tongue to his complaint; he would be very earnest in his pleas with heaven. Some cry aloud who never say a word. It is the bell of the heart that rings loudest in heaven. Some read it, "I will nurse and murmur; "deep heart thoughts should be attended with inarticulate but vehement utterances of grief. Blessed be God,

moaning is translatable in heaven. A father's heart reads a child's heart. And he shall hear my voice. He is confident that he will prevail; he makes no question that he would be heard, he speaks as if already he were answered. When our window is opened towards heaven, the windows of heaven are open to us. Have but a pleading heart and God will have a plenteous hand.

Verse 18. *He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me.* The deliverance has come. Joab has routed the rebels. The Lord has justified the cause of his anointed. Faith sees as well as foresees; to her foresight is sight. He is not only safe but serene, delivered in peace—peace in his inmost soul. For there were many with me; many contending against me. Or it may be that he thankfully acknowledges that the Lord raised him up unexpected allies, fetched him succour when he most needed it, and made the friendless monarch once more the head of a great army. The Lord can soon change our condition, and he often does so when our prayers become fervent. The crisis of life is usually the secret place of wrestling. Jabbok makes Jacob a prevailing prince. He who stripped us of all friends to make us see himself in their absence, can give them back again in greater numbers that we may see him more joyfully in the fact of their presence.

Verse 19. *God shall hear, and afflict them.* They make a noise as well as I, and God will hear them. The voice of slander, malice, and pride, is not alone heard by those whom it grieves, it reaches to heaven, it penetrates the divine ear, it demands vengeance, and shall have it. God hears and delivers his people, he hears and destroys the wicked. Their cruel jests, their base falsehoods, their cowardly insults, their daring blasphemies are heard, and shall be repaid to them by the eternal judge. Even he that abideth of old. He sits in eternity, enthroned judge for evermore; all the prayers of saints and profanities of sinners are before his judgment seat, and he will see that justice is done. Selah. The singer pauses, overwhelmed with awe in the presence of the everlasting God. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. His own reverential feeling causes him to remember the daring godlessness of the wicked; he feels that his trials have driven him to his God, and he declares that their uninterrupted prosperity was the cause of their living in such neglect of the Most High. It is a very manifest fact that long continued ease and pleasure are sure to produce the worst influences upon graceless men: though troubles do not convert them, yet the absence of them makes their corrupt nature more readily develop itself. Stagnant water becomes putrid. Summer heat breeds noxious insects. He who is without trouble is often without God. It is a forcible proof of human depravity that man turns the mercy of God into nutriment for sin: the Lord save us from this.

Verse 20. The psalmist cannot forget the traitor's conduct, and returns again to consider it. He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him. He smites those to whom he had given the hand of friendship, he breaks the bonds of alliance, he is perfidious to those who dwell at ease because of his friendly profession. He hath broken his covenant. The most solemn league he has profaned, he is regardless of oaths and promises.

Verse 21. *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter.* He lauded and larded the man he hoped to devour. He buttered him with flattery and then battered him with malice. Beware of a man who has too much honey on his tongue; a trap is to be suspected where the bait is so tempting. Soft, smooth, oily words are most plentiful where truth and sincerity are most scarce. But war was in his heart. He brought forth butter in a lordly dish, but he had a tent pin ready for the temples of his guest. When heart and lip so widely differ, the man is a monster, and those whom he assails are afflicted indeed. His words were softer than oil. Nothing could be more unctuous and fluent, there were no objectionable syllables, no jars or discords, his words were as yielding as the best juice of the olive; yet were they drawn swords, rapiers unsheathed, weapons brandished for the fray. Ah! base wretch, to be cajoling your victim while intending to devour him! entrapping him as if he were but a beast of prey; surely, such art thou thyself.

Verse 22. *Thy burden,* or what thy God lays upon thee, lay thou it upon the Lord. His wisdom casts it on thee, it is thy wisdom to cast it on him. He cast thy lot for thee, cast thy lot on him. He gives thee thy portion of suffering, accept it with cheerful resignation, and then take it back to him by thine assured confidence. He shall sustain thee. Thy bread shall be given thee, thy waters shall be sure. Abundant nourishment shall fit thee to bear all thy labours and trials. As thy days so shall thy strength be. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. He may move like the boughs of a tree in the tempest, but he shall never be moved like a tree torn up by the roots. He stands firm who stands in God. Many would destroy the saints, but God has not suffered it, and never will. Like pillars, the godly stand immoveable, to the glory of the Great Architect.

Verse 23. For the ungodly a sure, terrible, and fatal overthrow is appointed. Climb as they may, *the pit* yawns for them, God himself will cause them to descend into it, and *destruction* there shall be their portion. Bloody and deceitful men, with double iniquity of cruelty and craft upon them, shall not live out half their days; they shall be cut off in their quarrels, or being disappointed in their artifices, vexation shall end them. They were in heart murderers of others, and they became in reality self murderers. Doubt not that

virtue lengthens life, and that vice tends to shorten it. But I will trust in thee. A very wise, practical conclusion. We can have no better ground of confidence. The Lord is all, and more than all that faith can need as the foundation of peaceful dependence. Lord, increase our faith evermore.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. Maschil. This is often prefixed to those Psalms in which David speaks of himself as being chastened by God, inasmuch as the end of chastisement is instruction. *Simon de Muis*, 1587-1644.

Whole Psalm. A prayer of the Man Christ in his humiliation, despised and rejected of men, when he was made sin for his people, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him, when he was about to suffer their punishment, pay their debt, and discharge their ransom. Utter depravity of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; betrayal of Messiah by one of the twelve whom he had ordained to the apostolical office, and who was Messiah's constant attendant in all his ministerial circuits. Premature and punitive death of the traitor Judas, and of others banded together to crucify the Lord of glory. *John Noble Coleman, M.A., in "A Revision of the authorised English Version of the Book of Psalms,"* 1863.

Verse 1. In the first clause he uses the word *ytlkt*, that he might indicate that he merely sought justice from God as a Judge; but in the second he implores the *favour of God*, that if perchance the prayer for *justice* be less becoming to himself as a sinner, God may not deny his grace. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 1. *Hide not thyself from my supplication.* A figure taken from the conduct of a king who debars an offender from seeing his face (2Sa 14:24), or from an enemy, who conceals himself from the ox, etc.; that is, pretends not to see it, and goes away, leaving it (see De 22:1,3,4 Isa 58:7); or, from a false friend, or an unkind person, who, foreseeing that he may be entreated by a miserable and needy man, will not let himself be seen, but seeks to make his escape. *Martin Geier*, 1614-1681.

Verse 2. *I mourn.* As one cast down with sorrow, making a doleful noise. *Henry Ainsworth*, 1662.

Verse 2. *I mourn*, etc. A mourning suppliant shall neither lose his prayers nor his tears; for, *I mourn*, is brought for a reason of his hope that God shall attend and hear him. *David Dickson*.

Verse 2. *I mourn in my complaint.* The literal translation of these words is, *I will suffer to wander in my thinking; i.e., I will let my mind wander, or my thoughts rove as they will.* *J. A Alexander.*

Verse 2. *In my complaint.* Saints have their complaints on account of their sins and corruptions, their barrenness and unfruitfulness, and the decay of vital religion in them, and because of the low estate of Zion, the declining state of the interest of Christ, and the little success of his gospel; and they mourn, in these complaints, over their own sins, and the sins of others, professors and profane, and under afflictions temporal and spiritual, both their own and the church's. Christ also in the days of his flesh, had his complaints of the perverseness and faithlessness of the generation of men among whom he lived; of the frowardness, pride, and contentions of his disciples; of the reproaches, insult, and injuries of his enemies; and of the dereliction of his God and Father; and he often mourned on account of one or other of these things, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. *John Gill.*

Verse 2. *In my complaint.* The word here employed commonly means discourse, meditation. It here occurs in the sense of *complaint*, as in Job 7:13 9:27 21:4 23:2 Ps 142:2 1Sa 1:16. It is not used, however, to denote complaint in the sense of fault finding, complaining, accusing, or the idea that we have been dealt with unjustly. This is not the meaning in this place or in the Scriptures generally. It is the language of a *troubled*, not of an *injured* spirit. *Albert Barnes, 1868.*

Verse 2. In confession, when the soul melts into a holy shame and sorrow for the sins he spreads before the Lord, he feels a holy smart and pain within, and doth not act a tragical part with a comical heart. Chrysostom saith, "To paint tears is worse than to paint the face." Here is true fervency, *I mourn in my complaint and make a noise.* There may be fire in the pan when there is none in the piece; a loud wind but no rain with it. David made a noise with his voice, and mourned in his spirit. *William Gurnall, 1617-1679.*

Verse 3. *Because of the voice of the enemy,* there is their railing; *because of the oppression of the wicked,* there is their violent robbing him of his estate; *they cast iniquity upon me,* there are their slanderous traducings of him, and charging him with faults falsely; *in wrath they hate me,* there is their cruel seeking to kill. *David Dickson.*

Verse 3. *For they cast iniquity upon me.* They tumble it on me, as men do stones or anything else upon their besiegers, to endamage them; so did these sin, shame, anything, upon innocent David, to make him odious. *John Trapp.*

Verse 4. *Is sore pained, or, trembled with pain,* The word usually meaneth such pains as a woman feels in her travail. Henry Ainsworth.

Verse 4. *The terrors of death are fallen upon me. My heart,* said the afflicted psalmist, *is sore pained within me:* and though I am repeatedly assured of my interest in the divine love and favour, yet now *the terrors of death are fallen upon me.* The case of David is so far from being peculiar to himself, that it portrays, in the most striking colours, a state of mind to which many of the most exemplary Christians are frequently, if not constantly subject. Many, whose hopes are placed on the right foundation, even Christ Jesus, and whose conduct is uniform and consistent, are ye harassed almost continually by the tormenting fears of death... It will be an interesting and useful enquiry to examine into the real causes of a fear, which cultivates melancholy and despondency on the one hand and destroys our happiness on the other. To effect this design I shall consider,

1. The various causes of the fear of death.
2. The arguments calculated to remove it. There are few, indeed, so hardened in the slavery of vice, or so utterly regardless of every admonition, as to consider the awful period of dissolution without some emotions of terror and dismay. There is something so peculiarly awful in the idea of a change hitherto unknown, and of a state hitherto untried, that the most hardy veterans have owned its tremendous aspects.

One of the first causes of the fear of death is *conscious guilt*. The most hardened are conscious of many things which they may not readily confess; and the most self righteous is conscious of many crimes which he artfully studies to conceal. Whilst the Christian is looking only to his own habits and temper, he may and will be always wretched; but if he looks to the great Surety, Christ Jesus, his gloomy prospect will soon be turned to joy. An *attachment to this world* is also a (second) cause of the fear of death. A principal of self preservation is also a (third) cause of the fear of death. That our bodies, which are pampered by pride and nourished by indulgence, should be consigned to the silent grave, and become even the food of worms, is a humbling reflection to the boasted dignity of man. Besides, nature revolts at the idea of its own dissolution; hence a desire of preserving life, evidently implanted in us. The devil is also (fourthly) often permitted to terrify the consciences of men, and thereby increase at least the fear of death. Unbelief is also a (fifth) cause of the fear of death. Were our faith more frequently in exercise, we should be enabled to look beyond the dreary mansions of the grave with a hope full of

immortality. Our fears of death may be often caused by looking for that perfection in ourselves, which we shall never easily discover.

Consider the arguments calculated to remove the fear of death. It may be necessary to premise that the consolations of religion belong only to real Christians; for the wicked have just reason to dread the approach of death. But to such as are humbled under a sense of their own unworthiness, and who have fled to Christ for pardon and salvation, they have no cause to apprehend either the pain or the consequences of death; because first, the sting of death is taken away. Secondly, because death is no longer an enemy but a friend. Instead of threatening us with misery, it invites us to happiness. Thirdly, the safety of our state is founded on the oath, the purpose, and the promises of God. A fourth argument calculated to remove the fear of death, is the consideration of the benefits resulting from it. The benefits which believers receive from Christ at the resurrection also, is a fifth argument calculated to remove the fear of death. *Condensed from a Sermon by John Grove, M.A., F.A.S., 1802.*

Verses 4-5. In the version of the Psalter used in the Prayer book, this verse stands with a more homely and expressive simplicity, "My heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me." The fear of death is upon all flesh. It is no sign of manhood to be without it. To overcome it in the way of duty is courage; to meet death with patience is faith; but not to fear it is either a gift of special grace, or a dangerous insensibility. No doubt great saints have been able to say, "I have a desire to depart." And many have rushed to martyrdom as to the love and bosom of their Lord; but for the rest, the multitude of his flock, who are neither wilful sinners nor to be numbered among the saints, the thought of death is a thought of fear. We see that, on the first feeling of their having so much as set foot in the path leading to the grave, even good men feel "the terror of death, ""a horrible dread, "which makes every pulse to beat with a hurried and vehement speed. Their whole nature, both in body and in soul, trembles to its very centre; and their heart is "disquieted, ""sore pained, "within them. Let us see what are the causes or reasons of this "fear of death." The first must needs be a consciousness of personal sinfulness. A sense of unfitness to meet God, our unreadiness to die, a multitude of personal faults, evil tempers, thoughts, and inclinations; the recollection of innumerable sins, of great omissions and lukewarmness in all religious duties, the little love or gratitude we have to God, and the great imperfections of our repentance; all these make us tremble at the thought of going to give up our account. We feel as if it were impossible we could be saved. Shame, fear, and a "horrible dread" fall upon us. *Henry Edward Manning, M.A., 1850.*

Verse 5. *Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me.* In this pitiful condition of mind, learn, that it is not a thing inconsistent with godliness to be much moved with fear in time of danger; natural affections are not taken away in conversion, but sanctified and moderated. *David Dickson.*

Verse 5. *Fearfulness.* How natural is this description! He is *in distress*, he *mourns*, *makes a noise*, *sobs* and *sighs*, his *heart is wounded*, he expects nothing but *death*; this produces *fear*, this produces *tremor*, which terminates in that *deep apprehension* of *approaching* and *inevitable ruin* that *overwhelms* him with *horror*. No man ever described a wounded heart like David. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6. *And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.* Wherever the psalmist cast his eye, the inscription was vanity and vexation. A deluge of sin and misery covered the world, so that like Noah's dove he could find no rest for the sole of his foot below, therefore does he direct his course toward heaven, and say, *Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest*; but rest is not a denizen of this world, nothing but the heaven of heavens is at rest, and here does he fix only. *Thomas Sharp (1630-1693), in "Divine Comforts."*

Verse 6. *Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.* King David, though for innocence not only a *dove*, but the phoenix of doves, and so a notable type of Christ, upon whom the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of a dove, yet was his whole life nothing else but *bellum sine induciis*, a perpetual persecution without intermission. Such was also the portion of Christ the Lord of David; and such to the world's end will ever be the lot of those that are the heritage of Christ. My text imports no less; which, taken *historically*, is the voice of David pursued by his enemies; *prophetically*, the voice of Christ at his passion; *mystically*, the voice of that mystical dove, the innocent soul, surrounded and environed with the snares of death; even *generalis quoendam querela* (saith Pellican), a general complaint of the malice of the wicked persecuting the righteous. For (alas that it should be! yet so it is)—

"Non rete accipitri tenditur, neque milvio,
Qui male facinunt nobis; illis qui nil faciunt tenditur." *Terence.*

"The net is not pitched for ravenous birds, as are the hawk and the kite; but for poor harmless birds, that never meditate mischief." And

"Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas."

"The dove shall surely be shot at, when the carrion crow shall go shot free."
Juvenal.

It will then be no news unto you, that here the faithful soul, the spouse, the dove of Christ, when trouble and heaviness take hold upon her, and the floods of Belial compass her about, *Tanquam avis e cave liberari cupit* as St. Austin speaks of the cloistered monks in his time), "Desireth like a bird to be loosed out of her cage." Or, that as Jonas (by interpretation *a dove*, after three days' and three nights' imprisonment in the whale's belly, could not but long after his enlargement. So the dove like soul of man, when not three, but many days, and months, and years, she hath been imprisoned in the body, hath a longing desire to be enlarged, and to fly unto God that made her; and so *mourning* like a dove in devout *supplication*, and *mounting* like a dove in divine *speculation*, breaks forth into these sad elegies: "Oh that I had wings!" and "Alas, that I have not wings! Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have mine habitation among the tents of Kedar. Like as the hart desires the water brook, so longeth my soul to be with thee, O God. I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Who will give me wings?" etc. Which is as if the poor distressed soul, pathetically bemoaning her forlorn estate of pilgrimage, should thus more plentifully enlarge herself. "My spouse is already ascended higher than the winds, than the clouds, than the highest heavens, and I, poor soul, as a husbandless widow, as a tutorless orphan, as a comfortless exile, am left desolate and disconsolate in this valley of tears; none to care for me, none to comfort me, till I have regained him whom I love, and in whom I live. Nay (which worse is), this mine own familiar friend, this nearest and dearest companion of mine, *my body*, is even a burden unto me. The weight of it, and oft the sins that hang so fast on it, doth so clog and shackle me, so glue and nail me to the earth, that I cannot raise or rear up myself towards heaven. Or let him therefore descend to relieve me, being *fila, sponsa, soror*, his daughter, and spouse, and sister; or let him give me wings wherewith I may ascend to him, under the shadow of whose wings I shall surely rest in safety." Ps 16:4. "I must confess it was the very bitterness of extremity that first compelled me to love him, though of himself no less lovely than love itself. It was the sharp sauce of affliction that gave edge to mine affections, and sharpened mine appetite to that 'sweet meat that endureth to everlasting life.' But now, having had some little foretaste of him, I am even in an holy ecstasy, so ravished, so transported with a fervent desire of him and of his presence, that *ubi sum, ibi non sum; ubi non sum, ibi animus est*:" "where I am, there I am not; and where I am not, there am I." For, *anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat*: (Erasmus). "The soul is where it loveth, not where it liveth." Now sigh I not so much for the present dangers, I

would decline, as because of my absent love, whom I most desire. *Who will give me wings?* etc. In the scanning of which verse, ye will observe with me,

1. The *efficient* or *author* of these wings—God. *Who will give me?* Who? that it, who but God?
 2. The *matter* of the wish—*wings*. "Who will give me wings?"
 3. The *form* of those wings—*dove like*. Who will give me wings like unto a dove?
 4. The *end mediate*—*flying*. *Then would I fly away*.
 5. The *end ultimate*—*resting*. *And be at rest*.
- (a) "Who will give me?" There's *Christian humility*.
 - (b) "Who will give me wings?" There's *prudent celerity*.
 - (c) "Wings like unto a dove." There's *innocent simplicity*.
 - (d) "Then would I fly away." There's *devout sublimity*.
 - (e) "And be at rest." There's *permanent security*.

John Rawlinson, in "The Dove like Soule. A Sermon preached before *the Prince's Highness at Whitehall, "Feb. 19, 1618.*

Verse 6. *Oh that I had wings*, etc. Some of the most astounding sermons ever delivered have been preached on this text, which was a very favourite one with the old divines. They ransacked Pliny and Aldrovandus for the most outrageous fables about doves, their eyes, their livers, their crops, and even their dung, and then went on to find emblems of Christians in every fact and fable. Griffith Williams, at considerable length, enlarges upon the fact that David did not desire wings like a grasshopper to hop from flower to flower, as those hasty souls who leap in religion, but do not run with perseverance; nor like an ostrich which keeps to the earth, though it be a bird, as hypocrites do who never mount towards heavenly things; nor like an eagle, or a peacock, or a beetle, or a crow, or a kite, or a bat; and after that he has shown in many ways the similarity between the godly and doves, he refers us to Hugo Cardinalis, and others, for more. We do not think it would be to edification to load these pages with such eccentricities and conceits. This one single sentence, from Bishop Patrick is

worth them all, "He rather wished than hoped to escape." He saw no way of escape except by some improbable or impossible means. *C. H. S.*

Verse 6. When the Gauls had tasted the wine of Italy, they asked where the grapes grew, and would never be quiet till they came there. Thus may you cry, *Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.* A believer is willing to lose the world for the enjoyment of grace; and he is willing to leave the world for the fruition of glory. *William Secker.*

Verse 6. *Wings like a dove.* The pigeon, or dove, is one of the swiftest of birds. *The Religious Tract Society's "Book of Psalms, with Preface and Explanatory Notes."*

Verse 6. An old writer tells us that it would have been more honourable for him to have asked for the strength of an ox to bear his trials, than for the wings of a dove to flee from them. *William Jay, 1769-1853.*

Verse 6. *Dove.* The reference is to the turtle dove, I suppose. Their low, sad complaint may be heard all day long at certain seasons in the olive groves, and in the solitary and shady valleys among these mountains; I have, however, been more affected by it in the vast orchards round Damascus than anywhere else—so subdued, so very sorrowful among the trees, where the air sighs softly, and little rills roll their melting murmurs down the flowery aisles. These birds can never be tamed. Confined in a cage they droop, and like Cowper, sigh for

"A lodge in some vast wilderness—some boundless contiguity of shade."

and no sooner are they set at liberty than they flee, as a bird, to their mountain. Ps 11:1. David refers to their habits in this respect when his heart was sore pained within him: *Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.* And there you will meet these timid birds far away from the haunts of cruel hunters, of whose society they are peculiarly suspicious. *W. M. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," 1859.*

Verse 6. *Oh that I had wings, etc.—*

At first her mother earth she holdeth dear,
And doth embrace the world and worldly things;
She flies close by the ground, and hovers there,
And mounts not up with her celestial wings.
Yet under heaven she cannot light on ought

That with heavenly nature doth agree;
 She cannot rest, she cannot fix her thought,
 She cannot in this world contented be:
 Then as a bee which among weeds doth fall,
 Which seem sweet flowers, with lustre fresh and gay;
 She lights on that, and this, and tasteth all,
 But pleased with none, doth rise and soar away;
 So when the Soul finds here no true content;
 And like Noah's dove, can no sure footing take,
 She doth return from whence she first was sent,
 And flies to him that first her wings did make.
 —*Sir John Davies, 1569-1626.*

Verse 7. *Lo, then would I wander far off, etc.* A passage in the "Octavia" of Seneca has been referred to as being parallel to this of David. It is in the answer of Octavia to the Chorus, act 5., ver. 914-923.

My woes who enough can bewail?
 O what notes can my sorrows express?
 Sweet Philomel's self even would fail
 To respond with her plaintive distress.
 O had I her wings, I would fly
 To where sorrows I never should feel more,
 Upborne on her plumes through the sky,
 Regions far from mankind would explore.
 In a grove where sad silence should reign,
 On a spray would I seat me alone;
 In shrill lamentations complain.
 And in wailings would pour forth my moan.
 —*J. B. Clarke (From Adam Clarke, in loc.)*

Verse 8. *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.* There was a windy storm and tempest without, and which is worse, a tumult and combustion within in his thoughts. A man may escape from external confusions, but how shall he fly from himself? If he be out of the reach of all the blood suckers on earth, and all the furies in hell, yet be dogged and haunted with his own turbulent, ungovernable cogitations, he needs no other tormentors. This holy man was thus doubly distressed, a storm abroad and an earthquake at home rendered his condition most dolorous; but for both he hath *en mega* he goes not about with the foxes of this world to relieve himself with subtle stratagems and wiles, by carnal shifts and policies, a vanity tosses to and from

by them that seek death. No, his one great refuge is to get aloft, to ascend to God. *Thomas Sharp.*

Verse 9. *Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues.* In the first place, their tongues were truly destroyed and they themselves divided, when the testimony of the two false witnesses agreed not so together. Then secondly, by the contradictory account of the soldiers that kept watch at the sepulchre. *Michael Ayguan (1416) in J. M. Neal's Commentary, 1860.*

Verse 9. *Divide their tongues: i.e.,* cause them to give conflicting opinions. *French and Skinner, 1842*

Verse 10. *Mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.* The city, as Abenezra observes, was like a circle; violence and strife were as a line round about it, and mischief and sorrow the centre of it; and these two commonly go together: where mischief is, sorrow soon follows. *John Gill.*

Verse 12. *Then I could have borne it.* It is remarkable that the Lord, who endured the other unspeakable sorrows and agonies of his passion in perfect and marvellous silence, allowed his grief at this one alone to escape him, bewailing himself to his disciples that one of them should betray him, and addressing that one, when he was taken, in these words of reproach—"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" *Frau Thome de Jesu, 1582.*

Verse 12. *Then I would have hid myself from him.* It is generally easy to get out of the way of an avowed enemy, but how can one be on his guard against a treacherous friend? *A. R. Fausset, in "A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, "1866.*

Verse 13. *A man mine equal.* The LXX here not badly, *isoque* (of equal soul), Jerome, *unanimus mens* (of one mind). *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 14. *We took sweet counsel.* From *qtx to be sweet*, and the ordinary notion of *dwo* for *secret*, the phrase *dwo qytmg* will literally be read, *we made our secret sweet*. And so it may be an elegance, to signify the pleasure of his friendship, or of communicating secrets to him. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 14. The first clause speaks of private intimacy, the next of association in public acts, and especially in the great festivals and processions of the temple. *J. J. Stewart Perowne, 1864.*

Verse 14. *In company.* In the end of the verse vgrk may be rendered *with a noise*: and so the Chaldee seems to have taken it, which reads *with haste*; and to that agree the Jewish doctors, who tell us men are to go in *haste* and with *speed* to the *synagogue*, but return thence very *leisurely*. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 15. *Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell.* The last part and end of sinners' lives is worst with them. They have in their lives been busily trading in the world, buying and selling, and getting gain and ruffling it in the world, but meanwhile by their sins they run deep in debt with God, and for want of interest in Christ to be their surety at death (it may be on the sudden) it comes to that of the psalmist, *Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell*. Death seizes on them unawares, as a sergeant or pursevant, casts them into prison, which is expressed by their going down quick into hell (as it is said Nu 16:32-33), that Korah and his company did. *Anthony Tuckney, 1599-1670.*

Verse 15. *Let death seize upon them* by divine warrant, and let them go quick into hell; let them be dead and buried, and damned in a moment; for wickedness is wherever they are, it is in the midst of them. The souls of impenitent sinners go down quick, or alive, into hell; for they have a perfect sense of their miseries, and shall therefore live still, that they may be still miserable. This prayer is a prophecy of the utter, the final, the everlasting ruin of all those who, whether secretly or openly, oppose and rebel against the Lord's Messiah. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 15. *Quick*, that is *alive*, like Korah, Dathan and Abiram. *From "The Psalms chronologically arranged, By Four Friends," 1867.*

Verse 15. Throughout this series of Psalms, there appears to be a peculiar penalty attached to each class of transgressions, or, each variety of opposition against God meets a suitable end. The ungodly, that is, the irreligious and indifferent, lay up for themselves an evil recompense when the wrath of God shall be revealed (Ps 54:5): but an instant punishment falls upon false and treacherous professors; as Paul denounced "anathema" against any who perverted the gospel of Christ in the churches of Galatia; so in this Psalm, *Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell*, announces the awful judgment of Jehovah, as once it was shown upon Dathan and Abiram; a punishment that will by its suddenness and notoriety at the same time expose the guilt, and make manifest the displeasure of the Almighty against it. *R. H. Ryland, in "The Psalms restored to Messiah," 1853.*

Verse 17. *Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray.* This was the custom of the pious Hebrews. See Da 6:10. The Hebrews began their day in the *evening*, and hence David mentions the *evening first*. The rabbins say, men should pray three times each day because the day changes three times. This was observed in the primitive church; but the times in different places were various. The old Psalter gives this a curious turn: "At *even* I sall tell his louing (*praise*) what the Christ was on the Crosse; and at *morn* I sall schew his louing, what tim he ros fra dede. And sua he sall here my voice at *midday*, that is sitand at the right hand of his fader, wheder he stegh (ascended) at midday." *Adam Clarke*.

Verse 17. *Evening and morning, etc.* The three principle parts of the day are mentioned, not as marking special times set apart for prayer, but as a poetical expression for "the whole day, ""at all times, ""without ceasing." *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 17. If our poor, frail bodies need refreshment from food three times a day, who, that knows his own weakness, will say that we need not as frequent refreshment for our poor frail spirits? *William S. Plumer, 1867.*

Verse 17. I can no more believe him to be frequent and spiritual in ejaculatory prayer, who neglects the season of solemn prayer, than I can believe that he keeps every day in the week a Sabbath, who neglects to keep that one which God hath appointed. *William Gurnall, 1617-1679.*

Verse 17. There is no limited time in the court of heaven for hearing petitions. It is not like the court of earthly princes, for there is a free access any day of the week, any hour of the day, or the night, any minute of the hour. As the lawyer saith of the king, for having his due, *Nullum tempus occurrit regi*: so may I say of the godly, for making his prayers and granting his requests, *Nullum tempus occurrit fidelibus*, no time unseasonable, so the heart be seasoned with faith; no *non term* in God's court of requests. He keeps continually open house for all comers and goers; and indeed, most for comers, then goers. His eyes are always open to behold our tears; his ears are always open to hear our groans; his heart also and his bowels are always open, and never shut up so fast, but they will yearn and turn within him, if our misery be never so little. For as we have not an High Priest to pray by "that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; "so neither have we a God to pray to, that shall see us in distress, and hear us call and cry, and never be moved. *Zachary Bogan (1625-1659), in "Meditations of the Mirth of a Christian Life."*

Verse 17. *And cry aloud.* The word here employed properly means to murmur; to make a humming sound; to sigh; to growl; to groan. Here the language means that he would give utterance to his deep feelings in appropriate tones—whether words, sighs, or groans. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 17. *And he shall hear.* And what will this loud cry obtain? A hearing without doubt, so he assures himself, *He shall hear me.* Not that God hears any prayers whether he will or no (as men sometimes do that upon importunity which they have no mind to), but he hath no will, no mind not to hear such prayers, the prayers of those who cry aloud to him. *Joseph Caryl, 1602-1673.*

Verse 18. *He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle.* In the midst of war the Lord can keep a man as safe as in the time of peace, and in extreme perils preserve him from danger. He that depends upon God in the time of trouble, albeit he had an host against him, yet hath he more with him when God is with him, than can be against him. *David Dickson.*

Verse 18. *For.* The *for* implies the reason why God interposed to deliver him; namely, because of the general principle that God ministers relief when his people come to an extremity. *A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 18. *There were many with me.* This is doubtful whether it be meant of *foes* or *friends*. If of *foes*, it may be resolved thus: *for with many* (with a great multitude) *they were fighters with me.* If of *friends*, it may be understood of God's *angels*, that *in a great number were with him*, pitching camp for his aid (Ps 34:7); as Elisha said, "Many more are with us than with them." 2Ki 6:16-17. The Chaldee explains it, "For in many afflictions his word was for my help." *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 19. *Even he that abideth of old.* The deeds by which God had already showed himself from of old as the righteous King and Judge, the judgments, for example, upon the wicked in the land of Shinar (Ps 55:9), the company of Korah (Ps 55:9,18), the cities of the plain (Ps 55:15), pledge his still ready interposition. He who had already so long held the throne, must now also show himself as King and Judge; he cannot now, at so late a period, be another. *E. W. Hengstenberg, 1845.*

Verse 19. *Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.* That is, there is no new thing among them, no extraordinary providential turns, no judiciary changes, their prosperity keeps a settled course, and because they find all things going on in the old course of providence, therefore they go on in their old course of sinfulness, *they fear not God*; intimating, that as such *changes*

always should, so usually they do, awaken fear; and that, if the Lord would but change, and toss, and tumble them about, by various troublesome dispensations, surely they would fear him. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 19. *Because they have no changes*, etc. Or, *with whom also there be no changes, yet they fear not God*. If *changes* be referred to their temporal estates and welfare, as Job 10:17 (it is the same word there as here, *twkylx*), "changes and war are against me:" then, according to the first translation, *because* etc., a reason is given of their perseverance in wickedness, and contempt of God; to wit, their constant and uninterrupted worldly prosperity. Or, according to the second, *With whom there are no changes, yet*, etc.; it is a great aggravation of their impenitency, that notwithstanding so much goodness vouchsafed unto them, they should continue so unthankful as to requite so ill, or so stupid and insensible as not to acknowledge the author. But if changes be referred, as by many, to the soul, then the meaning is—that through long use and continuance of sinning, they are, through God's just judgment, become altogether obdurate and inflexible; and therefore, no wonder if nothing work upon them to their conversion. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" etc. Jer 13:23. But this *changes* might also have another meaning. The Grecians used to say, *streptai esylwn*, that the minds or hearts of good men are changeable; their meaning is, that good men are merciful. *Quos quisque est major, magis est placabilis ira: et faciles motus mens generosa capit*, as the Latin proverb expresses it. He may therefore say, that they show by their cruel unmercifulness, that they have no fear or sense of God at all; else they would fear him, of whose mercy themselves stood in so much need, and consider that they whom they so fiercely persecute are his creatures as well as they. *Westminster Assembly's Annotations*.

Verse 19. *They have no changes*, etc. Who are they who have no changes? Apparently those whom God is said to humble or chastise. And what is the meaning of the word, *changes* as here used? Many understand it of a moral change; "who are without change of heart or reformation." But the word never occurs in this sense. It means, properly, "*a change*" in the sense of *succession*; as of garments, of troops relieving guard, servants leaving work, and the like. Hence it would rather mean in a moral sense: "They who have no cessation in their course (by being relieved guard, for instance), who always continue, and persevere in their evil life." Calvin and others understand it of *change of fortune*, i.e., "who are always prosperous; "but this again is not supported by usage. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 19. *They fear not God*. The fear required here, is to fear him as God, and as God presented in this name, *Elohim*; which though it be a name primarily

rooted in power and strength (for *El* is Deus fortis, The powerful God; and as there is no love without fear, so there is no fear without power), yet properly it signifies his judgment, and order, and providence, and dispensations and government of his creatures. It is that name which goes through all God's whole work of the creation, and disposition of all creatures in the first of Genesis: in all that he is called by no other name than this, the name God; not by Jehovah, to present an infinite majesty; nor by Adonai, to present an absolute power; nor by Tzebaoth, to present a force, or conquest; but only the name of God, his name of government. All ends in this; to fear God is to adhere to him, in his way, as he hath dispensed and notified himself to us; that is, as God is manifested in Christ, in the Scriptures, and applied to us out of those Scriptures, by the church: not to rest in nature without God, nor in God without Christ. *John Donne*, 1573-1631.

Verse 21. *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter*, etc. Of this complexion are the cant of hypocrites, the charity of bigots and fanatics, the benevolence of atheists, the professions of the world, the allurements of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan, when he thinks proper to appear in the character of an angel of light. *George Horne*, 1730-1792.

Verse 21. *Butter*. The Eastern butter is by no means like the solid substance, which is known by that name in these colder climates; but is liquid and flowing as appears from different passages in Scripture, particularly Job 29:6 20:17; and as is confirmed by the accounts of modern travellers; so that in fact it more resembles "cream," which Vitringa says is the genuine sense of the word here used. *Richard Mant*, 1776-1849.

Verse 21. To avoid all difficulties, the readiest expedient is to receive the Septuagint rendering of wqlx *diemerisyhsan*, *they were*, or *are divided*, viz., the *members* of the wicked man there spoken of, they are at great distance one from the other; wyk tamxm, *butter their mouth*, or *their mouth is butter*, wklkrqw and *war their heart*, or *their heart is war*; and this seems to be the fairest rendering of it. *Henry Hammond*, 1605-1660.

Verse 21. A feigned friend is much like a crocodile who, when he smiles, poisons; and when he weepeth, devoureth; or the hyaena, having the voice of a man and the mind of a wolf, speaking like a friend and devouring like a fiend; or the flattering sirens that sweetly sing the sailor's wreck; or the fowler's pipe that pleasantly playeth the bird's death; or the bee, who carrieth honey in her mouth and a sting in her tail; or the box tree, whose leaves are always green, but the seeds poison. So his countenance is friendly and his words pleasant, but his intent dangerous, and his deeds unwholesome.

His fetch is to flatter, to catch what he can;
 His purpose obtained, a fig for his man.
 —*L. Wright*, 1616.

Verse 21. *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.* Well, when I came to the justice again, there was Mr. Foster, of Bedford, who coming out of another room, and seeing me by the light of the candle, for it was dark night when I came thither, he said unto me, "Who is there? John Bunyan?" with much seeming affection, as if he would have leaped in my neck and kissed me, (A right Judas.), which made me somewhat wonder that such a man as he, with whom I had so little acquaintance, and, besides, that had ever been a close opposer of the ways of God, should carry himself so full of love to me, but afterwards when I saw what he did, it caused me to remember those sayings, *Their tongues were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords*, and again, "Beware of men," etc. When I had answered him that, blessed be God, I was well, he said, "What is the occasion of your being here?" or to that purpose. To whom I answered that I was at a meeting of people a little way off, intending to speak a word of exhortation to them; but the justice hearing thereof (said I) was pleased to send his warrant to fetch me before him, etc.—John Bunyan. In relation to J.B.'s imprisonment: written by *himself*. *Offor's edit.*, Vol. 1. p. 52.

Verse 21. (*first clause*).—

Smooth are his words, his voice as honey sweet,
 Yet war was in his heart, and dark deceit. *Moschus* (*B.C.* 250.)

Verse 22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*, etc. The remedy which the Psalm suggests, and, perhaps, the only resource in a difficulty of the kind, where the enemies of true religion are fighting under the semblance of friendship, is announced in an oracular voice from God: "Cast thy care upon Jehovah, for he will sustain thee; he will not suffer the just one to be tossed about for ever." *R. H. Ryland*.

Verse 22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*, etc. The best way to ease thyself is to lay thy load upon God; he will take it up and also carry thee. There is many a man would be willing to go of himself if another would but carry his burden for him; but if you throw your burden upon God he will not only carry that, but will also carry you. He cares not how much weight a Christian layeth on his back; a true Israelite may ease himself, and best please his God at once. God delights not to see tears in thine eyes, or paleness in thy countenance; thy groans and sighs make no music in his ears. He had rather that thou wouldst

free thyself of thy burden by casting it upon him, that he might rejoice in thy joy and comfort. Now, true confidence in God, and resting upon God, will both free thee of thy burden and also bring in the strength of God to sustain and bear thee up from falling. Wouldst thou, therefore, own God as thy strength, and fetch strength from God to thy soul? rest upon God, roll thyself upon him, and that

1. In time of greatest weakness.
 2. In time of greatest service.
 3. In times of greatest trials.
- Samuel Blackerby*, 1674.

Verse 22. *Cast thy burden* upon him in the same way that the ship in a storm casts her burden on the anchor, which anchor holds on to its sure fixing place. And to my mind, that is the more beautiful sense of the two—a sense which once entered into, may be followed out in these glorious verses:

And I see the good ship riding, all in a perilous road; The low reef booming on her lee; the swell of ocean poured Sea after sea, from stem to stern; the mainmast by the board; The bulwarks down; the rudder gone; the boats stove by the chains. But courage still, brave mariners, the ANCHOR yet remains: And he will flinch—no, never an inch—until ye pitch sky high; Then he moves his head, as if he said, "Fear nought; for here am I!" —*J. M. Neale's Commentary*.

Verse 23. *Shalt bring them down.* Indicating a violent death, like that of the slain ox, which is said to *descend*, when it falls under the stroke. The *pit of putrefaction* is meant, in which the corpse decays, nor does it here merely denote the sepulchre, but the ignominious condition of a corpse cast forth, as when it is thrown into a pit. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 23. *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.* A wicked man never lives out half his days; for either he is cut off before he hath lived half the course of nature, or he is cut off before he hath lived a quarter of the course of his desires; either he lives not half so long as he would; and therefore let him die when he will, his death is full of terror, trouble, and confusion, because he dies out of season. He never kept time or season with God, and surely God will not keep or regard his time or season. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 23. *Half their days.* In the Jewish account threescore years was the age of a man, and death at any time before that was looked upon as untimely, and deemed and styled *trd excision*, of which they made thirty-six degrees; so that

not to live out half one's days, is in their style to die before thirty years old.
Henry Hammond.

Verse 23. (*second clause*). The more sins we do commit, the more we hasten our own death; because as the wise man saith, "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (Pr 10:27); and the prophet David saith, *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days*; for sin is an epitomiser or shortener of everything: it consumes our wealth, it confines our liberty, it impeaches our health, and it abbreviates our life, and brings us speedily unto our grave. *Griffith Williams, 1636.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. (*second clause*).

1. An evil to be dreaded: *Hide not thyself*, etc.
 - (a) By long delay in an urgent case.
 - (b) In the sinner's case by refusing to hear altogether.
2. Causes which may produce it.
 - (a) In the man.
 - (b) In the prayer itself.
 - (c) In the manner of the prayer.
3. Evils which will follow a list which the preacher can readily think of.
4. Remedies for the evil. There is none of it should continue; but heart searching, repentance, importunity, pleading the name of Jesus, etc., will lead to its removal.

Verse 2. The Great Hearer.

1. What address shall we present to him?
2. What sort of attention do we desire?
3. How shall we secure it?

4. What is the reflex duty on our part? To attend and hear him.

Verse 2. (*second clause*). Allowable complaining.

1. Not *of* God but *to* God.
2. Mainly of ourselves.
3. Of the world as against God and right.
4. Ever with holy grief, and not selfish vexation.

Verse 4. The terrors of death. See Sermon by *Grove* in the Notes.

Verse 7. Solitude.

1. Its fancied benefits.
2. Its sore temptations.
3. Its occasional benefits.
4. Its sweet solaces.

Verse 8. Too hasty a flight from trial.

1. Would show rebellion against God.
2. Would manifest cowardly want of faith.
3. Would involve loss of useful experience.
4. Would land us in other and worse trials.
5. Would prevent our glorifying God.
6. Would mar our conformity to Christ and fellowship with his people.
7. Would lessen the value of heaven.

Verse 9. (*first clause*). The Babel of heresies. *Essential*, for truth is one. *Inevitable*, for the motives of heretics clash. *Providential*, for so they weaken each other. *Judicial*, for so they torment each other.

Verse 10. (*first clause*). The activity of evil.

Verse 10. (*second clause*). The diabolical twins, or cause and effect.

Verse 14. The social companionships which grow out of religion.

1. They are on a good foundation.
2. They yield profit—*counsel*.
3. They yield pleasure—*sweet*.
4. They lead to enthusiasm—*walked in company*.
5. They ought to be sacredly maintained.
6. But they need to be carefully watched.

Verse 16. The contrast.

1. A child of God will not wrong others as they do him.
2. He will call upon God as they do not.
3. God will hear him as he does not the wicked.
4. God will deal with him at last otherwise than with them.

Verse 17.

1. David will pray fervently; *I will pray and cry aloud*.
2. He will pray frequently; every day, and three times a day, evening, and morning, and at noon. *Matthew Henry*.

Verse 18. Our battles, our almost rout, our helper, our deliverances, our praise.

Verse 19. The eternal government of God a threat to the ungodly.

Verse 19. (*second part*). Prosperity creating atheism. This involves—

1. Ingratitude—they ought to be the more devout.
2. Impudence—they think themselves as God.
3. Forgetfulness—they forget that changes will come.
4. Ignorance—they know not that unbroken prosperity is often for awhile the portion of the accursed.

5. Insanity—for there is no reason in their conduct.
6. Rottenness—preparing them to be cast away for ever.

Verse 21. The hypocrite's mouth.

1. It has many words.
2. They are only from his mouth.
3. They are very smooth.
4. They conceal rather than reveal his purpose.
5. They are cutting and killing.
6. They will kill himself.

Verse 22. (*first clause*). Here we see the believer has—

1. A *burden* to try him.
2. A *duty* to engage him, "Cast thy burden, "etc.
3. A *promise* to encourage him, "He shall sustain, "etc. *Ebenezer Temple*, 1850.

Verse 22. (*last clause*). Who are the righteous? What is meant by their being moved? Whose permission is needful to accomplish it? Will he give it? "Never." Why not?

Verse 23. (*last clause*). The grand "I WILL." Sum up the Psalm.—

1. When I pray, Ps 55:1-3.
2. When I faint, Ps 55:4-7.
3. When I am sore beset, Ps 55:9-11.
4. When I am betrayed, Ps 55:12-14,20-21.
5. When others perish, Ps 55:15.
6. After I am delivered, Ps 55:18.
7. In every condition, Ps 55:22.

WORK UPON THE FIFTY-FIFTH PSALM

In CHANDLER'S *"Life of David,"* Vol. 2., pp. 305-315, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

Psalm 56

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician.* That mighty minstrel by degrees acquired a noble repertoire of hallowed songs, and set them all to music. *Upon Jonathelemrechokim*—this was probably the title of the tune, as we should say Old Hundred, or Sicilian Mariners. Perhaps the title may however belong to the Psalm, and if so it is instructive, for it has been translated "the silent dove in distant places." We have here the songs of God's servant, who rejoices once more to return from banishment, and to leave those dangerous places where he was compelled to hold his peace even from good. There is such deep spiritual knowledge in this Psalm that we might say of it, "Blessed art thou David Barjonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee." When David plays the Jonah he is not like the prophet of that name; in David the love of the dove predominates, but in Jonah its moaning and complaining are most notable. Michtam of David. This is the second golden Psalm, we had the first in Psalm 16, to which this Psalm has a great likeness, especially in its close, for it ends in the joyful presence. A golden mystery, the gracious secret of the life of faith is in both these Psalms most sweetly unveiled, and a pillar is set up because of God's truth. *When the Philistines took him in Gath.* He was like a dove in strangers' hands, and on his escape he records his gratitude.

DIVISION. In Ps 56:1-2, he pours out his complaint; in Ps 56:3-4 he declares his confidence in God; in Ps 56:5-6 he returns to his complaining, but pleads in earnest hope in Ps 56:7-9, and sings a grateful song from Ps 56:10 to the close.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Be merciful unto me, O God.* In my deep distress my soul turns to thee, my God. Man has no mercy on me, therefore double thy mercy to me. If thy justice has let loose my enemies, let thy mercy shorten their chain. It is sweet to see how the tender dove like spirit of the psalmist flies to the most tender attribute for succour in the hour of peril. For man would swallow me up. He is but thy creature, a mere man, yet like a monster he is eager for blood, he pants, he gapes for me; he would not merely wound me, or feed on my substance, but he would fain swallow me altogether, and so make an end of me. The open mouths of sinners when they rage against us should open our mouths in prayer. We may plead the cruelty of men as a reason for the divine interposition—a father is soon aroused when his children are shamefully entreated. He fighting daily oppresseth me. He gives me no interval—he fights daily. He is successful in his unrighteous war—he oppresses me, he crushes me, he presses me sore. David has his eye on the leader of his foes, and lays his complaint against him in the right place. If we may thus plead against man, much more against that great enemy of souls, the devil. We ask the Lord to forgive us our trespasses, which is another way of saying, "Be merciful to me,

O God, "and then we may say, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." The more violent the attack of Satan the stronger our plea for deliverance.

Verse 2. *Mine enemies would daily swallow me up.* Their appetite for blood never fails them. With them there is no truce or armistice. They are many, but one mind animates them. Nothing I can do can make them relent. Unless they can quite devour me they will never be content. The ogres of nursery tales exist in reality in the enemies of the church, who would crush the bones of the godly, and make a mouthful of them if they could. For they be many that fight against me. Sinners are gregarious creatures. Persecutors hunt in packs. These wolves of the church seldom come down upon us singly. The number of our foes is a powerful plea for the interposition of the one Defender of the faithful, who is mightier than all their bands. These foes of the gracious are also keen eyed, and ever on the watch, hence the margin calls them "observers." O thou most High. Thus he invokes against the lofty ones of the earth the aid of one who is higher than the highest. Some translate the words differently, and think that the writer means that his foes assailed him from the high places in which pride and power had placed them. Saul, his great foe, attacked him from his throne with all the force which his high position placed at his disposal: our comfort in such a case is near to hand, for God will help us from a higher place than our proudest foes can occupy. The greatness of God as the Most High is a fertile source of consolation to weak saints oppressed by mighty enemies.

Verse 3. *What time I am afraid.* David was no braggart, he does not claim never to be afraid, and he was no brutish Stoic free from fear because of the lack of tenderness. David's intelligence deprived him of the stupid heedlessness of ignorance, he saw the imminence of his peril, and was afraid. We are men, and therefore liable to overthrow; we are feeble, and therefore unable to prevent it; we are sinful men, and therefore deserving it, and for all these reasons we are afraid. But the condition of the psalmist's mind was complex—he feared, but that fear did not fill the whole area of his mind, for he adds, I will trust in thee. It is possible, then, for fear and faith to occupy the mind at the same moment. We are strange beings, and our experience in the divine life is stranger still. We are often in a twilight, where light and darkness are both present, and it is hard to tell which predominates. It is a blessed fear which drives us to trust. Unregenerate fear drives from God, gracious fear drives to him. If I fear man I have only to trust God, and I have the best antidote. To trust when there is no cause for fear, is but the name of faith, but to be reliant upon God when occasions for alarm are abundant and pressing, is the conquering faith of God's elect. Though the verse is in the form of a resolve, it became a

fact in David's life, let us make it so in ours. Whether the fear arise from without or within, from past, present, or future, from temporals, or spirituals, from men or devils, let us maintain faith, and we shall soon recover courage.

Verse 4. *In God I will praise his word.* Faith brings forth praise. He who can trust will soon sing. God's promise, when fulfilled, is a noble subject for praise, and even before fulfilment it should be the theme of song. It is in or through God that we are able to praise. We praise as well as pray in the Spirit. Or we may read it—in extolling the Lord one of the main points for thanksgiving is his revealed will in the Scriptures, and the fidelity with which he keeps his word of promise. In God I have put my trust. Altogether and alone should we stay ourselves on God. What was a gracious resolve in the former verse, is here asserted as already done. I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. Faith exercised, fear is banished, and holy triumph ensues, so that the soul asks, "What can flesh do unto me?" What indeed? He can do me no real injury; all his malice shall be overruled for my good. Man is flesh, flesh is grass—Lord, in thy name I defy its utmost wrath. There were two verses of complaint, and here are two of confidence; it is well to weigh out a sufficient quantity of the sweet to counteract the sour.

Verse 5. *Every day they wrest my words.* This is a common mode of warfare among the ungodly. They put our language on the rack, they extort meanings from it which it cannot be made fairly to contain. Thus our Saviour's prophecy concerning the temple of his body, and countless accusations against his servants, were founded on wilful perversions. They who do this every day become great adepts in the art. A wolf can always find in a lamb's discourse a reason for eating him. Prayers are blasphemies if you choose to read them the wrong way upwards. All their thoughts are against me for evil. No mixture of good will tone down their malice. Whether they viewed him as a king, a psalmist, a man, a father, a warrior, a sufferer, it was all the same, they saw through coloured glass, and could not think a generous thought towards him. Even those actions of his which were an undoubted blessing to the commonwealth, they endeavoured to undervalue. Oh, foul spring, from which never a drop of pure water can come!

Verse 6. *They gather themselves together.* Firebrands burn the fiercer for being pushed together. They are afraid to meet the good man till their numbers place terrible odds against him. Come out, ye cowards, man to man, and fight the old hero! No, ye wait till ye are assembled like thieves in bands, and even then ye waylay the man. There is nothing brave about you. They hide themselves. In ambuscade they wait their opportunity. Men of malice are men of cowardice. He who dares not meet his man on the king's highway, writes himself down a

villain. Constantly are the reputations of good men assailed with deep laid schemes, and diabolical plots, in which the anonymous enemies stab in the dark. They mark my steps, as hunters mark the trail of their game, and so track them. Malicious men are frequently very sharp sighted to detect the failings, or supposed failings, of the righteous. Spies and *mouchards* are not all in the pay of earthly governments, some of them will have wages to take in red hot coin from one who himself is more subtle than all the beasts of the field. When they wait for my soul. Nothing less than his life would content them, only his present and eternal ruin could altogether glut them. The good man is no fool, he sees that he has enemies, and that they are many and crafty; he sees also his own danger, and then he shows his wisdom by spreading the whole case before the Lord, and putting himself under divine protection.

Verse 7. *Shall they escape by iniquity?* Will such wickedness as this stand them in good stead? Can it be that this conduct shall enable them to avoid the sentence of earthly punishment? They slander the good man to screen themselves—will this avail them? They have cunningly managed hitherto, but will there not be an end to their games? In thine anger cast down the people, O God. Trip them up in their tricks. Hurl them from the Tarpeian rock. A persecuted man finds a friend even in an angry God, how much more in the God of love! When men seek to cast us down, it is but natural and not at all unlawful to pray that they may be disabled from the accomplishment of their infamous designs. What God often does we may safely ask him to do.

Verse 8. *Thou tellest my wanderings.* Every step which the fugitive had taken when pursued by his enemies, was not only observed but thought worthy of counting and recording. We perhaps are so confused after a long course of trouble, that we hardly know where we have or where we have not been; but the omniscient and considerate Father of our spirits remembers all in detail; for he has counted them over as men count their gold, for even the trial of our faith is precious in his sight. Put thou my tears into thy bottle. His sorrows were so many that there would need a great wineskin to hold them all. There is no allusion to the little complimentary lachrymators for fashionable and fanciful Romans, it is a more robust metaphor by far; such floods of tears had David wept that a leathern bottle would scarce hold them. He trusts that the Lord will be so considerate of his tears as to store them up as men do the juice of the vine, and he hopes that the place of storage will be a special one—*thy bottle*, not *a* bottle. Are they not in thy book? Yes, they are recorded there, but let not only the record but the grief itself be present to thee. Look on my griefs as real things, for these move the heart more than a mere account, however exact. How

condescending is the Lord! How exact his knowledge of us! How generous his estimation! How tender his regard!

Verse 9. *When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back.* So soon as I pray they shall fly. So surely as I cry they shall be put to the rout.

"So swift is prayer to reach the sky,
So kind is God to me."

The machinery of prayer is not always visible, but it is most efficient. God inclines us to pray, we cry in anguish of heart, he hears, he acts, the enemy is turned back. What irresistible artillery is this which wins the battle as soon as its report is heard! What a God is this who harkens to the cry of his children, and in a moment delivers them from the mightiest adversaries! This I know. This is one of the believer's certainties, his axioms, his infallible, indisputable verities. For God is for me. This, we know, and we know, therefore, that none can be against us who are worth a moment's fear. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Who will restrain prayer when it is so potent? Who will seek any other ally than God, who is instantly present so soon as we give the ordained signal, by which we testify both our need and our confidence?

Verse 10. *In God will I praise his word.* Now comes the thanksgiving. He is a wretch who, having obtained help, forgets to return a grateful acknowledgment. The least we can do is to praise him from whom we receive such distinguished favours. Does David here mean "by God's grace I will praise him"? If so, he shows us that all our emotions towards God must be in God, produced by him and presented as such. Or does he mean, "that which in God is most the object of my praise is his word, and the faithfulness with which he keeps it"? If so, we see how attached our hearts should be to the sure word of promise, and especially to *him* who is the WORD incarnate. The Lord is to be praised under every aspect, and in all his attributes and acts, but certain mercies peculiarly draw out our admiration towards special portions of the great whole. That praise which is never special in its direction cannot be very thoughtful, and it is to be feared cannot be very acceptable. In the Lord will I praise his word. He delights to dwell on his praise, he therefore repeats his song. The change by which he brings in the glorious name of Jehovah is doubtless meant to indicate that under every aspect he delights in his God and in his word.

Verse 11. *In God have I put my trust.* This and the former verse are evidently the chorus of the Psalm. We cannot be too careful of our faith, or see too sedulously that it is grounded on the Lord alone. I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Faith has banished fear. He views his foes in their most

forcible character, calling them not *flesh*, but indicating them as *man*, yet he dreads them not; though the whole race were his enemies he would not be afraid now that his trust is stayed on God. He is not afraid of what they threaten to do, for much of that they cannot do; and even what is in their power, what they *can do*, he defies with holy daring. He speaks for the future, "I will not," for he is sure that the security of the present will suffice for days to come.

Verse 12. *Thy vows are upon me, O God.* Vows made in his trouble he does not lightly forget, nor should we. We voluntarily made them, let us cheerfully keep them. All professed Christians are men under vows, but especially those who in hours of dire distress have rededicated themselves unto the Lord. I will render praises unto thee. With heart, and voice, and gift, we should cheerfully extol the God of our salvation. The practice of making solemn vows in times of trouble is to be commended, when it is followed by the far less common custom of fulfilling them when the trouble is over.

Verse 13. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death.* His enemies were defeated in their attempts upon his life, and therefore he vowed to devote his life to God. Wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling? One mercy is a plea for another, for indeed it may happen that the second is the necessary complement of the first. It little boots that we live, if we are made to fall in character by the thrusts of our enemies. As lief not be, as live to be bereft of honour, and fallen prostrate before my enemies. That I may walk before God in the light of the living, enjoying the favour and presence of God, and finding the joy and brightness of life therein. Walking at liberty, in holy service, in sacred communion, in constant progress in holiness, enjoying the smile of heaven—this I seek after. Here is the loftiest reach of a good man's ambition, to dwell with God, to walk in righteousness before him, to rejoice in his presence, and in the light and glory which it yields. Thus in this short Psalm, we have climbed from the ravenous jaws of the enemy into the light of Jehovah's presence, a path which only faith can tread.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. The words *Jonathelemrechokim* may be rendered, *concerning the mute dove among them that are afar off*, or *in far places*. John Gill.

Title. *Michtam*. See also Explanatory Notes on Psalm 16, in the "Treasury of David," Vol. 1, pp., 222-223.

Verse 1. *Be merciful.* This is the second of the Psalms beginning with the miserere; the fifty-first being the first of them. *C. H. S.*

Verse 1. *Be merciful unto me, O God.* This is to me the one source of all my expectations, the one fountain of all promises: *Miserere mei, Deus, miserere mei.* *Bernard, 1091-1157.*

Verse 1. *Be merciful.* His first wrestling in prayer is with the check of his conscience, whether for his daily sins, or in particular for casting himself in such apparent danger, as to have ventured without probable security, to seek shelter among the enemies of the people of God, whose blood he himself had shed abundantly; for this rashness or other sins he begs mercy. *David Dickson.*

Verse 1. *Man.* He uses the indefinite term *man* in this verse, though in the next he speaks of having many enemies, the more forcibly to express the truth, that the whole world was combined against him, that he experienced no humanity amongst men, and stood in the last necessity of divine help. *John Calvin.*

Verse 1. *Would swallow me up. Soop me up* (as the Hebrew word soundeth); make but one draught of me, or suck me in as a whirlpool, swallow me up as a ravenous wild beast. *John Trapp.*

Verse 1. *He fighting daily.* There is no morning on which we can arise and go forth into the world, and say, "No enemy will come out against me today." There is no night in which we can retire from that world, and think to find safety in the solitude of our own chambers, and say, "No evil can enter here." *Barton Bouchier, in "Manna in the Heart," 1855.*

Verses 1-2. The same words are applicable to the situation and circumstances of David, pursued by his enemies; of Christ, persecuted by the Jews; of the church, afflicted in the world; and of the soul, encompassed by enemies, against whom she is forced to wage perpetual war. *George Horne.*

Verse 2. *O thou most High.* The Hebrew is not that rendered *Most High* in Ps 7:17; nor in our version is it ever rendered *Most High* in any other place, although found in the Hebrew Bible more than *fifty* times. There are but two other places where it is applied, as an epithet, to God; Ps 92:8; Mic 6:6. It is commonly rendered, *from above, on high, high places, high*; once *loftily*, Ps 73:8... The probable meaning is, they "fight against me from the high places of authority, both in Jerusalem and in Gath," *q.d.*, mine enemies are in power. *William S. Plumer's "Studies in the Book of Psalms," 1867.*

Verse 3. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* There is nothing like faith to help at a pinch; faith dissolves doubts as the sun drives away the mists. And that you may not be put out, know that your time for believing is always. There are times when some graces may be out of use, but there is no time wherein faith can be said to be so. Wherefore faith must be always in exercise. Faith is the eye, is the mouth, is the hand, and one of these is of use all the day long. Faith is to see, to receive, to work, or to eat; and a Christian should be seeing or receiving, or working, or feeding all day long. Let it rain, let it blow, let it thunder, let it lighten, a Christian must still believe. "At what time," said the good man, "I am afraid, I will trust in thee." *John Bunyan.*

Verse 3. *What time I am afraid,* etc. A divine spark may live in a smoke of doubts without a speedy rising into flame. When grace is at the bottom of doubting, there will be reliance on Christ and lively petitions to him. Peter's faith staggers when he began to sink, but he casts a look and sends forth a cry to his Saviour, acknowledging his sufficiency; Mt 14:30, "Lord, save me." Sometimes those doubtings strengthen our trust and make us take hold faster on God. Ps 56:3. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* This was a fear of himself or others, rather than a jealousy of God. Had he had unworthy suspicions of him, he would not have trusted him; he would not have run for remedy to the object of his fear. The waverings where faith is, are like the tossings of a ship fast at anchor (still there is a relying upon God), not like a boat carried by the waves of the sea to be dashed against a rock. If the heart stay on Christ in the midst of those doubtings, it is not an evil heart of unbelief. Such doubtings consist with the indwelling of the Spirit, who is in the heart, to perform the office of a Comforter against such fears and to expel those thick fumes of nature. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 3. *What time I am afraid,* etc. I know not what to do, but I will try my old way, it is good for me to draw near still; I will do so still, as I used to do; I will cast myself down upon the free grace of Christ in the promises; I will lay the weight of my sinking spirit there, I will renew my hold, life, expectation there; this is my old path, I will never be turned or beaten out here. This Christian in his strength may challenge all the gates of hell. This was David's course (Ps 71:5), "Thou art my trust from my youth," etc. Thence was it that he could say, *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee:* his shield and sword was always in his hand, therefore he could make use of it when fear and inward trouble offered themselves. *Afraid!* alas, who is not? but what course will you take then? Even what course you used to take, *i.e.*, believe; use faith always; and have it now. *Elias Pledger*(-1676), in "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 3. *What time*, etc. Literally, *What day*. As "Man *daily* oppresseth me" (Ps 56:1), so "Every *day*, when I am afraid, I trust in thee." *A. R. Fausset*.

Verse 3. It is a good maxim with which to go into a world of danger; a good maxim to go to sea with; a good maxim in a storm; a good maxim when in danger on the land; a good maxim when we are sick; a good maxim when we think of death and the judgment—*What time I am afraid, I WILL TRUST IN THEE*. *Albert Barnes*.

Verse 3. *I will trust in thee*. Faith and fear stand together; and so fear and love. *John Richardson*, -1654.

Verses 3-4. Sometimes faith comes from prayer in triumph, and cries, *Victoria*. It gives such a being and existence to the mercy prayed for in the Christian's soul, before any likelihood of it appears to sense and reason, that the Christian can silence all his troubled thoughts with the expectation of its coming. So Hannah prayed, "and was no more sad." 1Sa 1:18. Yea, it will make the Christian disburse his praises for the mercy long before it is received. Thus high faith wrought in David. *At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*, and in the next words, *In God I will praise his word*; that is, he would praise God for his promise before there was any performance of it in him, when it had no existence but in God's faithfulness and David's faith. This holy man had such a piercing eye of faith, that he could see the promise when he was at the lowest ebb of misery, so certain and unquestionable in the power and truth of God, that he could then praise God as if the promised mercy had been actually fulfilled to him. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 4. *In God I will praise his word*. Or, praise him for his word; for the whole Scripture that was then in being. *John Gill*.

Verse 4. The best hold that faith can have of God, is to take him by *his word*, however his dispensation seems to be; this will give satisfaction at length; for *In God I will praise his word*, is as much as to say, albeit he withhold comfort and deliverance from me, so that I cannot find what I would, yet let me have *his word*, and I will give him the glory of all his attributes. *David Dickson*.

Verse 4. *I will not fear what flesh can do unto me*. Fear not man, he is but flesh. Thou needest not, thou oughtest not to fear. Thou needest not. What, not such a great man; not such a number of men, who have the keys of all the prisons at their girdle; who can kill or save alive? No, not these; only look they be thy enemies for righteousness sake. Take heed thou makest not the least child thine enemy, by offering wrong to him; God will right the wicked even upon the

saint. If he offends he shall find no shelter under God's wing for his sin. This made Jerome complain that the Christian sin made the arms of those barbarous nations which invaded Christendom victorious: *Nostris peccatis fortes sunt barbari*. But if man's wrath find thee on God's way, and his fury take fire at thy holiness, thou needest not fear though thy life be the prey he hunts for. Flesh can only wound flesh; he may kill thee, but not hurt thee. Why shouldest thou fear to be stripped of that which thou hast resigned already to Christ? It is the first lesson you learn, if a Christian, to deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow thy Master; so that the enemy comes too late; thou hast no life to lose, because thou hast given it already to Christ; nor can man take away that without God's leave; all thou hast is insured; and though God hath not promised thee immunity from suffering in this kind, yet he hath undertaken to bear the loss, yea, to pay thee a hundredfold, and thou shalt not stay for it till another world. Again, thou oughtest not to fear flesh. Our Saviour (Matthew 10) thrice, in the compass of six verses, commands us not to fear man: if thy heart quail at him, how wilt thou behave thyself in the last against Satan, whose little finger is heavier than man's loins? The Romans had *arma proelusoria*, weapons rebated or cudgels, which they were tried at before they came to the sharp. If thou canst not bear a bruise in thy flesh from man's cudgels and blunt weapons, what wilt thou do when thou shalt have Satan's sword in thy side? God counts himself reproached when his children fear a sorry man; therefore we are bid sanctify the Lord, not to fear their fear. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 4. *I will not fear*, etc. Eusebius tells us of a notable speech that Ignatius used when he was in his enemies' hands, not long before he was to suffer, which argued a raised spirit to a wonderful height above the world, and above himself. "I care," says he, "for nothing visible or invisible, that I might get Christ. Let fire, the cross, the letting out of beasts upon me, breaking of my bones, the tearing of my members, the grinding of my whole body, and the torments of the devils come upon me, so be it I may get Christ." *From Jeremiah Burroughs' "Moses his Self denial," 1649.*

Verse 4. *What flesh can do*, etc. It is according to the phrase of Scripture, when it would speak contemptibly of man and show him to be the lowest creature, to call him "flesh," to set forth the weakness that man is subject to. *John Arrowsmith, 1600-1660.*

Verse 4. (*last clause*). *Fear of man*—grim idol, bloody mouthed; many souls has he devoured and trampled down into hell! His eyes are full of hatred to Christ's disciples. Scoffs and jeers lurk in his eye. The laugh of the scorner growls in his throat. Cast down this idol. This keeps some of you from secret prayer, from worshipping God in your family, from going to lay your case

before ministers, from openly confessing Christ. You that have felt God's love and Spirit, dash this idol to pieces. "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die?" "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." "What have I to do any more with idols?" *Robert Murray Macheyne, 1813-1843.*

Verse 4. Faith groweth valiant in fight; albeit it began like a coward, and staggered in the first conflict, yet it groweth stout, incontinent, and pulls its adversaries under foot: *In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. David Dickson.*

Verse 5. *Every day they wrest my words;* or, they put my words to pain and grief, or, they painfully and grievously wrest my words. David's enemies took up what he spake, and put a new shape upon it; and this they did so vexingly, that they are said to *wrest* his words; a thing is vexed when it is wrested or wrought out of the form it before had. The same metaphor the apostle Peter useth in reference to doctrine, speaking of the Epistles of Paul, in which "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable *wrest*, "or put upon the rack; they painfully form his words, and represent them in a meaning which he never intended. 2Pe 3:16. What is spoken may be right, both in the matter and intendment of the speaker, yet another wrests, forms and fashions it in his own mould, and makes it bear a sense which the speaker never dreamed of. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 5. *Every day they wrest my words,* etc. Mr. Jewel, the Bishop of Salisbury, who, according to his life, died most godly and patiently, at the point of death used the versicle of the Hymn, "Te Deum, ""O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded, " whereupon, suppressing the rest, they published that the principle champion of the heretics, in his very last words, cried he was confounded. *Lord Bacon's "Bible Thoughts."*

Verse 5. *They wrest my words.* Whatever Christ said in justification of himself was twisted to a meaning injurious to him. So it is still in the world, self justification by words answers but little purpose with ungodly men. *W. Wilson, D.D., 1860.*

Verse 6. *They mark my steps.* Go whither I will, they are at my heels. *William Nicholson(-1671), in "David's Harp Strung and Tuned."*

Verse 8. *Put thou my tears in thy bottle.* Among other things in the collection of Mr. Abbott, of Cairo, he had a lachrymatory, or tear bottle, which had been found in a tomb at Thebes. This interested me very much. The custom in old times was, when a person was ill or in great distress, for his friends to go to see

him, and take with them a tear bottle. Then, as the tears rolled down the cheeks of the sufferer, they were caught in these bottles, sealed up, and preserved as a memorial of the event. This is what David referred to in Ps 56:8. *Put thou my tears into thy bottle*. But it implies much more than at first suggests itself, and much more than I can attempt to write. For instance, it is as if David had said, "Visit me, and behold my tears; ("O visit me with thy salvation!") for without such *visit* there could be no bottling of his tears. "Thou tellest my wanderings; O visit me, and behold my anguish; put my tears into thy bottle, "for "they have been my meat day and night." Ps 42:3. "Keep them before thee, by way of remembrance, and when thou seest the bottle, O think of him whose tears it contains. Are they not in thy book?" That is, God's book of remembrance, that was written for those "who thought upon his name" (Mal 3:16), just as the kings of old used to keep a book of chronicles of important events. See Es 6:1-11. *John Gadsby*, 1860.

(We insert this to show what has been said by others; but we do not think there is the slightest allusion to this piece of *Roman* etiquette in this text. *C. H. S.*)

Verse 8. *My tear*: the singular used collectively. *In thy bottle*: as if one should say, take care of my tears, as of a kind of wine that is very costly, and very pleasant to thee; or, that hereafter you may measure out to me just that quantity of joys: a metaphor from the keeper of a vineyard, who receives into his vessel the drops of the grapes pressed out by the winepress of affliction. The word *dag* (*iter*) (leather or skin bottle) denotes the manner in which they preserved their wine. (1Sa 16:20; Jos 9:4,13), and milk also (Jud 4:19). *Martin Geier*.

Verse 8. *Put thou my tears into thy bottle*. What a sweet thought is suggested here of God's remembrance of his people's affliction! It is an interesting figure of speech, of *bottling their tears*. But the sense is, they are remembered. And woe will be to the man that offends one of God's little ones on his account. What are now bottles of tears, will be poured out in the end as so many vials of wrath. But reader! think how the tears of Jesus have been treasured up when shedding for the sins of his people. *Robert Hawker*, 1753-1827.

Verse 8. *Put thou my tears into thy bottle*. It is the witty observation of one, that God is said in Scripture to have a bag and a bottle, a *bag* for our sins, and a *bottle* for our tears; and that we should help to fill this, as we have that. There is an allusion here in the original that cannot be Anglicized. *John Trapp*.

Verse 8. *Are they not in thy book?* While we remain in this vale of misery, God keeps all our tears in a bottle; so precious is the water that is distilled from penitent eyes; and because he will be sure not to fail, he notes how many drops

there be in his register. It was a precious ointment wherewith the woman in the Pharisee's house (it is thought Mary Magdalene) anointed the feet of Christ; but her *tears*, wherewith she washed them, were more worth than her spikenard. *Abraham Wright, in "A Practical Commentary or Exposition upon the Book of Psalms, "1661.*

Verse 9. *When I cry.* The cry of faith and prayer to God is more dreadful to our spiritual foes than the war whoop of the Indian is to his surprised brother savages. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 9. (*first clause*). It was somewhat that when David prayed he was saved from his enemies. "I will call on the Lord: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (2Sa 22:4); there is the *defensive* power of prayer; but it is more that it puts enemies to the foil. *When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back* and be put to flight; there is the *offensive* power of prayer. In David's tower there was an armoury, *thalpijoth*, a place to hang swords with two edges, swords with two mouths (Canticles 4:4); a defensive and an offensive edge. Both edges must be used by such as seek safety. Prayer is a sword with two edges. "Put up thy sword into his place," says Christ to Peter: "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Mt 22:52. But he that takes not this sword may happen to perish by the sword; and the drawing of this sword may save a man from perishing by the sword. Mark that last reason that our Saviour adds why Peter should put up his sword: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mt 22:53). As if he had said, If it were my mind to confound these mine enemies that now set upon me, I should not need thy sword to do it. I could pray to my Father, and could presently by prayer bring such forces into the field as should rout and scatter all mine enemies; hereby implying, that if he would, he could do his enemies more damage and mischief by his prayers against them than by the sword and all instruments of war. Prayer is *twelve legions* strong, yea, twelve legions of angels strong against enemies. *Jeremiah Dyke (1620), in the Righteous Man's Tower.*

Verse 9. *This I know.* Faith goeth upon solid grounds, and is not a fallible conjecture, but a sure knowledge. *David Dickson.*

Verse 10. *In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word.* The first word, *Elohim*, is a name belonging to God as a judge, the second word, *Jehovah*, is a name of mercy. I will praise God whether he deal with me in a way of justice or in a way of mercy, when he hath thunder in his voice, as well as when he hath honey under his tongue. Oh, how should we praise God, and pleasure ourselves by such a frame! *Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 10. (*first clause*). By the assistance of God I shall be enabled to praise him for the performance of his promises. *Symon Patrick*, 1626-1707.

Verse 12. *Thy vows are upon me, O God.* Whoever is conversant with the Psalms of David, will find him frequently making *vows*, and careful in paying them. When these words dropped from him he was just delivered out of a pressing danger among the Philistines, with whom he took shelter from the rage of King Saul, who unweariedly pursued him; but he soon found that the remembrance of his past achievements to their damage was still so fresh amongst them, and they so exasperated thereupon, that his life was in constant danger. In his distress he flies to God, his wonted refuge, and sends up earnest addresses to him, *vowing* if he would open a way for his deliverance out of these new straits, he would show his grateful sense of so signal a mercy, by the exactness and accuracy of his future obedience. God hears and succours him; and he thereupon grateful looks back, endeavours to renew the sense of his former obligation to his great Deliverer, and to stir up himself by suitable returns, and so cries out, *Thy vows are upon me, O God*; as if he should say, I resolve, O Lord, not to forget what was transacted while I was under my fears. Thou hast heard my cries, and I own myself firmly bound by my *vows*. I was serious and in earnest when I made them, and I will endeavour to show that I was so by my care to perform them. *Thy vows*, O God, made indeed on my part, but justly to be exacted on thine, *are upon me*, they do in reality hold me fast, and I desire not to be released. I am sensible I deserve to be stigmatised for a perfidious wretch if I ever forget them. This temper of holy David with reference to the *vows* he made on this occasion, should be ours with reference to all the sacred *vows* we any way come under. All Christians, as such, are necessarily under *vows* to the blessed God: and particular circumstances may make it expedient for us to come under special engagements to him. But wherever they are such as that they may justly be denominated *vows of God*, *i.e.*, are such as his word will warrant; we should make holy David, as speaking in this text, our pattern, and set ourselves to imitate him, in seriously owning their binding force, and endeavouring to answer and pay them. *Edmund Calamy*, in "*A Practical Discourse Concerning Vows*," 1704.

Verse 12. *Thy vows are upon me, O God.* A well composed *vow* will make thee more circumspect and wary in the general course of thy life. Such an influence it hath, as doth more directly work on one particular part, yet is not terminated to that particular only. Thus it was with David. These *vows* were made when he was in danger of his life, as it seemeth from Ps 56:13; for when God heard him, he delivered his soul from death: for this he vowed praises in particular, and he will render them. But, withal he takes himself to be hereby engaged to a more

exact and circumspect walk before God in all duties: so he expresses himself in the latter part of Ps 56:13. *Henry Hurst (1629-1696), in "The Morning Exercise at Cripplegate," 1661.*

Verses 12-13. Thy vows are upon me, O God. Passively, vows made to God, not by God; or the obligations of those vows and prayers which I have made and upon which I have received answers. Sacrifices of thanksgiving were called vows, as having been vowed to God upon the want, and to be paid upon the receipt, of mercy. Le 1:1, "If the sacrifice that is offered be a vow." Thy vows are upon me; the fruit of my vows, so that I stand indebted to God for the return of praise. *Thou hast delivered.* He understands some great danger wherein he had sunk had not God stood by him, and from a greater mercy, the deliverance of his soul from death, argues for a less, the keeping his feet from falling. *That I may walk before God in the light of the living.* By light of the living is meant life, which is called being enlightened with the "light of the living." Job 33:30. Sometimes eternal life in heaven. Joh 8:12, "He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." "To walk before God." To walk obediently in the sight of God; with a respect to his presence; a walking unto all well pleasing. This is the last argument in the Psalm whereon he builds his strongest plea, as if he knew not what to urge if this should fail him; as if he should have said, Lord, I have had experience of thy wisdom in contriving, thy power in effecting, thy mercy in bestowing deliverance upon me, thy goodness in answering my vows and prayers. "Thou hast delivered from death, "a danger as great and unavoidable as death itself. O Lord, art not thou the same as thou wert? Art not thou still as wise to design, and as gracious to confer further mercy? Wilt thou not as certainly also deliver my feet from falling? The one contains his experience, the other the inference or conclusion he draws from it. Mercies received are in a special manner to be remembered. Mercies received are encouragements to ask, and strong grounds to hope for the mercies we want. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verses 12-13. Thy vows are upon me, O God. *See Psalms on "Ps 56:12" for further information.*

Verse 13. *From falling,* or, as more literally translated, from a *thrust*, or a *push*, by which one is caused to fall. *O. Prescott Hiller.*

Verse 13 (last clause). *To walk in the presence of God* is partly under his eyes, his guidance and care, partly in particular, where God is wont to be *present*, where he is *worshipped* by his people and scatters his blessings, opposed to his present state by which he was removed from the place of his worship and presence. Conf. 1Sa 26:19, etc. Lastly, *to walk in the light of the living* denotes

in general to live amongst *those who live in the light*, or who enjoy the *light*, as it is said elsewhere, *in the land of the living*—Ps 27:13 Isa 38:11 53:8; Eze 32:32; Ps 142:6—opposed to the *dead* or *the region of the dead*, who dwell *in darkness*. But in particular it signifies to live in a *safe* and *prosperous* state, whose well known emblem is *light*. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 13 (*last clause*). We cannot restrict this phrase to the light of mortal life; David's vows bound him to walk in the *light of spiritual life*, and also in the *light of eternal life*, of which by faith he was a partaker. And most commentators have applied this verse to the *light of glory* in the world to come, as the real and final object of the believer's conversation here on earth. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verses 2-3.

1. *Fears are common to all men*, at one time or another.
2. *Improper and inefficacious means* of removing fear are often resorted to.
3. There is here suggested *a true and effectual* method of removing fear.
—*Robert Morrison (1782-1834), in "A Parting Memorial."*

Verse 3. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* Whensoever we are afraid of any evil, we are still to put our trust in God.

1. What is it to put our trust in God?
 - (a) To keep our hearts from desponding or sinking down under any fears.
 - (b) To comfort ourselves in God.
 - (c) To expect deliverance from him.
2. What is there in God we ought to put our trust in?
 - (a) In his promises.
 - (b) In his properties. His power, wisdom, justice, mercy, all sufficiency.
3. Why should we in all our fears put our trust in God?
 - (a) Because there is none else can secure us from our fears. Whereas,

(b) There are no fears but God can secure us from them, either by removing the thing feared, or by subduing the fear of the thing. *Bishop Beveridge.*

Verse 3.

1. There is fear without trust.
2. There is trust without fear.
3. There is fear and trust united. *G. R.*

Verse 7.

1. From iniquity there is an escape.
2. By iniquity there is no escape. The mercy of God secures the one. The justice of God prevents the other. *G. R.*

Verse 8. Here are—

1. Manifold mercies, to reclaim from wanderings.
2. Tender mercies, putting tears in a bottle.
3. Covenant mercies, "Are they not, "etc. *G. R.*

Verse 9.

1. God is on the side of his people.
2. He is known to be on their side.
3. In answer to prayer he appears on their side.
4. When he appears enemies flee.

Or—

1. The fact, God is for me.
2. The knowledge of that fact—*This I know.*
3. The use of that knowledge—*When I cry, etc.*
4. The consequence of that use—*Mine enemies turn back. G. R.*

Verse 10.

1. "I will praise God *for* his word."
2. *In* his word, as he is there revealed.
3. *By* his word. "Thou hast put a song, "etc.

Verse 12. Here is—

1. Past dedication.
2. Present consecration.
3. Future glorification. *G. R.*

Verses 12-13. You have here—

1. The commemoration of former mercies: *Thou hast delivered.*
2. The confidence of future: *Wilt not thou.*
3. The end of all: *To walk before God in the light of the living. Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 13.

1. The language of Gratitude—*Thou hast*, etc.
2. Of Faith—*Wilt not thou*, etc.
3. Of Hope—*That I may walk*, etc. *G. R.*

WORK UPON THE FIFTY-SIXTH PSALM

In CHANDLER'S *"Life of David,"* Vol. 1., pp. 104-7, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

Psalm 57

Exposition
 Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
 Hints to the Village Preacher
 Other Works

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician.* So glad a song as this becomes ere it closes, should be in the keeping of the most skilled of all the temple minstrels. *Altaschith, i.e., DESTROY NOT.* This petition is a very sententious prayer, as full as it is brief, and well worthy to be the motto for a sacred song. David had said, "destroy not," in reference to Saul, when he had him in his power, and now he takes pleasure in employing the same words in supplication to God. We may infer from the spirit of the Lord's prayer, that the Lord will spare us as we spare our foes. There are four of these "*Destroy not*" Psalms, namely, the 57th, 58th, 59th, and 75th. In all of them there is a distinct declaration of the destruction of the wicked and the preservation of the righteous, and they all have probably a reference to the overthrow of the Jews, on account of their persecution of the great Son of David: they will endure heavy chastisement, but concerning them it is written in the divine decree, "Destroy them not." *Michtam of David.* For quality this Psalm is called golden, or a secret, and it well deserves the name. We may read the words and yet not know the secret joy of David, which he has locked up in his golden casket. *When he fled from Saul in the cave.* This is a song from the bowels of the earth, and, like Jonah's prayer from the bottom of the sea, it has a taste of the place. The poet is in the shadow of the cave at first, but he comes to the cavern's mouth at last, and sings in the sweet fresh air, with his eye on the heavens, watching joyously the clouds floating therein.

DIVISION. We have here prayer, Ps 57:1-6, and praise, Ps 57:7-11. The hunted one takes a long breath of prayer, and when he is fully inspired, he breathes out his soul in jubilant song.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me.* Urgent need suggests the repetition of the cry, for thus intense urgency of desire is expressed. If 'he gives twice who gives quickly, 'so he who would receive quickly must ask twice. For mercy the psalmist pleads at first, and he feels he cannot improve upon his plea, and therefore returns to it. God is the God of mercy, and the Father of mercies, it is most fit therefore that in distress he should seek mercy from him in whom it dwells. For my soul trusteth in thee. Faith urges her suit right well. How can the Lord be unmerciful to a trustful soul? Our faith does not deserve mercy, but it always wins it from the sovereign grace of God when it is sincere, as in this case where *the soul* of the man believed. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge. Not in the cave alone would he hide, but in the cleft of the Rock of ages. As the little birds find ample shelter beneath the parental wing, even so would the fugitive place himself beneath the secure protection of the divine power. The emblem is delightfully familiar and suggestive. May we all experimentally know its meaning. When we cannot see

the sunshine of God's face, it is blessed to cower down beneath the shadow of his wings. Until these calamities be overpast. Evil will pass away, and the eternal wings will abide over us till then. Blessed be God, our calamities are matters of time, but our safety is a matter of eternity. When we are under the divine shadow, the passing over of trouble cannot harm us; the hawk flies across the sky, but this is no evil to the chicks when they are safely nestling beneath the hen.

Verse 2. *I will cry.* He is quite safe, but yet he prays, for faith is never dumb. We pray because we believe. We exercise by faith the spirit of adoption whereby we cry. He says not I do cry, or I have cried, but I will cry, and indeed, this resolution may stand with all of us until we pass through the gates of pearl; for while we are here below we shall still have need to cry. Unto God most high.—Prayers are for God only; the greatness and sublimity of his person and character suggest and encourage prayer; however high our enemies, our heavenly Friend is higher, for he is *Most high*, and he can readily send from the height of his power the succour which we need. Unto God that performeth all things for me. He has cogent reason for praying, for he sees God performing. The believer waits and God works. The Lord has undertaken for us, and he will not draw back, he will go through with his covenant engagements. Our translators have very properly inserted the words, "all things," for there is a blank in the Hebrew, as if it were a *carte blanche*, and you might write therein that the Lord would finish anything and everything which he has begun. Whatsoever the Lord takes in hand he will accomplish; hence past mercies are guarantees for the future, and admirable reasons for continuing to cry unto him.

Verse 3. *He shall send from heaven.* If there be no fit instruments on earth, heaven shall yield up its legions of angels for the succour of the saints. We may in times of great straits expect mercies of a remarkable kind; like the Israelites in the wilderness, we shall have our bread hot from heaven, new every morning; and for the overthrow of our enemies God shall open his celestial batteries, and put them to utter confusion. Wherever the battle is more fierce than ordinary, there shall come succours from headquarters, for the Commander in chief sees all. And save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. He will be in time, not only to rescue his servants from being swallowed up, but even from being reproached. Not only shall they escape the flames, but not even the smell of fire shall pass upon them. O dog of hell, I am not only delivered from thy bite, but even from thy bark. Our foes shall not have the power to sneer at us, their cruel jests and taunting gibes shall be ended by the message from heaven, which shall for ever save us. Selah. Such mercy may well make us pause to meditate and give thanks. Rest, singer, for God has

given thee rest! God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. He asked for mercy, and truth came with it. Thus evermore doth God give us more than we ask or think. His attributes, like angels on the wing, are ever ready to come to the rescue of his chosen.

Verse 4. *My soul is among lions.* He was a very Daniel. Howled at, hunted, wounded, but not slain. His place was in itself one of extreme peril, and yet faith made him feel himself secure, so that he could lie down. The cave may have reminded him of a lion's den, and Saul and his band shouting and yelling in their disappointment at missing him, were the lions; yet beneath the divine shelter he finds himself safe. And I lie even among them that are set on fire. Perhaps Saul and his band kindled a fire in the cavern while they halted in it, and David was thus reminded of the fiercer fire of their hate which burned within their hearts. Like the bush in Horeb, the believer is often in the midst of flames, but never consumed. It is a mighty triumph of faith when we can lie down even among firebrands and find rest, because God is our defence. Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their *tongue a sharp sword*. Malicious men carry a whole armoury in their mouths; they have not harmless mouths, whose teeth grind their own food as in a mill, but their jaws are as mischievous as if every tooth were a javelin or an arrow. They have no molars, all their teeth are canines, and their nature is canine, leonine, wolfish, devilish. As for that busy member the tongue, in the case of the malicious, it is a two edged, keen, cutting, killing sword. The tongue, which is here compared to a sword, has the adjective *sharp* added to it, which is not used in reference to the teeth, which are compared to spears, as if to show that if men were actually to tear us with their teeth, like wild beasts, they could not thereby wound us so severely as they can do with their tongues. No weapon is so terrible as a tongue sharpened on the devil's grindstone; yet even this we need not fear, for "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

Verse 5. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.* This is the chorus of the Psalm. Before he has quite concluded his prayer the good man interjects a verse of praise; and glorious praise too, seeing it comes from the lion's den and from amid the coals of fire. Higher than the heavens is the Most High, and so high ought our praises to rise. Above even the power of cherubim and seraphim to express it, the glory of God is revealed and is to be acknowledged by us. Let thy glory be above all the earth. As above, so below, let thy praises, O thou great Jehovah, be universally proclaimed. As the air surrounds all nature, so let thy praises gird the earth with a zone of song.

Verse 6. *They have prepared a net for my steps.* The enemies of the godly spare no pains, but go about their wicked work with the coolest deliberation. As for each sort of fish, or bird, or beast, a fitting net is needed, so do the ungodly suit their net to their victim's circumstances and character with a careful craftiness of malice. Whatever David might do, and whichever way he might turn, his enemies were ready to entrap him in some way or other. My soul is bowed down. He was held down like a bird in a trap; his enemies took care to leave him no chance of comfort. They have dug a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are *fallen themselves*. He likens the design of his persecutors to pits, which were commonly dug by hunters to entrap their prey; these were made in the usual path of the victim, and in this case David says, *before me, i.e.,* in my ordinary way. He rejoices because these devices had recoiled upon themselves. Saul hunted David, but David caught him more than once and might have slain him on the spot. Evil is a stream which one day flows back to its source. Selah. We may sit down at the pit's mouth and view with wonder the just retaliations of providence.

Verse 7. *My heart is fixed.* One would have thought he would have said, "My heart is fluttered;" but no, he is calm, firm, happy, resolute, established. When the central axle is secure, the whole wheel is right. If our great bower anchor holds, the ship cannot drive. O God, my heart is fixed. I am resolved to trust thee, to serve thee, and to praise thee. Twice does he declare this to the glory of God who thus comforts the souls of his servants. Reader, it is surely well with thee, if thy once roving heart is now firmly fixed upon God and the proclamation of his glory. I will sing and give praise. Vocally and instrumentally will I celebrate thy worship. With lip and with heart will I ascribe honour to thee. Satan shall not stop me, nor Saul, nor the Philistines, I will make Adullam ring with music, and all the caverns thereof echo with joyous song. Believer, make a firm decree that your soul in all seasons shall magnify the Lord.

"Sing, though sense and carnal reason
Fain would stop the joyful song:
Sing, and count it highest treason
For a saint to hold his tongue."

Verse 8. *Awake up, my glory.* Let the noblest powers of my nature bestir themselves: the intellect which conceives thought, the tongue which expresses it, and the inspired imagination which beautifies it—let all be on the alert now that the hour for praise has come. Awake, psaltery and harp. Let all the music with which I am familiar be well attuned for the hallowed service of praise. I myself will awake early. I will awake the dawn with my joyous notes. No

sleepy verses and weary notes shall be heard from me; I will thoroughly arouse myself for this high employ. When we are at our best we fall short of the Lord's deserts, let us, therefore, make sure that what we bring him is our best, and, if marred with infirmity, at least let it not be deteriorated by indolence. Three times the psalmist calls upon himself to awake. Do we need so much arousing, and for such work? Then let us not spare it, for the engagement is too honourable, too needful to be left undone or ill done for want of arousing ourselves.

Verse 9. *I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.* Gentiles shall hear my praise. Here is an instance of the way in which the truly devout evangelic spirit overleaps the boundaries which bigotry sets up. The ordinary Jew would never wish the Gentile dogs to hear Jehovah's name, except to tremble at it; but this grace taught psalmist has a missionary spirit, and would spread the praise and fame of his God. I will sing unto thee among the nations. However far off they may be, I would make them hear of thee through my glad psalmody.

Verse 10. *For thy mercy is great unto the heavens.* Right up from man's lowliness to heaven's loftiness mercy reaches. Imagination fails to guess the height of heaven, and even thus the riches of mercy exceed our highest thoughts. The psalmist, as he sits at the cave's mouth and looks up to the firmament, rejoices that God's goodness is more vast and more sublime than even the vaulted skies. And thy truth unto the clouds. Upon the cloud he sets the seal of his truth, the rainbow, which ratifies his covenant; in the cloud he hides his rain and snow, which prove his truth by bringing to us seedtime and harvest, cold and heat. Creation is great, but the Creator greater far. Heaven cannot contain him; above clouds and stars his goodness far exceeds.

Verse 11. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.* A grand chorus. Take it up, ye angels and ye spirits made perfect, and join in it, ye sons of men below, as ye say, Let thy glory be above all the earth. The prophet in the previous verse spoke of mercy "unto the heavens," but here his song flies "above the heavens;" praise rises higher, and knows no bound

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. This Psalm was composed, as the title notes, by David prayer wise, when he hid himself from Saul in the cave, and is inscribed with a double title, *Altaschith, Michtam of David*. *Altaschith* refers to the scope, and *Michtam* to the dignity of the subject matter. The former signifies *destroy not*, or, let there be no slaughter; and may either refer to Saul, concerning whom he gave charge

to his servants not to destroy him; or rather it hath reference to God, to whom in this great exigence he poured out his soul in this pathetic ejaculation; *Altaschith*, destroy not. The latter title, *Michtam*, signifies a golden ornament, and so is suited to the choice and excellent matter of the Psalm, which much more deserves such a title than Pythagoras' golden verses did. *John Flavel* (1627-1692), in *"Divine Conduct, or the Mystery of Providence."*

Title. A Psalm composed *when David fled from Saul in the cave*, which is referred to in Psalm 143, and which, because it is without any other distinction called "the cave," is probably that celebrated cave where David with his six hundred followers lay concealed when Saul entered and David cut off the skirt of his robe. The king, accompanied by three thousand followers, chased him to the loftiest alpine heights—"to the sheepcotes," where the cattle were driven in the hottest summer months only—to hunt him in every hiding place. There was a cave, in the darkened cool of which David and his men were hid. Such caves in Palestine and the East are frequently enlarged by human hands, and so capacious that they accommodate thousands of people. This song of complaint was written during the hours of suspense which David spent there, to wait until the calamity was overpast (Ps 57:2); in which he only gradually gains a stout heart (Ps 57:8). His life was really suspended by a hair, if Saul or any of his attendants had espied him! *Agustus F. Tholuck*.

Title. *The cave.* There appear good grounds for the local tradition which fixes the cave on the borders of the Dead Sea, although there is no certainty with regard to the particular cave pointed out. The cave so designated is at a point to which David was far more likely to summon his parents, whom he intended to take from Bethlehem in to Moab, than to any place in the western plains... It is an immense natural cavern, the mouth of which can be approached only on foot along the side of the cliff. Irby and Mangles, who visited it without being aware that it was the reputed Cave of Adullam, state that it "runs in by a long, winding, narrow passage, with small chambers or cavities on either side. We soon came to a large chamber with natural arches of great height; from this last there were numerous passages, leading in all directions, occasionally joined by others at right angles, and forming a perfect labyrinth, which our guides assured us had never been perfectly explored—the people being afraid of losing themselves. The passages are generally four feet high by three feet wide, and were all on a level with each other." ...It seems probable that David as a native of Bethlehem, must have been well acquainted with this remarkable spot, and had probably often availed himself of its shelter, when out with his father's flocks. It would, therefore, naturally occur to him as a place of refuge when he

fled from Gath. *John Kitto (1804-1854), in "A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature."*

Whole Psalm. Mystically this hymn may be construed of Christ, who was in the days of his flesh assaulted by the tyranny both of spiritual and temporal enemies. His temporal enemies, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, furiously raged and took counsel together against him. The chief priests and princes were, saith Hierome, like *lions*, and the people like the *whelps of lions*, all of them in a readiness to devour his soul. The rulers *laid a net for his feet* in their captious interrogatories, asking (Mt 22:17), "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" and (Joh 8:5) whether the woman taken in the very act of adultery should be stoned to death or no. The people were "*set on fire*," when as they raged against him, and *their teeth and tongues were spears and swords* in crying, "Crucify him, crucify him." His spiritual enemies also sought *to swallow him up*; his *soul was among lions* all the days of his life, at the hour of his death especially. The devil in tempting and troubling him, had *laid a snare for his feet*; and death, in *digging a pit* for him, had thought *to devour* him. As David was in death, so Christ the Son of David was in the *grave*. *John Boys, 1571-1625.*

Verse 1. *Be merciful unto me, O God*, etc. This excellent Psalm was composed by David when there was enough to discompose the best man in the world. The repetition notes both the extremity of the danger, and the ardency of the supplicant. *Mercy! Mercy! Nothing but mercy*, and that exerting itself in any extraordinary way, can now save him from ruin. The arguments he pleads for obtaining mercy in this distress are very considerable.

1. He pleads his reliance upon God as an argument to move mercy. *My soul trusteth in thee*, etc. This his trust and dependence upon God, though it be not argumentative in respect of the dignity of the *act*; yet it is so in respect both of the nature of the *object*, a compassionate God who will not expose any that take shelter under his wings, and in respect of the *promise*, whereby protection is assured to them that fly to him for sanctuary. Isa 26:3.

2. He pleads former experiences of his help in past distresses, as an argument encouraging hope under the present strait (Ps 57:2). *John Flavel.*

Verse 1. *Be merciful unto me.* According to the weight of the burden that grieveth us, is the cry that comes from us. How do poor condemned prisoners cry to their judges, "Have pity upon us, have pity upon us!" David, in the day of his calamities doubles his prayer for mercy: *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee*, etc., *Until these calamities be*

overpast. It was not a single calamity, but a multitude of calamities which compassed David, and therefore he compasseth the Lord about with petitions. His spirit being up in prayer, like a bell that rings out, he strikes on both sides, *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me. Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 1. *Be merciful unto me.* The first clause contains the prayer itself in a very forcible word *ygnx*, properly, "Show thy most tender affection to me, "such as animals, with a humming sound, show to their young. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 1. *For my soul trusteth in thee.* The best reason with God, who "taketh pleasure in those that hope in his mercy." Ps 147:11. *Poole's Synopsis.*

Verse 1. *Soul.* His *soul* trusted in God; and this is a form of expression the force of which is not to be overlooked; for it implies that the trust which he exercised proceeded from his very innermost affection—that it was of no volatile character, but deeply and strongly rooted. He declares the same truth in figurative terms, when he adds his persuasion that God would cover him with the shadow of his wings. *John Calvin.*

Verse 1. *In the shadow of thy wings I will trust;* properly, I will seek for protection. The very delightful figure here employed, is taken from the chicken lying safely hid under the mother's wings; at the same time it seems to have reference to the wings of the cherubim, by which the mercyseat was covered. *Simon de Muis, 1587-1644.*

Verse 1. *The shadow of thy wings.* Compare Ps 17:8 61:4; and Mt 23:37; and the Apocalyptic imagery, describing the church fleeing from the dragon in the wilderness; and "to her are given the two wings of the great eagle, "and she is delivered from the dragon, who desires to *swallow her up*. See Re 12:6,15-16. *Christopher Wordsworth, 1868.*

Verse 1. *Until these calamities be overpast.* He compares his afflictions and calamity to a storm that cometh and goeth; as it is not always fair weather with us in this life, so not always foul. Athanasius said of Julian furiously raging against the Lord's Anointed, "*Nubecula est, cito transibit*, "he is a little cloud; he will soon pass away. Man is born to labour and dolour, to travail and trouble; to labour in his actions, to dolour in his passions; and so, "Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all." If we put our trust in him and cast all our care upon him, he will in his good time bring it to pass, that all our afflictions shall overpass. He will either take them from us or us from them, and then we shall assuredly know that the troubles of this life

present are not worthy of the glory which in the life to come shall be showed unto us. For as the globe of the earth, which improperly for his show of bigness we term the world, and is, after the mathematician's account, many thousand miles in compass; yet, being compared unto the greatness of the starry sky's circumference, is but a centre or little prick: so the travail and affliction of this life temporal, in respect of the joys eternal in the world to come, bear not any proportion, but are to be reputed in comparison a very nothing, as a dark cloud that cometh and goeth in a moment. *John Boys.*

Verses 1-3. In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these calamities be overpast*, etc. As if he had said, Lord, I am already in the cave and in the holds, and in the shadow of it, but yet for all that I think not myself safe indeed, till I have made my refuge in the shadow of thy wings: that is therefore the course I resolve and build upon. It was wisely done of him: and mark what course he takes to do it, Ps 57:2, *I will cry unto God most high*, I will by prayer put myself under the shadow of God's wings: and mark what success should follow, Ps 57:3, *He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.* When we send prayers up to heaven, God will send help down from heaven. But yet David *prays* to God, as well as *trusts* in God. And unless we pray as well as trust, our trust will fail us, for we must trust to God for that we pray for. *Jeremiah Dyke, 1620.*

Verse 3. *Him that would swallow me up.* If I were to take you to my house, and say that I had an exquisite fat man, and wished you to join me in eating him, your indignation could be restrained by nothing. You would pronounce me to be crazy. There is not in New York a man so mean that he would not put down a man who should propose to have a banquet off from a fellow man, cutting steaks out of him, and eating them. And that is nothing but feasting on the human body, while they will all sit down, and take a man's soul, and look for the tender loins, and invite their neighbours in to partake of the little titbits. They will take a man's honour and name, and broil them over the coals of their indignation, and fill the whole room with the aroma thereof, and give their neighbour a piece, and watch him, and wink as he tastes it. You all eat men up... You eat the souls, the finest elements of men. You are more than glad if you can whisper a word that is derogatory to a neighbour, or his wife, or his daughter... The morsel is too exquisite to be lost. Here is the soul of a person, here is a person's hope for this world and the world to come, and you have it on your fork, and you cannot refrain from tasting it, and give it to some one else to taste. You are cannibals, eating men's honour and name and rejoicing in it—and that, too, when you do not always know that the things charged against

them are true; when in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the probabilities are that they are not true. *Henry Ward Beecher*, 1870.

Verse 3. *God shall send forth his mercy and his truth*, viz., to save me. That is to say, God, to manifest his mercy, and vindicate the truth of his promises, will save me. The reader will observe, that mercy and truth are here poetically represented as ministers of God, standing in his presence, ready to execute his pleasure, and employed by him in the salvation of his people. *Samuel Chandler*.

Verse 3. *His mercy and his truth*. He need not send down angels, he need send but *mercy and truth* down, which elsewhere it is said he prepares in the heavens. Ps 61:7. He prepares commissions for them, and sends them down with them for execution. *Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 4. *My soul is among lions*. This may also be construed of the church, and that both in respect of her spiritual enemies and temporal. As for her ghostly foes, the devil is *a roaring lion* (1Pe 5:8), and our sins are the *whelps of lions*, ready to devour us. And concerning outward enemies, the church in this world is like Daniel in the lion's den, or as "the sucking child playing upon the hole of the asp." Isa 11:8. She hath here no visible power or outward help to fly to for succour, all her trust is in the Lord, and "under the shadow of his wings is her refuge, till this evil is overpast."... And surely, beloved, if the church had not any other enemies, but only these monstrous Antichrists of Rome, yet she might truly complain with our prophet here, *My soul is among lions*. Eleven popes had that name, whereof all, excepting two or three, were roaring lions in their Bulls, and ravening lions in seeking after their prey. *Leo* the tenth so pilled (Pill—peel, to pillage, plunder, strip) and polled (Poll, used synonymously with peel) the goodly nations of Germany with his unpardonable pardons and merciless indulgences, as that his insupportable cruelty gave the first occasion of the Reformation of religion in that country. *John Boys*.

Verse 4. (*first clause*). Mudge translates literally, *I lie with my soul amidst lionesses*. This agrees with the opinion of Bochart, who thinks that the animals here intended are lionesses, properly, when giving suck to their young, a time when they are peculiarly fierce and dangerous, "nor need we wonder," he observes, "that the lioness is reckoned among the fiercest lions; for the lioness equals, or even exceeds, the lion in strength and fierceness; "and this he proves from the testimonies of ancient writers. *James Anderson's Note to Calvin in loc*, 1846.

Verse 4. *And I lie even among them that are set on fire.* The whole pith lies in the word *hbkva*, *I will recline*, which denotes a tranquil and secure condition of body and mind, like a man *reclining* and sleeping, as Ps 3:5; *I laid me down and slept, I awaked*; and lived composedly; Ps 4:9; *I will both lay me down in peace*, etc. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 4. The horrors of a lion's den, the burning of a fiery furnace, and the cruel onset of war, are the striking images by which David here describes the peril and wretchedness of his present condition. *John Morison*.

Verse 6. *Net.* Not having fire arms, the ancients were much more skilful than the moderns in the use of snares, nets, and pits for capturing wild animals. A large class of Biblical figures and allusions necessarily presuppose this state of things. *W. M. Thomson*.

Verse 7. *My heart is fixed, O God*, etc. The psalmist knowing that it is the order and work of God, first to prepare the heart for communion, and then to incline his own ear to hear his people, and to entertain communion with them in ordinances, he doth observe this order, and follow it with a practice suitable to it in his daily address to God, that is thus, wheresoever he doth find his heart put into a fitted and prepared frame for communion with God, he doth not let it die again, and go out of frame by a slothful neglect of such a disposition of heart. No, but he immediately sets himself to duty, to worship God, and to the acts of his worship, in his ordinances, as he expresses himself in Ps 57:7; viz., thus—*ybl nwkg myhla ybl nwkg*, *Nachon libbi Elohim, nachon libbi* (there is the first; he finds his heart fitted and prepared for communion with God): "My heart, "saith he, "is fitted or prepared" (for the word *nwkg nachon* is the passive conjugation *niphal*, signifying, he is fitted or prepared, from the root *nzb*, *chun*, he fitted or prepared, in the active; and so it is rather to be rendered prepared or fitted, then "fixed, "thus *ykl libbi*, my heart; *nwkg nachon*, is fitted or prepared), "O God, my heart is fitted or prepared" for communion with thee. Well, what follows? He presently sets himself upon that great duty and ordinance of communion with God, in the praising of his name and singing forth those praises, as in the words immediately following in the same verse, thus: *My heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared*; therefore, *hrmzaw, ashidah va-azamerah*, "I will sing and give praise." *William Strong*, in "Communion with God," 1656.

Verse 7. *My heart is fixed, O God*, etc. Fitness for duty lies in the orderly temper of body and mind, making a man willing to undertake, and able to finish his work with comfortable satisfaction. If either the body or mind be distempered, a man is unfit for such an undertaking; both must be in a suitable

frame, like a well tuned instrument, else there will be no melody: hence when David prepared himself for praises and worship, he tells us *his heart was ready and fixed*, and then, his *tongue* was ready also (Ps 45:1), so was his hand with psaltery and harp; all these were awakened into a suitable posture. That a man is or hath been in a fit order for service may be concluded from

1. His alacrity to undertake a duty.
2. His activity in the prosecution.
3. His satisfaction afterward. Right grounds and principles in these things being still presupposed. *Richard Gilpin (1625-1699, 1700), in "Daemonologia Sacra."*

Verse 7. *I will sing.* It should alarm the wicked that they are contending with a people who sing and shout on the battle field. Yea, they never sing louder than when most distressed and afflicted. Whether saints conquer or are conquered they still sing on. Blessed be God for that. Let sinners tremble at contending with men of a spirit so heavenly. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 7. Sincerity makes the Christian sing, when he hath nothing to his supper. David was in none of the best case when in the cave, yet we never find him merrier: his heart makes sweeter music than ever his harp did. *William Gurnall.*

Verses 7-8. That worship that is performed with a sleepy, drowsy body, is a weak worship, but the psalmist here makes the awakening of the body to be the fruit and effect of the preparation of the heart; *Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.* Why so? My heart is prepared. The heart prepared and thereby awaked, will awake the body. To worship God therefore without a prepared heart, is to worship him with a drowsy body, because with a drowsy heart, and therefore weakly. *John Angier, in "An Help to Better Hearts, for Better Times," 1647.*

Verse 8. *Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.* We must prevent God by early praise as well as prayer: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me," sings David; and every child of David must prevent God again with his songs. Jehoshaphat delighted God with instruments of music before his deliverance. Faith must tune an *epinikion*, a psalm of victory, before the triumph. Praise is the ingenious mother of future mercies; as the Virgin Mary sang at Hebron before the birth of her son at Bethlehem. Oh, heavenly contention between mercy and duty! *Samuel Lee, 1625-1691.*

Verse 8. *Awake up, my glory*, etc. We must sing *with excited grace*. Not only with grace habitual, but with excited and actual: the musical instrument delights not but when it is played upon. In this duty we must follow Paul's advice to Timothy (2Ti 1:6), *anazwpurein*, stir up the grace that is in us, and cry out as David, *Awake love, awake delight*. Ps 57:8. The clock must be wound up before it can guide our time; the bird pleaseth not in her nest, but in her notes; the chimes only make music when they are going. Let us therefore beg the Spirit to blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, when we set upon this joyous service. God loves active grace in duty, that the soul should be ready trimmed when it presents itself to Christ in any worship. *John Wells, in "Morning Exercises, "1674.*

Verse 8. *I will awake early*. Literally, 'I will awake the dawn.' a bold figure of poetry, as if the writer had said,—The morning shall not awake me to praise; but in my songs I will anticipate the dawn. *R. T. Society's Notes.*

Verse 8. It will answer our purpose to take notice, first, of the *terms* David uses, and then, secondly, press the *exhortation*. Of the terms he uses:

1. *My glory*. That is my *soul* (say some) because the spirit of a man is the glory of a man, whereby he is dignified and raised so much above the *brutes*, as to be but a "little lower than the angels, "nay, to be akin to God himself, "the Father of spirits." My *musical skill*, say others, the glory of the artist above the unskilful; and that wherein David had the glory of excelling, as Jubal had of the first invention. My *tongue*, say others; for this is also the glory of a man above the dumb creatures, and the glory of a wise man above a fool. And as the tongue is the glory of a man, so the glory of the tongue is to glorify God. Praise is the glory of all other uses to which the tongue is employed; and the tongue is, in the body, that "temple of the Holy Ghost, "what the silver trumpet was in the temple of Solomon; to sound the high praises of God, and express the raised affections of our souls.

2. *Awake, psaltery and harp*. The one for a psalm, the other for a spiritual song or hymn; that is to say, all my musical instruments and skill I will employ in and consecrate to the glory of him who "puts new songs into my mouth." He first teaches my fingers to fight, and then to play the *epinikion*, or song of triumph. Sound, then, my psaltery and harp, emulous of those that are around the throne above; your melody can soften my cares, lay my fears, and turn my *cave* into a *choir*. As to these instruments in the worship of God, they were doubtless allowed to David, and to the church in his time. They were agreeable to the state of that church and people, who were led very much by their senses; and whose infant and less discerning condition made it needful for the natural

man to have something to fasten upon and be entertained with in the worship of God and to sweeten and take off from the labour and burden of that service. But as the gospel worship and appointments are a more spiritual, pleasant, and reasonable service, and need them less, so in the gospel institution we find no footsteps of them; and we know who first brought them into the church, as well as who first brought them into the world. It is not my business here to dispute this matter; and he must at any time do it but indifferently, whose inclination is against him all the while, and whose genius tempts him to wish himself solidly confuted in all he can advance. But since I find these instruments in my text, and since the sound of such texts as these is made use of to turn the public worship so frequently into concerts of music, I shall leave them with this remark: that to let them alone, especially in public worship, though one thought them tolerable, has a much better grace with it than to declare them "sorely displeasing to God, and that they filthily defile his holy house and place of prayer."

3. *I myself will awake early.* And without this, all the rest have been an empty sound; there would have been no melody to the Lord, whatsoever good music he might have made to himself. He would not put God off with a sacrifice of mere air. He summons the attendance of all his powers. Himself is the offering; and his music plays to the sacrifice, as it goes up in holy affections and spiritual joys; and unless these accompany the song, the mere breath of an organ, or the trembling of the strings of an harp is as good devotion and less offensive to God. Consider the *nature and excellency of the duty*. Singing psalms is a compound of several other duties. It contains prayer to a very great advantage: the stretch of the voice does humour and lead on the earnest reaching of the mind after the desired blessing. It is the very element and breath of praise; and the apostle tells us that "teaching and admonishing one another" is performed in singing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." For when we sing of *judgment*, it is awakening to sinners; and when we sing of *mercy*, it is comforting to all. Meditation cannot have a better help. The solemn movement of the time gives room for the mind to compass the full sense of the matter, and to impress it deep; and while the tongue is making the *pause*, the heart may make the *elevation*. In short, it gives an accent to all duty; it is the music of all other ordinances; it is adapted and suited to all circumstances; as appears from the psalms composed upon all occasions and subjects, doctrinal, prophetic, oratory, and historical; of praise and prayer, of grief and joy, in the penitential and complaining, in the triumphal and rejoicing; as if singing of psalms could stand for everything, and, like the manna in the wilderness, gives a taste of all the other food we enjoy in the house of God.

Benjamin Grosvenor, D.D. (1675-1758), in "An Exhortation to the *Duty of Singing*," *Eastcheap Lectures*, 1810.

Verse 8. The *psaltery* was a stringed instrument, usually with twelve strings, and played with the fingers. The *harp* or lyre was a stringed instrument, usually consisting of ten strings. Josephus says that it was struck or played with a key. It appears, however, that it was sometimes played with the fingers. *Albert Barnes*.

Verse 9. *I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.* The Spirit of God who indited this scripture, made his penman know that the Gentiles should have the use of his Psalms. *David Dickson*.

Verse 9. *The people—the nations.* The Hebrew church was neither called nor qualified to be a missionary society, but it never ceased to desire and hope for the conversion of the nations. This is seen in those passages in which the psalmists betray a consciousness that they shall one day have all the world for auditors. How boldly does David exclaim, *I will sing unto thee among the nations*. In the same spirit, a later psalmist summons the church to lift up her voice, so that all the nations may hear her recital of the Lord's mighty acts: *O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people*. Ps 105:1. The full import of this class of texts is often hidden from the English reader by the circumstance that our translators have hardly ever used the word *people* in its plural form. Twice in the Revelation they venture to write *peoples*; everywhere else the singular form has to do duty for both numbers; so that in not a few passages the sense is greatly obscured to those who have no access either to the original or to other versions. In the Psalms, in particular, the mention of the Gentiles is more frequent than the English reader is made aware of. It is to be observed, moreover, that in addition to this strain of indirect prediction, the conversion of the world is articulately celebrated in many glorious Psalms. Indeed, so numerous are these, and so generally distributed over the centuries between David and Ezra, that it would seem that at no time during the long history of inspired Psalmody, did the Spirit cease to indite new songs in which the children of Zion might give utterance to their world embracing hopes. *William Binnie, D.D., in "The Psalms: their History, Teachings, and Use," 1870.*

Verses 10-11. A hard and ungrateful heart beholds even in prosperity only isolated drops of divine grace; but a grateful one like David's, though chased by persecutors, and striking the harp in the gloom of a cave, looks upon the mercy and faithfulness of God as a mighty ocean, waving and heaving from the earth to the clouds, and from the clouds to the earth again. *Agustus F. Tholuck*.

Verse 11. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens*, etc. Greater words of prayer than these never came from human lips. Heaven and earth have as they imply, a mutually interwoven history, and the blessed, glorious end of this is in the sunrise of the Divine glory over both. *Franz Delitzsch*, 1869.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. (*first clause*). *Repetition in prayer.*

1. Its dangers. May degenerate into "vain repetitions." Carried to excess painfully suggests the idea, God is unwilling.
2. Its uses. Eases the soul like tears. Manifests intense emotion. Enables those of less mental activity to join in the general supplication. *R. A. Griffin*.

Verse 1. Here are—

1. Calamities:
 - (a) War.
 - (b) Pestilence.
 - (c) Privations.
 - (d) Sin, greatest of all.
 - (e) Death.
 - (f) Curse of a broken law.
2. Here is a refuge from these calamities.
 - (a) In God.
 - (b) Specially in the mercy of God.
3. There is flying to that refuge.
 - (a) By faith; *My soul trusteth in thee; Under the shadow*, etc.
 - (b) By prayer; "*Be* "etc.
4. Here is continuance both in faith and prayer; *until*, etc. *G. R.*

Verses 1, 4, 6-7. Note the varying condition of the same heart, at the same time. *My soul trusteth in thee... My soul is among lions... My soul is bowed down... My heart is fixed.*

Verse 2. Prayer to the performing God. He performs all his promises, all my salvation, all my preservation, all needed between here and heaven. Here he reveals his omnipotence, his grace, his faithfulness, his immutability; and we are bound to show our faith, patience, joy, and gratitude.

Verse 2. Strange reasons.

1. The psalmist in the depth of distress, cries to God, because he is most high in glory. Surely this thought might well paralyse him with the fear of divine inaccessibility, but the soul quickened with suffering, sees through and beyond the metaphor, rejoices in the truth, "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly."

2. He cries to God for help, because God *is* performing all things for him. Why urge him then? Prayer is the music to which "the mighty man of war" goes forth to battle. *R. A. G.*

Verse 3. The saints comfort in adversity.

1. All contingencies are provided for: *He shall* (or will) *send*.

2. The highest resources are available: *from* heaven.

3. The worst foes will be overcome in the end: *him* that would swallow me up.

4. By the holiest means: *mercy and truth*. *R. A. G.*

Verse 3. The celestial messengers. What they are. The certainty of their being sent. Their efficient operation. The grateful receiver.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). The harmony of the divine attributes in salvation. Mercy founded on truth, truth vindicating mercy. Mercy without injustice, justice honoured in mercy.

Verse 5.

1. The end which God has in view, both in heaven and earth, in a sinful and in sinless worlds—his own glory.

2. Our duty to acquiesce in that end: *Be thou*, etc.—Not self, not men, not angels—*Be thou* exalted, etc. In this we should acquiesce—

(a) Actively, by seeking that end.

(b) Passively, by submission to his will. *G. R.*

Verse 7. (*first clause*). It is implied that the *heart* is the main thing required in all acts of devotion; nothing is done to purpose in religion further than it is done with the heart. The heart must be *fixed*; fixed *for* the duty, fitted and put in frame for it; fixed *in* the duty by a close application; *attending on the Lord* without distraction. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.

1. What is fixed? the heart, not the mind merely, but the will, the conscience, the affections, which draw the mind after them: *My heart is fixed*—found an anchorage, a resting place, not therefore at the mercy of every gale, etc.

2. The objects upon which it is fixed.

- (a) Upon God.
- (b) Upon his word.
- (c) Upon his salvation.
- (d) Upon heaven.

3. The fixedness of the heart upon these objects, denotes—

- (a) Singleness of aim.
- (b) Uniformity of action.
- (c) Perseverance to the end. *G. R.*

Verses 7-9.

1. He that will be thankful must treasure up in his heart and memory the courtesy that is done him; so had David done, and therefore he mentions *his heart*; and to make it more emphatic, he names it again, *My heart*.

2. After he remembers it, he must be affected with it, and resolve upon it; so doth David: *My heart is ready*, or else, *My heart is fixed*; confirmed I am in it to be thankful, and I cannot be altered.

3. It is not enough that a man carry about with him a thankful heart he must *anunciare*, tell it abroad, and make it known publicly what God hath done for him; yea, and do it joyfully too: *I will*, saith David, *sing and give praise*.

4. He must use all means he can to make it known—*"tongue, ""psalter, "and "harp, "all are little enough. Whence, by an apostrophe, David turns to these. Awake, my glory: i.e., Tongue, awake; lute and harp, awake; I myself will awake.*

5. He must not do it in a sleepy manner, but with intention and earnestness of spirit: *"Awake, awake, I will awake."*

6. He must take the first opportunity to do it, and not hang off and delay it. *I will awake early.*

7. He must do it in such a place, and such an assembly as may most redound to God's honour: *I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. William Nicholson.*

Verse 9. Who? *I.* What? *Will praise.* Whom? *Thee, O Lord.* Where? *Among the people.* Why?

Verse 9. Public profession.

1. A necessity.
2. A privilege.
3. A duty. *R. A. G.*

Verse 10. The mercy of God reaches to the heavens.

1. As a throne. God is exalted in our eyes by his mercy.
2. As a ladder. By mercy we ascend from earth to heaven.
3. As a rainbow. Present and past mercies argue exemption for the saints from the wrath of heaven.
4. As a mountain. Its base is on the earth though its summit is lost in clouds. The influence of the cross towers to the heaven of heavens. Who can tell the glory of the summit of this mountain, whose *base* is refulgent with glory! *R. A. G.*

Verse 10. The amazing greatness of mercy.

1. It is not said merely that it is high as heaven, but great unto the heavens. It is *high* as the heavens, overtopping the greatest sin, and highest thought of man.

2. It is *wide* as the far reaching sky, compassing men of all ages, countries, classes, etc.

3. It is *deep*. Everything of God is proportionate; this, therefore, is deep in abiding foundation, and infinite wisdom.

WORKS UPON THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PSALM

The Works of JOHN BOYS, D.D., "Deane of Canterburie, "1629, folio, pp. 834-40, contains an Exposition of Psalm 57.

In CHANDLER'S *"Life of David, "Vol. 1., pp. 176-9, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.*

Psalm 58

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

To the Chief Musician. Although David had his own case in his mind's eye, yet he wrote not as a private person, but as an inspired prophet, and therefore his song is presented, for public and perpetual use, to the appointed guardian of the Temple psalmody. *Altaschith*. The wicked are here judged and condemned, but over the godly the sacred "*Destroy not*" is solemnly pronounced. *Michtam of David*. This is the fourth of the Psalms of the Golden Secret, and the second of the "Destroy not." These names if they serve for nothing else may be useful to aid the memory. Men give names to their horses, jewels, and other valuables, and these names are meant not so much to describe as to distinguish them, and in some cases to set forth the owner's high esteem of his treasure; after the same fashion the Oriental poet gave a title to the song he loved, and so aided his memory, and expressed his estimation of the strain. We are not always to look for a meaning in these superscriptions, but to treat them as we would the titles of poems, or the names of tunes.

DIVISION. The ungodly enemy is accused, Ps 58:1-5; judgment is sought from the judge, Ps 58:6-8; and seen in prophetic vision as already executed, Ps 58:9-11.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation?* The enemies of David were a numerous and united band, and because they so unanimously condemned the persecuted one, they were apt to take it for granted that their verdict was a right one. "What everybody says must be true," is a lying proverb based upon the presumption which comes of large combinations. Have we not all agreed to hound the man to the death, and who dare hint that so many great ones can be mistaken? Yet the persecuted one lays the axe at the root by requiring his judges to answer the question whether or not they were acting according to justice. It were well if men would sometimes pause, and candidly consider this. Some of those who surrounded Saul were rather passive than active persecutors; they held their tongues when the object of royal hate was slandered; in the original, this first sentence appears to be addressed to them, and they are asked to justify their silence. Silence gives consent. He who refrains from defending the right is himself an accomplice in the wrong. Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? Ye too are only men though dressed in a little brief authority. Your office for men, and your relation to men both bind you to rectitude; but have ye remembered this? Have ye not put aside all truth when ye have condemned the godly, and united in seeking the overthrow of the innocent? Yet in doing this be not too sure of success, or ye are only the "sons of men," and there is a God who can and will reverse your verdicts.

Verse 2. *Yea, in heart ye work wickedness.* Down deep in your very souls ye hold a rehearsal of the injustice ye intend to practise, and when your opportunity arrives, ye wreak vengeance with a gusto; your hearts are in your wicked work, and your hands are therefore ready enough. Those very men who sat as judges, and pretended to so much indignation at the faults imputed to their victim, were in their hearts perpetrating all manner of evil. Ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth. They were deliberate sinners, cold, calculating villains. As righteous judges ponder the law, balance the evidence, and weigh the case, so the malicious dispense injustice with malice aforethought in cold blood. Note in this verse that the men described sinned with heart and hand; privately in their heart, publicly in the earth; they worked and they weighed—they were active, and yet deliberate. See what a generation saints have to deal with! Such were the foes of our Lord, a generation of vipers, an evil and adulterous generation; they sought to kill him because he was righteousness itself, yet they masked their hatred to his goodness by charging him with sin.

Verse 3. *The wicked are estranged from the womb.* It is small wonder that some men persecute the righteous seed of the woman, since all of them are of the serpent's brood, and enmity is set between them. No sooner born than alienated from God—what a condition to be found in! Do we so early leave the right track? Do we at the same moment begin to be men and commence to be sinners? They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Every observer may see how very soon infants act lies. Before they can speak they practise little deceptive arts. This is especially the case in those who grow up to be adept in slander, they begin their evil trade early, and there is no marvel that they become adept in it. He who starts early in the morning will go far before night. To be untruthful is one of the surest proofs of a fallen state, and since falsehood is universal, so also is human depravity.

Verse 4. *Their poison is like the poison of a serpent.* Is man also a poisonous reptile? Yes, and his venom is even as that of a serpent. The viper has but death for the body in his fangs; but unregenerate man carries poison under his tongue, destructive to the nobler nature. They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear. While speaking of serpents the psalmist remembers that many of them have been conquered by the charmer's art, but men such as he had to deal with no art could tame or restrain; therefore, he likens them to a serpent less susceptible than others to the charmer's music, and says that they refused to hear reason, even as the adder shuts her ear to those incantations which fascinate other reptiles. Man, in his natural corruption, appears to have all the ill points of a serpent without its excellences. O sin, what hast thou done!

Verse 5. *Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.* Ungodly men are not to be won to right by arguments the most logical, or appeals the most pathetic. Try all your arts, ye preachers of the word! Lay yourselves out to meet the prejudices and tastes of sinners, and ye shall yet have to cry, "Who hath believed our report?" It is not in your music, but in the sinner's ear that the cause of failure lies, and it is only the power of God that can remove it.

"You can call spirits from the vast deep,
But will they come when you do call for them?"

No, we call and call, and call in vain, till the arm of the Lord is revealed. This is at once the sinner's guilt and danger. He ought to hear but will not, and because he will not hear, he cannot escape the damnation of hell.

Verse 6. *Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth.* If they have no capacity for good, at least deprive them of their ability for evil. Treat them as the snake charmers do their serpents, extract their fangs, break their teeth. The Lord can do this, and he will. He will not suffer the malice of the wicked to triumph, he will deal them such a blow as shall disable them from mischief. Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord. As if one brute creature had not enough of evil in it to complete the emblem of ungodly nature, another specimen of *ferae naturae* is fetched in. For fierce cruelty the wicked are likened to young lions, monsters in the prime of their vigour, and the fury of their lustiness; and it is asked that their grinders may be smashed in, broken off, or dashed out, that the creatures may henceforth be harmless. One can well understand how the banished son of Jesse, while poisoned by the venomous slander of his foes, and worried by their cruel power, should appeal to heaven for a speedy and complete riddance from his enemies.

Verse 7. *Let them melt away as waters which run continually.* Like mountain torrents dried up by the summer heats let them disappear; or like running streams whose waters are swiftly gone, so let them pass away; or like water spilt which none can find again, so let them vanish out of existence. Begone, ye foul streams, the sooner ye are forgotten the better for the universe. When he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in *pieces*. When the Lord goes forth to war, let his judgments so tell upon these persecutors that they may be utterly cut in pieces as a mark shattered by many shafts. Or perhaps the meaning is, when the ungodly man marches to the conflict, let his arrows and his bow drop into fragments, the string cut, the bow snapped, the arrows headless, the points blunted; so that the boastful warrior may not have

wherewithal to hurt the object of his enmity. In either sense the prayer of the Psalm has often become fact, and will be again fulfilled as often as need arises.

Verse 8. *As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away.* As the snail makes its own way by its slime, and so dissolves as it goes, or as its shell is often found empty, as though the inhabitant had melted away, so shall the malicious eat out their own strength while they proceed upon their malevolent designs, and shall themselves disappear. To destroy himself by envy and chagrin is the portion of the ill disposed. Like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the *sun*. Solemn is this curse, but how surely does it fall on many graceless wretches! They are as if they had never been. Their character is shapeless, hideous, revolting. They are fitter to be hidden away in an unknown grave than to be reckoned among men. Their life comes never to ripeness, their aims are abortive, their only achievement is to have brought misery to others, and horror to themselves. Such men as Herod, Judas, Alva, Bonner, had it not been better for them if they had never been born? Better for the mothers who bore them? Better for the lands they cursed? Better for the earth in which their putrid carcasses are hidden from the sun? Every unregenerate man is an abortion. He misses the true form of God made manhood; he corrupts in the darkness of sin; he never sees or shall see the light of God in purity, in heaven.

Verse 9. *Before your pots can feel the thorns.* So sudden is the overthrow of the wicked, so great a failure is their life, that they never see joy. Their pot is put upon the hook to prepare a feast of joy, and the fuel is placed beneath, but before the thorns are lit, before any heat can be brought to bear upon the pot, yea, even as soon as the fuel has touched the cooking vessel, a storm comes and sweeps all away; the pot is overturned, the fuel is scattered far and wide. Perhaps the figure may suppose the thorns, which are the fuel, to be kindled, and then the flame is so rapid that before any heat can be produced the fire is out, the meat remains raw, the man is disappointed, his work is altogether a failure. He shall take them away as with a whirlwind. Cook, fire, pot, meat and all, disappear at once, whirled away to destruction. Both living, and in his wrath. In the very midst of the man's life, and in the fury of his rage against the righteous, the persecutor is overwhelmed with a tornado, his designs are baffled, his contrivances defeated, and himself destroyed. The passage is difficult, but this is probably its meaning, and a very terrible one it is. The malicious wretch puts on his great seething pot, he gathers his fuel, he means to play the cannibal with the godly; but he reckons without his host, or rather without the Lord of hosts, and the unexpected tempest removes all trace of him, and his fire, and his feast, and that in a moment.

Verse 10. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.* He will have no hand in meting out, neither will he rejoice in the spirit of revenge, but his righteous soul shall acquiesce in the judgments of God, and he shall rejoice to see justice triumphant. There is nothing in Scripture of that sympathy with God's enemies which modern traitors are so fond of parading as the finest species of benevolence. We shall at the last say, "Amen, "to the condemnation of the wicked, and feel no disposition to question the ways of God with the impenitent. Remember how John, the loving disciple, puts it. "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. He shall triumph over them, they shall be so utterly vanquished that their overthrow shall be final and fatal, and his deliverance complete and crowning. The damnation of sinners shall not mar the happiness of saints.

Verse 11. *So that a man shall say.* Every man however ignorant shall be compelled to say, Verily, in very deed, assuredly, there is a reward for the righteous. If nothing else be true this is. The godly are not after all forsaken and given over to their enemies; the wicked are not to have the best of it, truth and goodness are recompensed in the long run. Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth. All men shall be forced by the sight of the final judgment to see that there is a God, and that he is the righteous ruler of the universe. Two things will come out clearly after all—there is a God and there is a reward for the righteous. Time will remove doubts, solve difficulties, and reveal secrets; meanwhile faith's foreseeing eye discerns the truth even now, and is glad thereat.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. The proper meaning of the root of *Michtam* is *to engrave*, or *to stamp a metal*. It therefore, in strictness, means, *an engraving* or *sculpture*. Hence in the Septuagint, it is translated *sthlografia*, an inscription on a column. I would venture to offer a conjecture in perfect harmony with this view. It appears by the titles of four out of these six Psalms, that they were composed by David while flying and hiding from the persecutions of Saul. What, then, should hinder us from imagining that they were inscribed on the rocks and on the sides of the caves which so often formed his place of refuge? This view would accord with the strict etymological meaning of the word, and explain the

rendering of the Septuagint. *John Jebb, in "A Literal Translation of the Book of Psalms,"* 1846. (See also Explanatory Notes on Psalms 6 and 56. "Treasury of David", Vol. 1., pp. 222-23; Vol. 3, p. 40.)

Whole Psalm. Kimchi says this Psalm was written on account of Abner, and the rest of Saul's princes, who judged David as a rebel against the government, and said it was for Saul to pursue after him to slay him; for if they had restrained him, Saul would not have pursued after him; and indeed they seem to be wicked judges who are addressed in this Psalm; *do not destroy*. Arama says, it declares the wickedness of Saul's judges. *John Gill*.

Verse 1. *Are ye dumb* (when) *ye* (should) *speak righteousness* (and) *judge equitably, sons of men?* The first words are exceedingly obscure. One of them *mla*, not expressed in the English, and the ancient versions, means *dumbness*, as in Ps 61:1, and seems to be here used as a strong expression for *entirely speechless*. In what respect they were thus dumb, is indicated by the verb which follows, but the connection can be made clear in English only by a circumlocution. The interrogation, *are ye indeed*, expresses wonder, as at something scarcely credible. Can it be so? Is it possible? are you really silent, you, whose very office is to speak for God, and against the sins of men? *Joseph Addison Alexander*.

Verse 1. *O congregation, O band, or company.* The Hebrew *alem*, which hath the signification of *binding as a sheaf or bundle*, seemeth here to be a company that are combined or confederate. *Henry Ainsworth*.

Verse 2. *In heart ye work wickedness*, etc. The psalmist doth not say, they had wickedness in their heart, but that they did work it there: the heart is a shop within, an underground shop; there they did closely contrive, forge, and hammer out their wicked purposes, and fit them into actions; yea, *they weighed the violence of their hands in the earth*. That's an allusion to merchants, who buy and sell by weight; they weigh their commodity to an ounce; they do not give it out in gross, but by exact weight. This saith the psalmist, *they weigh the violence of their hands*; they do not oppress grossly, but with a kind of exactness and skill, they sit down and consider what and how much violence they may use in such a case, or how much such a person may endure, or such a season may bear. They are wiser than to do all at once, or all to one, lest they spoil all. They *weigh* what they do, though what they do be so bad that it will hold no weight when God comes to weigh it. Nor do they arrive at this skill presently, but after they have, as it were, served an apprenticeship at it; and they bind themselves to the trade very early; for as it follows at the third verse of the Psalm, *The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon*

as they be born, speaking lies, that is, they are estranged both by nature and by early practice; they lose no time, they go to it young, even "as soon as they are born, "as soon as they are fit for any use, or to do any thing, they are using and setting themselves to do wickedly. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 2. The word *twlwe wickedness* properly signifies the *inclinations of scales*, when the scale weighs down to one side; then it is transferred to respect of persons, to injustice and iniquity, especially in public tribunals and decisions, as in Ps 82:2, *How long will ye judge lwe by an unjust inclination of the scales?* *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 2. The principles of the wicked are even worse than their practices: premeditated violence is doubly guilty. *George Rogers*.

Verse 3. *The wicked are estranged from the womb*, etc. How early men do sin! How late they do repent! *As soon as they are born* "they go astray, "but if left to themselves they will not return till they die; they will never return. Children can neither go nor speak as soon as born, but as soon as born they can "go astray" and "speak lies; "that is, their first speaking is lying, and their first going is straying; yea, when they cannot go naturally, they can go astray morally or metaphorically: the first step they are able to take is a step out of the way. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 3. *They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies*. Of all sins, no sin can call Satan father like to lying. All the corruption that is in us came from Satan, but yet this sin of forging and lying is from the devil more than any; tastes of the devil more than any. Hence every man is a liar (Ro 3:4), and so every man is every sinner else; but in a special manner every man is a liar; for that the very first depravation of our nature came in by lying, and our nature doth taste much still of this old block to be given to lying, the devil also breathing into us a strong breath to stir us up to lying. Hence *no sooner do we speak but we lie*. As we are in body, subject to all diseases, but yet, some to one sickness rather than to another: so in the soul, all are apt enough to all sin, and some rather to one vice than to another; but all are much inclined to lying. A liar then is as like the devil as ever he can look: as unlike to God as ever he can be. *Richard Capel, 1586-1656, in "Tentations, their Nature, Danger, Cure."*

Verse 3. The figure of the wicked going astray as soon as they are born, seems to be taken from the disposition and power of a young serpent soon after its birth. The youngest serpent can convey poison to anything which it bites; and the suffering in all cases is great, though the bite is seldom fatal. Place a stick near the reptile whose age does not amount to many days, and he will

immediately snap at it. The offspring of the tiger and of the alligator are equally fierce in their earliest habits. *Joseph Roberts, in "Oriental Illustrations of the Sacred Scriptures," 1844.*

Verse 4. Poison. There is such a thing as poison; but where to be found? *Ubique fuerit, in homine quis quaereret?* Wheresoever it is, in man who would look for it? God made man's body of the dust; he mingled no poison with it. He inspires his soul from heaven; he breathes no poison with it. He feeds him with bread; he conveys no poison with it. *Unde venenum?* Whence is the poison? Mt 13:27—"Didst not thou, O Lord, sow good seed in thy field?" *Unde zizaniae*—"From whence then hath it tares?" Whence? *Hoc fecit inimicus*—"The enemy hath done this." We may perceive the devil in it. That great serpent, the red dragon, hath poured into wicked hearts this poison. His own poison, *malitiam*, wickedness. *Cum infundit peccatum, infundit venenum*—"When he pours in sin he pours in poison." Sin is poison. Original depravity is called corruption; actual poison. The violence and virulence of this venomous quality comes not at first. *Nemo fit repente pessimus*—No man becomes worst at the first dash. We are born corrupt, we have made ourselves poisonous. There be three degrees, as it were so may ages, in sin. *First*—secret sin; an ulcer lying in the bones, but skinned over with hypocrisy. *Secondly*—open sin, bursting forth into manifest villany. The former is corruption, the second is eruption. *Thirdly*—frequented and confirmed sin, and that is rank poison, envenoming soul and body. *Thomas Adams, 1614.*

Verse 4. Adder. Hebrew *ntb pethen*, the Egyptian cobra (*Naja hage*), one of the venomous *Colubrine Snakes (Colubri)*. This is one of the so called hooded snakes, with which serpent charmers chiefly deal. The Spectacled Snake proper (*Naja tripudians*) is a closely related species. The well known Cobra di Capello is another. They are all noted for their deadly bite. The hollow fangs communicate with a poison gland, which being pressed in the act of biting, sends a few drops into the puncture. The venom quickly acts on the whole system, and death soon ensues. *John Duns, D.D., in "Biblical Natural Science," 1868.*

Verse 4. The deaf adder. Certain it is, says a modern writer upon the Psalms, that the common adder or viper here in England, the bite of which too, by the way, is very venomous, if it is not wholly *deaf*, has the sense of hearing very imperfectly. This is evident from the danger there is of treading upon these animals, unless you happen to see them; for if they do not see you, and you do not disturb them, they never endeavour to avoid you, which when they are disturbed and do see you, they are very solicitous of doing. Allowing, then, that there is a species of these noxious animals, which either not having the sense of

hearing at all, or having it only in a low degree, may very well be said to be deaf; this may help to explain the present poetical passage of the psalmist. He very elegantly compares the pernicious and destructive practices of wicked men to the venom of a serpent; and his mentioning this species of animals, seems to have brought to his mind another property of at least one sort of them, in which they likewise resembled perverse and obstinate sinners, who are deaf to all advice, utterly irreclaimable, and not to be persuaded. This the adder resembled, which is a very venomous animal, and moreover is deaf, or very near it. And perhaps his saying that *she stoppeth her ear*, may be no more than a poetical expression for deafness; just as the *mole*, which in common speech is said to be *blind*, might in a poetical phrase, be said to shut her eyes; as in fact she does when you expose her to the light. The next clause, *Which refuseth to hear*, etc., is another poetical expression for the same thing. *Samuel Burder, in "The Scripture Expositor," 1810.*

Verse 4. *The deaf adder.* Several of the serpent tribe are believed to be either quite deaf, or very dull of hearing. Perhaps that which is called the *puddeyan*, the "beaver serpent," is more so than any other. I have frequently come close up to these reptiles; but they did not make any effort to move out of the way. They lurk in the path, and the victim on whom they pounce will expire within a few minutes after he is bitten. *Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 4. *The deaf adder.* The *adder*, or *asp*, is the *haje naja*, or *cobra* of Egypt, according to Cuvier. The hearing of all the serpent tribes is imperfect, as all are destitute of a tympanic cavity, and of external openings to the ear. The *deaf adder* is not a particular species. The point of the rebuke is, the *pathen*, or "adder," here in question, *could* hear in some degree but *would* not; just as the unrighteous judges, or persecutors, of David could hear with their outward ears such appeals as he makes in Ps 58:1-2, but would not. The charmer usually could charm the serpent by shrill sounds, either of his voice or of the flute, the serpent's comparative deafness rendering it the more amenable to those sounds which it could hear. But exceptional cases occurred of a *deaf adder* which was *deaf* only in the sense that it refused to hear, or to be acted on. Also Jer 8:17; compare Ec 10:11. *A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 4. *The deaf adder that stoppeth her ear.* With respect to what is said of the animal's stopping its ears, it is not necessary to have recourse to the supposition of its actually doing so, which by some persons has been stated, but it is sufficient to know, that whilst some serpents are operated upon in the manner above described, others are partly or altogether insensible to the incantation. *Richard Mant.*

Verse 4. (second clause). This clause admits of a different construction, *like the deaf adder he stops his ear*, which some interpreters prefer, because an adder cannot stop its ears, and need not stop them if naturally deaf, whereas it is by stopping his, the wicked man becomes like a deaf adder. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verses 4-5. Experienced and skilful as the serpent charmers are, however, they do not invariably escape with impunity. Fatal terminations to these exhibitions of the psyllid art now and then occur; for there are still to be found "*deaf adders, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*"... Roberts mentions the instance of a man who came to a gentleman's house to exhibit tame snakes, and on being told that a cobra, or hooded snake, was in a cage in the house, was asked if he could charm it; on his replying in the affirmative, the serpent was released from the cage, and no doubt, in a state of high irritation. The man began his incantation, and repeated his charms; but the snake darted at him, fastened upon his arm, and before night he was a corpse. *Philip Henry Gosse, in "The Romance of Natural History," 1861.*

Verses 4-5. One day a rattlesnake entered our encampment. Among us was a Canadian who could play the flute, and who, to divert us, marched against the serpent with his new species of weapon. On the approach of his enemy, the haughty reptile curls himself into a spiral line, flattens his head, inflates his cheeks, contracts his lips, displays his envenomed fangs and his bold throat; his tongue flows like two flames of fire; his eyes are burning coals; his body swollen with rage, rises and falls like the bellows of a forge; his dilated skin assumes a dull and scaly appearance; and his tail, whence proceeds the death announcing sound, vibrates with such rapidity as to resemble a light vapour. The Canadian begins to play upon his flute—the serpent starts with surprise, and draws back his head. In proportion as he is struck with the magic notes, his eyes lose their fierceness; the oscillations of his tail become slower and the sounds which it makes become weaker, and gradually die away. Less perpendicular upon their spiral line, the rings of the charmed serpent are by degrees expanded, and sink one after another on the ground in concentric circles. The shades of azure, green, white, and gold recover their brightness on his quivering skin, and slightly turning his head, he remains motionless, in the attitude of attention and pleasure. At this moment the Canadian advances a few steps, producing from his flute sweet and simple notes. The serpent, inclining his variegated neck, opens a passage with the head through the high grass, and begins to creep after the musician; stopping when he stops, and beginning to follow him again as soon as he advances forward. In this manner he was led out of the camp, attended by a great number of spectators, both savages and

Europeans, who could scarcely believe their eyes, which had witnessed this effect of harmony. *Francois Aguste, Viscount de Chateaubriand, 1768-1848.*

Verses 4-5. The serpent, when she begins to feel the charmer, clappeth one ear presently to the ground, and stoppeth the other ear with her tail, although by hearkening to the charmer, as some observe, she would be provoked to spit out her poison, and renew her age. (This is a specimen of the old fashioned *unnatural* history. No one will be misled by it. *C. H. S.*) So hot is man upon his harlot sin, that he is deaf to all that would counsel him to the contrary; he stops his ear, hardens his heart, stiffens his neck against the thunders of the law, the still voice of the gospel, the motions of the Spirit, and the convictions of his own conscience. When sin calls, they run through thick and thin for haste; when the world commands, how readily do they hearken, how quickly do they hear, how faithfully do they obey! but when the blessed God cries to them, charges them by his unquestionable authority, beseeches them for their own unchangeable felicity, they, like statues of men, rather than living creatures, stand still and stir not at all. Other things move swiftly to their centres; stones fall tumbling downward, sparks fly apace upward, coneys run with speed to their burrows, rivers with violence to the ocean, and yet silly man hangs off from his Maker, that neither entreaties nor threatenings, nor the word, nor the works of God, nor the hope of heaven, nor fear of hell, can quicken or hasten him to his happiness. Who would imagine that a reasonable soul should act so much against sense and reason? *George Swinnock, 1627-1673.*

Verse 5. *Will not hearken.* The Lord hath some of his elect ones whom he seeth walking in bypaths and crooked ways: the Lord giveth a commission to his servants, the ministers, and saith, Go invite and call yon soul to come to me, and say, Return, O Shulamite; but the soul stirs not: the Lord sends and calls again: yet with the deaf adder, he hearkeneth not to the voice of the enchanter: well, saith the Lord, "If you will not come; I will fetch you"; if fair means will not do, foul means must; then he hisses for the fly and the bee of affliction, and calls forth armies of trouble, and gives them commission to seize upon, and to lay siege to such a man or woman, and saith, Ply them with your cannon shot, till you make them yield, give up the keys and strike the sail; he sends sickness to their bodies, a consumption to their estate, death to their friends, shame to their reputation, a fire to their house, and the like, and bids them prey and spoil, till they see and acknowledge the hand of the Lord lifted up. *J. Votier's "Survey of Effectual Calling," 1652.*

Verse 6. *Break their teeth,* destroy the fangs of these serpents, in which *their poison* is contained. This will amount to the same meaning as above. Save me

from the *adders*, the sly and poisonous slanderers: save me also from the *lions*—the tyrannical and bloodthirsty men. *Adam Clarke*.

Verse 6. *Great teeth.* mwetlm, according to Michaelis and Gesenius, are the *eye teeth*, which in lions are sharp and terrible. *George Phillips, B.D., in "The Psalms in Hebrew: With a Commentary," 1846.*

Verses 6-9. David's enemies were strong and fierce as young lions: he therefore prayed that *their teeth might be broken*, even their strongest teeth, their *grinders*, with which they were ready to devour him; that so they might be disabled from doing mischief. They overwhelmed him like an inundation: but he desired it might prove a land flood, which is soon wasted. They were about to shoot at him: but he would have their bows, or their arrows, to be shivered to pieces, and become like straw, and do no execution, and he prayed that they might waste insensibly as the snail, which leaves its substance all along its track; and that they might come to nothing, like an abortion. He also predicted, that their prosperous rage (which resembled the crackling of thorns under a pot), would soon be extinct, and produce no effect; while the Lord in his wrath would hurry them into speedy destruction; as a furious whirlwind drives a living man down a precipice, or into a dreadful pit. *Thomas Scott, 1747-1821.*

Verse 8. *As a snail which melteth away as it goeth*, literally, *which goeth in melting* (or slime), the noun being in the accusative as describing the nature of the action, and the allusion being to the slimy trail which the snail leaves behind it, so that *it seems* to waste away. Evidently this is nothing more than a poetical hyperbole, and need not be explained, therefore, as a popular error or a mistake in natural history.—J. J. Stewart Perowne, B.D., in "The Book of Psalms; a New Translation, with Introduction and Notes," 1864.

Verse 8. *As a snail which melteth*, etc. This is a very remarkable and not very intelligible passage. The Jewish Bible renders the passage in a way which explains the idea which evidently prevailed at the time the Psalms were composed: "As a snail let him melt as he passeth on." The ancients had an idea that the slimy track made by a snail as it crawled along was subtracted from the substance of its body, and that in consequence the farther it crept the smaller it became until at last it wasted entirely away. The commentators on the Talmud took this view of the case. The Hebrew word, lwlvv *shablul*, which undoubtedly does signify a snail of some kind, is thus explained:—"The Shablul is a creeping thing; when it comes out of its shell, saliva pours from itself until it becomes liquid, and so dies." Other explanations of this passage have been offered, but there is no doubt that the view taken by these commentators is the correct one, and that the psalmist, when he wrote the

terrible series of denunciations in which the passage occurs, had in his mind the popular belief regarding the gradual wasting away of the snail as it "passeth on." It is needless to say that no particular species of snail is mentioned, and almost as needless to state that in Palestine there are many species of snails, to any or all of which these words are equally applicable. *J. G. Wood, in "Bible Animals."* 1869.

Verse 8. *The untimely birth of a woman.* The wicked are all, so speak, human abortions; they are and for ever remain defective beings, who have not accomplished the great purpose of their existence. Heaven is the one end for which man is created, and he who falls short of it does not attain the purpose of his being; he is an eternal abortion. *O. Prescott Hiller.*

Verse 8. *(second clause).* David when he curseth the plots of wicked men, that though they have conceived mischief, and though they have gone with it a long time, and are ready to bring it forth, yet saith he, *Let them be* (that is, let their counsels and designs be) like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the *sun*: that is, let them be dashed and blasted, let them never bring forth their poisonous brood to the hurt and trouble of the world. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9. *(first clause).* *Before your cooking vessels,* etc. It would puzzle Oedipus himself to make any tolerable sense of the English translation of this verse. It refers to the usage of travellers in the East, who when journeying through the deserts, make a hasty blaze with the thorns which they collect, some green and full of sap, others dry and withered, for the purpose of dressing their food; in which circumstances, violent storms of wind not infrequently arise, which sweep away their fuel and entire apparatus, before the vessels which they use become warm by the heat. An expressive and graphical image of the overwhelming ruin of wicked men. *William Walford, 1837.*

Verse 9. *Before your pots feel the bramble.* By this proverbial expression the psalmist describes the sudden eruption of the divine wrath; sudden and violent as the ascension of the dry bramble underneath the housewife's pot. The brightness of the flame which this material furnishes, the height to which it mounts in an instant, the fury with which it seems to rage on all sides of the vessel, give force, and even sublimity to the image, though taken from one of the commonest occurrences of the lower life—a cottager's wife boiling her pot! The sense, then, will be: "Before your pots feel the bramble, he shall sweep them away in whirlwind and hurricane." *Samuel Horsley, 1733-1806.*

Verse 9. In all the book of God I do not remember any sentence so variously and differently translated as this verse... This variety of translations ariseth

chiefly from the original Hebrew word *twrym siroth*, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies, first, *pots* or *cauldrons*, wherein flesh is sod, as Ex 16:3 38:3 Eze 11:11. Secondly, *thorns*, and *pricks* of thorns and briers, as Isa 34:13 Ho 2:8. Thirdly, because the pricks of the great bramble are very sharp and hooked, this word is used to signify fishhooks. Am 4:2. In all our English Bibles of the old, new, and Geneva translation, and some Latin Bibles, this word is taken to signify pots or cauldrons; but the Septuagint, Hierome, vulgar Latin, Austine, Pagnine, Tremellius, and all others that I have seen, take this word in the second sense, for the sharp pricks of thorns and brambles. Here, certainly, this word signifies the sharp pricks of the great dog bramble, which here in the Hebrew text is *dj atad*, and is used (Jud 9:14-15) in Jotham's parable to signify the bramble, which being made king of the trees, kindled a fire, which devoured the cedars of Lebanon. Now this bramble in the body, and every branch of it, is beset with sharp hooked pricks, some of which are green and have life and moisture in them, and though they be sharp, yet they are not so stiff and strong as to make any deep wound in a man's flesh. Others are greater, more hooked, and hardened by drying and parching with the vehement heat of the sun; and they strike to the quick, and hold fast, or tear where they catch hold of man's skin or flesh. The first are here called *dja*, living or green; the other are called, *nwr x*, dried, or parched and hardened; and the prophetic psalmist affirms that "God who judgeth in the earth, will take away and destroy as with a tempestuous whirlwind, every one of them, as well the green as the dry," as Tremellius out of the original doth most truly translate the word... The whole text runs thus: "Before they feel your thorns or pricks, O ye bramble, he will take away every one as with a whirlwind, as well the green as the dry." *Before they*, that is, the righteous whom ye hate and persecute; *do feel*. that is, have a full sense and understanding of your thorns or pricks, that is, of the sharpness, fury, and mischief which is in the heart and hand of all and every one among you; for every one in your band and congregation is a grievous thorn and sharp prick of the cursed bramble, sharply set and bent to do mischief in malice and fury to the people and church of God. "He that is God who judgeth in the earth" (as it is expressed in the eleventh verse, in the last words) "will take away as with a whirlwind" (that is, scatter and destroy tempestuously), "every one, as well the living and green as the dry and hardened." That is, of every sort banded together, as well the green headed and young persecutors, sharp set, but not so strong to hurt, as the old and dry who are hardened in malice by long custom, and in power and policy are strong to do mischief. *George Walker, in a Fast Sermon before the House of Commons, 1644.*

Verse 10. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.* When the just man seeth the vengeance and rejoiceth, it is not of malice, but of benevolence, either hoping that the wicked may by punishment be amended, or loving God's justice above men's persons, not being displeased with the punishment of the wicked, because it proceedeth from the Lord, nor desiring that the wicked may be acquitted from penalty because they deserve in justice to be punished. *Nicholas Gibbens.*

Verse 10. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.* Not that he shall be glad of the vengeance purely as it is a hurt, or a suffering to the creature, but the righteous shall be glad when he seeth the vengeance of God, as it is a fulfilling of the threatening of God against the sin of man, and so evidence of his own holiness. Ps 59:9-10. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10. *He shall; wash his feet,* etc. That is, he gets comfort and encouragement by seeing the Lord avenge his cause against his adversaries. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10. *He shall wash his feet in the blood,* etc. As the victorious survivor of a conflict, walking over the battle field, might be said to do. *R. T. Society's Notes.*

Verse 10.. When angels execute God's judgments upon sinners, the saints see much in it; they see matter of fear and praise; of fear, in that God's power, wrath, and hatred are manifested in them against sin and sinners; of praise, in that themselves are delivered and justice performed. When the wicked are taken away by a divine stroke, by the hand of justice, and God hath the glory of his justice, *the righteous rejoice at it:* but is that all? No, *he washes his feet in the blood of the wicked;* that is, by this judgment he fears and reforms. It is a metaphor taken from the practice of those parts where they went barefoot, or with sandals, and so contracted much filth, and used to wash and cleanse their feet when they came in; so here, the godly seeing the hand of God upon the wicked, fears, and judges himself for his sins, purges his conscience and affections, and stands now in awe of that God who hath stricken the wicked for those sins which he himself in part is guilty of. Waldus, a man of note in Lyons, seeing one struck dead in his presence, he washed his hands in his blood; for presently he gave alms to the poor, instructed his family in the true knowledge of God, and exhorted all that came unto him to repentance and holiness of life. *William Greenhill, 1691-1777.*

Verse 10.. No doubt, at the sight of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim destroyed, angels saw cause to rejoice and sing, "Hallelujah." Wickedness was

swept away; earth was lightened of a burden; justice, the justice of God, was highly exalted; love to his other creatures was displayed in freeing them from the neighbourhood of hellish contaminations. On the same principles (entering, however, yet deeper into the mind of the Father, and sympathising to the full in his justice), the Lord Jesus himself, and each one of his members shall cry, "Hallelujah, "over Antichrist's ruined hosts. Re 19:3. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.* He shall be refreshed at the end of his journey (Joh 13:5 Lu 7:44 Ge 18:4), he shall wipe off all the dust of the way, and end its weariness by entering into that strange, that divine joy over sin destroyed, justice honoured, the law magnified, vengeance taken for the insult done to Godhead, the triumph of the Holy One over the unholy. It is not merely *the time when* the joy begins—it is also the occasion and cause of that day's rapturous delight. *Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 10. A broad and vital distinction is to be made between *desire for the gratification of personal vengeance*, and zeal for the vindication of *the glory of God*. "The glory of God" includes necessarily the real good of the offender and the well being of society. Desire for *retaliation* is always wrong; desire for *retribution* may be in the highest degree praiseworthy. For personal motives only can I desire retaliation upon the wrong doer; but for motives most disinterested and noble I may desire retribution. *R. A. Bertram, in "The Imprecatory Psalms," 1867.*

Verse 11. *So that a man shall say, Verily*, etc. This shall be said not by *a man*, nor by any particular man, but by men in general, by man as opposed to God. The particle translated, *verily* really means *only*, and denotes that this and nothing else is true. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 11. *So that*, etc. There is something worth noting from the connexion of this verse with the context, and is implied in the first word, *so that*, which joins this verse with the former parts of this Psalm, and shows this to be an illation from them. What? did God so suddenly, "as with a whirlwind," overthrow those wicked judges who lorded it over his people? did he make those "lions" melt like snails? did he confirm the joints of his people, which were little before, trembling and smiting on against another, as if they had been so many forlorn wretches exposed and cast forth, and no eye to pity them; as if they had been floating with Moses upon the sea in a basket of bulrushes, without any pilot to guide them, and even ready to cry out with the disciple, "Master, carest not that we perish?" Did he then command a calm, and bring them to the haven where they would be? did he turn their howling like dragons and chattering like cranes, under the whips and saws of tyrannical taskmasters, into a song of joy

and triumph? did he dismantle himself of that cloud wherein for a time he had so enveloped himself, that he seemed not to behold the pressures of his people? did he, I say, then step in to his people's rescue, by breaking their yokes as in the day of Midian, and kissing them with kisses of his mouth? *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.* Observe: Though the passages of God's providence may seem so rugged and uncouth, as if they were destructive to his church, and likely to put out the eye of his own glory; yet our God will so dispose of them in the close, that they shall have an advantageous tendency, to the setting forth of his honour and our good. *John Hinckley, 1657.*

Verse 11. Some of the judgments of God are a shallow, or a ford, over which a lamb may wade; every child may read the meaning of them; and *a man*—any ordinary man—*may say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.* *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 11. This judging here does not refer to the judgment to come, at the last day, when there shall be a general convention of quick and dead before the Lord's dreadful tribunal; though so, it is most true *affore tempus*, that there will be a time when God will ride his circuit here in a solemn manner, *so that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth;* but that is not the scope of this place. It is in the present tense, *o krinwn, that now judgeth, or is now judging* the earth and the inhabitants thereof; and therefore it must be understood of a judgment on this side, the judgment of the great day; and so God judges the earth, or in the earth, three manner of ways. First, by a providential ordering and wise disposal of all the affairs of all creatures. Secondly, in relieving the oppressed, and pleading the cause of the innocent. Thirdly, in overthrowing and plaguing the wicked doers. *John Hinckley.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 3.

1. The natural effects of original sin are seen in early suffering and death.
2. Its moral effects are seen in the early commission of actual sin.
3. Early depravity is evinced in the conscious guilt of telling lies. *G. R.*

Verse 3. (*first clause*). The inner pandemonium, or the calendar of the heart's crime.

Verse 4. (*first clause*). A generation of serpents. *T. Adams's Sermon.*

Verse 4. Sin as a poison. Poisons may be attractive in colour and taste, slow or rapid in action, painful in effect, withering, soporific or maddening. In all cases deadly.

Verse 5. The serpent charmer.

1. He charms with moral persuasion, promise, threatening, etc.
2. He charms wisely, earnestly, affectionately, argumentatively.
3. He charms in vain; the will is averse. Hence the need of divine grace and of the gospel.

Verse 8. The snail like course of ungodly men. Their sin destroys their property, health, time, influence, life.

Verse 11. Remarkable cases of divine judgments and their results.

Psalm 59

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

To the Chief Musician. Strange that the painful events in David's life should end in enriching the repertoire of the national minstrelsy. Out of a sour, ungenerous soil spring up the honey bearing flowers of psalmody. Had he never been cruelly hunted by Saul, Israel and the church of God in after ages would have missed this song. The music of the sanctuary is in no small degree indebted to the trials of the saints. Affliction is the tuner of the harps of sanctified songsters. *Altaschith*. Another "destroy not" Psalm. Whom God preserves Satan cannot destroy. The Lord can even preserve the lives of his prophets by the very ravens that would naturally pick out their eyes. David always found a friend to help him when his case was peculiarly dangerous, and that friend was in his enemy's household; in this instance it was Michal, Saul's daughter, as on former occasions it had been Jonathan, Saul's son. *Michtam of David*. This is the Fifth of the Golden Secrets of David: God's chosen people have many such. *When Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him*. Great efforts were made to carry the Psalms away to other authors and seasons than those assigned in the headings, it being the fashion just now to prove one's learning by disagreeing with all who have gone before. Perhaps in a few years the old titles will be as much revered as they are now rejected. There are spasms in these matters, and in many other things among the would be "intellectuals" of the schools. We are not anxious to show our readiness at conjecture, and therefore are content with reading this Psalm in the light of the circumstances here mentioned; it does not seem unsuitable to any verse, and in some the words are very appropriate to the specified occasion.

DIVISION. In Ps 59:1-2 he prays, in Ps 59:3-4 he complains of his woes, and again in Ps 59:5 he prays. Here he inserts a *Selah*, and ends one portion of his song. In Ps 59:6-7 he renews his complaint, in Ps 59:8-10 declares his confidence in God, and in Ps 59:11-13 lifts up his heart in prayer; closing another part of his Psalm with *Selah*. Then he prays again in Ps 59:14-15, and afterwards betakes himself to singing.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God.* They were all round the house with the warrant of authority, and a force equal to the carrying of it out. He was to be taken dead or alive, well or ill, and carried to the slaughter. No prowess could avail him to break the cordon of armed men, neither could any eloquence stay the hand of his bloody persecutor. He was taken like a bird in a net, and no friend was near to set him free. Unlike the famous starling, he did not cry, "I cannot get out," but his faith uttered quite another note. Unbelief would have suggested that prayer was a waste of breath, but not so thought the good man, for he makes it his sole resort. He cries for deliverance and leaves ways and means with his God. Defend me from them that rise up against me. Saul was a king, and therefore sat in high places, and used all his authority to crush David; the persecuted one therefore beseeches the Lord to set him on high also, only in another sense. He asks to be lifted up, as into a lofty tower,

beyond the reach of his adversary. Note how he sets the title, *My God*, over against the word, *mine enemies*. This is the right method of effectually catching and quenching the fiery darts of the enemy upon the shield of faith. God is our God, and therefore deliverance and defence are ours.

Verse 2. *Deliver me from the workers of iniquity.* Saul was treating him very unjustly, and besides that was pursuing a tyrannical and unrighteous course towards others, therefore David the more vehemently appeals against him. Evil men were in the ascendant at court, and were the ready tools of the tyrant, against these also he prays. Bad men in a bad cause may be pleaded against without question. When a habitation is beset by thieves, the good man of the house rings the alarm bell; and in these verses we may hear it ring out loudly, "*deliver me, defend me, deliver me, save me.*" Saul had more cause to fear than David had, for the invincible weapon of prayer was being used against him, and heaven was being aroused to give him battle. And save me from bloody men. As David remembers how often Saul had sought to assassinate him, he knows what he has to expect from that quarter and from the king's creatures and minions who were watching for him. David represents his enemy in his true colours before God; the bloodthirstiness of the foe is a fit reason for the interposition of the righteous God, for the Lord abhors all those who delight in blood.

Verse 3. *For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul.* They were in ambuscade for the good man's life. He knew their design and cried to God to be rescued from it. Like wild beasts they crouched, and waited to make the fatal spring; but their victim used effectual means to baffle them, for he laid the matter before the Lord. While the enemy lies waiting in the posture of a beast, we wait before God in the posture of prayer, for God waits to be gracious to us and terrible towards our foes. The mighty are gathered against me. None of them were absent from the muster when a saint was to be murdered. They were too fond of such sport to be away. The men at arms who ought to have been fighting their country's battles, are instead thereof hunting a quiet citizen; the gigantic monarch is spending all his strength to slay a faithful follower. Not for my transgression, not for my sin, O Lord. He appeals to Jehovah that he had done no ill. His only fault was, that he was too valiant and too gracious, and was, besides, the chosen of the Lord, therefore the envious king could not rest till he had washed his hands in the blood of his too popular rival. We shall always find it to be a great thing to be innocent; if it does not carry our cause before an earthly tribunal, it will ever prove the best of arguments in the court of conscience, and a standing consolation when we are under persecution. Note

the repetition of his declaration of integrity. David is sure of his innocence. He dares repeat the plea.

Verse 4. *They run and prepare themselves without my fault.* They are all alive and active, they are swift to shed blood. They prepare and use their best tactics; they besiege me in my house, and lay their ambushes as for some notable enemy. They come up fully armed to the attack, and assail me with all the vigour and skill of a host about to storm a castle; and all for no cause, but out of gratuitous malice. So quick are they to obey their cruel master, that they never stay to consider whether their errand is a good one or not; they run at once, and buckle on their harness as they run. To be thus gratuitously attacked is a great grief. To a brave man the danger causes little distress of mind compared with the injustice to which he is subjected. It was a cruel and crying shame that such a hero as David should be hounded down as if he were a monster, and beset in his house like a wild beast in its den. Awake to help me, and behold. When others go to sleep, keep thou watch, O God. Put forth thy might. Arouse thee from thy inaction. Only look at thy servant's sad condition and thy hand will be sure to deliver me. We see how thorough was the psalmist's faith in the mercy of his Lord, for he is satisfied that if the Lord do but look on his case it will move his active compassion.

Verse 5. *Thou, thyself, work for me personally, for the case needs thine interposition.* Therefore, because I am unjustly assailed, and cannot help myself. O Lord, ever living, *God of Hosts*, able to rescue me; the God of Israel, pledged by covenant to redeem thine oppressed servant; awake to visit all the heathen, arouse thy holy mind, bestow thy sacred energies, punish the heathen among thine Israel, the false hearted who say they are Jews and are not, but do lie. And when thou art about the business, let all the nations of thine enemies, and all the heathenish people at home and abroad know that thou art upon circuit, judging and punishing. It is the mark of a thoughtful prayer that the titles which are in it applied to God are appropriate, and are, as it were, congruous to the matter, and fitted to add force to the argument. Shall Jehovah endure to see his people oppressed? Shall the God of hosts permit his enemies to exult over his servant? Shall the faithful God of a chosen people leave his chosen to perish? The name of God is, even in a literal sense, a fortress and high tower for all his people. What a forceful petition is contained in the words, "*awake to visit*"! Actively punish, in wisdom judge, with force chastise. Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Be merciful to them as men, but not as transgressors; if they continue hardened in their sin, do not wink at their oppression. To wink at sin in transgressors will be to leave the righteous under their power, therefore do not pass by their offences but deal out the due reward.

The psalmist feels that the overthrow of oppression which was so needful for himself must be equally desirable for multitudes of the godly placed in like positions, and therefore he prays for the whole company of the faithful, and against the entire confraternity of traitors. Selah. With such a subject before us we may well pause. Who would not sit still and consider, when vengeance is being meted out to all the enemies of God? How wrong is that state of mind which hates to hear of the punishment of the wicked!

Verse 6. *They return at evening.* Like wild beasts that roam at night, they come forth to do mischief. If foiled in the light, they seek the more congenial darkness in which to accomplish their designs. They mean to break into the house in the dead of night. They make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Howling with hunger for their prey, they sneak round and round the walls, prowling with stealthy footstep, and barking in unamiable concert. David compares his foes to Eastern dogs, unowned, loathsome, degraded, lean, and hungry, and he represents them as howling with disappointment, because they cannot find the food they seek. Saul's watchmen and the cruel king himself must have raved and raged fiercely when they found the image and the pillow of goat's hair in the bed instead of David. Vain were their watchings, the victim had been delivered, and that by the daughter of the man who desired his blood. Go, ye dogs, to your kennels and gnaw your bones, for this good man is not meat for your jaws.

Verse 7. *Behold they belch out with their mouth.* The noisy creatures are so remarkable in their way, that attention is called to them with a *behold*. *Ecce homines*, might we not say, *Ecce canes!* Their malicious speech gushes from them as from a bubbling fountain. The wicked are voluble in slander; their vocabulary of abuse is copious, and as detestable as it is abundant. What torrents of wrathful imprecation will they pour on the godly! They need no prompters, their feelings force for themselves their own vent, and fashion their own expressions. Swords are in their lips. They speak daggers. Their words pierce like rapiers, and cleave like cutlasses. As the cushion of a lion's paw conceals his claw, so their soft ruby lips contain bloody words. For who, say they, doth hear? They are free from all restraint, they fear no God in heaven, and the government on earth is with them. When men have none to call them to account, there is no accounting for what they will do. He who neither fears God nor regards man sets out on errands of oppression with gusto, and uses language concerning it of the most atrociously cruel sort. David must have been in a singular plight when he could hear the foul talk and hideous braggings of Saul's black guards around the house. After the style in which a Cavalier would have cursed a Puritan, or Claverhouse a Coventanter, the Saulites swore at the

upstarts whom the king's majesty had sent them to arrest. David called them dogs, and no doubt a pretty pack they were, a cursed cursing company of curs. When they said, "Who doth hear?" God was listening, and this David knew, and therefore took courage.

Verse 8. *But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them.* He speaks to God, as to one who is close at hand. He points to the liars in wait and speaks to God about them. They are laughing at me, and longing for my destruction, but thou hast the laugh of them seeing thou hast determined to send them away without their victim, and made fools of by Michal. The greatest, cleverest, and most malicious of the enemies of the church are only objects of ridicule to the Lord; their attempts are utterly futile, they need give no concern to our faith. Thou shalt have all the heathen in derision. As if David had said—What are these fellows who lie in ambush! And what is the king their master, if God be on my side? If not only these but all the heathen nations were besetting the house, yet Jehovah would readily enough disappoint them and deliver them. In the end of all things it will be seen how utterly contemptible and despicable are all the enemies of the cause and kingdom of God. He is a brave man who sees this today when the enemy is in great power, and while the church is often as one shut up and besieged in his house.

Verse 9. *Because of his strength will I wait upon thee.* Is my persecutor strong? Then, my God, for this very reason I will turn myself to thee, and leave my matters in thy hand. It is a wise thing to find in the greatness of our difficulties a reason for casting ourselves on the Lord.

"And when it seems no chance nor change
From grief can set me free,
Hope finds its strength in helplessness,
And, patient, waits on thee."

For God is my defence, my high place, my fortress, the place of my resort in the time of my danger. If the foe be too strong for me to cope with him, I will retreat into my castle, where he cannot reach me.

Verse 10. *The God of my mercy shall prevent me.* God who is the giver and fountain of all the undeserved goodness I have received, will go before me and lead my way as I march onward. He will meet me in my time of need. Not alone shall I have to confront my foes, but he whose goodness I have long tried and proved will gently clear my way, and be my faithful protector. How frequently have we met with preventing mercy—the supply prepared before the need occurred, the refuge built before the danger arose. Far ahead into the

future the foreseeing grace of heaven has projected itself, and forestalled every difficulty. God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies. Observe that the words, *my desire*, are not in the original. From the Hebrew we are taught that David expected to see his enemies without fear. God will enable his servant to gaze steadily upon the foe without trepidation; he shall be calm, and self possessed, in the hour of peril; and ere long he shall look down on the same foes discomfited, overthrown, destroyed. When Jehovah leads the way victory follows at his heels. See God, and you need not fear to see your enemies. Thus the hunted David, besieged in his own house by traitors, looks only to God, and exults over his enemies.

Verse 11. *Slay them not, lest my people forget.* It argues great faith on David's part, that even while his house was surrounded by his enemies he is yet so fully sure of their overthrow, and so completely realises it in his own mind, that he puts in a detailed petition that they may not be too soon or too fully exterminated. God's victory over the craft and cruelty of the wicked is so easy and so glorious that it seems a pity to end the conflict too soon. To sweep away the plotters all at once were to end the great drama of retribution too abruptly. Nay, let the righteous be buffeted a little longer, and let the boasting oppressor puff and brag through his little hour, it will help to keep Israel in mind of the Lord's justice, and make the brave party who side with God's champion accustomed to divine interpositions. It were a pity for good men to be without detractors, seeing that virtue shines the brighter for the foil of slander. Enemies help to keep the Lord's servants awake. A lively, vexatious devil is less to be dreaded than a sleepy, forgetful spirit which is given to slumber. Scatter them by thy power. Blow them to and fro, like chaff in the wind. Let the enemy live as a vagabond race. Make Cains of them. Let them be living monuments of divine power, advertisements of heaven's truth. To the fullest extent let divine justice be illustrated in them. And bring them down. Like rotten fruit from a tree. From the seats of power which they disgrace, and the positions of influence which they pollute, let them be hurled into humiliation. This was a righteous wish, and if it be untempered by the gentleness of Jesus, we must remember that it is a soldier's prayer, and the wish of one who was smarting under injustice and malice of no ordinary kind. O Lord, our shield. David felt himself to be the representative of the religious party in Israel, and therefore he says, *our shield*, speaking in the name of all those who make Jehovah their defence. We are in good company when we hide beneath the buckler of the Eternal; meanwhile he who is the shield of his people is the scatterer of their enemies.

Verse 12. *For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride.* Such dreadful language of atheism and insolence deserves a fit return. As they hope to take their victims, so let them be taken themselves, entangled in their own net, arrested in the midst of their boastful security. Sins of the lips are real sins, and punishable sins. Men must not think because their hatred gets no further than railing and blasphemy that therefore they shall be excused. He who takes the will for the deed, will take the word for the deed and deal with men accordingly. Wretches who are persecutors in talk, burners and stabbers with the tongue, shall have a reckoning for their would be transgressions. Pride though it show not itself in clothes, but only in speech, is a sin; and persecuting pride, though it pile no faggots at Smithfield, but only revile with its lips, shall have to answer for it among the unholy crew of inquisitors. And for cursing and lying which they speak. Sins, like hounds, often hunt in couples. He who is not ashamed to curse before God, will be sure to lie unto men. Every swearer is a liar. Persecution leads on to perjury. They lie and swear to it. They curse and give a lying reason for their hate. This shall not go unnoticed of the Lord, but shall bring down its recompense. How often has it happened that while haughty speeches have been fresh in the mouths of the wicked they have been overtaken by avenging providence, and made to see their mischief recoil upon themselves!

Verse 13. *Consume them in wrath.* As if he had changed his mind and would have them brought to a speedy end, or if spared would have them exist as ruins, he cries, *consume them*, and he redoubles his cry, *consume them*; nay, he gives a triple note, that they may not be. Revilers of God whose mouths pour forth such filth as David was on this occasion obliged to hear, are not to be tolerated by a holy soul; indignation must flame forth, and cry to God against them. When men curse the age and the place in which they live, common humanity leads the righteous to desire that they may be removed. If they could be reformed it would be infinitely better; but if they cannot, if they must and will continue to be like mad dogs in a city, then let them cease to be. Who can desire to see such a generation perpetuated? And let them know; *i.e.*, let all the nations know, that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. He whose government is universal fixes his headquarters among his chosen people, and there in special he punishes sin. So David would have all men see. Let even the most remote nations know that the great moral Governor has power to destroy ungodliness, and does not wink at iniquity in any, at any time, or in any place. When sin is manifestly punished it is a valuable lesson to all mankind. The overthrow of a Napoleon is a homily for all monarchs, the death of a Tom Paine a warning to all infidels, the siege of Paris a sermon to all cities. Selah. Good cause there is for this rest, when a theme so wide and important is

introduced. Solemn subjects ought not to be hurried over; nor should the condition of the heart while contemplating themes so high be a matter of indifference. Reader, bethink thee. Sit thou awhile and consider the ways of God with men.

Verse 14. Here verse six is repeated, as if the songster defied his foes and revelled in the thought of their futile search, their malice, their disappointment, their rage, their defeated vigilance, their wasted energy. He laughs to think that all the city would know how they were deceived, and all Israel would ring with the story of the image and the goats' hair in the bed. Nothing was more a subject of Oriental merriment than a case in which the crafty are deceived, and nothing more makes a man the object of derision than to be outwitted by a woman, as in this instance Saul and his base minions were by Michal. The warrior poet hears in fancy the howl of rage in the council of his foes when they found their victim clean escaped from their hands.

Verse 16. *Let them wander up and down for meat.* Like dogs that have missed the expected carcass, let them go up and down dissatisfied, snapping at one another, and too disappointed to be quiet and take the matter easily. And grudge if they be not satisfied. Let them act like those who cannot believe that they have lost their prey: like a herd of Oriental dogs, unhoused, unkennelled, let them prowl about seeking a prey which they shall never find. Thus the menial followers of Saul paraded the city in vain hope of satisfying their malice and their master. "Surely, "say they, "we shall have him yet. We cannot endure to miss him. Perhaps he is in yonder corner, or concealed is such a hiding place. We must have him. We grudge him his life. Our lust for his blood is hot, nor can we be persuaded but that we shall light upon him." See the restlessness of wicked men; this will increase as their enmity to God increases, and in hell it will be their infinite torment. What is the state of the lost, but the condition of an ambitious camp of rebels, who have espoused a hopeless cause, and will not give it up, but are impelled by their raging passions to rave on against the cause of God, of truth, and of his people.

Verse 16. *But I will sing of thy power.* The wicked howl, but I sing and will sing. Their power is weakness, but thine is omnipotence; I see them vanquished and thy power victorious, and for ever and ever will I sing of thee. Yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning. When those lovers of darkness find their game is up, and their midnight howlings die away, then will I lift up my voice on high and praise the lovingkindness of God without fear of being disturbed. What a blessed morning will soon break for the righteous, and what a song will be theirs! Sons of the morning, ye may sigh tonight, but joy will come on the wings of the rising sun. Tune your harps even now, for the signal

to commence the eternal music will soon be given; the morning cometh and your sun shall go no more down for ever. For thou hast been my defence. The song is for God alone, and it is one which none can sing but those who have experienced the lovingkindness of their God. Looking back upon a past all full of mercy, the saints will bless the Lord with their whole hearts, and triumph in him as the high place of their security. And refuge in the day of my trouble. The greater our present trials the louder will our future songs be, and the more intense our joyful gratitude. Had we no day of trouble, where were our season of retrospective thanksgiving? David's besetment by Saul's bloodhounds creates an opportunity for divine interposition and so for triumphant praise.

Verse 17. *Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing.* What transport is here! What a monopolising of all his emotions for the one object of praising God! Strength has been overcome by strength; not by the hero's own prowess, but by the might of God alone. See how the singer girds himself with the almightiness of God, and calls it all his own by faith. Sweet is the music of experience, but it is all for God; there is not even a stray note for man, for self, or for human helpers. For God is my defence, and the God of my mercy. With full assurance he claims possession of the Infinite as his protection and security. He sees God in all, and all his own. Mercy rises before him, undisturbed and manifold, for he feels he is undeserving, and security is with him, undisturbed and impregnable, for he knows that he is safe in divine keeping. Oh, choice song! My soul would sing it now in defiance of all the dogs of hell. Away, away, ye adversaries of my soul, the God of my mercy will keep ye all at bay—

"Nor shall the infernal lion rend
Whom he designs to keep."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

This Psalm has in its stern contents something no doubt strange to our ears. But never let us omit to distinguish from each other the times and diverse economies, and to place ourselves as far as possible, in sympathy with the experience of a heart which burned for nothing more than for the glorifying of God in this world. Everything that tended to obscure the theocratic relation of God to his people, called up in the soul of David the most vehement passion. The scornful oppression with which Saul and his venal satellites visited him, the man of God, could not but have, upon the eyes of all, the appearance as if Jehovah were no longer Lord in his own land, who inexorably adhered to his laws and rights. Treason, falsehood, and every kind of evil then prevailed unchecked. What wonder, that as formerly Moses in the wilderness was

provoked against the stiff necked people, so also David, whom the awful holiness of God had already made to tremble, should feel his spirit stirred against the ungodly who surrounded him, and should say, with Job, "My bowels boiled within me." *Frederick William Krummacher, D.D., in "David, the King of Israel," 1867.*

Verse 1. *O my God.* There are two pleas which the psalmist makes use of; one was, that God was *his God*, Ps 59:1; the other was the *power* and *strength* of his *enemies*. It is a blessed thing to have the covenant to fly to in all times of straits and troubles; there is always an anchor hold of hope there. *My God*, is such a plea as infinitely over balances all other things. He has engaged himself to do his people good; and it is time for him to work when the enemy exalts himself. The church's enemies are never so near destruction as when they think they have nothing to do, but take and divide the spoil. We may plead God's promise and the enemies' power too; both are a ground of hope to a believer in Jesus. *John Hill (1711-1746), in "Sermons on Several Occasions."*

Verse 1. *That rise up against me.* He insists upon the strength and violence of his enemies, with the view of exciting his mind to greater fervour in the duty of prayer. These he describes as *rising up* against him, in which expression he alludes, not simple to the audacity or fierceness of their assaults, but to the eminent superiority of power which they possessed; and yet he asks that he may be lifted up on high, as it were, above the reach of this over swelling inundation. *John Calvin.*

Verse 3. *(first clause).* On the expression, *they lie in wait for my soul*, compare 1Sa 19:11, "And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life *soul* tonight, tomorrow thou shalt be slain;" and Ps 7:2,5. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 3. *The mighty are gathered against me*, is rendered by Chandler, *The mighty are turned aside to lay snares against me.*

Verse 3. *The mighty are gathered against me.* As if he would say, "But I am weak, be thou, however, my strength, and vindicate my innocence." *Arnd.*

Verses 3-4. He pleads his own innocence, not as to God, but as to his persecutors. Note,

1. The innocence of the godly will not secure them from the malignity of the wicked. Those that are harmless like doves, yet for Christ's sake are hated of all men, as if they were noxious like serpents, and obnoxious accordingly.

2. Though our innocency will not secure us from troubles, yet it will greatly support and comfort us under our troubles. The testimony of our conscience for us, that we have behaved ourselves well toward those that have behaved themselves ill towards us, will be very much our rejoicing in the day of evil. If we are conscious to ourselves of our innocency, we may with humble confidence appeal to God, and beg of him to plead our injured cause which he will do in due time. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 4. *They run*, as armed warriors rushing to the assault (Ps 18:29). The Hebrew for "prepare themselves," (Heb.) means also "they *establish* themselves; "they make firm their footing, like forces assaulting a city. Job 30:14. *A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 4. *They run and prepare.* The zeal and diligence of the wicked in the cause of unrighteousness might well reprove the languor and tardiness of saints in the work of faith and labour of love. In the church of God nothing is the source of more mischief than the want of true zeal and liveliness. It is only when "many run to and fro" that "knowledge shall be increased." *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 4. *Without fault.* As it respected Saul, he was a faithful subject and an obedient son-in-law. *Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 4. *Awake to help me*, literally, *Awake to meet me*. In time of temptation the Lord seems to be absent from us, and not to observe our distress—to be, as it were, as Jesus, in the storm, is described as having been "asleep in the hinder part of the ship." Mr 4:38. But it is only an appearance; the Lord neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps 121:4); he is always ready to come to our help when we call upon him. *O. Prescott Hiller.*

Verse 4. *And behold.* The expression is one which savours at once of faith and of the infirmity of the flesh. In speaking of God, as if his eyes had been hitherto shut to the wrongs which he had suffered, and needed now for the first time to be opened for the discovery of them, he expresses himself according to the weakness of our human apprehension. On the other hand, in calling upon God *to behold* his cause, he shows his faith by virtually acknowledging that nothing was hid from his providential cognisance. *John Calvin.*

Verse 5. *O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel.* In time of straits we should set our eyes most upon those styles of God which most serve to strengthen our faith, especially such as hold forth his power and goodwill to employ his power for us. *David Dickson.*

Verse 5. *Lord God of hosts.* YAHVEH, *Elohim, Tsebaoth*; as in Ps 80:4,19 84:8. Compare 2Sa 5:10 1Ki 19:10,14 Ps 89:8. *From "The Psalms translated from the Hebrew, with Notes chiefly exegetical." By William Kay, D.D., 1871.*

Verse 5. *Lord God of hosts.* Some have thought this equivalent to God of battles; the true force of the epithet, however, is, "Sovereign of the stars, material hosts of heaven, and of the angels their inhabitants." *A. A. Hodge, in "Outlines of Theology," 1866.*

Verse 5.

1. *God of hosts, and therefore able;*
2. *God of Israel, and therefore willing.* *Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 6. *At evening.* The *evening* expresses the time of calamity and want, and alludes to the wild beasts which are wont in the *evening* to go forth in quest of prey. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 6. *They make a noise like a dog.* The noise I heard then I shall never forget. To say that if all the sheep dogs in going to Smithfield on a market day, had been kept on the constant bark and pitted against the yelping curs upon all the carts in London, they could have given any idea of the canine uproar that now first astonished me, would be to make the feeblest of images. The whole city rang with one vast riot. Down below me, at Tophane; over about Stamboul; far away at Scutari; the whole sixty thousand dogs that are said to overrun Constantinople, appeared engaged in the most active extermination of each other, without a moment's cessation. The yelping, howling, barking, growling, and snarling, were all merged into one uniform and continuous even sound, as the noise of frogs becomes, when heard at a distance. For hours there was no lull. I went to sleep and woke again, and still, with my windows open, I heard the same tumult going on; nor was it until daybreak that anything like tranquillity was restored. *Albert Smith, in "A Month at Constantinople," 1850.*

Verse 6. In bringing their secret plans to bear, they are represented as hungry dogs, prowling about the city in the darkness for prey; ranging, each one with his own object, but in one common cause. To take in the full force of this metaphor it must be remembered that in Eastern cities formerly, as at the present day, it was the custom to cast out all the refuse of food—bones, offal, etc.—into the streets, which was consumed chiefly by dogs, great numbers of which were kept, as it would seem, for that particular purpose. With this idea in mind, the metaphor has great propriety in its application to Christ's enemies.

"Every evening they return
 They howl like dogs,
 And surround the city."
 —*William Hill Tucker.*

Verses 6-7. This is a continued metaphor, which must be well observed, of a famished and rabid dog, unable to satisfy either its hunger or thirst; and describes men, howling formerly like dogs, pursuing, seizing all good things for themselves, and devouring; but now destitute of all things, unable to quench their cupidity, despised, miserable, and desperate wanderers. Such did Saul and his messengers sent against David in Najoth Rama show themselves to be, and give the prelude to their coming misery. *Hermann Venema.*

Verses 6-7.

1. They are diligent about it, *They return at evening.*
2. *Mad*, and set to do it, *They make a noise like a dog*, and threaten boldly.
3. Unwearied and obdurate in their purpose: *They go round about the city.*
4. Impudent, and brag what they will do to me: *Behold, they belch out with their mouth.*
5. And their words are bloody: *Swords are in their lips.* *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 7. *Behold, they belch out with their mouth*, etc. Bark like dogs, so Aben Ezra; or, *bubble out*, as a fountain bubbles out with water; so they cast out their wickedness in great abundance (see Jer 6:7); the phrase denotes the abundance of evil things and wicked speeches that come out of their mouths, which showed the naughtiness of their hearts; so David's enemies blustered and threatened what they would do to him could they find him; and Christ's enemies poured out their wicked charges of blasphemy and sedition against him in great plenty, and without proof. *John Gill.*

Verse 8. God sees and smiles, he looks and laughs at these giants; he sits in heaven far above their reach; neither doth he much trouble himself about the matter; no more should we, but trust in him, and know that there is a counsel in heaven, that will dash the mould of all contrary counsels upon the earth, as the stone cut out of the mountain did the four great monarchies. Da 2:34. And therefore though the wicked, in the pride of his heart, doth persecute the poor; though they belch out with their mouth, and seek to double murder the

innocent, by detraction and by deadly practice, yet God both hears and jeers at their madness, and will bring all their purposes to nought with little ado; nay, the very cruelty of his enemies will move God to make haste. The saints fare the better for the insolence and outrages of their enemies, whose ruin is thereby accelerated; and somewhat God will do the sooner for his people, lest the enemy exalt himself. Ps 140:8. *Abraham Wright*.

Verse 8. (*last clause*). In the close of the verse, mention is made of *all nations*, to intimate, that though they might equal the whole world in numbers, they would prove a mere mockery with all their influence and resources. Or the words may be read—EVEN AS *thou hast all the nations in derision*. One thing is obvious, that David ridicules the vain boasting of his enemies, who thought no undertaking too great to be accomplished by their numbers. *John Calvin*.

Verses 8-9.

But thou, Lord, laugh at them;
You deride all the heathen.
His strength! Toward thee will I keep watch,
For God is my high fort. *William Kay*.

Verse 9. *Because of his strength will I wait upon thee*. Those seem to come nearest the meaning of the psalmist, who construe the words as one continuous sentence, *I will put in trust his strength with thee*, meaning that however intemperately Saul might boast of his strength, he would rest satisfied in the assurance that there was a secret divine providence restraining his actions. We must learn to view all men as subordinated in this manner, and to conceive of their strength and their enterprises as depending upon the sovereign will of God. In my opinion, the following version is the best—*His strength is with thee, I will wait*. The words are parallel with those in the end of the Psalm, where there can be no doubt that the nominative case is employed, *My strength is with thee, I will sing*. *John Calvin*.

Verse 9. (*first clause*). *His strength* is great, humanly viewed; but to the eye of faith what is it! LXX, *to kratōz moi* (—*uzzi*); and so most ancient versions. (The contrast is given in Ps 59:16-17.) *William Kay*.

Verse 9. *Will I wait upon thee*, literally, *I will keep watch to thee*, alluding to the title, "When Saul sent, and they *watched* the house *to kill* him." David sets *watching before God*, against their *watching to kill* him. *A. R. Fausset*.

Verse 9. How weak soever the believer finds himself, and how powerful soever he perceives his enemy to be, it is all one to him, he hath no more to do but to put faith on work, and to wait till God works. *Because of his (that is, the enemy's) strength, I will wait upon thee, saith he to the Lord, for God is my defence. David Dickson.*

Verse 10. *The God of my mercy shall prevent me.* Oh, how the saints sing of the love of Christ! Oh, how they sing that this love was not moved by worthiness, and it disdains all hire and price, but loves us because he loves us! De 7:8. O sing of his wonderful love, and of the *prevention* of this love of Christ: *The God of my mercy shall prevent me.* How,

1. It prevents thy love to him. 1Jo 4:19. *We love God, because he first loved us.*
2. It prevents our sins, as in Paul's case. Ac 4:3: *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.*
3. It prevents our calamities. Ps 79:8; *Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us.* And,
4. It prevents our endeavours. *The God of my mercy shall prevent me. John Spalding, in "Synaxis Sacra," 1703.*

Verse 10. (first clause). The psalmist was sure of mercy upon these grounds, he knew he was safe, because God was his God, and the God of his mercy: *The God of my mercy shall prevent me.* Some read it, *hath prevented me*; others, *doth prevent me*; and others, as in my text, *shall prevent me*. Each of these senses is exceedingly sweet and full. Take it in the first sense, *hath prevented me*; and it implies thus much, that the psalmist never was in any difficulty, temptation, or fear, but God was beforehand with him; having always the mercy ready which he stood in need of; and had given it in due season, and that when he least expected it, and it may be was least prepared for it. Take it in the second sense, *doth prevent*, it argues the psalmist's ground of confidence when all present appearances were gone; as if he had said, "God is of one mind, his thoughts are thoughts of peace, and not of evil; he may vary his providence, but his heart is the same as ever; why should I fear, why should I not hope and rejoice? for my God is a tried God, he is working for me even now. He prevents my fears, and he will prevent my falling." Take the words as they lie in my text, and it comes to the same thing. "God sees all my enemies' designs, and he is ready for them; my prayer is heard, and sure I am deliverance will come, though I know not the time of it." My design, under the Spirit's influence, is to

look into my own heart and yours, and show you what wonders of providence and grace God, as *the God of our mercy*, has caused to pass before us. In discoursing on these words, I shall enquire,

1. In what sense, or in what respects, God is *the God* of our mercy.
2. How, as the God of our mercy, he doth prevent us.
3. Apply.

I am to enquire in what respects God is said to be *the God of his people's mercy*, and it seems to include in it these three things.

1. That all the mercy which is in God's nature, is for his saints. It is a great word that (1Pe 5:10), *the God of all grace*. God has in him all sorts of grace for his saints. He hath pardoning, quickening, strengthening, comforting, and preserving grace. His mercy is rich mercy, abundant mercy, inexhaustible mercy, sure mercy. A man's riches are his glory; God glories in his mercy; it is his delight, he rests in it; and so may we, because there is an infinite inconceivable fulness of it in *him*. "With thee is the fountain of life." God distributes and parcels out this mercy, that we may conceive of it the better; hence he is called by the apostle, *The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*. 2Co 1:3. God is not called the author of our mercies, but the *Father* of them; to show how freely they come from him; they are his bowels; he is pleased with them, as the father is with his own child; dwell on the name, it is a sweet one, the *Father of mercies*. In my text, David grasps all this mercy, lays hold of it as his own mercy: *The God of my mercy shall prevent me*. That is one sense.

2. It supposes, farther, that there is a portion of mercy laid by, in the purpose of God, for every saint; a portion of mercy which he may call *his own*. This some understand to be Christ's meaning to Paul (2Co 12:9): *My grace is sufficient for thee; i.e., that grace which I have allotted for thee thou wilt find sufficient*. I knew what thou wouldst need in my eternal counsels; I have made provision beforehand; I have taken care thou shouldest have enough.

3. The words suppose, farther, that God has taken it upon him as his charge, to keep this portion of his mercy for his people. Whatever it be, soul, it is in trust for thee with him. Every saint may apply to God, as the God of every mercy which he needs. *Condensed from John Hill's Sermon.*

Verse 10. *God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.* The words, *my desire*, are not in the original, and would be better omitted. The sense is—God will enable me to look down calmly upon my enemies. So Christ looked upon his murderers. So Stephen was enabled to do when they "gnashed upon him with their teeth." "All that sat in the council looking steadfastly upon him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Ac 6:15. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 11. *Slay them not*, that they may be a whetstone to others' faith—as the Spartans (mentioned in Plutarch's *Apothegms*) refused to allow the destruction of a neighbouring city which had often called forth their armies, saying, "Destroy not the whetstone of our young men." *Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 11. *Slay them not:*

"Live loathed and long
You smiling, smooth, detested parasites."
—*W. Shakespeare.*

Verse 11. The enemies must serve for monuments of the divine righteousness, not less in the abiding wretchedness of their race than by their own sudden destruction. Parallel to this verse, and to Ps 59:6,14, is the curse which David utters upon Joab, in 2Sa 3:29: "Let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that *lacketh bread*;" then the threatening of a man of God to Eli, in 1Sa 3:36, where, after announcing the violent death of the evildoers themselves, corresponding to 1Sa 3:13 here, it is said: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him (the new high priest) for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." Christian expositors have all along drawn attention to the fact, that the substance of our verse, as that also of verses, 6, 14, has gone into fulfilment on the Jews. "They have been scattered into all lands, and must go and stand before the eyes of all Christians, as a living witness that they have crucified the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. So that if you see a Jew, think on this word." (Arndt.) *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 11. *Slay them not*; namely, suddenly. *Scatter them.* It should seem that he hath a relation to Cain's punishment, whom God would not have killed, but would have him to be a wanderer all the days of his life for a spectacle, and an example of his judgments. Ge 4:12. Others translate it, *shake them* namely, their degree of honour and glory. *John Diodati, 1576-1649.*

Verse 12. *For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips, etc.* Albeit the persecutors do not accomplish their purpose against the righteous; yet their pride, their brags, their lies, their slanders, their curses against the godly, are a sufficient ditty for damnation and wrath to come upon them. *David Dickson.*

Verse 12. *The words of their lips.* The phrase, *word of the lips*, is often used for empty loquacity and boasting; the opposite of a word that is solid and founded on fact, as in 2Ki 18:20. "Thou speakest, but it is only a *word of the lips*." Pr 14:23. "In all labour there is profit: but the *word of the lips* tendeth only to penury." *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 13. *Consume them*, emphatically, *consume them in wrath, that they may not be*; which at first sight seems contrary to his first desire, *Slay them not*; but it is not so, for he speaks not of their life, as if he would have them so consumed, that they should not remain alive; but he desires only a consumption of their power, royalty, command, etc. And so these words are a farther explication of his second desire, *Bring them down*. He would have them so brought down and consumed in their strength, dignity, command, wealth, riches, that made them proud, that they never be able any more to oppose God, hurt his people, trample upon religion and his church; he would have them live. *William Nicholson.*

Verse 13. *Consume them.* I hear of sad doings in Poland, of villages burnt down, of peaceable men deported to Siberia by hundreds, of woman flogged; and when I look away to that Warsaw market place where a woman, nearly naked, is being publicly beaten, and when I see cruel Mouravieff smile as the blood jets forth from the scourged shoulders, I will not deny that I feel very much tempted to say, "Happy man, whose bullet in fair flight should empty that saddle!" Am I bloodthirsty in this? Am I vindictive? Do you condemn me for this feeling? *R. A. Bertram.*

Verse 13. *That they may not be.* By the word *wmg yaw*, *that they may not be*, may be understood either a vile and wretched state in general, or even total destruction. The *former* must indeed here be admitted, as is plain from the context, yet not to the exclusion of the *latter* sense; since a miserable condition, such as in a disease, issues in destruction at length. *Not to be* is evidently by no means rarely taken for to be *nobody*, to be wretched, afflicted, despised. Compare Jer 31:15. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 13. *Selah.* Though God be in all his words *Yea* and *Amen*, yet in setting this seal of *Selah* to this doctrine, he hath testified his will that he would have all these things the better understood and the deeper imprinted; that if the

wicked go on to persecute the godly, *Selah*, assuredly God will have them in derision; *Selah*, assuredly God shall shiver their bones, shake their best actions, and discover their impurity; *Selah*, assuredly God's hand shall be heavy upon them, and they shall not discern it to be his hand till they are consumed. *Selah*, assuredly, verily, amen, this is a faithful, an infallible truth; as the Lord liveth it shall be so. *Abraham Wright*.

Verse 14. *Dog*. Is it the influence of Christianity extending its law of kindness to the lower animals, or something in the nature of northern dogs and northern men which makes dogs among us Anglo Saxons, and all the associations connected with them, so entirely different from what they are in the East? Imagine the effigy of an Oriental saint reposing with its feet on a dog, like that of William the Silent, the heroic Prince of Orange, on the faithful spaniel which rescued his life in the night attack of the Spanish troops, and like so many a sculptured knight of medieval times! The very presence of such an image would, in Oriental eyes, be the greatest desecration an enemy could inflict on a sacred edifice. And in the Bible how exceedingly contemptuous, and how inapplicable to English dogs, are the terms employed in describing canine habits. "They grin like a dog, and go about the city, and grudge if they be not satisfied;" "Without are dogs." What possible resemblance is there between such a description and the grave dignity of a Newfoundland; the sagacious, acute expression of a terrier; the wistful, almost human eyes of our house spaniels? But here at Tyre, as in most Eastern towns, the familiar words came to us with all their true and forcible meaning. The wolfish, hungry, masterless dogs which "go about the cities (of Alexandria, for instance), gathering in packs like jackals, prowling about for offal, and grudging if they be not satisfied;" "or the famished outcasts, like our dogs at Tyre, prowling "outside" the city. To these we may apply the highly unfavourable definitions of Scripture, which every Englishman and Englishwoman must indignantly disclaim on behalf of the loyal, faithful, patient creatures who watch beside our homes like sentinels, and guard our flocks like shepherds, and welcome us with ecstatic joy when we come home again, and sometimes will even die rather than desert a master's grave. *From "Wanderings over Bible Lands and Seas," 1862.*

Verse 14. Those that repent of their sins when they are in trouble, *mourn like doves*; those whose hearts are hardened when they are in trouble, *make a noise like dogs*. *Matthew Henry*.

Verse 16. *Let them wander up and down*, etc. A beggarly and indigent, and so an unsatisfied and wearisome condition, shall be their lot; the greatest worldly

plague that can fall on any—large appetites and no possessions or acquires to satisfy them. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 16. *And grudge if they be not satisfied.* A contented man, if he has not what he would have, yet doth not grudge, doth not quarrel with providence, nor fret within himself; but those whose God is their belly, if that be not filled and its appetites gratified, fall out both with God and themselves. It is not poverty, but discontent that makes a man unhappy. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 16. The hunger of a dog is deservedly their plague, of whom a resemblance of that unclean animal's disposition hath been the sin. Reader, be it thy care to avoid such sins, and cultivate a spirit of lively devotion; that, instead of receiving thy portion where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, thou mayest sing to the God of thy mercy for ever. *Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 16. We must not pass by the contrast with the wretched condition of the wicked, which is indicated by the pronoun *hnh*, *they*, in Ps 59:15, an *yga*, *but I*, which are in exact antithesis; also the "*evening*," mentioned above, and the "*morning*," now occurring for the times of trouble and happiness, and the *dog like noise* of the wicked, and the *singing* with joyful sound of David, to pass by other particulars, likewise give to the diverse states additional difference. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 16. *Cantabo and exaltabo, I will sing, and I will sing aloud.* Here is *singing* only of God's *power*; but there is *singing aloud* of his *mercy*; as if his *mercy* were more exaltable than his *power*, and *that* reached the very *heavens*; *this* unto the *clouds*. Ps 26:5. From Humphrey Sydenham's Sermon, entitled, "*The Well toned Cymball*," 1637.

Verse 17. *Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing.* Formerly he had said that the strength of his enemy was with God, and now he asserts the same thing of his own. The expression, however, which admits of two meanings, he elegantly applies to himself in a different sense. God has the strength of the wicked in his hands, to curb and to restrain it, and to show that any power of which they boast is vain and fallacious. His own people, on the other hand, he supports and secures against the possibility of falling, by supplies of strength from himself. *John Calvin.*

Verse 17. *Unto thee, O my strength.* In opposition to *the enemy's strength*, Ps 59:9. *Thy power*, or *strength*—the Hebrew word is the same (Ps 59:16)—is *my strength*. There is an elegant play on similar sounds in the Hebrew for *I will wait upon thee*, *hrmva* (Ps 59:9), and "*I will sing*," *hrmza* A. R. Faussett.

Verse 17. (*first clause*). As on account of *Saul's strength* my watching was directed to thee; so now, no account of *thy strength* vouchsafed to me, my *singing* of praises also shall be directed to thee alone. *Martin Geier*.

Verse 17. *Strength—Mercy*. He joins these two attributes, "*strength*" and "*mercy*", very well; for take away *strength* from him, and he cannot; remove mercy, and he will not, protect; both must go together in any one that will defend; *power*, that he can, *mercy*, that he will; otherwise it is but in vain to hope for help from him David found God to be both, and for both he extols him. *William Nicholson*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. (*first clause*). Deliver me from temptation, uphold me in temptation, cleanse me from the result of temptation. The world, the flesh, the devil, and chiefly sin, these are our enemies. We cannot escape them of ourselves, but the Lord by providence and grace can rescue us.

Verse 2. (*first clause*). From being tempted by their promises, cowed by their threats, corrupted by their teaching, influenced by their example, injured by their slander, hindered in usefulness by their opposition.

Verse 3. (*first clause*). The subtleties of Satan. Watches for places, times, states, and ways in which to assail us. Errors in doctrine, practice, spirit, set forth to entrap us. "Ye are not ignorant of his devices." Or, the diabolical ambush, discovered by watchfulness, and defeated by faith.

Verse 4. The activity of the evil a rebuke for the good.

1. Their activity, *run*.
2. Unanimity—*they run*.
3. Their care—*prepare themselves*.
4. Their readiness—*without my fault*.

Verse 5. *O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel*. This title furnishes an admirable topic.

Verse 9. The greatness of difficulty a reason for prayer and faith.

Verse 10. (*first clause*). The divine forwardness to bless.

Verse 11. The continuance of our enemies a salutary ordinance of God for the prevention of an evil to which we are very liable.

Verse 13 (*last clause*). God as the God of the church, his government as such, known in all human history.

Verse 16. The heavenly chorister.

1. His song is sweet in contrast with the revilings of others—*but I*.
2. It treats of subjects which terrify others—*thy power*.
3. It grows louder on tender themes—*thy mercy*.
4. It has its choice seasons—*in the morning*.
5. It is tuned by experience—*for thou hast*.
6. It is all to God's glory—*thy power, thy mercy, thou hast*.

Verse 17.

1. *A doctrine*—God is his people's strength.
2. *An appropriation*—"my strength."
3. *A resolution*. The song of gratitude for the past, faith for the present, hope for the future, of bliss for eternity.

WORKS UPON THE FIFTY-NINTH PSALM

In CHANDLER'S *"Life of David,"* Vol. 1., pp. 85-89, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

Psalm 60

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Here is a lengthy title, but it helps us much to expound the Psalm. *To the Chief Musician upon Shushaneduth*, or the Lily of Testimony. The forty-fifth was on the lilies, and represented the kingly warrior in his beauty going forth to war; here we see him dividing the spoil and bearing testimony to the glory of God. Tunes have strange names apparently, but this results from the fact that we do not know what was in the composer's mind, else they might seem to be touchingly appropriate; perhaps the music or the musical instruments have more to do with this title than the Psalm itself. Yet in war songs, roses and lilies are often mentioned, and one remembers Macaulay's Song of the Huguenots, though perhaps we err in mentioning so carnal a verse—

"Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,
Charge for the golden lilies now, upon them with the lance."

Michtam of David, to teach. David obeyed the precept to teach the children of Israel; he recorded the Lord's mighty acts that they might be rehearsed in the ears of generations to come. Golden secrets are to be told on the house tops; these things were not done in a corner and ought not to be buried in silence. We ought gladly to learn what inspiration so beautifully teaches. *When he strove with Aramnaharaim and with Aramzobah*. The combined Aramean tribes sought to overcome Israel, but were signally defeated. *When Joab returned*. He had been engaged in another region, and the enemies of Israel took advantage of his absence, but on his return with Abishai the fortunes of war were changed. *And smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand*. More than this appear to have fallen according to 1Ch 18:12, but this commemorates one memorable part of the conflict. Terrible must have been the battle, but decisive indeed were the results, and the power of the enemy was utterly broken. Well did the Lord deserve a song from his servant.

DIVISION. Properly the song may be said to consist of three parts: the complaining verses, Ps 60:1-3; the happy, Ps 60:4-8; the prayerful, Ps 60:9-12. We have divided it as the sense appeared to change.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Before the days of Saul, Israel had been brought very low; during his government it had suffered from internal strife, and his reign was closed by an overwhelming disaster at Gibeon. David found himself the possessor of a tottering throne, troubled with the double evil of factions at home, and invasion from abroad. He traced at once the evil to its true source, and began at the fountainhead. His were the politics of piety, which after all are the wisest and most profound. He knew that the displeasure of the Lord had brought calamity upon the nation, and to the removal of that displeasure he set himself by earnest prayer. O God, thou hast cast us off. Thou hast treated us as foul and offensive things, to be put away; as mean and beggarly persons, to be shunned with contempt; as useless dead boughs, to be torn away from the tree, which they disfigure. To be cast off by God is the worst calamity that can befall a man or a

people; but the worst form of it is when the person is not aware of it and is indifferent to it. When the divine desertion causes mourning and repentance, it will be but partial and temporary. When a cast off soul sighs for its God it is indeed not cast off at all. Thou has scattered us. David clearly sees the fruits of the divine anger, he traces the flight of Israel's warriors, the breaking of her power, the division in her body politic, to the hand of God. Whoever might be the secondary agent of these disasters, he beholds the Lord's hand as the prime moving cause, and pleads with the Lord concerning the matter. Israel was like a city with a breach made in its wall, because her God was wroth with her. These first two verses, with their depressing confession, must be regarded as greatly enhancing the power of the faith which in the after verses rejoices in better days, through the Lord's gracious return unto his people.

Thou hast been displeased. This is the secret of our miseries. Had we pleased thee, thou wouldst have pleased us; but as we have walked contrary to thee, thou hast walked contrary to us. O turn thyself to us again. Forgive the sin and smile once more. Turn us to thee, turn thou to us. Aforetime thy face was towards thy people, be pleased to look on us again with thy favour and grace. Some read it, "Thou wilt turn to us again," and it makes but slight difference which way we take it, for a true hearted prayer brings a blessing so soon that it is no presumption to consider it already obtained. There was more need for God to turn to his people than for Judah's troops to be brave, or Joab and the commanders wise. God with us is better than strong battalions; God displeased is more terrible than all the Edomites that ever marched into the valley of salt, or all the devils that ever opposed the church. If the Lord turn to us, what care we for Aramnaharaim or Aramzobah, or death, or hell? but if he withdraw his presence we tremble at the fall of a leaf.

Verse 2. *Thou hast made the earth to tremble.* Things were as unsettled as though the solid earth had been made to quake; nothing was stable; the priests had been murdered by Saul, the worst men had been put in office, the military power had been broken by the Philistines, and the civil authority had grown despicable through insurrections and intestine contests. Thou hast broken it. As the earth cracks, and opens itself in rifts during violent earthquakes, so was the kingdom rent with strife and calamity. Heal the breaches thereof. As a house in time of earthquake is shaken, and the walls begin to crack, and gape with threatening fissures, so was it with the kingdom. For it shaketh. It tottered to a fall; if not soon propped up and repaired it would come down in complete ruin. So far gone was Israel, that only God's interposition could preserve it from utter destruction. How often have we seen churches in this condition, and how suitable is the prayer before us, in which the extremity of the need is used as an

argument for help. The like may be said of our personal religion, it is sometimes so tried, that like a house shaken by earthquake it is ready to come down with a crash, and none but the Lord himself can repair its breaches, and save us from utter destruction.

Verse 3. *Thou hast showed thy people hard things.* Hardships had been heaped upon them, and the psalmist traces these rigorous providences to their fountainhead. Nothing had happened by chance, but all had come by divine design and with a purpose, yet for all that things had gone hard with Israel. The psalmist claims that they were still the Lord's own people, though in the first verse he had said, "thou hast cast us off." The language of complaint is usually confused, and faith in time of trouble ere long contradicts the desponding statements of the flesh. Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment. Our afflictions have made us like men drunken with some potent and bitter wine; we are in amazement, confusion, delirium; our steps reel, and we stagger as those about to fall. The great physician gives his patients potent potions to purge out their abounding and deep seated diseases. Astonishing evils bring with them astonishing results. The grapes of the vineyard of sin produce a wine which fills the most hardened with anguish when justice compels them to quaff the cup. There is a fire water of anguish of soul which even to the righteous makes a cup of trembling, which causes them to be exceeding sorrowful almost unto death. When grief becomes so habitual as to be our drink, and to take the place of our joys, becoming our only wine, then are we in an evil case indeed.

Verse 4. Here the strain takes a turn. The Lord has called back to himself his servants, and commissioned them for his service, presenting them with a standard to be used in his wars. Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee. Their afflictions had led them to exhibit holy fear, and then being fitted for the Lord's favour, he gave them an ensign, which would be both a rallying point for their hosts, a proof that he had sent them to fight, and a guarantee of victory. The bravest men are usually intrusted with the banner, and it is certain that those who fear God must have less fear of man than any others. The Lord has given us the standard of the gospel, let us live to uphold it, and if needful die to defend it. Our right to contend for God, and our reason for expecting success, are found in the fact that the faith has been once committed to the saints, and that by the Lord himself. That it may be displayed because of the truth. Banners are for the breeze, the sun, the battle. Israel might well come forth boldly, for a sacred standard was borne aloft before them. To publish the gospel is a sacred duty, to be ashamed of it a deadly sin. The truth of God was involved in the triumph of David's armies, he had promised them victory; and so in the proclamation of the gospel we need feel no hesitancy, for as surely as God is

true he will give success to his own word. For the truth's sake, and because the true God is on our side, let us in these modern days of warfare emulate the warriors of Israel, and unfurl our banners to the breeze with confident joy. Dark signs of present or coming ill must not dishearten us; if the Lord had meant to destroy us he would not have given us the gospel; the very fact that he has revealed himself in Christ Jesus involves the certainty of victory. *Magna est veritas et praevalabit.*

Hard things thou hast upon us laid,
And made us drink most bitter wine;
But still thy banner we have displayed,
And borne aloft thy truth divine.
Our courage fails not, though the night
No earthly lamp avails to break,
For thou wilt soon arise in might,
And of our captors captives make.

Selah. There is so much in the fact of a banner being given to the hosts of Israel, so much of hope, of duty, of comfort, that a pause is fitly introduced. The sense justifies it, and the more joyful strain of the music necessitates it.

Verse 5. *That thy beloved may be delivered.* David was the Lord's beloved, his name signifies "dear, or beloved," and there was in Israel a remnant according to the election of grace, who were the beloved of the Lord; for their sakes the Lord wrought great marvels, and he had an eye to them in all his mighty acts. God's beloved are the inner seed, for whose sake he preserves the entire nation, which acts as a husk to the vital part. This is the main design of providence, *That thy beloved may be delivered*; if it were not for their sakes he would neither give a banner nor send victory to it. Save with thy right hand, and hear me. Save at once, before the prayer is over; the case is desperate unless there be immediate salvation. Tarry not, O Lord, till I have done pleading: save first and hear afterwards. The salvation must be a right royal and eminent one, such as only the omnipotent hand of God linked with his dexterous wisdom can achieve. Urgent distress puts men upon pressing and bold petitions such as this. We may by faith ask for and expect that our extremity will be God's opportunity; special and memorable deliverances will be wrought out when dire calamities appear to be imminent. Here is one suppliant for many, even as in the case of our Lord's intercession for his saints. He, the Lord's David, pleads for the rest of the beloved, beloved and accepted in him the Chief Beloved; he seeks salvation as though it were for himself, but his eye is ever upon all those who are one with him in the Father's love. When divine interposition is necessary for the rescue of the elect it must occur, for the first and greatest

necessity of providence is the honour of God, and the salvation of his chosen. This is fixed fate, the centre of the immutable decree, the inmost thought of the unchangeable Jehovah.

Verse 6. *God hath spoken in his holiness.* Faith is never happier than when it can fall back upon the promise of God. She sets this over against all discouraging circumstances; let outward providences say what they will, the voice of a faithful God drowns every sound of tear. God had promised Israel victory, and David the kingdom; the holiness of God secured the fulfilment of his own covenant, and therefore the king spake confidently. The goodly land had been secured to the tribes by the promise made to Abraham, and that divine grant was an abundantly sufficient warrant for the belief that Israel's arms would be successful in battle. Believer make good use of this, and banish doubts while promises remain. I will rejoice, or "I will triumph." Faith regards the promise not as fiction but fact, and therefore drinks in joy from it, and grasps victory by it. "God hath spoken; I will rejoice:" here is a fit motto for every soldier of the cross.

I will divide Shechem. As a victor David would allot the conquered territory to those to whom God had given it by lot. Shechem was an important portion of the country, which as yet had not yielded to his government; but he saw that by Jehovah's help it would be, and indeed was all his own. Faith divides the spoil, she is sure of what God has promised, and enters at once into possession. And mete out the valley of Succoth. As the east so the west of Jordan should be allotted to the proper persons. Enemies should be expelled, and the landmarks of peaceful ownership set up. Where Jacob had pitched his tent, there his rightful heirs should till the soil. When God has spoken, his divine *shall*, our *I will*, becomes no idle boast, but the fit echo of the Lord's decree. Believer, up and take possession of covenant mercies. *Divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.* Let not Canaanitish doubts and legalisms keep thee out of the inheritance of grace. Live up to thy privileges, take the good which God provides thee.

Verse 7. *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine.* He claims the whole land on account of the promise. Two other great divisions of the country he mentions, evidently delighting to survey the goodly land which the Lord had given him. All things are ours, whether things present or things to come; no mean portion belongs to the believer, and let him not think meanly of it. No enemy shall withhold from true faith what God has given her, for grace makes her mighty to wrest it from the foe. Life is mine, death is mine, for Christ is mine. Ephraim also is the strength of mine head. All the military power of the valiant tribe was at the command of David, and he praises God for it. God will bow to the

accomplishment of his purposes all the valour of men; the church may cry, "the prowess of armies is mine, " God will overrule all their achievements for the progress of his cause. Judah is my lawgiver. There the civil power was concentrated: the king being of that tribe sent forth his laws out of her midst. We know no lawgiver, but the King who came out of Judah. To all the claims of Rome, Or Oxford, or the councils of men, we pay no attention; we are free from all other ecclesiastical rule, but that of Christ: but we yield joyful obedience to him: *Judah is my lawgiver*. Amid distractions it is a great thing to have good and sound legislation, it was a balm for Israel's wounds, it is our joy in the Church of Christ.

Verse 8. Having looked at home with satisfaction, the hero king now looks abroad with exultation. Moab, so injurious to me in former years, *is my washpot*. The basin into which the water falls when it is poured from an ewer upon my feet. A mere pot to hold the dirty water after my feet have been washed in it. Once she defiled Israel, according to the counsel of Balaam, the son of Beor; but she shall no longer be able to perpetrate such baseness; she shall be a washpot for those whom she sought to pollute. The wicked as we see in them the evil, the fruit, and the punishment of sin, shall help on the purification of the saints. This is contrary to their will, and to the nature of things, but faith finds honey in the lion, and a washpot in filthy Moab. David treats his foes as but insignificant and inconsiderable; a whole nation he counts but as a footbath for his kingdom. Over Edom will I cast out my shoe. As a man when bathing throws his shoes on one side, so would he obtain his dominion over haughty Esau's descendants as easily as a man casts a shoe. Perhaps he would throw his shoe as nowadays men throw their glove, as a challenge to them to dare dispute his sway. He did not need draw a sword to smite his now crippled and utterly despondent adversary, for if he dared revolt he would only need to throw his slipper at him, and he would tremble. Easily are we victors when Omnipotence leads the way. The day shall come when the church shall with equal ease subdue China and Ethiopia to the sceptre of the Son of David. Every believer also may by faith triumph over all difficulties, and reign with him who hath made us kings and priests. "They overcame through the blood of the Lamb, "shall yet be said of all who rest in the power of Jesus.

Philistia, triumph thou because of me. Be so subdued as to rejoice in my victories over my other foes. Or does he mean, I who smote thy champion have at length so subdued thee that thou shalt never be able to rejoice over Israel again; but if thou must needs triumph it must be with me, and not against me; or rather is it a taunting defiance, a piece of irony? O proud Philistia, where are

thy vaunts? Where now thy haughty looks, and promised conquests? Thus dare we defy the last enemy, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" So utterly hopeless is the cause of hell when the Lord comes forth to the battle, that even the weakest daughter of Zion may shake her head at the enemy, and laugh him to scorn. O the glorifying of faith! There is not a grain of vain glory in it, but yet her holy boastings none can hinder. When the Lord speaks the promise, we will not be slow to rejoice and glory in it.

Verse 9. As yet the interior fortresses of Edom had not been subdued. Their invading bands had been slain in the valley of salt, and David intended to push his conquests even to Petra the city of the rock, deemed to be impregnable. Who will bring me into the strong city? It was all but inaccessible, and hence the question of David. When we have achieved great success it must be a stimulus to greater efforts, but it must not become a reason for self confidence. We must look to the strong for strength as much at the close of a campaign as at its beginning. Who will lead me into Edom? High up among the stars stood the city of stone, but God could lead his servant up to it. No heights of grace are too elevated for us, the Lord being our leader, but we must beware of high things attempted in self reliance. EXCELSIOR is well enough as a cry, but we must look to the highest of all for guidance. Joab could not bring David into Edom. The veterans of the valley of salt could not force the passage, yet was it to be attempted, and David looked to the Lord for help. Heathen nations are yet to be subdued. The city of the seven hills must yet hear the gospel. Who will give the church the power to accomplish this? The answer is not far to seek.

Verse 10. *Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off?* Yes, the chastising God is our only hope. He loves us still. For a small moment doth he forsake, but with great mercy does he gather his people. Strong to smite, he is also strong to save. He who proved to us our need of him by showing us what poor creatures we are without him, will now reveal the glory of his help by conducting great enterprises to a noble issue. And thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies? The self same God art thou, and to thee faith cleaves. Though thou slay us, we will trust in thee, and look for thy merciful help.

Verse 11. *Give us help from trouble.* Help us to overcome the disasters of civil strife and foreign invasion; save us from further incursions from without and division within. Do thou, O Lord, work this deliverance, for vain is the help of man. We have painfully learned the utter impotence of armies, kings, and nations without thine help. Our banners trailed in the mire have proven our weakness without thee, but yonder standard borne aloft before us shall witness to our valour now that thou hast come to our rescue. How sweetly will this

verse suit the tried people of God as a frequent ejaculation. We know how true it is.

Verse 12. *Through God we shall do valiantly.* From God all power proceeds, and all we do well is done by divine operation; but still we, as soldiers of the great king, are to fight, and to fight valiantly too. Divine working is not an argument for human inaction, but rather is it the best excitement for courageous effort. Helped in the past, we shall also be helped in the future, and being assured of this we resolve to play the man. For he it is that shall tread down our enemies. From him shall the might proceed, to him shall the honour be given. Like straw on the threshing floor beneath the feet of the oxen shall we tread upon our abject foes, but it shall rather be *his* foot which presses them down than ours; his hand shall go out against them so as to put them down and keep them in subjection. In the case of Christians there is much encouragement for a resolve similar to that of the first clause. We shall do valiantly, we will not be ashamed of our colours, afraid of our foes, or fearful of our cause. The Lord is with us, omnipotence sustains us, and we will not hesitate, we dare not be cowards. O that our King, the true David, were come to claim the earth, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. There are some difficulties attendant upon the title of this Psalm, when it is compared with the contents. We naturally expect after such as inscription, joy, congratulation, and praise for victory; but the psalmist breaks out into lamentations and bitter complaints: his strains are, however, changed, when he has proceeded as far as verse three, where he begins to feel confidence, and to employ the language of exultation and triumph. The best means of removing this discrepancy seems to be by remarking, that this Psalm was written after some of the battles of which mention is made in the title, but that the author does not restrict himself to those events without taking a wider range, so as to embrace the afflictive conditions both of Israel and Judah during the latter part of Saul's life, and the former years of David's reign. In the concluding years of Saul, the Philistines obtained a superiority over him, and finally destroyed him with his army. Subsequently to these events the whole land was in a very disturbed and agitated condition, arising out of the contentions between the partisans of Saul's family, and those who were attached to David. The nations which inhabited the regions adjacent to the land of Canaan were at all times inimical to the Jews, and seized every opportunity of attacking and injuring them. But when David had succeeded in uniting the whole nation under his authority, he proceeded to avenge the injuries and insults that had been inflicted

upon his countrymen by the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and Syrians; and God was pleased to give him signal success in his undertakings. He appears, therefore, to have combined all these transactions, and made them the subject of this Psalm. *William Walford*.

Title. *Shushaneduth. The lilies of the testimony*—means, that this Psalm has for its chief subject something very lovely and cheering in the law; namely, the words of promise quoted in the beginning of verse six, according to which the land of Canaan belonged to the Israelites, upon which is thus established the confidence expressed in Ps 60:6-8, with respect to their right of property over the land, and their possession of it. This promise, not to cite many other passages, which occur in the Five Books of Moses, and even so early as the patriarchs, is contained in Genesis 49, and Deuteronomy 33. It is evident of what value and importance this promise was, and particularly the remembrance of it at this time. *T. C. Barth's "Bible Manual," 1865.*

Title. The only other *eduth* or "*testimony*" in the Psalter, Psalm 80, makes mention by name of the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, and is a witness against those tribes for forsaking the Shepherd of Israel who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt. *Joseph Francis Thrupp, M.A., in "An Introduction to the Study and Use of the Psalms," 1860.*

Title. *Aramnaharaim.* The name *Aram* corresponds to *Syria* in its widest and vaguest sense, and is joined with other names to designate particular parts of that large country. It even includes Mesopotamia, which is a term of physical rather than political geography, and denotes the space between the Tigris and Euphrates, corresponding to *Aram Naharaim*, or *Syria of the Two Rivers*, in the verse before us. The king of this country was tributary to the king of Aram Zobah, as appears from the account of David's second Aramean war (2Sa 10:16,19). *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Title. *When he strove with Aramnaharaim and with Aramzobah.* An insult offered to David's ambassadors by Hanun, king of the Ammonites, led to a serious war. Hanun obtained mercenaries from Syria to reinforce his army, Joab and Abishai his brother, David's generals, gave them battle. Joab, opposed to the Syrians, gained the first success, and the Ammonites, seeing their allies routed, took to flight into their town. But this defeat provoked a great coalition, embracing all the people between the Jordan and the Euphrates. David, however, fearlessly marched against them at the head of his army; he vanquished all his enemies, and made himself master of the small Aramean kingdoms of Damascus, Zobah, and Hamath, and subjugated the Eastern Idumaeans, who met their final defeat in the Valley of Salt. *Francois*

Lenormant and E. Chevallier, in "A Manual of the Ancient History of the East," 1869.

Title. *Joab returned and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand,* compared with 2Sa 8:13, "David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men, "and 1Ch 18:12, where this very service was performed by *Abishai*. Answer. It is one thing to attribute the victory for the honour of the king that was the cause. But the mentioning of these chief generals, by whom the service was performed, is another. David, under God, must have the honour of the work, for the increase of his name, being set for the typing out of Christ, who must have all the glory of the day, whatever conquest he gets by instruments of that service here, who likewise are typed out in David's worthies, of whom Joab and Abishai were chief. By these he obtained that great victory over Hadadezer. In returning from which service Joab found his brother Abishai engaged *in the valley of salt* against eighteen thousand Edomites or Syrians (all one), whose valour the Almighty looked on, as he attributes the whole slaughter to him, because first attempting it. Joab, it seems, took this in his return from the former slaughter, and fell in for the assistance of his brother Abishai (for that was their usual course: though they divided their armies, they did not divide their hearts). But if the enemies were too strong, one would help the other. 1Ch 19:12. And of this eighteen thousand attributed to David and Abishai before, Joab slew twelve thousand of them; the memory of which service is here embalmed with a Psalm; first showing the extremes they were in, doubtful at first they should not get the victory. Secondly, applying it to the kingdom of Christ. Lastly, ascribing all the honour of the conquest to God; saying, through God this valiant service was done; it was he that trod down our enemies; and will do (last verse). *William Streat, in "The Dividing of the Hoof," 1654.*

Title. *The Valley of Salt.* The ridge of Usdum exhibits more distinctly its peculiar formation; *the main body of the mountain being a solid mass of rock salt...* We could at first hardly believe our eyes, until we had several times approached the precipices, and broken off pieces to satisfy ourselves, both by the touch and taste. The salt, where thus exposed, is everywhere more or less furrowed by the rains. As we advanced, large lumps and masses broken off from above, lay like rocks along the shore, or were fallen down as *debris*. The very stones beneath our feet were wholly salt... The position of this mountain at the south end of the sea, enables us also to ascertain the place of *The Valley of Salt* mentioned in Scripture, where the Hebrews under David, and again under Amaziah, gained decisive victories over Edom. This valley could have been no other than the Ghor south of the Dead Sea, adjacent to the mountain of salt; it

separates indeed the ancient territories of Judah and Edom. *Edward Robinson's "Biblical Researches in Palestine, "1867.*

Title. The historic record mentions *eighteen thousand* slain, and here but *twelve thousand*. The greater of course includes the less. The discrepancy may be explained by supposing that the title contains the numbers slain by one division of the army, or that the *twelve thousand* were slain in the battle, and the residue in the flight. Or an error may have crept into the text. Every scholar admits that there is sometimes serious difficulty in settling the numbers of the Old Testament. In this place Calvin has *two and twenty thousand*, the common version *twelve thousand*, while the original is *two ten thousand*, which taken in one way would mean *twenty thousand, i.e., two tens of thousands*. Hammond refers the number slain to different battles, and so avoids the difficulty. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1. *O God, thou hast cast us off.* The word here used means properly to be foul, rancid, offensive; and then, to treat anything *as if* it were foul or rancid; to repel, to spurn, to cast away. It is strong language, meaning that God had seemed to treat them as if they were loathsome or offensive to him. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2. *Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.* They pray that this may be done with the utmost speed, because there was a danger in delay, for the kingdom was already pressed down with a heavy calamity, and on the brink of ruin, which is signified by the word *hjm* whose origin is in a very strong and tremulous inclination to one side, properly from the application of a *lever*, and is applied to those who are leaning so far to one side that they are just on the point of falling; figuratively, therefore, it expresses a *most perilous condition*, in which one is on the edge of destruction. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2. *Heal the breaches thereof.* Even Israel is subject to *breaches*. So it was with the literal typical Israel, David's kingdom; so it may be with spiritual mystical Israel, the kingdom of Christ, the church of God upon earth. There are *breaches* from *without*, and *breaches* from *within*. I will invert the order. From *without*, by open *persecution*; from *within*, by intestine and homebred *divisions*. Of both these the church of God in all ages hath had sufficient experience. Look we upon the *primitive* times, during the infancy of the church, however the *soundest* and most entire church that ever was, yet how was it *broken*! Broken, as by foreign persecutions, so by homebred divisions. Both these ways was the church during the apostles' time broken, distressed by enemies from without who persecuted it. *John Brinsley (1600-1665), in "The Healing of Israel's Breaches."*

Verse 2. *It shaketh.* That is, presaging nothing but *ruin* and *downfall*, unless it be speedily underpropped, and *the breaches thereof* made up and *healed*. Thus did David look upon Israel's disease, and hereupon it was that he was so deeply affected with it, so earnestly desiring the cure of it. The reference, as interpreters conceive, is to those *homebred divisions*, those civil wars betwixt the two houses of Saul and David, after the death of Saul: then did the "*earth*, "the land, that land of Israel (as the Chaldee explains it), *quake and tremble*, being *broken, riven* (as the word in the original signifieth): even as the earth sometimes by earthquakes is riven, and torn asunder with prodigious chasms, openings, or gapings: so was that kingdom divided in those civil commotions, the nobles and commons taking parts and siding, some with David, some with Ishbosheth. *John Brinsley.*

Verse 3. *Thou hast showed thy people hard things.* God will be sure to plough his own ground, whatsoever becometh of the waste; and to weed his own garden, though the rest of the world should be let alone to grow wild. *John Trapp.*

Verse 3. *Thou hast given us to drink infatuation, or bewilderment, as men drink wine.* So Hupfeld explains the constructions, referring to Ps 80:5, "Thou hast made them feed upon weeping like bread; "1Ki 22:27, "Feed him with affliction as bread, and with affliction as water" uxl mymw; Isa 30:20. But the apposition is capable of being explained in another way, for the second noun may in fact be a predicate further defining the first: "Thou hast given us wine to drink which is (not wine, but) bewilderment." *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3. *The wine of astonishment. "Intoxicating wine."* Hebrew, "Wine of staggering, "that is, which causeth staggering, or, in other words, intoxicating. Some render, "wine of stupor, "or stupefying. Symmachus, "wine of agitation, "and this sense I have adopted which is also that of the Syriac. *Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 4. *Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee.* Perhaps the delivery of a *banner* was anciently esteemed an obligation to protect, and that the psalmist might consider it in this light, when, upon a victory over the Syrians and Edomites, after the public affairs of Israel had been in a bad state, he says, *Thou hast shewed thy people hard things*, etc. *Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee.* Though thou didst for a time give up thine Israel into the hands of their enemies, thou hast now given them an assurance of thy having received them under thy protection. *Thomas Harmer (1715-1788), in "Observations on Divers Passages of Scripture."*

Verse 4. *Thou hast given a banner*, etc. Thou hast given us by the recent victory, after our prostrate condition, a banner of triumph to *lift up* (so the Hebrew), because of thy faithfulness to thy promise. *Truth* here answers to God's *holiness* (Ps 60:6). So long as soldiers see their banner *uplifted*, they flock round it with confidence. But when it is prostrate their spirits and hopes fall. The *banner* is a pledge of safety, and a rallying point to those who fight under it. *A. R. Faussett.*

Verse 4. *Thou hast given a banner*, etc. The psalmist compares the *salvation* which the Lord bestows upon his people to a highly excellent *banner*, which serves as a signal, to one lying prostrate in his misery, to rise up, with an allusion perhaps to Nu 21:8. "And the Lord said to Moses, Make thee a serpent, and set it upon a *standard pole*; and it happened that every one who was bitten, and looked at it, lived." At any rate, that passage in which the serpent is a symbol of the healing power of God, may serve to illustrate the passage before us. Compare *heal its breaches*. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4. *A banner*, which is a sign or instrument:

1. Of union. This people, who were lately divided and under several banners, thou hast now gathered together and united under one banner; to wit, under my government.
2. Of battle. Thou hast given us an army and power to oppose our enemies. We had our banner to set against theirs.
3. Of triumph. We have not lost our banner but gained theirs, and brought it away in triumph. Compare Ps 20:5. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 6. *God hath spoken in his holiness*. That is, by Samuel he hath promised, as he is an holy God, and true of his word, that I should be king of all Israel, and now he hath performed it. (2 Samuel 5.) Yet Calvin speaks of it as not yet performed; but the course of the history makes it plain that David was now king over the parts of which he here speaketh. *I will divide Shechem*, as subjects to me as Joshua having the land under him, divided it amongst his people: so David being king over all the parts of the land, divides to his followers such portions as belonged unto them by inheritance, from which happily some of them had been expelled by the time of Ishbosheth his reign; or some families in the time of those wars might be utterly wasted away, and so the king having free power to dispose of their lands, might give them amongst his men, and take part to himself. *John Mayer.*

Verse 6. *God hath spoken in his holiness.* That is, he hath given out his word from heaven, the habitation of his holiness and of his glory; or, he hath spoken it certainly, there is nothing but holiness in his word (and that is the strength of words). David having received this word stands assured, that as Shechem and Succoth, Gilead and Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah would willingly submit to him and yield obedience; so, also, that Moab, Edom, and Philistia, who were his professed enemies, should be subdued to him. He expected to conquer and triumph over them, to put them to the basest offices, as his vassals, because God had decreed and spoken it in his holiness. God hath spoken the word, saith he, therefore it shall be done, yea, it is done; and therefore David cried, *All's mine, Gilead in mine, Manasseh is mine, Moab and Edom are mine*, as soon as God had spoken the word. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 6. *I will divide Shechem.* It is as much as if he should say, I will not look to have my share measured out by others, but I will divide it, and measure myself, and will be the right owner and possessor thereof. *Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 6. *I will divide Shechem, etc.* Of *Shechem* and the *Valley of Succoth, or booths*, so called from Jacob's making *booths*, and *feeding his cattle* there. (See Ge 33:17-18.) By these are meant Samaria; and *David's dividing or meting* them out, is a phrase to express his *dominion* over them, in being part of the *regal* power to *distribute* his province into cities and regions, and place judges and magistrates over them. To these the addition of *Gilead* (which contained the whole region of *Bashan, etc.*, on the *other side of Jordan*), and then the mention of *Manasseh* and *Ephraim*, are designed, as by so many parts, to denote the kingdom of Israel, or the ten tribes; and their being *his*, and *the strength of his head*, notes him to be the *Lord* over them, and to make use of their strength in his wars, for the defending or enlarging his dominions. And then *Judah yqqwxm is my lawgiver*; as it refers to Jacob's prophecy of the *sceptre and lawgiver not departing from Judah*, denoting that to be the *royal* tribe; so by it is signified the *kingdom of Judah* (under which *Benjamin* is comprehended), that David is possessed of that also. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 6. *Succoth.* If the preceding views are correct, we may rest in the result, that the present Sâkût represents the name and site of the ancient Succoth... We passed obliquely along the northern slope of the same broad swell, where the ground was covered only by a thick crop of thistles. On our right was a region of lower ground to which we gradually descended; full of grass, wild oats, and thistles, with an occasional thornbush. The soil was like that of an Ohio bottom. The grass, intermingled with tall daisies, and the wild oats reached to the horses backs; while the thistles sometimes overtopped the rider's heads. All was now dry; and in some places it was difficult to make our way through the exuberant

growth. At last we came to the cause of this fertility, a fine brook winding along the bottom. We crossed it, and passed up again obliquely over another like swell, covered as before only with thistles. Here was an ancient oil vat, very large and of a single stone; it was evidently brought hither, and indicates the former growth of the olive in these parts. We struck the same stream again at its source, called Ain el Beida, a large and fine fountain, surrounded with gardens of cucumbers, and watering an extensive tract. We were here on the edge of the higher portion of the Ghôr, where low ridges and swells project out from the foot of the western mountains, and form a rolling plain or plateau, which is well watered, arable and very extensively cultivated for wheat. The tract further east, which we had now crossed, may be said to extend to the high bank of the lower Jordan valley. It is less elevated, is more generally level, though crossed by low swells between the water courses, and has little tillage. The inhabitants of Tûbâs are divided into three hostile parties; and they carry their divisions into their agriculture in the Ghôr. One party sows at Ain el Beida, where we now were; another around Ain Makhûz, more in the north; and the third at Ridghah, Sâkût, and further south. The people of Teyâsîr also sow on the south of Mâlih; the water of which is used for irrigation. The whole tract north of Wady Mâlih was said to be farmed from the government by one of the Sheiks of the Jenâr family, who live at Jeba and in its neighbourhood. By him it is again let to the different villages. *Robinson's "Biblical Researches in Palestine."*

Verses 6-7. The chief and principal places where the seditious party had their residence and abode, were those which the psalmist mentions in the sixth and seventh verses, namely, *Shechem*, a city in the tribe of Ephraim; *Succoth*, a city in the tribe of Gad; *Gilead* and *Manasseh*, the utmost borders of the land of Canaan beyond Jordan. These were some of the chief places, which sided with Ishbosheth whilst he lived, as you may see, 2 Samuel 2; and, as it seemeth, they still cleaved to the house of Saul after he was dead, not acknowledging David for their king. *John Brinsley.*

Verse 7. *Gilead is mine and Manasseh is mine.* That is to say, I will possess myself of them and rule over them; not as a *conqueror* over *slaves*, but as a lord over *subjects*, as a father over children, owning and acknowledging them as *mine*. They are my inheritance, and shall be my people, my subjects. *John Brinsley.*

Verse 7. *Ephraim also is the strength of mine head.* The strong and warlike tribe of Ephraim being to the state what the helmet is to the warriors in battle; or, perhaps the allusion is to De 33:17: "His glory is like the firstling of his

bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the nations." *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 7. *Judah is (or shall be) my lawgiver*, i.e., all his subjects should be brought under one *Head*, one governor, who should give them laws, according to which they should be ordered or governed, which power and authority belonged to the tribe of *Judah*, according to that prophecy of Jacob (Ge 49:10), to which the psalmist here alludes. No way, no means to bring the people unto unity, to bring them into one *body*, but by bringing them under on *head*, one *law giver*, by whose laws they may be regulated and governed. Now in the church, and in matters of religion, this one *Head* is *Christ*, even that *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, as he is called (Re 5:5). He is the *Law giver* of his church, and let him so be. This will be found one, aye, and the only means to breed an holy and religious unity, and bring home straying, wandering sheep. *John Brinsley.*

Verse 7. No government could stand which was not resident in Judah. *John Calvin.*

Verse 8. *Moab is my washpot.* Implying that Moab should be reduced to slavery, it being the business of a slave to present the hand washing basin to his master. With the Greeks, *plunein tina*, to wash down any one, was a slang term, signifying to ridicule, abuse, or beat; hence we have the word *washpot* applied to the subject of such treatment. "You do not appear to be in your right senses, who make a washpot of me in the presence of many men." *Aristophanes.* *Thomas S. Millington, in "The Testimony of the Heathen to the Truths of Holy Writ," 1863.*

Verse 8. (second clause). When, keeping in view the idea of washing the feet, a person throws his shoes, which he has taken off, to any one to be taken away or to be cleaned—*kylvh* with *le* and also with *la*, 1Ki 19:19, is "*to throw to any one*"—the individual to whom it belongs to perform such an office must be a slave of the lowest kind. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 8. *Over Edom will I cast out my shoe*, which notes either contempt of them, as if he had said, O look upon them as worthy only to scrape and make clean my shoes. Or secondly, conquest over them—I will walk through Edom and subdue it. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8. *Over Edom will I cast out my shoe.* By extension, immission, or projection of the shoe, either upon the necks of people, or over their countries, is meant nothing else but to overcome, subdue, bring under power, possess, and subject to vileness such men and such countries. The very vulgar acceptance of

the word *possession*, in the grammatical sense, imports as much; for the etymology of *possessio* is no more but *pedum positio*. This manner of speaking hath also allusion to the positive law recorded in De 25:6-10; for the letter of the law is, that is the kinsman would not marry the brother's widow and raise up seed unto his brother; the widow loosing his shoe, and spitting in his face, he lost the claim and interest of such possessions as belonged to the woman in right of her husband. And the house of such a man was called *domus discalceati*, that is to say, "The house of him that hath his shoe loosed." The practice also of this law we find recorded in the book of Ruth, in the case of Elimelech's land, between Boaz and the kinsman, about the widow Ruth, who had her interest by right of her husband in the said land. Moreover, the frequent use of this phrase meeting us very often in the book of God, makes this to be the meaning of the words, as clear as the day. This king elsewhere singing his trophies, saith, "They are fallen under my feet." "Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon." But the people must "not meddle with Mount Seir; for God would not give them thereof so much as a foot's breadth; "yet ever the place whereon the soles of their feet should tread, from the wilderness of Lebanon and from the river Euphrates unto the utmost sea, should be theirs. Ps 18:38 De 1:36 2:5. *William Loe*, in "*A Sermon before the King at Theobalds*, "entitled, "*The King's Shoe, made and ordained to trample on, and to tread down enemies*," 1623.

Verse 8. *Over Edom will I cast out my shoe.* Turnus, having slain Palias,— "Bestrode the corpse, and pressed it with his foot." *Virgil*.

Verse 8. Of the Philistines he says, *Over Philistia it is mine to boast*; for so I would translate, and not, as is usual, *Philistia, triumph thou over me*, which does not yield a consistent meaning. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 8. (*last clause*). Let not our adversaries triumph over our *breaches*. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy." Or, if they will, let them triumph: *Triumph thou, O Philistia, because of me, or over me.* *John Brinsley*.

Verses 8-10. Moab in the East, Edom in the South, and Philistia in the West (the North is not mentioned, because the banner of David had already been victorious there.) *Augustus F. Tholuck*.

Verse 11. *For vain is the help of man.* As they had lately experimented in *Saul*, a king of their own choosing, but not able to save them from those proud Philistines. *John Trapp*.

Verse 11. So long as sight and reason find footing in matters, there is no place for faith and hope; the abundance of human helps puts not grace to proof, but the strength of faith is in the absence of them all. A man is stronger when he goeth on his feet alone, than when he standeth by a grip in his infancy, or leaneth on a staff in his old age: the two feet of faith and hope serve us best when we are fixed on the Rock of Sion alone. *William Struther.*

Verse 12. *Through God we shall do*, etc. In war these two must be joined, and indeed in all actions: HE, *we*; *God* and *man*.

1. "We shall do valiantly, "for God helps not remiss, or cowardly, or negligent men.

2. And yet, that being done, the work is *his*: "He shall tread down; "the blow and the overthrow are not to be attributed to *us*, but to *him*. *Adam Clarke.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Prayer of a church in low condition.

1. *Complaint.*

(a) Left of God's Spirit.

(b) Scattered.

2. *Cause.* Something displeasing to God. Neglect or actual sin; a subject for self examination.

3. *Cure.* The Lord's return to us and ours to him. In our version it is a prayer; in the Septuagint an expression of faith—"Thou wilt return."

Verse 2. The perturbation, the prayer, the plea. *G. R.*

Verse 3. That God does afflict his people severely, and that he has good reason for the same.

Verse 3. *The wine of astonishment.* A purgative, a tonic. Astonishing sin followed by astonishing chastisements, discoveries of corruption, of the spirituality of the law, of the terrors of divine wrath, and by astonishing depressions, temptations, and conflicts.

Verse 4. The banner of the gospel.

1. Why a banner? A rallying point, meant to fight under, etc.
2. By whom given. *Thou*.
3. To whom. *To them that fear thee*.
4. What is to be done with it. *To be displayed*.
5. For what cause. *Because of the truth*. Truth promotes truth.

Verse 5. The deliverance of the elect needs a saving God, a mighty God (*right hand*), and a prayer hearing God.

Verse 5. (*last clause*). *Save... and hear*. The remarkable order of these words suggests that—

1. In the purpose of God.
2. In the first works of grace.
3. Often under trial.
4. And specially in fierce temptations, Gods saving precedes man's praying.

Verse 6. God's holy promise, ground for present joy, and for boldly taking possession of the promised good.

Verse 7. *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine*. How, and in what respect this world is the Christian's.

Verse 7. *Judah is my lawgiver*. The believer owning no law but that which comes from Christ.

Verse 8. *Moab is my washpot*. How we may make sinners subservient to our sanctification. We are warned by their sin, and punishment, etc. See "Spurgeon's Sermons, "No. 983, "Moab is my washpot."

Verse 9. The soul winner's question.

1. The object of attack; the strong city of man's heart, barricaded by depravity, ignorance, prejudice, custom, etc.
2. Our main design. To penetrate, to reach the citadel for Jesus.

3. Our great enquiry. Eloquence, learning, wit, none of these can force the gate, but there is One who can.

Verse 12. Divine operation a reason for human activity.

Psalm 61

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician upon Neginah, a Psalm of David.* The original indicates that both the hymn and the musical instrument were David's. He wrote the verses and himself sang them to the stringed instrument whose sound he loved so well. We have left the Psalms entitled *Michtam*, but we shall still find much precious meaning though the golden name be wanting. We have met with the title of this Psalm before, in Psalms 4, 6, 54, and 55, but with this difference, that in the present case the word is in the singular number: the Psalm itself is very personal, and well adapted for the private devotion of a single individual.

SUBJECT AND DIVISION. This Psalm is a pearl. It is little, but precious. To many a mourner it has furnished utterance when the mind could not have devised a speech for itself. It was evidently composed by David after he had come to the throne,—see Ps 61:6. The second verse leads us to believe that it was written during the psalmist's enforced exile from the tabernacle, which was the visible abode of God: if so, the period of Absalom's rebellion has been most suitably suggested as the date of its authorship, and Delitzsch is correct in entitling it, "Prayer and thanksgiving of an expelled King on his way back to his throne." We might divide the verses according to the sense, but it is preferable to follow the author's own arrangement, and make a break at each SELAH.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Hear my cry, O God.* He was in terrible earnest; he shouted, he lifted up his voice on high. He is not however content with the expression of his need: to give his sorrows vent is not enough for him, he wants actual audience of heaven, and manifold succour as the result. Pharisees may rest in their prayers; true believers are eager for an answer to them: ritualists may be satisfied when they have, "said or sung" their litanies and collects, but living children of God will never rest till their supplications have entered the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Attend unto my prayer. Give it thy consideration, and such an answer as thy wisdom sees fit. When it comes to crying with us, we need not doubt but that it will come to attending with God. Our heavenly Father is not hardened against the cries of his own children. What a consoling thought it is that the Lord at all times hears his people's cries, and is never forgetful of their prayers; whatever else fails to move him, praying breath is never spent in vain!

Verse 2. *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee.* He was banished from the spot which was the centre of his delight, and at the same time his mind was in a depressed and melancholy condition; both actually and figuratively he was an outcast, yet he does not therefore restrain prayer, but rather finds therein a

reason for the louder and more importunate cries. To be absent from the place of divine worship was a sore sorrow to saints in the olden times; they looked upon the tabernacle as the centre of the world, and they counted themselves to be at the fag end of the universe when they could no longer resort to the sacred shrine; their heart was heavy as in a strange land when they were banished from its solemnities. Yet even they knew right well that no place is unsuitable for prayer. There may be an end of the earth, but there must not be an end to devotion. On creation's verge we may call upon God, for even there he is within call. No spot is too dreary, no condition too deplorable; whether it be the world's end or life's end, prayer is equally available. To pray in some circumstances needs resolve, and the psalmist here expresses it,

I will cry. It was a wise resolution, for had he ceased to pray he would have become the victim of despair; there is an end to a man when he makes an end to prayer. Observe that David never dreamed of seeking any other God; he did not imagine the dominion of Jehovah to be local: he was at the end of the promised land, but he knew himself to be still in the territory of the Great King; to him only does he address his petitions. When my heart is overwhelmed:—when the huge waves of trouble wash over me, and I am completely submerged, not only as to my head, but also my heart. It is hard to pray when the very heart is drowning, yet gracious men plead best at such times. Tribulation brings us to God, and brings God to us. Faith's greatest triumphs are achieved in her heaviest trials. It is all over with me, affliction is all over me; it encompasses me as a cloud, it swallows me up like a sea, it shuts me in with thick darkness, yet God is near, near enough to hear my voice, and I will call him. Is not this brave talk? Mark how our psalmist tells the Lord, as if he knew he were hearing him, that he intended to call upon him: our prayer by reason of our distress may be like to a call upon a far off friend, but our inmost faith has its quiet heart whispers to the Lord as to one who is assuredly our very present help. *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* I see thee to be my refuge, sure and strong; but alas! I am confused, and cannot find thee; I am weak, and cannot climb thee. Thou art so steadfast, guide me; thou art so high, uplift me. There is a mint of meaning in this brief prayer. Along the iron bound coast of our northern shores, lives are lost because the rocks are inaccessible to the shipwrecked mariner. A clergyman of one of the coast villages has with immense labour cut steps up from the beach to a large chamber, which he has excavated in the chalk cliffs; here many mariners have been saved; they have climbed the rock, which had else been too high for them, and they have escaped. We have heard of late, however, that the steps have been worn away by the storms, and that poor sailors have perished miserably within sight of the refuge which they could not reach, for it was too high for them: it is therefore proposed to drive in iron

stanchions, and to hang up chain ladders that shipwrecked mariners may reach the chambers in the rock. The illustration is self interpreting. Our experience leads us to understand this verse right well, for the time was with us when we were in such amazement of soul be reason of sin, that although we knew the Lord Jesus to be a sure salvation for sinners, yet we could not come at him, by reason of our many doubts and forebodings. A Saviour would have been of no use to us if the Holy Spirit had not gently led us to him, and enabled us to rest upon him. To this day we often feel that we not only want a rock, but to be led to it. With this in view we treat very leniently the half unbelieving prayers of awakened souls; for in their bewildered state we cannot expect from them all at once a fully believing cry. A seeking soul should at once believe in Jesus, but it is legitimate for a man to ask to be led to Jesus; the Holy Spirit is able to effect such a leading, and he can do it even though the heart be on the borders of despair. How infinitely higher that we are is the salvation of God. We are low and grovelling, but it towers like some tall cliff far above us. This is its glory, and is our delight when we have once climbed into the rock, and claimed an interest in it; but while we are as yet trembling seekers, the glory and sublimity of salvation appal us, and we feel that we are too unworthy ever to be partakers of it; hence we are led to cry for grace upon grace, and to see how dependent we are for everything, not only for the Saviour, but for the power to believe on him.

Verse 3. *For thou hast been a shelter for me.* Observe how the psalmist rings the changes on, *Thou hast*, and *I will*, —Ps 61:3-6. Experience is the nurse of faith. From the past we gather arguments for present confidence. Many and many a time had the persecutions of Saul and the perils of battle imperilled David's life, and only by miracle had he escaped, yet was he still alive and unhurt; this he remembers, and he is full of hope. And a strong tower from the enemy. As in a fort impregnable, David had dwelt, because surrounded by omnipotence. Sweet is it beyond expression to remember the lovingkindnesses of the Lord in our former days, for he is unchangeable, and therefore will continue to guard us from all evil.

Verse 4. *I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.* Let me once get back to thy courts, and nothing shall again expel me from them: even now in my banishment my heart is there; and ever will I continue to worship thee in spirit wherever my lot may be cast. Perhaps by the word *tabernacle* is here meant the dwelling place of God; and if so, the sense is, I will dwell with the Lord, enjoying his sacred hospitality, and sure protection.

"There would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;

No more a stranger or a guest,
But like a child at home."

He who communes with God is always at home. The divine omnipresence surrounds such a one consciously; his faith sees all around him the palace of the King, in which he walks with exulting security and overflowing delight. Happy are the indoor servants who go not out from his presence. Hewers of wood and drawers of water in the tents of Jehovah are more to be envied than the princes who riot in the pavilions of kings. The best of all is that our residence with God is not for a limited period of time, but for ages; yea, for ages of ages, for time and for eternity: this is our highest and most heavenly privilege, *I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever*. I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Often does our sweet singer use this figure; and far better is it to repeat one apt and instructive image, than for the sake of novelty to ransack creation for poor, strained metaphors. The chicks beneath the hen how safe, how comfortable, how happy! How warm the parent's bosom! How soft the cherishing feathers! Divine condescension allows us to appropriate the picture to ourselves, and how blessedly instructive and consoling it is! O for more trust; it cannot be too implicit: such a covert invites us to the most unbroken repose. SELAH. Rest we well may when we reach this point. Even the harp may be eloquently silent when deep, profound calm completely fills the bosom, and sorrow has sobbed itself into a peaceful slumber.

Verse 5. *For thou, O God, hast heard my vows.* Proofs of divine faithfulness are to be had in remembrance, and to be mentioned to the Lord's honour. The prayer of Ps 61:1 is certain of an answer because of the experience of Ps 61:5, since we deal with an immutable God. Vows may rightly be joined with prayers when they are lawful, well considered, and truly for God's glory. It is great mercy on God's part to take any notice of the vows and promises of such faithless and deceitful creatures as we are. What we promise him is his due already, and yet he deigns to accept our vows as if we were not so much his servants as his free suitors who could give or withhold at pleasure. Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. We are made heirs, joint heirs with all the saints, partakers of the same portion. With this we ought to be delighted. If we suffer, it is the heritage of the saints; if we are persecuted, are in poverty, or in temptation, all this is contained in the title deeds of the heritage of the chosen. Those we are to sup with we may well be content to dine with. We have the same inheritance as the Firstborn himself; what better is conceivable? Saints are described as fearing the name of God; they are reverent worshippers; they stand in awe of the Lord's authority; they are afraid of offending him, they feel their own nothingness in the sight of the Infinite One.

To share with such men, to be treated by God with the same favour as he metes out to them, is matter for endless thanksgiving. All the privileges of all the saints are also the privileges of each one.

Verse 6. *Thou wilt prolong the king's life;* or, better, "days to the days of the King thou wilt add." Death threatened, but God preserved his beloved. David, considering his many perils, enjoyed a long and prosperous reign. And his years as many generations. He lived to see generation after generation personally; in his descendants he lived as king through a very long period; his dynasty continued for many generations; and in Christ Jesus, his seed and son, spiritually David reigns on evermore. Thus he who began at the foot of the rock, half drowned, and almost dead, is here led to the summit, and sings as a priest abiding in the tabernacle, a king ruling with God for ever, and a prophet foretelling good things to come. (Ps 61:7.) See the uplifting power of faith and prayer. None so low but they may yet be set on high.

Verse 7. *He shall abide before God for ever.* Though this is true of David in a modified sense, we prefer to view the Lord Jesus as here intended as the lineal descendant of David, and the representative of his royal race. Jesus is enthroned before God to eternity; here is our safety, dignity, and delight. We reign in him; in him we are made to sit together in the heavens. David's personal claim to sit enthroned for ever is but a foreshadowing of the revealed privilege of all true believers. O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him. As men cry, "Long live the king," so we hail with acclamation our enthroned Immanuel, and cry, "Let mercy and truth preserve him." Eternal love and immutable faithfulness are the bodyguards of Jesus' throne, and they are both the providers and the preservers of all those who in him are made kings and priests unto God. We cannot keep ourselves, and nothing short of divine mercy and truth can do it; but these both can and will, nor shall the least of the people of God be suffered to perish.

Verse 8. *So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever.* Because my prayer is answered, my song shall be perpetual; because Jesus for ever sits at thy right hand, it shall be acceptable; because I am preserved in him, it shall be grateful. David had given vocal utterance to his prayer by a cry; he will now give expression to his praise by a song: there should be a parallel between our supplications and our thanksgivings. We ought not to leap in prayer, and limp in praise. The vow to celebrate the divine name *for ever* is no hyperbolical piece of extravagance, but such as grace and glory shall enable us to carry out to the letter. That I may daily perform my vows. To God who adds days to our days we will devote all our days. We vowed perpetual praise, and we desire to render it without intermission. We would worship God *de die in diem*, going

right on as the days roll on. We ask no vacation from this heavenly vocation; we would make no pause in this sacred service. God daily performs his promises, let us daily perform our vows: he keeps his covenant, let us not forget ours. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth, even for evermore.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. The word *Neginah* (the singular of *Neginoth*) may be understood to be synonymous with the *kinnor* or harp: that is to say, the instrument of eight strings, probably played with a bow or plectrum. *John Jess.*

Verse 1. *Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.* Aquinas saith that some read the words thus, *Intende ad cantica mea*, attend unto my songs—and so the words may be safely read, from the Hebrew word *hgr ranah*, which signifies to shout or shrill out for joy—to note that the prayers of the saints are like pleasant songs and delightful ditties in the ears of God. No mirth, no music, can be so pleasing to us as the prayers of the saints are pleasing to God. So 2:14 Ps 141:2. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 1. *My cry.* There is a text in Job where the "hypocrites in heart" are spoken of condemningly, because "they cry not when he bindeth them." I like to feel that no hard fortitude is required of the chastened child of God, but that it ought to feel, and may cry, under the rod, without a single rebellious thought. *Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verses 1-2. One ejaculation begetteth another. *Hear my cry; attend unto my prayer* (yet no words thereof mentioned); and Ps 61:2. *From the end of the earth will I cry:* he had thus cried, and he will therefore cry again and again. As billows of temptation ever and anon stop his mouth and interrupt him, so as he now and then doth but peep above water, and get breathing space, he will thus cry, *Lead me*, or "guide me," or carry me to yonder *rock which is higher than I*. *Thomas Cobbet (1608-1686), on Prayer.*

Verse 2. *From the end of the earth.* This may be taken two ways: either *naturally*, and then it is an allusion to men that are far distant and remote from help, relief and comfort: or, as I may say, *ecclesiastically*, with reference to the temple of God, which was "*in medio terrae*," "in the midst and heart of the land," where God manifested and gave tokens of his gracious presence and favour: as if he had said, "I am at the end of the earth; far from any tokens, pledges, or manifestations of the love and favour of God, as well as from outward help and assistance." *John Owen.*

Verse 2. *The end of the earth.* What place was this, *the end of the earth*, referring the expression to the writer of the Psalm? We know that the centre of the affections and devotions of the pious Israelite was the "holy city, Jerusalem; whither the tribes went up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, and to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." The country of which this city was the capital, was to the Jew the world; it was the world within the world; the earth within the earth; the whole globe besides was to him a waste, a place out of the world; an extraterrestrial territory, beyond the limits set up by the Lord Almighty. Thus in Holy Writ what is called the world, or the earth, frequently signifieth only that part thereof which was the heritage of the chosen people... *The end of the earth*, then, as referred to the psalmist, would signify any place of bodily absence from the temple where the Deity had taken up his special abode, or any place whence his spiritual affections were unable to reach that temple. As referred to us, the expression signifies any sensible distance from God: for as God is the centre of life, hope, love, and joy, distance from him, of whatsoever degree, is the antipodes of the soul, a region of sterility and darkness; the Iceland of man's spirit. *Alfred Bowen Evans, 1852.*

Verse 2. *I will cry unto thee.* There is in this expression an endeavour to approach unto God; as you do when you *cry* after one whom you see at a distance, and are afraid he will go farther from you. It is the great work of faith to cry out after God, at a distance, when you are afraid lest at the next turn he should be quite out of sight. Crying to the Lord supposes him to be withdrawing or departing. *John Owen.*

Verse 2. *Cry.* No matter how abrupt the prayer be, so it be the representation of our hearts. Thus did David. Where doth he pray? In banishment. When? When his spirit *is overwhelmed*. How does he pray? He *cried*. Thus Hannah prayed herself into a composed state of mind. Remember, resignation is the work of the Spirit of God; and therefore you must plead for it before you have it. *John Singleton (1706), in "The Morning Exercises."*

Verse 2. *Cry.* Crying is a substitute for speech; and also the expression of earnestness. *William Jay.*

Verse 2. *When my heart is overwhelmed.* Troubles are of various kinds; some are *provoking*, some are *gnawing*, some are *perplexing*, and some are *overwhelming*; but whatever form they assume, they are troubles, and are part of the wear and tear of life. ...*Overwhelming troubles* are such as sweep over a man, just as the mighty billows of the ocean sweep over and submerge the sands. These are troubles which struggle with us, as it were, for life and death; troubles which would leave us helpless wrecks; troubles which enter into

conflict with us in our prime, which grapple with us in our health and strength, and threaten to conquer us by sheer force, no matter how bravely we may contend. Such trouble the psalmist knew. *Philip Bennett Power*, in "The *I wills* of the Psalms," 1861.

Verse 2. Heart. The heart is here represented to us as being overwhelmed, or, as it is otherwise translated, "covered over; "it is smothered in, unable to perform its functions with proper action, unable to throw out the blood to the extremities, to give them needed vitality and power for necessary effort. When the action of the heart is paralysed, even temporarily, it will tell upon all the members, a chill there send its cold vibration through every limb; Satan knows this well, and so all his dealings are heart dealings, efforts to paralyse the very spring of life itself. This is precisely what we ourselves have experienced; we have partially felt death within us, we have felt a gradual numbing of our heart; a gradual diminution in the quickness of its beat; a gradual closing in, and pressure of a weight upon it, and this was the *overwhelming* process. *Philip Bennett Power*.

Verse 2. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. The tower, in Ps 18:2, is "*an high tower*," and the rock is here an *high rock*, the rock *higher than I*; and yet there is a way to get into the highest towers; by scaling ladders a man may get over the high walls of towers. This tower and rock were too high for David himself to get into, and therefore he sets to the scaling ladder. "*Lead me to the rock*, and into the tower *that is higher than I*. *Hear my cry, attend unto my prayer*." So he makes prayer the scaling ladder to get upon that rock and into that tower that otherwise had been too high for him; he gets that safety and deliverance which otherwise but by prayer unto God had been impossible to have been obtained. *Jeremiah Dyke*.

Verse 2. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. The language is very remarkable. It gives us the idea of a man suffering shipwreck. The vessel in which he has been sailing has sunk. He has been plunged into the mighty ocean; and there he is buffeting the waves, struggling for life, panting for breath, and just about to give up all for lost. Suddenly he discovers a *rock* towering above him. If he can but climb up to the top of it, and get sure footing upon it, the billows will not be able to reach him, and he will be safe. Now, the prayer in our text is the cry of that poor wretch for help. He is so spent and exhausted, that he cannot reach the rock *himself*. He shouts aloud for the friendly hand of some one stronger than himself, or for a rope that may be flung to him by those who are already safe on the rock, if by these helps he may gain it. *Lead me to the rock*, cries the poor perishing wretch. "O, lead me, guide me, direct me to it; for I am so worn and spent, that I cannot reach it otherwise. I am

at the point to die; and I must sink, and be no more seen for ever, if there is none to help me." Thus he calls for some one to rescue him from the deep, and to place him on the *rock*. But what rock? He knows that unless the rock be a high one, he will not be in safety, though he should be on it. *The rock*, he says, "must be *higher than I*, or the waves will reach me, and wash me off again." It is not a rock, the top of which just shows itself above the sea, no higher than a man's own body, that will save the life of a shipwrecked mariner. Such a rock may occasion the wreck, but it will not afford any help to the sufferers afterwards; it is a rock to split upon for destruction, not to stand upon for safety. *Lead me to the rock*, or as it is in the Prayer book version, "Set me upon the rock that is *higher than I*!" ...The text having shown us the *danger of sin*, does not leave us comfortless; it shows us the *security of the refuge*. We have before remarked, that the prayer of David, as a shipwrecked man, is, to be "led to, "and set upon a *rock*, that is *higher than himself*. The expression seems to imply much. The rock that is higher than *he*, must be higher than *any man*; for David was a mighty monarch. He implies, therefore, that the refuge he seeks must be more than any "arm of flesh" can afford him; it must be therefore *divine*. *Condensed from a Sermon by Fountain Elwin, 1842.*

Verse 2. It is more the image of one overtaken by the tide, as he is hastening onwards to get beyond its reach, and yet with every step he sees it rolling nearer and nearer to him; he hears its angry roar, the loosening sand sinks beneath his tread—a few minutes more, and the waves will be around him; despair hath "*overwhelmed his heart*"; "when in the very depths of his agony he sees a point of rock high above the waves. "O that I could reach it and be safe!" And then comes the cry, the agonizing cry, to him that is mighty to save, *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I*. It is the sinner's cry to the sinner's Saviour! *Barton Bouchier, A.M., in "Manna in the Heart; or, Daily Comments on the Book of Psalms," 1855.*

Verse 2. *Lead me to the rock.* If we would find ourselves upon the rock, and enjoy the realisation of being so, we must be dependent upon another's hand. And that hand can do everything for us, even in our worst of times. When we are so blinded by the salt waves that dash in our eyes, so reeling in brain that we perhaps cannot think, much less make continuous efforts, there is a hand which can lead us, which can draw us out of the waters, which can set our feet upon the rock. Surely we have already experienced the power and tenderness of that hand? and it may be that in the reader's case, the waves, as they made sure of their prey, found it supernaturally drawn forth from them, that it might be set upon a rock, immovable amid all the waters, and sufficient amid all storms! *Philip Bennett Power.*

Verse 2. *The rock that is higher than I.* The rock of our salvation, then, is "higher than we." Here we have the Deity of Christ, the Rock, set forth; in this he is "higher than we." And except as he is thus higher, as he is God, he could not be a Saviour; for "He is a just God, as well as a Saviour." A being no higher than we, or but a little higher, as the angels (for we are but "a little lower than they"), though he might teach us, or warn us, or console us, could never save us. The prey is in the hands of the mighty, and the Almighty alone is mightier. But a rock is not only high, but deep; it not only erects its front above the waves, but its base is fixed in the ocean's bed. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find our the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job 11:7. Here we have the humanity of him who is the rock; that humanity by which he was able to go down to the deeps, as well as ride triumphantly on the bosom of the waters—those deeps, whereof David speaking experimentally of himself, spake prophetically of him; the depths of our fall and degradation—that humanity in which he went down into the grave, into the recesses of the intermediate state, and "preached to the spirits in prison." This is our rock, both deep and high; the rock of our salvation; to which those whose sons have set them at "the end of the earth, "desire to be brought, that they may find a place of safe standing. Let not those fear who feel the bitterness of distance from God, for they shall be brought nigh; desolate may be the coast to which they are driven, but over against it is the Paradise of God; clouds and darkness may gather at the base of this rock of safety, but "eternal sunshine settles in its head." *Alfred Bowen Evans.*

Verse 2. *Higher.* A hiding place must be *locus exelsissimus*. Your low houses are soon scaled. Jesus Christ is a high place; he is as high as heaven. He is the Jacob's ladder that reacheth from earth to heaven. Ge 28:12. He is too high for men, too high for devils; no creature can scale these high walls. *Ralph Robinson (1614-1655), in "Christ All and in All."*

Verse 4. *I will abide in thy tabernacle.* Some render it, *I shall dwell in thy tent or pavilion royal*, making it a metaphor from warfare, where those that are in the king's own tent must needs be in greatest safety. And this sense suits well with the following words: *I will trust in the covert of thy wings.* *John Trapp.*

Verse 4. *Covert of thy wings.* To a person who should penetrate the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, the most conspicuous object would be the outspread wings above the mercyseat: under their shelter and upon the mercyseat David would abide in quiet confidence. *C. H. S.*

Verse 5. (first clause). About this time I began to know that there is a God who hears and answers prayer. *John Newton, in his Journal.*

Verse 5. *Thou, O God, hast heard my vows:* that is, his prayers, which are always to be put up with vows. Indeed, that prayer is a blank which hath not a vow in it. Is it a mercy thou prayest him to give? If sincere, thou wilt vow to praise him for it, and serve him with it. Is it a sin thou prayest against? Except you juggle with God, thou wilt vow as well as pray against it. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 5. *The heritage.* Eternal life is called an inheritance. Theodoret remarks: "The true inheritance is eternal life, concerning which Christ saith to the sheep on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. This inheritance the Lord giveth to them that fear him." In Eph 1:14, the Spirit is called "the earnest of our inheritance." In Col 1:12, the apostle exhorts them "to give thanks unto the Father, who hath made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." On this verse we have the golden comment of Chrysostom, reiterated by Theophylact. He calls it an inheritance, to show that no man obtaineth the kingdom by his own good works; for no man hath so lived as to render himself worthy of the kingdom, but all is of the grace of God. Wherefore he saith, "When ye have done all, say that we are unprofitable servants, for we have only done that which we ought to have done." *John Caspar Suicer's "Thesaurus,"* 1728.

Verse 6. *Thou wilt prolong the king's life,* etc. David cannot be considered as using these words of gratulation with an exclusive reference to himself. It is true that he lived to an extreme old age, and died full of days, leaving the kingdom in a settled condition, and in the hands of his son, who succeeded him; but he did not exceed the period of one man's life, and the greater part of it was spent in continued dangers and anxieties. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the series of years, and even ages, of which he speaks, extends prospectively to the coming of Christ, it being the very condition of the kingdom, as I have often remarked, that God maintained them as one people under one head, or when scattered, united them again. The same succession still subsists in reference to ourselves. Christ must be viewed as living in his members to the end of the world. To this Isaiah alludes when he says, "Who shall declare his generation or age?"—words in which he predicts that the church would survive through all ages, notwithstanding the incessant danger of destruction to which it is exposed through the attacks of its enemies, and the many storms assailing it. So here David foretells the uninterrupted succession of the kingdom down to the time of Christ. *John Calvin.*

Verse 6. *The king's life: and his years.* David speaks designedly of the days of the *king* instead of his *own* days, as might have been expected from what had been said, for the purpose of showing that he considered the promise of eternal dominion as relating not to himself personally, but to his family—the royal family of David. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 7. *O prepare mercy.* David having declared in his own behalf the purpose of God towards him for everlasting salvation, *he*, speaking of himself, *shall abide before God for ever*: he withal considering what he was to run through in this life, and what it might require to keep him unto the end, and so *for ever*, doth presently thereupon, in way of prayer, subjoin *prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve me*. As if he had said, I have yet a long journey to go, and through many hazards, and thy promise is, *I shall abide before thee for ever*. Lord, thou hast need lay up and aforehand prepare an abundance of mercy and truth to preserve me for time to come. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8. They that are godly are oppressed and vexed in the church or congregation for this purpose: that when they are pressed, they should cry; and when they cry, that they should be heard; and when they are heard, that they should laud and praise God. *Augustine.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Whole Psalm. The progressive *I wills*.

1. I will cry.
2. I will abide in thy tabernacle.
3. I will trust.
4. I will sing praise.

Verse 1. Answers to prayer to be earnestly sought.

1. What hinders the answer of prayer?
2. What is our duty when answers are denied?
3. What encouragements we have to believe that the delay is only temporary.

Verse 2. *Lead me.*

1. Show me the way: reveal Jesus.

2. Enable me to tread it: work faith in me.
3. Uplift me when I cannot tread: do for me what is beyond me.

Verse 2. *Higher than I.* Jesus greater than our highest efforts, attainments, desires, expectations, conceptions.

Verse 2. God, the saint's rock. *John Owen's Two Sermons.* Works. Vol. 9, pp. 237-256.

Verse 2. The heart's cry and desire.

1. A recognition of a place of safety; then,
2. We have this place brought before us, as abundantly sufficient, when personal weakness has been realised.
3. This place cannot be attained without the help of another's hand.
4. The character of this refuge, and the position of a believer when availing himself of it: the place of refuge is "a rock," and the position of the believer is "upon a rock." *P. B. Power.*

Verses 2-3.

1. *How* would he pray? *I will cry unto thee.*
2. *Where* would he pray? *From the ends of the earth.*
3. *When* would he pray? *When my heart is overwhelmed.*
4. *For what* would he pray? *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*
5. *Whence* does he derive his encouragement to pray? For thou hast been, etc. (Ps 61:3). *William Jay.*

Verse 3. *A shelter* from the rain of trouble, the storm of persecution, the floods of Satanic temptation, the heat of divine wrath, the blast of death. The ark, Lot's mountain, the blood stained door in Egypt, the city of refuge, the cave Adullam. *A strong tower:* lasting in itself, impregnable against foes, secure for the occupant.

Verse 5. (*second clause*). Enquire whether or no it fares with us as with the saints.

Verses 5, 8.

1. Vows heard in heaven.
2. Vows to be carefully fulfilled on earth.

Verse 5. (*second clause*).

1. They that fear God have a "heritage."
2. This heritage is "given."
3. We may know that we possess it. *William Jay*.

Verse 6. Our King, his eternal existence, our personal joy in this, and our joy for our descendants.

Verses 4, 7.

1. My privilege, *I will abide* (Ps 61:4).
2. The ground of it, *He shall abide*, etc. (Ps 61:7).

Verses 5, 8.

1. Vows heard in heaven.
2. Vows to be carefully fulfilled on earth.

Psalm 62

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician, to Jeduthun.* This is the second Psalm which is dedicated to Jeduthun, or Ethan, the former one being the thirty-ninth, a Psalm which is almost a twin with this in many respects, containing in the original the word translated *only* four times as this does six. We shall meet with two other Psalms similarly appointed for Jeduthun: namely, Psalms 77, and 89. The sons of Jeduthun were porters or doorkeepers, according to 1Ch 16:42. Those who serve well make the best of singers, and those who occupy the highest posts in the choir must not be ashamed to wait at the posts of the doors of the Lord's house. *A PSALM OF DAVID.* Even had not the signature of the royal poet been here placed, we should have been sure from internal evidence that he alone penned these stanzas; they are truly Davidic. From the sixfold use of the word *ac* or *only*, we have been wont to call it *THE ONLY PSALM*.

DIVISION. The Psalmist has marked his own pauses, by inserting *SELAH* at the end of Ps 62:4,8. His true and sole confidence in God laughs to scorn all its enemies. When this Psalm was composed it was not necessary for us to know, since true faith is always in season, and is usually under trial. Moreover, the sentiments here uttered are suitable to occasions which are very frequent in a believer's life, and therefore no one historic incident is needful for their explanation.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Truly*, or verily, or only. The last is probably the most prominent sense here. That faith alone is true which rests on God alone, that confidence which relies but partly on the Lord is vain confidence. If we Anglicized the word by our word *verily*, as some do, we should have here a striking reminder of our blessed Lord's frequent use of that adverb. My soul waiteth upon God. My inmost self draws near in reverent obedience to God. I am no hypocrite or mere posture maker. To wait upon God, and for God, is the habitual position of faith; to wait on him truly is sincerity; to wait on him only is spiritual chastity. The original is, "only to God is my soul silence." The presence of God alone could awe his heart into quietude, submission, rest, and acquiescence; but when that was felt, not a rebellious word or thought broke the peaceful silence. The proverb that speech is silver but silence is gold, is more than true in this case. No eloquence in the world is half so full of meaning as the patient silence of a child of God. It is an eminent work of grace to bring down the will and subdue the affections to such a degree, that the whole mind lies before the Lord like the sea beneath the wind, ready to be moved by every breath of his mouth, but free from all inward and self caused emotion, as also from all power to be moved by anything other than the divine will. We should be wax to the Lord, but adamant

to every other force. From him cometh my salvation. The good man will, therefore, in patience possess his soul till deliverance comes: faith can hear the footsteps of coming salvation, because she has learned to be silent. Our salvation in no measure or degree comes to us from any inferior source; let us, therefore, look alone to the true fountain, and avoid the detestable crime of ascribing to the creature what belongs alone to the Creator. If to wait on God be worship, to wait on the creature is idolatry; if to wait on God alone be true faith, to associate an arm of the flesh with him is audacious unbelief.

Verse 2. *He only is my rock and my salvation.* Sometimes a metaphor may be more full of meaning and more suggestive than literal speech: hence the use of the figure of a rock, the very mention of which would awaken grateful memories in the psalmists's mind. David had often lain concealed in rocky caverns, and here he compares his God to such a secure refuge; and, indeed, declares him to be his only real protection, all-sufficient in himself and never failing. At the same time, as if to show us that what he wrote was not mere poetic sentiment but blessed reality, the literal word *salvation* follows the figurative expression: that our God is our refuge is no fiction, nothing in the world is more a matter of fact. He is my defence, my height, my lofty rampart, my high fort. Here we have another and bolder image; the tried believer not only abides in God as in a cavernous rock; but dwells in him as a warrior in some bravely defiant tower or lordly castle. I shall not be greatly moved. His personal weakness might cause him to be somewhat moved; but his faith would come in to prevent any very great disturbance; not much would he be tossed about. *Moved*, as one says, "but not removed." Moved like a ship at anchor which swings with the tide, but is not swept away by the tempest. When a man knows assuredly that the Lord is his salvation, he cannot be very much cast down: it would need more than all the devils in hell greatly to alarm a heart which knows God to be its salvation.

Verse 3. *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man?* It is always best to begin with God, and then we may confront our enemies. Make all sure with heaven, then may you grapple with earth and hell. David expostulates with his insensate foes; he marvels at their dogged perseverance in malice, after so many failures and with certain defeat before them. He tells them that their design was an imaginary one, which they never could accomplish however deeply they might plot. It is a marvel that men will readily enough continue in vain and sinful courses, and yet to persevere in grace is so great a difficulty as to be an impossibility, were it not for divine assistance. The persistency of those who oppose the people of God is so strange that we may well expostulate with them and say, "How long will ye thus display your malice?" A hint is

given in the text as to the cowardliness of so many pressing upon one man; but none are less likely to act a fair and manly part than those who are opposed to God's people for righteousness' sake. Satan could not enter into combat with Job in fair duel, but must needs call in the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and even then must borrow the lightning and the wind before his first attack was complete. If there were any shame in him, or in his children, they would be ashamed of the dastardly manner in which they have waged war against the seed of the woman. Ten thousand to one has not seemed to them too mean an advantage; there is not a drop of chivalrous blood in all their veins. Ye shall be slain all of you. Your edged tools will cut your own fingers. Those who take the sword shall perish with the sword. However many or fierce the bands of the wicked may be, they shall not escape the just retribution of heaven; rigorously shall the great Lawgiver exact blood from men of blood, and award death to those who seek the death of others.

As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence. Boastful persecutors bulge and swell with pride, but they are only as a bulging wall ready to fall in a heap; they lean forward to seize their prey, but it is only as a tottering fence inclines to the earth upon which it will soon lie at length. They expect men to bow to them, and quake for fear in their presence; but men made bold by faith see nothing in them to honour, and very, very much to despise. It is never well on our part to think highly of ungodly persons; whatever their position, they are near their destruction, they totter to their fall; it will be our wisdom to keep our distance, for no one is advantaged by being near a falling wall; if it does not crush with its weight, it may stifle with its dust. The passage is thought to be more correctly rendered as follows:—"How long will ye press on one man, that ye may crush him in a body, like a toppling wall, a sinking fence?" (So Dr. Kay, of Calcutta, translates it.) We have, however, kept to our own version as yielding a good and profitable meaning. Both senses may blend in our meditations; for if David's enemies battered him as though they could throw him down like a bulging wall, he, on the other hand, foresaw that they themselves would by retributive justice be overthrown like an old crumbling, leaning, yielding fence.

Verse 4. *They only consult to cast him down from his excellency.* The excellencies of the righteous are obnoxious to the wicked, and the main object of their fury. The elevation which God gives to the godly in Providence, or in dispute, is also the envy of the baser sort, and they labour to pull them down to their own level. Observe the concentration of malice upon our point *only*, as here set in contrast with the sole reliance of the gracious one upon his Lord. If the wicked could but ruin the work of grace in us, they would be content; to

crush our character, to overturn our influence, is the object of their consultation. They delight in lies; hence they hate the truth and the truthful, and by falsehood endeavour to compass their overthrow. To lie is base enough, but to delight in it is one of the blackest marks of infamy. They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Flattery has ever been a favourite weapon with the enemies of good men; they can curse bitterly enough when it serves their turn; meanwhile, since it answers their purpose, they mask their wrath, and with smooth words pretend to bless those whom they would willingly tear in pieces. It was fortunate for David that he was well practised in silence, for to cozening deceivers there is no other safe reply. *Selah.* Here pause, and consider with astonishment the futile rancour of unholy men, and the perfect security of such as rest themselves upon the Lord.

Verse 5. *My soul, wait thou only upon God.* When we have already practised a virtue, it is yet needful that we bind ourselves to a continuance in it. The soul is apt to be dragged away from its anchorage, or is readily tempted to add a second confidence to the one sole and sure ground of reliance; we must, therefore, stir ourselves up to maintain the holy position which we were at first able to assume. Be still silent, O my soul! submit thyself completely, trust immovably, wait patiently. Let none of thy enemies' imaginings, consultings, flatteries, or maledictions cause thee to break the King's peace. Be like the sheep before her shearers, and like thy Lord, conquer by the passive resistance of victorious patience: thou canst only achieve this as thou shalt be inwardly persuaded of God's presence, and as you wait solely and alone on him. Unmingled faith is undismayed. Faith with a single eye sees herself secure, but if her eye be darkened by two confidences, she is blind and useless. For my expectation is from him. We expect from God because we believe in him. Expectation is the child of prayer and faith, and is owned of the Lord as an acceptable grace. We should desire nothing but what would be right for God to give, then our expectation would be all from God; and concerning truly good things we should not look to second causes, but to the Lord alone, and so again our expectation would be all from him. The vain expectations of worldly men come not; they promise but there is no performance; our expectations are on the way, and in due season will arrive to satisfy our hopes. Happy is the man who feels that all he has, all he wants, and all he expects are to be found in his God.

Verse 6. *He only is my rock and my salvation.* Alone, and without other help, God is the foundation and completion of my safety. We cannot too often hear the toll of that great bell *only*; let it ring the death knell of all carnal reliances, and lead us to cast ourselves on the bare arm of God. He is my defence. Not my defender only, but my actual protection. I am secure, because he is faithful. I

shall not be moved—not even in the least degree. See how his confidence grows. In the second verse an adverb qualified his quiet; here, however, it is absolute; he altogether defies the rage of his adversaries, he will not stir an inch, nor be made to fear even in the smallest degree. A living faith grows; experience develops the spiritual muscles of the saint, and gives a manly force which our religious childhood has not yet reached.

Verse 7. *In God is my salvation and my glory.* Wherein should we glory but in him who saves us? Our honour may well be left with him who secures our souls. To find all in God, and to glory that it is so, is one of the sure marks of an enlightened soul. The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. He multiplies titles, for he would render much honour to the Lord, whom he had tried, and proved to be a faithful God under so many aspects. Ignorance needs but few words, but when experience brings a wealth of knowledge, we need varied expressions to serve as coffers for our treasure. God who is our rock when we flee for shelter, is also our *strong* rock when we stand firm and defy the foe; he is to be praised under both characters. Observe how the psalmist brands his own initials upon every name which he rejoicingly gives to his God—*my* expectation, *my* rock, *my* salvation, *my* glory, *my* strength, *my* refuge; he is not content to know that the Lord is all these things; he acts faith towards him, and lays claim to him under every character. What are the mines of Peru or Golconda to me if I have no inheritance in them? It is the word *my* which puts the honey into the comb. If our experience has not yet enabled us to realise the Lord under any of these consoling titles, we must seek grace that we may yet be partakers of their sweetness. The bees in some way or other penetrate the flowers and collect their juices; it must be hard for them to enter the closed cups and mouthless bags of some of the favourites of the garden, yet the honey gatherers find or make a passage; and in this they are our instructors, for into each delightful name, character, and office of our covenant God our persevering faith must find an entrance, and from each it must draw delight.

Verse 8. *Trust in him at all times.* Faith is an abiding duty, a perpetual privilege. We should trust when we can see, as well as when we are utterly in the dark. Adversity is a fit season for faith; but prosperity is not less so. God at all times deserves our confidence. We at all times need to place our confidence in him. A day without trust in God is a day of wrath, even if it be a day of mirth. Lean ever, ye saints, on him, on whom the world leans. Ye people, pour out your heart before him. Ye to whom his love is revealed, reveal yourselves to him. His heart is set on you, lay bare your hearts to him. Turn the vessel of your soul upside down in his secret presence, and let your inmost thoughts, desires, sorrows, and sins be poured out like water. Hide nothing from him, for

you *can* hide nothing. To the Lord unburden your soul; let him be your only father confessor, for he only can absolve you when he has heard your confession. To keep our griefs to ourselves is to hoard up wretchedness. The stream will swell and rage if you dam it up: give it a clear course, and it leaps along and creates no alarm. Sympathy we need, and if we unload our hearts at Jesus' feet, we shall obtain a sympathy as practical as it is sincere, as consolatory as it is ennobling. The writer in the *Westminster Assembly's Annotations* well observes that it is the tendency of our wicked nature to bite on the bridle, and hide our grief in sullenness; but the gracious soul will overcome this propensity, and utter its sorrow before the Lord. God is a refuge for us. Whatever he may be to others, his own people have a peculiar heritage in him; *for us* he is undoubtedly a refuge: here then is the best of reasons for resorting to him whenever sorrows weigh upon our bosoms. Prayer is peculiarly the duty of those to whom the Lord has specially revealed himself as their defence. SELAH. Precious pause! Timely silence! Sheep may well lie down when such pasture is before them.

Verse 9. *Surely men of low degree are vanity.* Here the word is *only* again; men of low degree are only vanity, nothing more. They are many and enthusiastic, but they are not to be depended on; they are mobile as the waves of the sea, ready to be driven to and fro by any and every wind; they cry "Hosanna" today, and "Crucify him" tomorrow. The instability of popular applause is a proverb; as well build a house with smoke as find comfort in the adulation of the multitude. As the first son of Adam was called Abel or vanity, so here we are taught that all the sons of Adam are Abels: it were well if they were all so in character as well as in name; but alas! in this respect, too many of them are Cains. And men of high degree are a lie. That is worse. We gain little by putting our trust in the aristocracy, they are not one whit better than the democracy: nay, they are even worse, for we expect something from them, but get nothing. May we not trust the *elite*? Surely reliance may be placed in the educated, the chivalrous, the intelligent? For this reason are they a lie; because they promise so much, and in the end, when relied upon, yield nothing but disappointment. How wretched is that poor man who puts his trust in princes. The more we rely upon God, the more shall we perceive the utter hollowness of every other confidence. To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Take a true estimate of them; judge them neither by quantity nor by appearance, but by weight, and they will no longer deceive you. Calmly deliberate, quietly ponder, and your verdict will be that which inspiration here records. Vainer than vanity itself are all human confidences: the great and the mean, alike, are unworthy of our trust. A feather has some weight in the scale, vanity has none, and creature confidence has less than that: yet such is the

universal infatuation, that mankind prefer an arm of flesh to the power of the invisible but almighty Creator; and even God's own children are too apt to be bitten with this madness.

Verse 10. *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery.* Wealth ill gotten is the trust only of fools, for the deadly pest lies in it; it is full of canker, it reeks with God's curse. To tread down the poor and silence their cries for justice, is the delight of many a braggart bully, who in his arrogance imagines that he may defy both God and man; but he is warned in these words, and it will be well for him if he takes the warning, for the Judge of all the earth will surely visit upon men the oppression of the innocent, and the robbery of the poor: both of these may be effected legally in the courts of man, but no twistings of the law, no tricks and evasions will avail with the Court of Heaven. If riches increase, set not your heart upon them. If they grow in an honest, providential manner, as the result of industry or commercial success, do not make much account of the circumstance; be not unduly elated, do not fix your love upon your money bags. To bow an immortal spirit to the constant contemplation of fading possessions is extreme folly. Shall those who call the Lord their glory, glory in yellow earth? Shall the image and superscription of Caesar deprive them of communion with him who is the image of the invisible God? As we must not rest in men, so neither must we repose in money. Gain and fame are only so much foam of the sea. All the wealth and honour the whole world can afford would be too slender a thread to bear up the happiness of an immortal soul.

Verse 11. *God hath spoken once.* So immutable is God that he need not speak twice, as though he had changed; so infallible, that one utterance suffices, for he cannot err; so omnipotent, that his solitary word achieves all his designs. We speak often and say nothing; God speaks once and utters eternal verities. All our speaking may yet end in sound; but he speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. Twice have I heard this. Our meditative soul should hear the echo of God's voice again and again. What he speaks once in revelation, we should be always hearing. Creation and providence are evermore echoing the voice of God; "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." We have two ears, that we may hear attentively, and the spiritual have inner ears with which they hear indeed. He hears twice in the best sense who hears with his heart as well as his ears. That power belongeth unto God. He is the source of it, and in him it actually abides. This one voice of God we ought always to hear, so as to be preserved from putting our trust in creatures in whom there can be no power, since all power is in God. What reason for faith is here! It can never be unwise to rest upon the almighty arm. Out of all troubles he can release us,

under all burdens sustain us, while men must fail us at the last, and may deceive us even now. May our souls hear the thunder of Jehovah's voice as he claims all power, and henceforth may we wait only upon God!

Verse 12. *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.* This tender attribute sweetens the grand thought of his power: the divine strength will not crush us, but will be used for our good. God is so full of mercy that it belongs to him, as if all the mercy in the universe came from God, and still was claimed by him as his possession. His mercy, like his power, endureth for ever, and is ever present in him, ready to be revealed, For thou renderest to every man according to his work. This looks rather like justice than mercy; but if we understand it to mean that God graciously rewards the poor, imperfect works of his people, we see in it a clear display of mercy. May it not also mean that according to the work he allots us is the strength which he renders to us? he is not a hard master; he does not bid us make bricks without straw, but he metes out to us strength equal to our day. In either meaning we have power and mercy blended, and have a double reason for waiting only upon God. Man neither helps us nor rewards us; God will do both. In him power and grace are eternally resident; our faith should therefore patiently hope and quietly wait, for we shall surely see the salvation of God. *Deo soli gloria.* All glory be to God only.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Psalms 62, and 63 compared. ONLY AND EARLY. There is a sweet and profitable lesson taught us in Psalms 62 and 63. The heart is ever prone to divide its confidence between God and the creature. This will never do. We must "wait *only* upon God." "He *only*" must be our "rock," "our "salvation," "and our "defence." Then we are frequently tempted to look to an arm of flesh *first*, and when that fails us, we look to God. This will never do either. He must be our *first* as well as our *only* resource. "O God, thou art my God, *early* will I seek thee." This is the way in which the heart should ever treat the blessed God. This is the lesson of Psalm 63. When we have learnt the blessedness of seeking God "*only*," we shall be sure to seek him "*early*." Charles Mackintosh, in "*Things New and Old*," 1858.

Whole Psalm. There is in it throughout not one single word (and this is a rare occurrence), in which the prophet expresses *fear* or *dejection*; and there is also no prayer in it, although, on other occasions, when in danger, he never omits to pray... The prophet found himself remarkably well furnished in reference to that part of piety which consists in *pleroforia*, the full assurance and perfection of faith; and therefore he designed to rear a monument of this his state of mind,

for the purpose of stimulating the reader to the same attainment. *Moses Amyraut*, 1596-1664.

Whole Psalm. Athanasius says of this Psalm: "Against all attempts upon thy body, thy state, thy soul, thy fame, temptations, tribulations, machinations, defamations", say this Psalm. *John Donne*.

Verse 1. *Only.* The particle may be rendered *only*, as restrictive; or, *surely*, as affirmative. Our translators have rendered it differently in different verses of this Psalm; Ps 62:1, *truly*; in Ps 62:2,4-6, *only*; in Ps 62:9, *surely*. If we render *only*, the meaning will be here that God exclusively is the object of trust; if *surely*, that this truth, that God is his salvation, has come home to him with a more lively conviction, with a more blessed certainty than ever. The first line of the verse rendered literally is, "*Only unto God my soul is silence.*" *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 1. *Truly my soul waiteth upon God*, etc. In the use of means, for answers of prayer, for performance of promises, and for deliverance from enemies, and out of every trouble: or, *is silent*, as the Targum; not as to prayer, but as to murmuring; patiently and quietly waiting for salvation until the Lord's time come to give it; being *subject* to him, as the Septuagint, Vulgate, Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; resigned to his will, and patient under his afflicting hand: it denotes a quiet, patient waiting on the Lord, and not merely bodily exercise in outward ordinances; but an inward frame of spirit, a soul waiting on the Lord, and that in truth and reality, in opposition to mere form and show. *John Gill*.

Verse 1. *Truly my soul waiteth upon God*; or, as the Hebrew, *My soul is silent*. Indeed, waiting on God for deliverance, in an afflicted state, consists much in a holy silence. It is a great mercy, in an affliction, to have our bodily senses, so as not to lie raving, but still and quiet, much more to have the heart silent and patient; and we find the heart is as soon heated into a distemper as the head. Now what the sponge is to the cannon, when hot with often shooting, hope is to the soul in multiplied afflictions; it cools the spirit and makes it meeker it, so that it doth not break out into distempered thoughts or words against God. (See also Ps 62:5.) *William Gurnall*.

Verse 1. *Waiteth.* *Waiting* is nothing else but *hope and trust lengthened*. *John Trapp*.

Verse 1. *My soul is silent before God.* As if he had said: to me as a man God has put in subjection all his creatures; to me as a king he has subjected the

whole of Judaea, the Philistines, the Moabites, Syrians, Idumeans, Ammonites, and other tribes; having taken me from the sheep cotes he has adorned me with a crown and sceptre now these thirty years, and extended my kingdom to the sea, and to the great river Euphrates; it is not without reason, then, that I subject myself to God alone in this affliction, wherein Absalom thirsts to crush me, especially since he reveals the deliverance prepared for me, and from him alone can I expect it. *Thomas Le Blanc—1669, in Psalmorum Davidicorum Analysis.*

Verse 1. *Is silent.* The Hebrew word used is hymwd *dumijah*, that is, silent, resting, expecting, reflecting, solicitous, and observing. For, first, we ought to be subject to God as silent disciples before a master...Whatever God has allowed to happen to me, yet I will be silent before him, and from my heart admire, both enduring his strokes and receiving his teaching... Secondly, we ought to be subject to God as creatures keeping quiet before their Creator... "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker." Isa 45:9. Thirdly, we ought to be subject to God as clay in the hands of the potter, ready for the form into which he wishes to fashion us... "*As clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*" Jer 18:6. Fourthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a maid servant to her master, observing his wish, even in the most menial affairs... Fifthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a wife to her husband (*sponsa sponso*), who in her love is solicitous and careful to do whatever may be pleasing to him. "*My beloved is mine, and I am his.*" Canticles 2:16. And, "*I am my beloved's.*" Canticles 6:3. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 1. After almost every quiet prayer and holy meditation in the divine presence, we have the consciousness that there was an ear which heard us, and a heart that received our sighs. The effect of a silent colloquy with God is so soothing! There was a time when I used greatly to wonder at these words of Luther:—

"Bear and forbear, and *silent* be,
Tell no man thy misery;
Yield not in trouble to dismay,
God can deliver any day."

I wondered because we feel the outpouring of grief into the heart of a friend to be so sweet. At the same time, he who talks much of his troubles to *men* is apt to fall into a way of saying too little of them to *God*; while, on the other hand, he who has often experienced the blessed alleviation which flows from silent converse with the Eternal, loses much of his desire for the sympathy of his fellows. It appears to me now as if spreading out our distress *too largely* before men served only to make it broader, and to take away its *zest*; and hence the

proverb, "Talking of trouble makes it double." On the contrary, if when in distress we can contrive to maintain calm composure of mind, and to bear it always as in the sight of God, submissively waiting for succour from him, according to the words of the psalmist, *Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation*; in that case, the distress neither extends in breadth nor sinks in depth. It lies upon the surface of the heart like the morning mist, which the sun as it ascends dissipates into light clouds. *Agustus F. Tholuck, in "Hours of Christian Devotion," 1870.*

Verse 1. The natural mind is ever prone to *reason*, when we ought to *believe*; to be *at work*, when we ought to be *quiet*; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature... And how does it work, when we thus anticipate God, by going our own way? We bring, in many instances, guilt on our conscience; but if not, we certainly weaken faith, instead of increasing it; and each time we work thus a deliverance of our own, we find it more and more difficult to trust in God, till at last we give way entirely to our natural fallen reason, and unbelief prevails. How different if one is enabled to wait God's own time, and to look alone to him for help and deliverance! When at last help comes, after many seasons of prayer it may be, and after much exercise of faith and patience it may be, how sweet it is, and what a present recompense does the soul at once receive for trusting in God, and waiting patiently for his deliverance! Dear Christian reader, if you have never walked in this path of obedience before, do so now, and you will then know experimentally the sweetness of the joy which results from it. *George Müller, in "A Narrative of some of the Lord's Dealings," 1856.*

Verse 2. *I shall not be greatly moved.* Grace makes the heart move leisurely to all things except God. A mortified man is as a sea that hath no winds, that ebbs not and flows not. The mortified man sings and is not light, and weeps and is not sad, is zealous but he can quit it for God. Ah! few can act but they over act. *Alexander Carmichael, in "The Believer's Mortification of Sin," 1677.*

Verse 3.

"How long will ye assault a man?
How long will ye crush him,
As though he were a leaning wall—
|A fence nearly thrust down?" *French and Skinner.*

Verse 3. *Against a man.* That sure is but a poetical expression for *against me*, *i.e., David*, the speaker, against whom the neighbouring nations raised war, and his own subjects rebellions. Thus doth Christ oft speak of himself under the

title of the *Son of Man*, in the third person; and Paul (2Co 12:2), *Oisa anyrwpon*, "I knew a man, "i.e., undoubtedly himself. Henry Hammond.

Verse 3. *As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.* Christ gave no blow, but merely asked his murderers whom they sought for; and yet they fell flat and prostrate to the ground (John 18), so that the wicked persecutors of the godly are aptly and properly likened and compared to a tottering and trembling wall. For as soon as ever the blasts of God's wrath and judgment are moved and kindled against them, they are so quivering and comfortless, that they would take them to be most their friends who would soonest despatch them out of the world; as Christ said aptly of them, they would pray the mountains to fall upon them. Luke 23. *John Hooper.*

Verse 3. *As a bowing wall shall ye be.* In consequence of heavy rains and floods, and unsound foundations, it is very common to see walls much out of perpendicular; and some of them so much so, that it might be thought scarcely possible for them to stand. "Poor old Raman is very ill, I hear." "Yes, the wall is bowing." "Begone, thou low caste! thou art a *kuttle chiover*, "that is, "a ruined wall." "By the oppression of the head man, the people of that village are like a ruined wall." *J. Robert's "Oriental Illustrations."*

Verse 3. *A bowing wall.* A wall, when ill built, bulges out in the centre, presenting the appearance of nearly twice its actual breadth; but, as it is hollow within, it soon falls to ruins. The wicked, in like manner, are dilated with pride, and assume, in their consultations, a most formidable appearance; but David predicts that they would be brought to unexpected and utter destruction, like a wall badly constructed, and hollow in the interior, which falls with a sudden crash, and is broken by its own weight into a thousand pieces. *John Calvin.*

Verse 4. *They only consult, etc. Truly I am he whom if they shall consult to cast down from his excellency, they shall delight in a lie, they shall bless with their mouth and curse inwardly.* That is: what I have said of worldly men, boasting themselves upon a man, falling into ruin, I desire that you should know that the same fate shall never befall me who trust in God; for otherwise does the matter stand. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 4. *Excellency.* Rather, *elevation*; the figure of the preceding verse being followed out. *Religious Tract Society's Notes.*

Verse 5. *My soul, wait thou only upon God.* They trust not God *at all* who trust him not *alone*. He that stands with one foot on a rock, and another foot upon a quicksand, will sink and perish, as certainly as he that standeth with both feet

upon a quicksand. David knew this, and therefore calleth earnestly upon his soul (for his business lay most within doors) to trust only upon God. See Ps 62:1. *John Trapp*.

Verse 5. *My expectation is from him.* As if he had said, never will he frustrate the patient waiting of his saints; doubtless my silence shall meet with its reward; I shall restrain myself, and not make that false haste which will only retard my deliverance. *John Calvin*.

Verse 5. *My expectation is from him.* In an account of the voyage of some of the early missionaries who left Hermannsburg for South Africa, is the following incident:—After a long calm, a brother prayed thus to the Lord for favouring wind: "Lord, thou givest them that fear thee the desires of their heart, and dost help them; help us now, that we may no longer be becalmed upon the sea; help us on our journey, you who ride on the wings of the wind." He was so joyful over this word of the Lord, that he rose up and said in his heart: "Now I have already that for which I prayed." After the prayer, one of the crew stepped over to the helmsman, and said, half mocking, half in earnest, "So we shall have wind: did you hear the prayer? It does not look very like it!" So he said, and half an hour after there came so strong a blast that the waves broke over the ship. *William Fleming Stevenson, in "Praying and Working," 1862.*

Verse 5. He shifts much needless labour, and provideth great contentment, who closes himself with God alone. To deal with man alone, apart from God, is both an endless and fruitless labour. If we have counsel to ask, help or benefit to obtain, or approbation to seek, there is none end with man: for every man we must have sundry reasons and motives; and what pleaseth one will offend twenty: as many heads, as many wits and fancies. No man can give contentment to all, or change himself into so many fashions, as he shall encounter humours; and yet it is more easy to take sundry fashions than to be acceptable in them. *William Struther*.

Verses 6-7. Twice in this Psalm hath he repeated this, in the second and in the sixth verses, *He is my rock and my salvation, and my defence*, and (as it is enlarged in the seventh verse) *my refuge and my glory*. If my *defence*, what temptation shall wound me? If my *rock*, what storm shall shake me? If my *salvation*, what melancholy shall defeat me? If my *glory*, what calumny shall defame me? *John Dunne*.

Verses 6-7. How quickly the soul of the faithful returns again to the God of its confidence. He spared a moment to admonish the ungodly, but like the dove of Noah he returns to the ark. Observe how the expressions of this holy

confidence are repeated, with every pleasing variety of expression, to denote the comfort of his heart. Reader, ask yourself—are such views of Christ your views of him? Do you know him in those covenant characters? Is Jesus your rock, your salvation, your defence? *Robert Hawker, D.D.*

Verse 7. (first clause). On the shields of the Greeks, Neptune was depicted; on the shields of the Trojans, Minerva; because in them they put their confidence, and in their protection deemed themselves secure... Now, Christ is the insignia of our shields. Often does David say, God is his protector. The Hebrew is *magen*; that is, shield, buckler, as Ps 18:2,30. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 7. There are several names of God given in this verse, that so every soul may take with him that name which may minister most comfort to him. Let him that is pursued by any particular temptation, invest God, as God is *a refuge, a sanctuary*; let him that is buffeted with Satan, battered with his own concupiscence receive God, as God is his *defence* and *target*; let him that is shaken with perplexities in his understanding, or scruples in his conscience, lay hold on God, as God is his *rock* and his *anchor*; let him that hath any diffident jealousy and suspicion of the free and full mercy of God, apprehend God, as God is his *salvation*; and let him that walks in the ingloriousness and contempt of the world, contemplate God, as God is *glory*. Any of these notions is enough to any man; but God is all these, and all else, that all souls can think, to every man. *Abraham Wright.*

Verse 9. Other doctrines, moral or civil instructions, may be delivered to us possibly, and probably, and likely, and credibly, and under the like terms and modifications, but this in our text, is assuredly, undoubtedly, undeniably, irrefragably, *Surely men of low degree*, etc. For howsoever when they two are compared together with one another, it may admit discourse and disputation, whether men of high degree, or of low degree, do most violate the laws of God; that is, whether prosperity or adversity make men most obnoxious to sin; yet, when they come to be compared, not with one another, but both with God, this asseveration, this *surely* reaches to both: "*Surely men of low degree are vanity, and, as surely, men of high degree are a lie.*" And though this may seem to leave room for men of middle ranks, and fortunes, and places, that there is a mediocrity that might give an assurance, and an establishment, yet there is no such thing in this case; (*as surely still*) *to be laid in the balance, they are all* (not of low, and all of high degree, all rich, and all poor), but all, of all conditions, *altogether lighter than vanity*. Now, all this doth destroy, not extinguish, not annihilate, that affection in man, of hope and trust, and confidence in anything; but it rectifies that hope, and trust, and confidence, and directs it upon the right object. Trust not in flesh, but in spiritual things, that we

neither bend our hope downward, to infernal spirits, to seek help in witches; nor miscarry it upward, to seek it in saints or angels, but fix it in him who is nearer to us than our own souls—our blessed, and gracious, and powerful God, who in this one Psalm is presented unto us by so many names of assurance and confidence: *"my expectation, my salvation, my rock, my defence, my glory, my strength, my refuge,"* and the rest... *Men of high degree are a lie.* The Holy Ghost hath been pleased to vary the phrase here, and to call *men of high degree* not *"vanity,"* but *a lie*; because the poor, men of low degree, in their condition promise no assistance, feed not men with hope, and therefore cannot be said *to lie*; but in the condition of men of high degree, who are of power, there is a tacit promise, a natural and inherent assurance of protection and assistance flowing from them. For the magistrate cannot say that he never promised me justice, never promised me protection; for in his assuming that place, he made me that promise. I cannot say that I never promised my parish my service; for in my induction I made them that promise, and if I perform it not I am *a lie*: for so this word *chasab* (which we translate *a lie*) is frequently used in the Scriptures, for that which is defective in the duty it should perform: "Thou shalt be a spring of water" (says God in Isaiah), *cujus aquae non mentiuntur*, "whose waters never lie; "that is, never dry, never fail. So, then, when men of high degree do not perform the duties of their places, then they are a lie of their own making; and when I over magnify them in their place, flatter them, humour them, ascribe more to them, expect more from them, rely more upon them than I should, then they are a lie of my making... *To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.* Vanity is nothing, but there is a condition worse than nothing. Confidence in the things or persons of this world, but most of all a confidence in ourselves, will bring us at last to that state wherein we would fain be nothing, and cannot. But yet we have a *balance* in our text; and all these are but put together in one balance. In the other scale there is something put too, in comparison whereof all this world is so light. God does not leave our great and noble faculty and affection of hope, and trust, and confidence without something to direct itself upon, and rectify itself in. He does not: for, for that he proposes himself. The words immediately before the text are, *God is a refuge*; and, in comparison of him, *To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.* John Donne.

Verse 9. *Surely men of low degree are vanity.*

"Who over the herd would wish to reign,
 Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!
 Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
 And fickle as a changeful dream;

Fantastic as a woman's mood,
 And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood,
 Thou many headed monster thing,
 O, who would wish to be thy king!"
 —*Walter Scott (1771-1832).*

Verse 9. *Surely men of low degree are vanity*, etc. Or, *sons of Adam*; of the earthly man; of fallen Adam; one of his immediate sons was called Hebel, *vanity*; and it is true of all his sons, but here it designs only one sort of them; such as are poor and low in the world; mean men, as the phrase is rendered in Isa 2:9; these are subject to sinful vanity; their thoughts are vain, their affections vain, their minds vain, their conversation vain, sinful, foolish, fallacious, and inconstant. *John Gill.*

Verse 9. *Men... are a lie.* An active lie—they deceive others; and a passive lie—they are deceived by others; and they who are most actively a lie, are most usually and most deservedly a passive lie, or fed with lies. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9. *Lighter than vanity.* If there were any one among men immortal, not liable to sin, or change, whom it were impossible for any one to overcome, but who was strong as an angel, such a one might be something; but inasmuch as every one is a man, a sinner, mortal, weak, liable to sickness and death, exposed to pain and terror, like Pharaoh, even from the most insignificant animals, and liable to so many miseries that it is impossible to count them, the conclusion must be a valid one: "Man is nothing." *Arndt.*

Verse 10. *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery.* Now this robbery and wrong is done two manner of ways—to God and to man. He that putteth his trust for salvation in any other, save in God, loses not only his salvation, but also robs God of his glory, and does God manifest wrong, as much as lieth in him; as the wicked people amongst the Jews did, who said as long as they honoured and trusted unto the queen of heaven, all things prospered with them; but when they hearkened to the true preachers of God's word, all things came into a worse state, and they were overwhelmed with scarcity and trouble. Hosea 2; Jeremiah 44. He also that puts his trust and confidence in any learning or doctrine beside God's word, not only falls into error and loses the truth; but also, as much as lies in him, he robs God's book of his sufficient truth and verity, and ascribes it to the book of men's decrees; which is as much wrong to God and his book as may be thought or done. In which robbery, or rather sacrilege, no man should put his trust, as the prophet saith. *John Hooper.*

Verse 10. *Become not vain in robbery.* What? would he have them serious in robbery? No; the meaning is this: do not trust in a thing of nought; if you rob, oppress, deceive, or wrong others, you trust in a vain thing—in a thing that is not—in a thing that will never do you good: there will be no tack, no hold in anything got in such a manner. When you think to get riches by wrong dealing, or closely circumventing others, you *become vain in robbery.* *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10. *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.* We naturally love riches, and therefore as naturally spend many thoughts, both how to get and how to keep them. If a man have riches, or an increase in riches, it is not unlawful for him to think of them (yet we should be as sparing of our thoughts that way as may be, our thoughts and the bent of our souls should always be upon God), but that which the psalmist forbids is the settling of our hearts; as if he had said, Let not your thoughts stay or dwell here. Riches are themselves transient things, therefore they should have but our transient thoughts. *Set not your hearts upon them,* for they may quickly be unsettled. Samuel bespoke Saul in the same language about a worldly concernment, when he went out to seek his father's asses: "Set not thy mind on them." 1Sa 9:20. It is like Saul was overburdened with this thought, "What's become of, or what shall I do for, my father's asses?" "Be not solicitous about them, "saith Samuel, "greater things are towards thee." *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10. *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.* Consider what is here meant by "riches." Indeed, some may imagine that it is hardly possible to mistake the meaning of this common word. Yet, in truth, there are thousands in this mistake; and many of them quite innocently. A person of note hearing a sermon preached upon this subject several years since, between surprise and indignation, broke out aloud, "Why does he talk about riches here? There is no rich man at Whitehaven, but Sir James L——r." And it is true there was none but he that had forty thousand pounds a year, and some millions in ready money. But a man may be rich that has not a hundred a year—not even one thousand pounds in cash. Whosoever has food to eat, and raiment to put on, with something over, is rich. Whoever has the necessities and conveniences of life for himself and his family, and a little to spare for them that have not, is properly a rich man, unless he is a miser, a lover of money, one that hoards up what he can and ought to give to the poor. For if so, he is a poor man still, though he has millions in the bank; yea, he is the poorest of men; for

"The beggars but a common lot deplore;
The rich poor man's emphatically poor."

...O! who can convince a rich man that he sets his heart upon riches? For considerably above half a century I have spoken on this head, with all the plainness that was in my power. But with how little effect! I doubt whether I have in all that time convinced fifty misers of covetousness. When the lover of money was described ever so clearly, and painted in the strongest colours, who applied it to himself? To whom did God and all that knew him say, "Thou art the man?" If he speaks to any of you that are present, O do not stop your ears! Rather say, with Zacchaeus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore him fourfold." He did not mean that he had done this in time past; but that he determined to do so for the time to come. I charge thee before God, thou lover of money, to "go and do likewise.!" I have a message from God unto thee, O rich man! whether thou wilt hear or whether thou wilt forbear. Riches have increased with thee; at the peril of thy soul, "set not thine heart upon them!" Be thankful to him that gave thee such a talent, so much power of doing good. Yet dare not rejoice over them but with fear and trembling. *Cave ne inhaereas*, says pious Kempis, *ne capiaris et pereas*; "Beware thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be entangled and perish." Do not make them thy end, thy chief delight, thy happiness, thy god! See that thou expect not happiness in money, nor anything that is purchasable thereby; in gratifying either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life. *John Wesley's Sermon "On the Danger of Increasing Riches."*

Verse 10. *If riches increase*, etc. "The lust of riches," says Valerian, "stirs with its stimulus the hearts of men, as oxen perpetually plough the soil." Hugo, on Isaiah, says: "The more deeply riches are sown in the heart through love, the more deeply will they pierce through grief." *Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 10. *If riches increase bwg—literally, "sprout up" of their own accord*, as distinguished from riches acquired by "oppression" and "robbery." *A. R. Faussett*.

Verse 10. Riches have in them uncertainty and deceitfulness. Riches have never been true to those that trusted in them, but have ever proved "a lie in their right hand." Isa 44:20. Hence they are called "lying vanities," Jon 2:8; and compared to a flock of birds sitting upon a man's ground, which upon the least fright, take wing and fly away. Riches have "wings," saith Solomon; and rather than want they will "Make to themselves wings." Pr 23:5. Yea, though they have not the wings so much as of a little sparrow, wherewith to fly to you; yet will they make to themselves the large wings of a great eagle, wherewith to fly from you. Oh, how many have riches served as Absalom's mule served her master, whom she lurched, and left, in his greatest need, hanging betwixt

heaven and earth, as if rejected of both! A spark of fire may set them on flying, a thief may steal them, a wicked servant may embezzle and purloin them, a pirate or shipwreck at sea, a robber or bad debtor at land; yea, an hundred ways sets them packing. They are as the apples of Sodom, that look fair yet crumble away with the least touch—golden delusions, a mere mathematical scheme or fancy of man's brain, 1Co 7:31; the semblances and empty show of good without any reality or solid consistency; *nec vera, nec vestra*: as they are slippery upon the account of verity, so they are no less in respect of prosperity and possession, for they are winged birds, especially in this, that they fly from man to man (as the birds do from tree to tree), and always from the owner of them. This is a sore deceit and cozenage, yet your heart is more deceitful, inasmuch as it will deceive you with these deceitful riches, *a quo aliquid tale est, illud est magis tale*: they are so, because the heart is so. *Christopher Love (1618-1651), in "A Crystal Mirror, or Christian Looking glass," 1679.*

Verse 10. *Set not your heart upon them.* The word *tyv* properly is *to place*, to arrange in a fixed firm order, is specially used of the foundation stones of a building being placed fitly and firmly together... Therefore *to set the heart* upon riches is, to fix the mind closely and firmly upon them, to give it wholly up to them with all its powers; at the same time to be puffed up with confidence and arrogance, as Cl. Schultens observes. *Hermann Venema.*

Verses 10-12. Our estimate of man depends upon our estimate of God. David knows that men of low and high degree, if separated from the primal fount of every good, weigh *nothing*, and are less than nothing. Riches are nothing, especially ill gotten ones. Man is not to get proud when riches increase. But such is the course of things, that in proportion as the gifts of God are rich, men confide more in the gifts than in the rich giver. But holy David is better instructed. Once and again he has heard the divine voice in his soul, "that power belongeth unto God only." Job 33:14. This powerful God is merciful: can then any merit attach to our poor works? and yet the Lord rendereth to every pious man according to his imperfect pious work. *Agustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 12. *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.* Something more is necessary to invite us to a dependence on God than his bare *power* and ability to help us. There must be also a firm persuasion of the promptitude and readiness of his will to do what he is able; and this we have in the other attribute of his *mercy*.... "Unto thee, "unto thee *alone*, and unto none else. The most tender mercy amongst the creatures is none at all, being compared with the divine mercy. It belongeth *unto thee*, as thy prerogative and peculiar excellency. Mercy is a peculiar jewel of his crown. Or, *thine, O Lord, is mercy.* Nothing amongst the creature deserves the name of mercy but his own. Nothing

is worthy to be so called, but what is proper and peculiar to God. Or, *with thee is mercy*, as it is expressed elsewhere. Ps 130:4,7. It is *with him*; that is, it is inseparable from his nature. He is merciful in a way peculiar to himself, "the Father of mercies." 2Co 1:3. *William Wisheart.*

Verse 12. *For thou rendest rest to every man according to his work; namely—* judgment to the wicked, and mercy to the righteous; where the Syriac interpreter giveth the good note: *Est gratia Dei ut reddat homini secunda opera bona, quia merces bonorum operum est ex gratia*: It is mercy in God to set his love on them that keep his commandments. Ex 20:6. *John Trapp.*

Verse 12. *Thou renderest to every man according to his work.* Learn to admire the grace of God in rewarding your works. It is much that he accepts them; and what is it, then, that he rewards them? It is much that he doth not damn you for them, seeing they are all defiled, and have something of sin cleaving to them; and what is it, then, that he crowns them? You would admire the bounty and munificence of a man that should give you a kingdom for taking up a straw at his foot, or give you a hundred thousand pounds for paying him a penny rent you owed him: how, then, should you adore the rich grace and transcendent bounty of God in so largely recompensing such mean services, in setting a crown of glory upon your heads, as the reward of those works which you can scarcely find in your hearts to call good ones! You will even blush one day to see yourselves so much honoured for what you are ashamed of, and are conscious to yourselves that you have deserved nothing by. You will wonder then to see God recompensing you for doing what was your duty to do, and what was his work in you; giving you grace, and crowning that grace; enabling you to do things acceptable to him, and then rewarding you as having done them. *Edward Veal (1708), in "The Morning Exercises."*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1.

1. *What* he did? *Waited upon God.* Believed, was patient, was silent in resignation, was obedient.
2. To whom he did it? To his God, who is true, a sovereign, gracious, etc.
3. How he did it? With his soul, truly and only.
4. What came of it? Salvation present, personal, eternal, etc.

Verse 2. *God a rock.* David speaks of him as high and strong, and as a rock to stand upon, a rock of defence and refuge, a rock of habitation (Ps 71:3, in Hebrew), and a rock to be praised. Ps 95:1. See the Concordance for many hints. "Christ the Rock:" a Sermon on 1Co 10:4. By RALPH ROBINSON, in "*Christ All and in All.*"

Verse 2. (*first clause*). See "SPURGEON'S *Sermons*", No. 80, "*God alone the Salvation of His People.*"

Verse 2, 6. I shall not be greatly moved. I shall not be moved. Growth in faith. How it is produced, preserved, and evidenced.

Verse 4. Wherein lies a believer's excellency? Who would cast him down, and why, and how they seek to do it?

Verse 4. *They delight in lies.* Those who invent them, or spread them, or laugh at them, or readily believe them. Romanists, self righteous persons, the presumptuous, persecutors, zealous errorists, etc.

Verse 5. (*first clause*). See "SPURGEON'S *Sermons*, "No. 144, "*Waiting only upon God.*"

Verse 5. (*second clause*). Great expectations from a great God; because of great promises, great provisions, and great foretastes.

Verse 5. (*last clause*). What we expect from God, and why and when?

Verse 2, 6. I shall not be greatly moved. I shall not be moved. Growth in faith. How it is produced, preserved, and evidenced.

Verse 10. Evils usually connected with the love of riches. Idolatry, covetousness, carking, care, meanness, forgetfulness of God and spiritual truth, neglect of charity, hardness of heart, tendency to injustice, etc. Means for escaping this seductive sin.

Verse 11.

1. How God speaks. "*Once*, "plainly, powerfully, immutably, etc.

2. How we should hear. *Twice*, continually, in heart as well as ear, observantly in practice, in spirit as well as in letter.

Verses 11-12. The constant union of power and mercy in the language of Scripture.

WORKS UPON THE SIXTY-SECOND PSALM

An Exposition upon some Select Psalmes of David. Containing *great store of most excellent and comfortable doctrine and instruction for all those that (under the burden of sinne), thirst for comfort in Christ Jesus*. Written by that faithful servant of God, M. ROBERT ROLLOK, sometime pastor in the Church of Edinburgh: and translated out of Latin into English, by CHARLES LUMISDEN. Minister of the Gospel of Christ at Dudingstoun... 1600. (Contains an Exposition of Psalm 62.)

Certain Comfortable Expositions of the constant Martyr of Christ, *John Hooper, bishop of Gloucester and Worcester*... Written in the time of tribulation and imprisonment, upon the Twenty-third, Sixty-second, Seventy-third, and Seventy-seventh Psalms of the prophet David.

Psalm 63

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. *A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.* This was probably written while David was fleeing from Absalom; certainly at the time he wrote it he was king (Ps 63:11), and hard pressed by those who sought his life. David did not leave off singing because he was in the wilderness, neither did he in slovenly idleness go on repeating Psalms intended for other occasions; but he carefully made his worship suitable to his circumstances, and presented to his God a wilderness hymn when he was in the wilderness. There was no desert in his heart, though there was a desert around him. We too may expect to be cast into rough places ere we go hence. In such seasons, may the Eternal Comforter abide with us, and cause us to bless the Lord at all times, making even the solitary place to become a temple for Jehovah. The distinguishing word of this Psalm is *EARLY*. When the bed is the softest we are most tempted to rise at lazy hours; but when comfort is gone, and the couch is hard, if we rise the earlier to seek the Lord, we have much for which to thank the wilderness.

DIVISION. In Ps 63:1-8 verses the writer expresses his holy desires after God, and his confidence in him, and then in Ps 63:9-11 remaining three verses he prophesies the overthrow of all his enemies. This Psalm is peculiarly suitable for the bed of sickness, or in any constrained absence from public worship.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *O God, thou art my God;* or, O God, thou art my Mighty One. The last Psalm left the echo of *power* ringing in the ear, and it is here remembered. Strong affiance bids the fugitive poet confess his allegiance to the only living God; and firm faith enables him to claim him as his own. He has no doubts about his possession of his God; and why should other believers have any? The straightforward, clear language of this opening sentence would be far more becoming in Christians than the timorous and doubtful expressions so usual among professors. How sweet is such language! Is there any other word comparable to it for delights? *Meus Deus*. Can angels say more? Early will I seek thee. Possession breeds desire. Full assurance is no hindrance to diligence, but is the mainspring of it. How can I seek another man's God? but it is with ardent desire that I seek after him whom I know to be my own. Observe the eagerness implied in the time mentioned; he will not wait for noon or the cool eventide; he is up at cockcrowing to meet his God. Communion with God is so sweet that the chill of the morning is forgotten, and the luxury of the couch is despised. The morning is the time for dew and freshness, and the psalmist consecrates it to prayer and devout fellowship. The best of men have been betimes on their knees. The word *early* has not only the sense of early in the

morning, but that of eagerness, immediateness. He who truly longs for God longs for him now. Holy desires are among the most powerful influences that stir our inner nature; hence the next sentence,

My soul thirsteth for thee. Thirst is an insatiable longing after that which is one of the most essential supports of life; there is no reasoning with it, no forgetting it, no despising it, no overcoming it by stoical indifference. Thirst will be heard; the whole man must yield to its power; even thus is it with that divine desire which the grace of God creates in regenerate men; only God himself can satisfy the craving of a soul really aroused by the Holy Spirit. My flesh longeth for thee; by the two words *soul* and *flesh*, he denotes the whole of his being. The *flesh*, in the New Testament sense of it, never longs after the Lord, but rather it lusteth against the spirit; David only refers to that sympathy which is sometimes created in our bodily frame by vehement emotions of the soul. Our corporeal nature usually tugs in the other direction, but the spirit when ardent can compel it to throw in what power it has upon the other side. When the wilderness caused David weariness, discomfort, and thirst, his flesh cried out in unison with the desire of his soul. In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. A weary place and a weary heart make the presence of God the more desirable: if there be nothing below and nothing within to cheer, it is a thousand mercies that we may look up and find all we need. How frequently have believers traversed in their experience this *dry and thirsty land*, where spiritual joys are things forgotten! and how truly can they testify that the only true necessity of that country is the near presence of their God! The absence of outward comforts can be borne with serenity when we walk with God; and the most lavish multiplication of them avails not when he withdraws. Only after God, therefore, let us pant. Let all desires be gathered into one. Seeking first the kingdom of God—all else shall be added unto us.

Verse 2. *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* He longed not so much to see the sanctuary as to see his God; he looked through the veil of ceremonies to the invisible One. Often had his heart been gladdened by communion with God in the outward ordinances, and for this great blessing he sighs again; as well he might, for it is the weightiest of all earth's sorrows for a Christian man to lose the conscious presence of his covenant God. He remembers and mentions the two attributes which had most impressed themselves upon his mind when he had been rapt in adoration in the holy place; upon these his mind had dwelt in the preceding Psalm, and the savour of that contemplation is evidently upon his heart when in the wilderness: these he desires to behold again in the place of his banishment. It is a precious thought that the divine power and glory are not confined in their manifestation

to any places or localities; they are to be heard above the roaring of the sea, seen amid the glare of the tempest, felt in the forest and the prairie, and enjoyed wherever there is a heart that longs and thirsts to behold them. Our misery is that we thirst so little for these sublime things, and so much for the mocking trifles of time and sense. We are in very truth always in a weary land, for this is not our rest; and it is marvellous that believers do not more continuously thirst after their portion far beyond the river where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; but shall see the face of their God, and his name shall be in their foreheads. David did not thirst for water or any earthly thing, but only for spiritual manifestations. The sight of God was enough for him, but nothing short of that would content him. How great a friend is he, the very sight of whom is consolation. Oh, my soul, imitate the psalmist, and let all thy desires ascend towards the highest good; longing here to see God, and having no higher joy even for eternity.

Verse 3. *Because thy lovingkindness is better than life.* A reason for that which went before, as well as for that which follows. Life is dear, but God's love is dearer. To dwell with God is better than life at its best; life at ease, in a palace, in health, in honour, in wealth, in pleasure; yea, a thousand lives are not equal to the eternal life which abides in Jehovah's smile. In him we truly live, and move, and have our being; the withdrawal of the light of his countenance is as the shadow of death to us: hence we cannot but long after the Lord's gracious appearing. Life is to many men a doubtful good: lovingkindness is an unquestioned boon: life is but transient, mercy is everlasting: life is shared in by the lowest animals, but the lovingkindness of the Lord is the peculiar portion of the chosen. My lips shall praise thee. Openly, so that thy glory shall be made known, I will tell of thy goodness. Even when our heart is rather desiring than enjoying we should still continue to magnify the Most High, for his love is truly precious; even if we do not personally, for the time being, happen to be rejoicing in it. We ought not to make our praises of God to depend upon our own personal reception of benefits; this would be mere selfishness; even publicans and sinners have a good word for those whose hands are enriching them with gifts; it is the true believer only who will bless the Lord when he takes away his gifts or hides his face.

Verse 4. *Thus will I bless thee while I live.* As I now bless thee so will I ever do; or rather, *so* as thou shalt reveal thy lovingkindness to me, I will in return continue to extol thee. While we live we will love. If we see no cause to rejoice in our estate, we shall always have reason for rejoicing in the Lord. If none others bless God, yet his people will; his very nature, as being the infinitely good God, is a sufficient argument for our praising him as long as we exist. I

will lift up my hands in thy name. For worship the hands were uplifted, as also in joy, in thanksgiving, in labour, in confidence; in all these senses we would lift up our hands in Jehovah's name alone. No hands need hang down when God draws near in love. The name of Jesus has often made lame men leap as a hart, and it has made sad men clap their hands for joy.

Verse 5. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.* Though unable to feast on the sacrifice at thine altar, my soul shall even here be filled with spiritual joys, and shall possess a complete, a double contentment. There is in the love of God a richness, a sumptuousness, a fulness of soul filling joy, comparable to the richest food with which the body can be nourished. The Hebrews were more fond of fat than we are, and their highest idea of festive provision is embodied in the two words, *marrow and fatness*: a soul hopeful in God and full of his favour is thus represented as feeding upon the best of the best, the dainties of a royal banquet. And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. More joy, more praise. When the mouth is full of mercy, it should also be full of thanksgiving. When God gives us the marrow of his love, we must present to him the marrow of our hearts. Vocal praise should be rendered to God as well as mental adoration; others see our mercies, let them also hear our thanks.

Verse 6. *When I remember thee upon my bed.* Lying awake, the good man betook himself to meditation, and then began to sing. He had a feast in the night, and a song in the night. He turned his bedchamber into an oratory, he consecrated his pillow, his praise anticipated the place of which it is written, "There is no night there." Perhaps the wilderness helped to keep him awake, and if so, all the ages are debtors to it for this delightful hymn. If day's cares tempt us to forget God, it is well that night's quiet should lead us to remember him. We see best in the dark if we there see God best. And meditate on thee in the night watches. Keeping up sacred worship in my heart as the priests and Levites celebrated it in the sanctuary. Perhaps David had formerly united with those "who by night stand in the house of the Lord," and now as he could not be with them in person, he remembers the hours as they pass, and unites with the choristers in spirit, blessing Jehovah as they did. It may be, moreover, that the king heard the voices of the sentries as they relieved guard, and each time he returned with renewed solemnity to his meditations upon his God. Night is congenial, in its silence and darkness, to a soul which would forget the world, and rise into a higher sphere. Absorption in the most hallowed of all themes makes watches, which else would be weary, glide away all too rapidly; it causes the lonely and hard couch to yield the most delightful repose—repose more restful than even sleep itself. We read of beds of ivory, but beds of piety

are better far. Some revel in the night, but they are not a tithe so happy as those who meditate in God.

Verse 7. *Because thou hast been my help.* Meditation had refreshed his memory and recalled to him his past deliverances. It were well if we oftener read our own diaries, especially noting the hand of the Lord in helping us in suffering, want, labour, or dilemma. This is the grand use of memory, to furnish us with proofs of the Lord's faithfulness, and lead us onward to a growing confidence in him. Therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. The very shade of God is sweet to a believer. Under the eagle wings of Jehovah we hide from all fear, and we do this naturally and at once, because we have aforetime tried and proved both his love and his power. We are not only safe, but happy in God: we *rejoice* as well as repose.

Verse 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee,* or is glued to thee. We follow close at the Lord's heels, because we are one with him. Who shall divide us from his love? If we cannot walk with him with equal footsteps, we will at least follow after with all the strength he lends us, earnestly panting to reach him and abide in his fellowship. When professors follow hard after the world, they will fall into the ditch; but none are ever too eager after communion with the Lord. Thy right hand upholdeth me. Else he would not have followed the Lord with constancy, or even have longed after him. The divine power, which has so often been dwelt upon in this and the preceding Psalms, is here mentioned as the source of man's attachment to God. How strong are we when the Lord works in us by his own right hand, and how utterly helpless if he withhold his aid!

Verse 9. As David earnestly sought for God, so there were men of another order who as eagerly sought after his blood; of these he speaks: But those that seek my soul, to destroy it. At his life they aimed, at his honour, his best welfare; and this they would not merely injure but utterly ruin. The devil is a destroyer, and all his seed are greedy to do the same mischief; and as he has ruined himself by his crafty devices, so also shall they. Destroyers shall be destroyed. Those who hunt souls shall be themselves the victims. Shall go into the lower parts of the earth. Into the pits which they digged for others they shall fall themselves. The slayers shall be slain, and the grave shall cover them. The hell which they in their curse invoked for others shall shut its mouth upon them. Every blow aimed against the godly will recoil on the persecutor; he who smites a believer drives a nail in his own coffin.

Verse 10. *They shall fall by the sword.* So David's enemies did. They that take the sword shall perish with the sword; bloody men shall feel their own life gushing forth from them, when their evil day shall at last come, and they shall

be given up to feel in their own persons the horrors of death. They shall be a portion for foxes. Too mean to be fit food for the lions, the foxes shall sniff around their corpses, and the jackals shall hold carnival over their carcasses. Unburied and unhonoured they shall be meat for the dogs of war. Frequently have malicious men met with a fate so dire as to be evidently the award of retributive justice. Although the great assize is reserved for another world, yet even here, at the common sessions of providence, justice often bares her avenging sword in the eyes of all the people.

Verse 11. *But the king shall rejoice in God.* Usurpers shall fade, but he shall flourish; and his prosperity shall be publicly acknowledged as the gift of God. The Lord's anointed shall not fail to offer his joyful thanksgiving: his well established throne shall own the superior lordship of the King of kings; his rejoicing shall be alone in God. When his subjects sing, "*Io triumphe*," he will bid them chant, "*Te Deum*." Every one that sweareth by him shall glory. His faithful followers shall have occasion for triumph; they shall never need to blush for the oath of their allegiance. Or, "swearing by *him*," may signify adherence to *God*, and worship paid to him. The heathen swore by their gods, and the Israelite called Jehovah to witness to his asseveration; those, therefore, who owned the Lord as their God should have reason to glory when he proved himself the defender of the king's righteous cause, and the destroyer of traitors. But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. And the sooner the better. If shame will not do it, nor fear, nor reason, then let them be stopped with the sexton's shovelful of earth; for a liar is a human devil, he is the curse of men, and accursed of God, who has comprehensively said, "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." See the difference between the mouth that praises God, and the mouth that forges lies: the first shall never be stopped, but shall sing on for ever; the second shall be made speechless at the bar of God. O Lord, we seek thee and thy truth; deliver us from all malice and slander, and reveal to us thine own self, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. *When he was in the wilderness of Judah.* Even in Canaan, though a fruitful land, and the people numerous, yet there were wildernesses... It will be so in the world, in the church, but not in heaven... All the straits and difficulties of a wilderness must not put us out of tune for sacred songs; but even then it is our duty and interest to keep up a cheerful communion with God. There are Psalms proper for a wilderness; and we have reason to thank God it is the wilderness of Judah we are in, not the wilderness of Sin. *Matthew Henry*.

Title. *The Wilderness of Judah* is the whole wilderness towards the east of the tribe of Judah, bounded on the north by the tribe of Benjamin, stretching southward to the south west end of the Dead Sea; westward, to the Dead Sea and the Jordan; and eastward to the mountains of Judah. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Title. *The term wilderness* rkd̄m, as distinguished from h̄dre, (a *steppe*) was given to a district which was not regularly cultivated and inhabited, but used for pasturage (from rbd̄, to *drive*), being generally without wood and defective in water, but not entirely destitute of vegetation. *J. P. Lange.*

Title. Hagar saw God in the wilderness, and called a well by the name derived from that vision, *Beerlahairoi*. Ge 16:13-14. Moses saw God in the wilderness. Ex 3:1-4. Elijah saw God in the wilderness. 1Ki 19:4-18. David saw God in the wilderness. The Christian church will see God in the wilderness. Re 12:6-14. Every devout soul which has loved to see God in his house will be refreshed by visions of God in the wilderness of solitude, sorrow, sickness, and death. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Whole Psalm. This is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and touching Psalms in the whole Psalter. Donne says of it: "As the whole Book of Psalms is, *oleum offusun* (as the spouse speaks of the name of Christ), an ointment poured out upon all sort of sores, a cerecloth that supplies all bruises, a balm that searches all wounds; so are there some certain Psalms that are imperial Psalms, that command over all affections and spread themselves over all occasions—catholic, universal Psalms, that apply themselves to all necessities. This is one of these; for of those constitutions which are called apostolical, one is that the church should meet every day to sing this Psalm. And, accordingly, St. Chrysostom testifies, 'That it was decreed and ordained by the primitive Fathers, that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm.'" *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is aptly described by Clauss as "A precious confession of a soul thirsting after God and his grace, and finding itself quickened through inward communion with him, and which knows how to commit its outward lot also into his hand." Its lesson is, that the consciousness of communion with God in trouble is the sure pledge of deliverance. This is the peculiar fountain of consolation which is opened up to the sufferer in the Psalm. The Berleb Bible describes it as a Psalm "which proceeds from a spirit really in earnest. It was the favourite Psalm of M. Schade, the famous preacher in Berlin, which he daily prayed with such earnestness and appropriation to himself, that it was impossible to hear it without emotion." *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 1. *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee* (or, I will diligently seek thee, as merchants precious stones that are of greatest value): *my soul thirsteth for thee*. He doth not say my soul thirsteth for water, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*; nor he doth say my soul thirsteth for the blood of my enemies, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*; nor he doth not say my soul thirsteth for deliverance out of this dry and thirsty land, where no water is; nor he doth not say my soul thirsteth for a crown, a kingdom, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*, my flesh longeth for *thee*. These words are a notable metaphor, taken from women with child, to note his earnest, ardent, and strong affections towards God.
Thomas Brooks.

Verse 1. *O God.* This is a serious word; pity it should ever be used as a byword. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 1. *My God* in Hebrew is the same word with which the Lord cried out upon the cross to the Father about the ninth hour: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" For in Hebrew, this Psalm begins *Elohim, Eli*. Now, *Elohim* is plural, and *Eli* is singular, to express the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of the Unity, the distinct subsistence of the (three) hypostases, and their consubstantiality. *Psalterium Quin. Fabri stapulensis*, 1513.

Verse 1. (*first clause*). In David we have a notable example of a sensitive, tender, self analysing soul, living in sustained communion with God, while deeply sensible of the claims of the civil and religious polity of Israel, and, moreover, while externally devoted to a large round of exacting public duties. And in this Psalm public misfortunes do but force him back upon the central strength of the life of his spirit. For the time his crown, his palace, his honours, the hearts of his people, the love of his child, whom he loved, as we know, with such passing tenderness, are forfeited. The psalmist is alone with God. In his hour of desolation he looks up from the desert to heaven. *O God*, he cried, *thou art my God*. In the original language he does not repeat the word which is translated *God*. In *Elohim*, the true idea of the root is that of awe, while the adjectival form implies permanency. In *Eli*, the second word employed, the etymological idea is that of might, strength. We might paraphrase, "O thou Ever awful One, my Strength, or my Strong God art thou." But the second word, *Eli*, is in itself nothing less than a separate revelation of an entire aspect of the Being of God. It is, indeed, used as a proper and distinct name of God. The pronomial suffixes for the second and third persons are, as Gesenius has remarked, never once found with this name *El*; whereas *Eli*, the first person, occurs very frequently in the Psalter alone. We all of us remember it in the words actually uttered by our Lord upon the cross, and which he took from their Syriacised version of Psalm 22. The word unveils a truth unknown beyond

the precincts of revelation. It teaches us that the Almighty and Eternal gives himself in the fulness of his Being to the soul that seeks him. Heathenism, indeed, in its cultus of domestic and local deities, of its penates, of its *Oeoi epicwrioi*, bore witness by these superstitions to the deep yearning of the human heart for the individualizing love of a higher power. To know the true God was to know that such a craving was satisfied. *My God*. The word represents not a human impression, or desire, or conceit, but an aspect, a truth, a necessity of the divine nature. Man can, indeed, give himself by halves; he can bestow a little of his thought, of his heart, of his endeavour, upon his brother man. In other words, man can be imperfect in his acts as he is imperfect and finite in his nature. But when God, the Perfect Being, loves the creature of his hand, he cannot thus divide his love. He must perforce love with the whole directness, and strength, and intensity of his Being; for he is God, and therefore incapable of partial and imperfect action. He must give himself to the single soul with as absolute a completeness as if there were no other being besides it, and, on his side, man knows that this gift of himself by God is thus entire; and in no narrow spirit of ambitious egotism, but as grasping and representing the literal fact, he cries, "*My God*." Therefore does this word enter so largely into the composition of Hebrew names. Men loved to dwell upon that wondrous relation of the Creator to their personal life which is so strikingly manifested. Therefore, when God had "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," we find St. Paul writing to the Galatians as if his own single soul had been redeemed by the sacrifice of Calvary: "He loved me, and gave himself for me." *Henry Parry Liddon, in "Some Words for God: being Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, 1863-1865."*

Verse 1. (*first clause*). There is a great deal more in it than men of the world are aware of; to say, *O God, thou art my God*, in this connection and conjunction: there is more in it in regard of excellency, and there is more in it in regard of difficulty likewise. It is not an unfruitful thing to say it, and it is not an easy thing to say it neither. It confers a great deal of benefit, and requires a great deal of grace, which belongs unto it, in the truth and reality of it. The benefit of it, first, is very great; yea, in effect all things else. To say God is ours, is to say the whole world is ours, and a great deal more; it is to give us title to everything which may be requisite or convenient for us. Whatever we can desire or stand in need of, it is all wrapped up in this, *Thou art my God*. But then, again, it is a matter of difficulty (as those things which are excellent are). It is a thing which is not so easily said as the world imagines it and thinks it to be. Indeed, it is easy to the mouth, but it is not easy to the heart. It is easy to have a fancy to say it, but it is not to have a faith to say it: this carries some

kind of hardship with it, and is not presently attained unto; but the mind of man withdraws from it. There are two states and conditions in which it is very difficult to say, *O God, thou art my God*: the one is the state of nature and unregeneracy; and the other is the state of desertion, and the hiding of God's face from the soul. *Thomas Horton (1673)*.

Verse 1. (*second clause*). The relations of God to his people are not bare and empty titles, but they carry some activity with them, both from him towards them, and from them also answerably towards him. Those whom God is a God to, he bestows special favours upon them; and those to whom God is a God, they return special services to him. And so we shall find it to be all along in Scripture, as this David in another place: "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my Lord, I will exalt thee." Ps 118:28. And so here: *Thou art my God; early will I seek thee*. While the servants of God have claimed any interest in him, they have also exhibited duty to him. The text is an expression not only of faith, but likewise of obedience, and so to be looked upon by us. *Thomas Horton*.

Verse 1. *Early; in the morning*, before all things, God is to be sought, otherwise he is sought in vain: as the manna, unless collected at early dawn, dissolves. *Simon de Muis*.

Verse 1. *My soul thirsteth for thee*. Oh that Christ would come near, and stand still, and give me leave to look upon him! for to look seemeth the poor man's privilege, since he may, for nothing and without hire, behold the sun. I should have a king's life, if I had no other thing to do than for evermore to behold and eye my fair Lord Jesus: nay, suppose I were holden out at heaven's fair entry, I should be happy for evermore, to look through a hole in the door, and see my dearest and fairest Lord's face. O great King! why standest thou aloof? Why remainest thou beyond the mountains? O Well beloved, why dost thou pain a poor soul with delays? A long time out of thy glorious presence is two deaths and two hells to me. We must meet. I must see him, I drow (Am not able to do without him.) not want him. Hunger and longing for Christ hath brought on such a necessity of enjoying Christ that I will not, I drow not want him; for I cannot master nor command Christ's love. *Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)*.

Verse 1. *My flesh*, that is, my bodily sensitive appetite, which thirsts, ardently longs for consolation, which it receives from the abounding of spiritual consolation to the soul. This meaning greatly pleases me. God giveth the upper and the nether springs. Rebekah, after drawing water in her pitcher, for Eliezer, Abraham's servant, added, *"I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking,"* Ge 24:19. Jacob dug a well near to Sychar, which was

afterwards called Samaria, and as the woman of Samaria said, "*drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle,*" Joh 4:12. When Moses with the rod smote the rock twice, "*the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also,*" Nu 20:11. So God satisfies with this consolation both our higher and lower nature. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 1. *My flesh longeth for thee.* The verb hmk is used only in this place, and therefore signification of it is rather uncertain, but it will receive light from the Arabic dialect. In Golius's Lexicon it signifies *caligavit oculus, alteratus colore, et mente debilitatus fuit.* His eye grew dim, his colour was changed, and his mind was weakened; and therefore, as used by the psalmist, implies the utmost intenseness of fervency of desire, as though it almost impaired his sight, altered the very hue of his body, and even injured his understanding; effects sometimes of eager and unsatisfied desires. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 1. *In a dry.* Here we must read uyrak (Keeretz), instead of nyrak (Beeretz), for it is, *like this*, and not, *in this* (which has no force), even like this dry, wearied, and waterless region; so am I for seeing thee in the sanctuary, for beholding thy power and thy glory. *Benjamin Weiss, in a "New Translation of the Book of the Psalms, with Critical Notes," etc. 1858.* Weiss appears to have the authority of several MSS for this, but he seldom errs in the direction of too little dogmatism. *C. H. S.*

Verses 1-2. O God, thou art my God. He embraces him at first word, as we used to do friends at first meeting. *Early will I seek thee,* says he: *my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh* (that is, myself) *longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.* Surely, David had some extraordinary business now with God to be done for himself, as it follows (Ps 63:2): *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary;* where God had met him, and manifested himself to him... The very sight of a friend rejoiceth a man (Pr 27:17): "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the face of his friend." It alone whets up joy by a sympathy of spirits; and in answer hereunto it is characteristically to God's people called the seeking of God's face, that is, himself, for so his face is taken: "Thou shalt have no other gods before my face; "that is, thou shalt have myself, or none but myself. Personal communion with God is the end of our graces; for as reason and the intercourse of it makes men sociable one with another, so the divine nature makes us sociable with God himself: and the life we live by is but an engine, a glass to bring God down to us. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verses 1-2. O God, thou art my God. *See Psalms on "Ps 63:1"* for further information.

Verse 2. *To see thy power, etc.*

1. It is, or should be, the desire of every Christian to see and enjoy more and more of the glory of God.

2. That the accomplishment of this design is to be sought by a devout and diligent attendance upon the worship of the sanctuary. How is God's character in the sanctuary manifested to believers?

(a) By the ministry of reconciliation—by the exhibition of gospel truth.

(b) Believers grow in their knowledge of the divine character in the sanctuary, by observing and feeling the application of those great doctrines to the souls of men, by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.

3. The effects that result to the believer in his history and experience, from an increasing knowledge of the power and glory of God. The effects of this knowledge are great and manifold.

(a) The believer, by fresh displays of the divine glory, is disenchanted from the fascination of the world.

(b) Another effect of an increasing acquaintance with God, and of every view of the divine glory we obtain, is that the mind is disentangled from the embarrassments into which it is sometimes thrown by the aspect of providence.

(c) By seeing the divine power and glory in the sanctuary, we shall have our strength renewed to go on our Christian course afresh.

4. A view of the divine glory crucifies our lusts, and puts the corruptions of our heart to death.

5. Fresh views of the divine power and glory nourish our humility.

6. These views of the divine glory in the sanctuary arm us for our conflict with the last enemy.

Concluding remarks:

1. That it is a characteristic of every good man, that he is devoutly attached to the solemnities of public worship.

2. That his object in going to the sanctuary is definite and distinct. *John Angell James.*

Verse 2. *So as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* To converse with ordinances, and not to converse with God; to have to do with ordinances, and not to have to do with God, alas! they are but dry breasts, and a miscarrying womb that will never bring forth the fruits of holiness. Ordinances without God are but like bones that have no marrow in them; they are but like shells without a kernel. Your hearing will be in vain; and your praying will be in vain; there will be no spirit moving, no voice answering, no heart warnings, no soul refreshing, no God meetings. *William Strong (1654), in the "Saints' Communion."*

Verse 2. God's glory is in the firmament, in all the creatures, but more especially and fully in the church. Ps 29:9, "In his temple doth every one speak of his glory; "there it is most visible, affecting, and provoking of every one to speak. In the world few take notice of it, but in the temple every one sees it, and speaks of it. The world is God opened, and so glorious; the church is Christ opened, and so very glorious. This made David long to be in the sanctuary when he was in the wilderness; and why so? *To see thy power and thy glory.* Could not David see them in the heavens, in the mountains, in the goodly cedars, and other works of God? Yes, but not as in the sanctuary; and therefore he saith, *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary;* there I have seen thee otherwise than ever elsewhere; there he saw the king upon his throne and in his glory. *William Greenhill.*

Verse 3. *Thy lovingkindness is better than life;* or, *better than lives,* as the Hebrew hath it (chaiim). Divine favour is better than life; it is better than life with all its revenues, with all its appurtenances, as honours, riches, pleasures, applause, etc.; yea, it is better than many lives put together. Now you know at what a high rate men value their lives; they will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yea, with a limb, yea, limbs, to preserve their lives. As he cried out, "Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life." Now, though life be so dear and precious to a man, yet a deserted soul prizes the returnings of divine favour upon him above life, yea, above many lives. Many men have been weary of their lives, as is evident in Scripture and history; but no man was ever yet found that was weary of the love and favour of God. No man sets so high a price upon the sun as he that hath long lain in a dark dungeon, etc. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 3. *Thy lovingkindness is better than life.* The love of life is a very frequent and pernicious snare, which a sense of God's love must deliver us from being entangled by. What so desirable as life, if a man have no place in

the heart of God? This is the greatest temporal blessing, and nothing can outdo it, but the favour of the God of our life; and this excels indeed. What comparison is there between the breath in our nostrils, and the favour of an eternal God? any more than there is between an everlasting light and a poor vanishing vapour. Compare Isa 60:19, with Jas 4:14. Who would not, therefore, hate his own life, which hangs in doubt continually before him, and of which he can have no assurance, when he knows that the living God is his certain portion? Who would not freely yield up and part with ten thousand such lives, one after another (if he had so many), rather than the wrath of God should be kindled but a little. *Timothy Cruso (1657-1697)*.

Verse 3. (*first clause*). *God's mercy is better than lives*. What lives? Those which for themselves men have chosen. One hath chosen for himself a life of business, another a country life, another a life of usury, another a military life; one this, another that. Divers are the lives, but *better is thy life than our lives*. Better is that which thou givest to men amended, than that which perverse men choose? One life thou givest, which should be preferred to all our lives, whatsoever in the world we might have chosen. *Augustine*.

Verse 3. *Life is an impure good*. It is a good which is implicated and involved with abundance of evils. There are many crosses, and troubles, and calamities, which the life of man is subject unto; which, though it have some comfort in it, yet that comfort is much troubled and mixed yea, but now the favour of God it is good, and nothing but good. As it is said of his blessing, it adds no sorrow with it, nor has it any inconvenience in it, nor has it any evil attendant upon it. *Thomas Horton*.

Verse 3. *My lips shall praise thee*. Is it possible that any man should love another and not commend him, nor speak of him? If thou hast but a hawk or a hound that thou lovest, thou wilt commend it; and can it stand with love to Christ, yet seldom or never to speak of him nor of his love, never to commend him unto others, that they may fall in love with him also? You shall see the Spouse (Canticles 5:9, 16) when she was asked, *what her beloved was above others?* she sets him out in every part of him, and concludes with this: "*he is altogether lovely:*" *because thy lovingkindness (saith David) is better than life, my lips shall praise thee, and I will bless thee while I live*. Can it stand with this life of love, to be always speaking about worldly affairs, or news at the best; both weekday and Sabbath day, in bed and at board, in good company and in bad, at home and abroad? I tell you, it will be one main reason why you desire to live, that you may make the Lord Jesus known to your children, friends, acquaintance, that so in the ages to come his name might ring, and his memorial might be of sweet odour, from generation to generation. Ps 71:18. If before thy

conversion, especially, thou hast poisoned others by thy vain and corrupt speeches, after thy conversion thou wilt seek to season the hearts of others by a gracious, sweet, and wise communication of savoury and blessed speeches; what the Lord hath taught thee thou wilt talk of it unto others, for the sake of him whom thou lovest. *Thomas Sheppard (1605-1649), in "The Sound Believer."*

Verses 3-6. David exalts *lovingkindness* as a queen above all other, even the most precious, blessings bestowed upon him, *because thy lovingkindness is better than (above) life*. Around her throne he places seven members of his body and faculties of his mind, as the seven chief angels... who stand before the Lord, that they may praise and admire her; these are his lips, his tongue, his hands, his will, his mouth, his memory, and his intellect. For first, he extols the lovingkindness of God with his lips (Ps 63:3): *My lips shall praise thee*. Secondly, with his tongue (Ps 63:4): *Thus will I bless thee while I live*. Thirdly, with his hands: *I will lift up my hands in thy name*. Fourthly, with his will (Ps 63:5): *MY soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness*. Fifthly, with his mouth: *And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips*. Sixthly, with his memory (Ps 63:6): *When I remember thee upon my bed*. Seventhly, and lastly, with his intellect: *And meditate on thee in the night watches*. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 6. *When I remember thee upon my bed, (and) meditate on thee in the night watches*. Thus the English version connects this verse with Ps 63:5. But the division of the strophes renders the following translation preferable, which, moreover, obviates the need of supplying "and:" *Whenever I remember thee upon my bed, I meditate on thee in the night watches*. The remembrance of thee on my bed so engrosses me, that I cannot draw my mind off the thought, so as to fall into the obliviousness of sleep; I often meditate on thee through the whole night watches. So Ps 119:55, 148 1:2. The Hebrew is *beds*; probably alluding to the fact that in his unsettled life in exile, he seldom slept for many nights in the same bed, but through fear of adversaries slept in different places. There were three night watches: *the first* (La 2:19); *the middle* (Jud 7:19); *the third*, or *morning watch* (Ex 19:24 1Sa 2:11). In the New Testament, the Roman usage of four prevails. *A. R. Faussett*.

Verse 6. *Remember—and meditate*. The *meditation* of anything hath more sweetness in it than bare remembrance. The memory is the chest to lay up a truth, but meditation is the palate to feed upon it. The memory is like the ark in which the manna was laid up; meditation is like Israel's eating of the manna. When David began to meditate upon God, it *was sweet* to him as marrow. There is as much difference between a truth remembered and a truth meditated,

as between a cordial in the glass and a cordial drunk down. *John Wells (1668), in "Sabbath Holiness."*

Verse 6. *Upon my bed.* The *bed* may be looked upon as a place for the remembrance of God in it, according to a threefold notion.

1. As *a place of choice*. In the bed, of choice, rather than anywhere else, where I am left to my liberty. David when he had a mind to remember God, he would make choice of his bed for it, as most suitable and agreeable to it. In case of excessive weariness contracted to the body from some occasion (this is often put accidentally in Scripture), "To commune with our hearts upon our bed, "etc., the occasion of it here; it may fall out that the bed may be the fittest place for such a duty as this. Ps 4:4.

2. As it is *a place of necessity*. In my bed at least, when I cannot anywhere else, as having restraints upon me. David, when (as now it was with him) he was detained from the public ordinances, whether by sickness, or any other impediment which he could not withstand, yet he would not now wholly forget God; he would remember him even in his bed. This is another notion in which we may take it.

3. As *a place of indifference*; that is, there as well as anywhere besides. I will not only remember thee when I am up, when I shall make it my business to remember thee, but even in my bed too. I will take an occasion and opportunity to remember thee there. By commending myself to thee, when I lie down to rest, and acknowledging and owning of thee when I first awake. *Thomas Horton.*

Verse 6. There were *night watches* kept in the tabernacle, for praising God (Ps 134:1), which it is probable David, when he had liberty, joined with the Levites in: but now he could not keep place with them, he kept time with them, and wished himself among them. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.* This is the language of a good man in his worst frames; for when he has lost his nearness to God, he will be uneasy till he has again obtained it, and will follow after it with all his might. It is also his language in his best frames; for when he knows and enjoys most of God, he wants to know and enjoy more. But it may especially be considered as the language of an afflicted and seeking soul, not sinking under its burden, but earnestly breathing after deliverance, and supported by the prospect of obtaining it. Hence it follows, *Thy right hand upholdeth me...*

I shall consider what is implied in the soul's following hard after God, and then enquire the reason of it.

1. Following hard after God supposes,

(a) A previous acquaintance with him. An unknown good, be it ever so desirable in itself, cannot be the object of desire. Hence, when God shines into the heart, it is to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as the foundation of all gracious exercises, and especially as the source of all fervent desires after him.

(b) Following hard after God is expressive of ardent and intense desires. It does not consist in cold and languid wishes, but insatiable longings after communion with God and conformity to his will.

(c) It implies laborious exertion. My soul followeth, it followeth *hard after thee*. Not earth nor heaven merely is the object of pursuit, but God himself. And the desires of a truly renewed soul are not sluggish and ineffectual; they lead him to the use of all appointed means, and to the exertion of his utmost endeavours till the object be attained.

(d) Perseverance in seeking. *To follow* implies this, and to follow *hard* implies it more strongly. It is as if the psalmist had said, "Does God retire? I will pursue. Does he withhold the blessing? I will wrestle with him till I obtain it. He long waited to be gracious, and I will now wait till he is so."

2. We are to enquire the reason why David thus followed hard after God.

(a) Guilt and distress followed hard after him.

(b) His enemies also followed hard after him. Satan did so, and once and again caused him to stumble and fall.

(c) He had followed hard after other things to no purpose.

(d) We may add the powerful attractions of divine grace. *Condensed from Benjamin Beddome's Sermon, "The Christian's Pursuit, " in "Short Discourses," 1809.*

Verse 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.* kyrha hqbd The primary sense of qbd is *agglutinavit*, to glue together; from thence it signifies figuratively to *associate*, to adhere to, to be united with; and particularly to be firmly united

with strong affection. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, wyvak qbdw, and cleave to his wife; "properly, be closely united and compacted with his wife, with the most permanent affection. Ge 2:24. The psalmist, therefore, means that his soul adhered to God with the warmest affection, and longed to offer up his sacrifice of praise in his sanctuary. *Samuel Chandler*.

Verse 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.* tqkd, *adhaesit, adherescit anima mea post te*: My soul cleaves after thee, as do things which hang by another; the root is of so great frequency in Scripture, as of enquiry amongst critics; it imports here the posture of David's spirit, and speaketh it close to God; and so depending upon him, as nothing could loosen it from him: Satan's subtlety, Saul's cruelty, his own personal loss and indemnity, are not all of them of any force or dexterity, to cut asunder or untie the Gordian knot of this unity. The cleaving of David's spirit was a gluing of the Lord's spirit: a marriage of the Lord's making is altogether incapable of the devil's breaking. It is no wonder David's words report him so much devoted to God, seeing with the same breath they speak him supported by God; *Thy right hand upholdeth me*, saith he. *Alexander Pringle, in "A Stay in Trouble; or the Saint's Rest in the Evil Day," 1657.*

Verse 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.* The original is kyrxa yvkg *My soul cleaves after thee*. As if he had said, Go, lead on, my God! Behold, I follow as near, as close, as I can; *e vestigio*; I would not leave any distance, but pursue thy footsteps, step by step, leaning upon thine everlasting arms, that are underneath me, and following thy manuduction. *John Gibbon, in "The Morning Exercises," 1661.*

Verse 8. The *soul's* following, and following *hard* after God—what means this? Surely it intends much more than a languid, inert inclination; or "the desire of the slothful which killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour." It evinces an intenseness of concern that quickens and rouses the man into life and earnestness; that draws his very soul along with it; that reconciles him to every needful exertion and sacrifice, however trying; and urges him to persevere, whatever difficulties or discouragements he meets with in his course. And sometimes the distance is long, and the progress up hill, and the road rough, and the weather unfriendly, and enemies would thrust us back; and sometimes we lose sight of him, and ask those we meet: "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" and when we spy him again, he seems to advance as we advance, and when we gain upon him and get nearer, he seems to look back and frown, and tell us to retire. The exercises and feelings of Christians in the divine life will enable them to explain these allusions. Who among them all has

not, like the Jews, been sometimes "discouraged because of the way?" Who has not resembled Barak's adherents—"Faith, yet pursuing?" Who has not frequently said, *My soul followeth hard after thee?* William Jay.

Verses 9-10. If the psalmist's divine longing was unquenched, so also was his faith; and in the latter part of the psalm he foretells with full assurance the final overthrow of his enemies. Nor did his denunciations fail to meet with a certain accuracy of fulfilment even in the battle by which his own deliverance was effected. The armies encountered in the wood of Ephraim, across the Jordan; there was "a greater slaughter that day of twenty thousand men; ""and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured." That David's words concerning the *lower parts of the earth*, and the *sword*, and the *foxes*, had not been idly spoken: the pitfalls of the forest, and the swords of the royal pursuers, and the wild beasts that had there made their lairs, all effectually did their work; and the fate of the rebel army was shared by their leader, who, caught in the thick boughs of the oak, pierced through the heart by Joab, and cut down by his attendants, received no further funeral honours than to be cast "into a great pit in the wood, "and have "a very great heap of stones" laid upon him to cover him. Joseph Francis Thrupp, in *"An Introduction to the Study and Use of the Psalms,"* 1860.

Verse 10. *They shall fall.* The word is ordinarily applied to *water*. 2Sa 14:14 La 3:49. But here, by the immediate mention of the *sword*, it is restrained to the *effusion of blood*, and being in the third person plural, in the active sense, it is after the Hebrew idiom to be interpreted in the passive sense, *they shall pour out by the hand of the sword*, i.e., *they shall be poured out by the sword*, the *hand of the sword* being no more than the edge of the sword. Henry Hammond.

Verse 10. *They shall be a portion for foxes.* Beasts were given to men for their food, but here men are given to beasts for a prey. A lamentable spectacle to see the vilest of all creatures ravenously feast themselves with the flesh of the noblest, and irrespectively hale and tear in pieces the caskets which whilome enclosed the richest jewel in the world. Is it not against the law of nature that men should become beasts' meat; yea, the meat of such beasts as are carrion, and not man's meat? Questionless it is, yet nature giveth her consent to this kind of punishment of unnatural crimes. For it is consonant to reason, that the law of nature should be broken in their punishment who brake it in their sin; that they who devoured men like beasts should be devoured of beasts like men, that they who with their hands offered unnatural violence to their sovereign should suffer the like by the claws and teeth of wild beasts, their slaves; that they who bear a fox in their breast in their life, should be entombed in the belly of a fox at their death. St. Austin, expounding this whole prophecy of Christ,

yieldeth a special reason of this judgment of God by which the Jews were condemned to foxes. The Jews, saith he, therefore killed Christ that they might not lose their country; but, indeed, they therefore lost their country because they killed Christ; because they refused the Lamb, and chose Herod the fox before him, therefore by the just retribution of the Almighty, they were allotted to the foxes for their portion. Notwithstanding this allusion of St. Austin to foxes in special, Jansenius and other expositors extend this grant in my text to all wild beasts and fowls, which are, as it were, impatient with the fox, and have full power and liberty given them to seize upon the corpses of traitors to God and their country; but foxes bear the name because they abound in those parts where was such store of them, that Samson in a short time, with a wet finger, caught three hundred. *Daniel Featley, D.D., in "Clavis Mystica," 1636.*

Verse 10. *They shall be a portion for foxes.* If the body of a human being were to be left on the ground, the *jackals* would certainly leave but little traces of it; and in the olden times of warfare, they must have held high revelry in the battle fields after the armies had retired. It is to this propensity of the *jackal* that David refers—himself a man of war, who had fought on many a battle field, and must have seen the carcasses of the slain mangled by those nocturnal prowlers. *J. G. Wood.*

Verse 10. What a doom is that which David pronounces upon those who seek the soul of the righteous to destroy it: *They shall be a portion for foxes;* by which *jackals* are meant, as I suppose. These sinister, guilty, woebegone brutes, when pressed with hunger, gather in gangs among the graves, and yell in rage, and fight like fiends over their midnight orgies; but on the battle field is their great carnival. Oh! let me never even dream that any one dear to me has *fallen by the sword*, and lies there to be torn, and gnawed at, and dragged about by these hideous howlers. *W. M. Thomson, D.D., in "The Land and the Book," 1861.*

Verse 11. *Every one that sweareth by him, i.e., to David,* that comes into his interest, and takes an oath of allegiance to him, shall glory in his success. Or, *that swears by him, i.e., by the blessed name of God,* and not by any idol. De 6:15. And then it means all good people that make a sincere and open profession of God's name: they shall glory in God; they shall glory in David's advancement: "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me." They that heartily espouse the cause of Christ, shall glory in its victory at last. "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 1. (*first clause*). While the Atheist says, "No God, "and the heathen worship "gods many, "the true believer says, "O God, thou art my God." He is so,

1. By choice.
2. By covenant.
3. By confession.

Verse 1. (*second clause*). Seeking God *early*.

1. Early in respect of *life*.
2. Early in respect of *diligence*.
3. Early in respect of (*fervour*.)
4. Early in respect of *times* or *continuance*. *Alexander Shanks*.

Verse 1. (*second clause*). *Earnest seeking*. That which is longed for will be eagerly sought.

1. The soul is *resolute*. *I will seek*.
2. The soul is *reasonable*. *I will seek*.
3. The soul is *ready*. *Early will I*.
4. The soul is *persevering*.

Let this be the resolution of both saved and unsaved. *G. J. K.*

Verse 3.

1. *Love's resolution*. *My lips shall praise thee*.

(a) *To praise*. This is congenial to the renewed nature. It delights not in grumbling, reproaching, or scolding. Praise expresses appreciation, gratitude, happiness, affection.

(b) *To praise God*.

(c) *To praise God practically*. *My lips*. By speaking well *to* him; by speaking well *of* him; of his wisdom, justice, love, grace, etc.

(d) *To praise God continually*. *As long as I live, etc*.

2. *Love's reason*. *Because thy lovingkindness*. Love must praise God because—

(a) It owes its existence to him. "We love him because he first loved us."

(b) Because it is fostered by him. "The love of God is shed abroad, "etc.

(c) Because the expressions of his love demand praise. "Kindness" to needy, helpless, lost. *Lovingkindness*, not wounding our natures. *Better than life*; either the principle, pleasures, or pursuits of life. *G. J. K.*

Verse 3. *Thy lovingkindness is better than life.*

1. *Love enjoyed with life.*
2. *Love compared with life.*
3. *Love preferred to life. G. J. K.*

Verses 5-6.

1. *The empty vessel filled.* How? By meditation. With what? God's goodness as marrow and fatness. To what extent? Satisfaction.
2. *The full vessel running over. My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.* The soul overflows with praise—joyful praise. *G. J. K.*

Verses 5-6. Describe the nature of, and show the intimate connection between
1. the believer's employments and 2. his enjoyments. *J. S. Bruce.*

Verse 7. A well founded resolve.

1. Upon what based.
2. How expressed. *J. S. B.*

Verse 8.

1. *The soul's pursuit after God.* It follows, (a) In desire. (b) In action. (c) Earnestly. (d) Quickly. (e) Closely.
2. *The soul's support. Thy right hand upholdeth me,* the arm of strength. In doing and bearing. *G. J. K.*

Verse 8. "A mighty hunter before the Lord."

1. The object of pursuit: *Thee.*
2. The manner of pursuit: *Hard after.*
3. The dangers encountered. *J. S. B.*

Verse 8. (*second clause*). God's right hand upholds his people three ways.

1. As to *sin*; lest they should fall by it.
2. As to *suffering*; lest they should sink under it.
3. As to *duty*; lest they should decline from it. *W. Jay.*

Verses 9-10.

1. The enemies of the Christian. Evil spirits, evil men, evil habits, etc., etc.
2. Their intent. To destroy the soul.
3. Their fall. Certain, shameful, destructive.
4. Their future. Hell is reserved for them *G. J. K.*

Verse 11. Three topics.

1. Royal rejoicing.
2. Lawful swearing.
3. Evil speaking.

WORKS UPON THE SIXTY-THIRD PSALM

CHANDLER'S *"Life of David"* contains an Exposition of this Psalm. Vol. 1, pp. 130-4.

"An Exposition of the 63 Psalm, "in eight Sermons, in *"Choice and Practical Expositions on four Select Psalms...* By THOMAS HORTON, D.D., 1675." (Folio.)

Twelve Sermons (on Ps 63:1-8) in *"Sermons on various Practical Subjects.* By ALEXANDER SHANKS (1731-1799), late Minister of the Associate Congregation of Jedburgh, Edinburgh, 1081."

Psalm 64

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician.* The leader of the choir, for the time being, is charged with this song. It were well if the chief musicians of all our congregations estimated their duty at its due solemnity, for it is no mean thing to be called to lead the sacred song of God's people, and the responsibility is by no means light. *A Psalm of David.* His life was one of conflict, and very seldom does he finish a Psalm without mentioning his enemies; in this instance his thoughts are wholly occupied with prayer against them.

DIVISION. From Ps 64:1-6 he describes the cruelty and craftiness of his foes, and from Ps 64:7-10 he prophesies their overthrow.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer.* It often helps devotion if we are able to use the voice and speak audibly; but even mental prayer has a voice with God which he will hear. We do not read that Moses had spoken with his lips at the Red Sea, and yet the Lord said to him, "Why criest thou unto me?" Prayers which are unheard on earth may be among the best heard in heaven. It is our duty to note how constantly David turns to prayer; it is his battle axe and weapon of war; he uses it under every pressure, whether of inward sin or outward wrath, foreign invasion or domestic rebellion. We shall act wisely if we make prayer to God our first and best trusted resource in every hour of need. Preserve my life from fear of the enemy. From harm and dread of harm protect me; or it may be read as an expression of his assurance that it would be so; "from fear of the foe thou wilt preserve me." With all our sacrifices of prayer we should offer the salt of faith.

Verse 2. *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked.* From their hidden snares hide me. Circumvent their counsel; let their secrets be met by thy secret providence, their counsels of malice by thy counsels of love. From the insurrection of the workers of iniquity. When their secret counsels break forth into clamorous tumults, be thou still my preserver. When they think evil, let thy divine thoughts defeat them; and when they do evil, let thy powerful justice overthrow them: in both cases, let me be out of reach of their cruel hand, and even out of sight of their evil eye. It is a good thing to conquer malicious foes, but a better thing still to be screened from all conflict with them, by being hidden from the strife. The Lord knows how to give his people peace, and when

he wills to make quiet, he is more than a match for all disturbers, and can defeat alike their deep laid plots and their overt hostilities.

Verse 3. *Who whet their tongue like a sword.* Slander has ever been the master weapon of the good man's enemies, and great is the care of the malicious to use it effectively. As warriors grind their swords, to give them an edge which will cut deep and wound desperately, so do the unscrupulous invent falsehoods which shall be calculated to inflict pain, to stab the reputation, to kill the honour of the righteous. What is there which an evil tongue will not say? What misery will it not labour to inflict? And bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words. Far off they dart their calumnies, as archers shoot their poisoned arrows. They studiously and with force prepare their speech as bent bows, and then with cool, deliberate aim, they let fly the shaft which they have dipped in bitterness. To sting, to inflict anguish, to destroy, is their one design. Insult, sarcasm, taunting defiance, nicknaming, all these were practised among Orientals as a kind of art; and if in these Western regions, with more refined manners, we are less addicted to the use of rough abuse, it is yet to be feared that the less apparent venom of the tongue inflicts none the less poignant pain. However, in all cases, let us fly to the Lord for help. David had but the one resource of prayer against the twofold weapons of the wicked, for defence against sword or arrow he used the one defence of faith in God.

Verse 4. *That they may shoot in secret at the perfect.* They lie in ambush, with bows ready bent to aim a coward's shaft at the upright man. Sincere and upright conduct will not secure us from the assaults of slander. The devil shot at our Lord himself, and we may rest assured he has a fiery dart in reserve for us; He was absolutely perfect, we are only so in a relative sense, hence in us there is fuel for fiery darts to kindle on. Observe the meanness of malicious men; they will not accept fair combat, they shun the open field, and skulk in the bushes, lying in ambush against those who are not so acquainted with deceit as to suspect their treachery, and are too manly to imitate their despicable modes of warfare. Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not. To secrecy they add suddenness. They give their unsuspecting victim no chance of defending himself; they pounce on him like a wild beast leaping on its prey. They lay their plans so warily that they fear no detection. We have seen in daily life the arrow of calumny wounding its victim sorely; and yet we have not been able to discover the quarter from which the weapon was shot, nor to detect the hand which forged the arrowhead, or tinged it with the poison. Is it possible for justice to invent a punishment sufficiently severe to meet the case of the dastard who defiles my good name, and remains himself in concealment? An open liar is an angel compared with this demon. Vipers and cobras are harmless and

amiable creatures compared with such a reptile. The devil himself might blush at being the father of so base an offspring.

Verse 5. *They encourage themselves in an evil matter.* Good men are frequently discouraged, and not infrequently discourage one another, but the children of darkness are wise in their generation and keep their spirits up, and each one has a cheering word to say to his fellow villain. Anything by which they can strengthen each other's hands in their one common design they resort to; their hearts are thoroughly in their black work. They commune of laying snares privily. Laying their heads together they count and recount their various devices, so as to come at some new and masterly device. They know the benefit of cooperation, and are not sparing in it; they pour their experience into one common fund, they teach each other fresh methods. They say, Who shall see them? So sedulously do they mask their attacks, that they defy discovery; their pitfalls are too well hidden, and themselves too carefully concealed to be found out. So they think, but they forget the all seeing eye, and the all discovering hand, which are ever hard by them. Great plots are usually laid bare. As in the Gunpowder Plot, there is usually a breakdown somewhere or other; among the conspirators themselves truth finds an ally, or the stones of the field cry out against them. Let no Christian be in bondage through fear of deep laid Jesuitical schemes, for surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel; the toils of the net are broken, the arrows of the bow are snapped, the devices of the wicked are foiled. Therefore, fear not, ye tremblers; for the Lord is at your right hand, and ye shall not be hurt of the enemy.

Verse 6. *They search out iniquities.* Diligently they consider, invent, devise, and seek for wicked plans to wreak their malice. These are no common villains, but explorers in iniquity, inventors and concoctors of evil. Sad indeed it is that to ruin a good man the evil disposed will often show as much avidity as if they were searching after treasure. The Inquisition could display instruments of torture, revealing as much skill as the machinery of our modern exhibitions. The deep places of history, manifesting most the skill of the human mind, are those in which revenge has arranged diplomacy, and used intrigue to compass its diabolical purposes. They accomplish a diligent search. Their design is perfected, consummated, and brought into working order. They cry "Eureka; "they have sought and found the sure method of vengeance. Exquisite are the refinements of malice! hell's craft furnishes inspiration to the *artistes* who fashion deceit. Earth and the places under it are ransacked for the *material* of war, and profound skill turns all to account. Both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is *deep*. No superficial wit is theirs; but sagacity,

sharpened by practice and keen hatred. Wicked men have frequently the craft to hasten slowly, to please in order to ruin, to flatter that ere long they may devour, to bow the knee that they may ultimately crush beneath their foot. He who deals with the serpent's seed has good need of the wisdom which is from above: the generation of vipers twist and turn, wind and wiggle, yet evermore they are set upon their purpose, and go the nearest way to it when they wander round about. Alas! how dangerous is the believer's condition, and how readily may he be overcome if left to himself. This is the complaint of reason and the moan of unbelief. When faith comes in, we see that even in all this the saints are still secure, for they are all in the hands of God.

Verse 7. *But God shall shoot at them with an arrow.* They shot, and shall be shot. A greater archer than they are shall take sure aim at their hearts. One of his arrows shall be enough, for he never misses his aim. The Lord turns the tables on his adversaries, and defeats them at their own weapons. Suddenly shall they be wounded. They were looking to surprise the saint, but, lo! they are taken at unawares themselves; they desired to inflict deadly wounds, and are smitten themselves with wounds which none can heal. While they were bending their bows, the great Lord had prepared his bow already, and he let slip the shaft when least they looked for such an unsparing messenger of justice. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." The righteous need not learn the arts of self defence or of attack, their avenging is in better hands than their own.

Verse 9. *And all men shall fear.* They shall be filled with awe by the just judgments of God, as the Canaanites were by the overthrow of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. Those who might have been bold in sin shall be made to tremble and to stand in awe of the righteous Judge. And shall declare the work of God. It shall become the subject of general conversation. So strange, so pointed, so terrible shall be the Lord's overthrow of the malicious, that it shall be spoken of in all companies. They sinned secretly, but their punishment shall be wrought before the face of the sun. For they shall wisely consider of his doing. The judgments of God are frequently so clear and manifest that men cannot misread them, and if they have any thought at all, they must extract the true teaching from them. Some of the divine judgments are a great deep, but in the case of malicious persecutors the matter is plain enough, and the most illiterate can understand.

Verse 10. *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord.* Admiring his justice and fully acquiescing in its displays, they shall also rejoice at the rescue of injured innocence yet, their joy shall not be selfish or sensual, but altogether in reference to the Lord. And shall trust in him. Their observation of providence

shall increase their faith; since he who fulfils his threatenings will not forget his promises. And all the upright in heart shall glory. The victory of the oppressed shall be the victory of all upright men; the whole host of the elect shall rejoice in the triumph of virtue. While strangers fear, the children are glad in view of their Father's power and justice. That which alarms the evil, cheers the good. Lord God of mercy, grant to us to be preserved from all our enemies, and saved in thy Son with an everlasting salvation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is applied by R. Obadiah to Haman and Mordecai. The enemy is Haman, the perfect man shot at is Mordecai; about whom Haman communed with his friends to lay snares for him, and search diligently for occasions against him and his people, which issued in his own destruction. The ancient Midrash of the Jews applies it to Daniel, when cast into the den of lions; and Jarchi supposes that David, by a spirit of prophecy, foresaw it, and prayed for him who was of his seed; and that everything in the Psalm beautifully falls in with that account. Daniel is the perfect man aimed at; the enemy are the princes of Darius's court, who consulted against him, communed of laying snares for him, and gained their point, which proved their own ruin. But the Psalm literally belongs to David, by whom it was composed. *John Gill.*

Whole Psalm. A cry of God's elect, when persecuted for righteousness' sake, to their Deliverer and sure Avenger. The general principle stated is very clear. The Psalm will adjust itself, as an experimental utterance, to the lips of Christian faith wherever brought into contact with the evil forces of the prince of this world, so as to suffer affliction for the gospel's sake; for it expresses the condition and the hope of one actually imperilled for the truth. How aptly a portion of this Psalm applies to the suffering Truth Himself in the days of his affliction, when, pierced in his spirit by lying words, he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, needs not be pointed out. *Arthur Pridham, in "Notes and Reflections on the Psalms," 1869.*

Verse 1. *Preserve my life.* Hebrew, *lives*; so called for the many faculties, operations, revolutions, and commodities of life. *John Trapp.*

Verse 3. *Who whet their tongue*, etc. The verb means, says Parkhurst, "to whet, sharpen, "which is performed by *reiterated* motion of friction; and by a beautiful metaphor it is applied to a wicked tongue. It has, however, been rendered, *vibrate*, as it is certain a serpent does his tongue. *Richard Mant.*

Verse 3. The ingenuity of man has been wonderfully tasked and exercised in two things, inventing destructive weapons of war, and devising various methods of ruining men by wicked words. The list of the former is found in military writings. But the various forms of evil speaking can hardly be catalogued. Evil speakers have arrows, sharp, barbed, dipped in poison. They have "swords, flaming swords, two edged swords, drawn swords, drawn in anger, with which they cut, and wound, and kill the good name of their neighbour." Sins of the tongue are commonly very cruel. When slander is secret, as it commonly is, you cannot defend yourself from its assaults. Its canons are infernal. One of them is, "If a lie will do better than the truth, tell a lie." Another is, "Heap on reproach; some of it will stick." *William S. Plumer.*

Verses 3-4. We saw in the Museum at Venice an instrument with which one of the old Italian tyrants was accustomed to shoot poisoned needles at the objects of his wanton malignity. We thought of gossips, backbiters, and secret slanderers, and wished that their mischievous devices might come to a speedy end. Their weapons of innuendo, shrug, and whisper, appear to be as insignificant as needles: but the venom which they instil is deadly to many a reputation. *C. H. Spurgeon, in "Feathers for Arrows; or, Illustrations for Preachers and Teachers," 1870.*

Verses 3-4. David, upon sad experience, compares a wicked, reviling tongue to three fatal weapons—a *razor*, a *sword*, and an *arrow*. To a *razor*, such a one as will take off every little hair: so a reviling tongue will not only take advantage of every gross sin committed by others, but those peccadilloes, the least infirmities which others better qualified cannot so much as discern; secondly, to a *sword* that wounds: so the tongues of reproaching men cut deeply into the credits and reputations of their brethren, but a sword doth mischief only near hand, not afar off; and, therefore, it is in the third place compared to an *arrow*, that can hit at a distance: and so revilers do not ill offices to those only in the parish or town where they live, but to others far remote. How much, then, doth it concern every man to walk circumspectly; to give no just cause of reproach, not to make himself a scorn to the fools of the world; but, if they will reproach (as certainly they will), let it be for forwardness in God's ways, and not for sin, that so the reproach may fall upon their own heads, and their scandalous language into their own throats. *Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verses 3, 7-8. The most mischievous weapons of the wicked are *words, even bitter words*; but *the Word* is the chief weapon of the Holy Spirit: and as with this sword the great Captain foiled the tempter in the wilderness, so may we vanquish "the workers of iniquity" with the true Jerusalem blade. *J. L. K.*

Verse 4. *That they may shoot in secret.* The wicked are said to shoot their arrows *in secret* at the perfect; and then "they say, Who shall see them?" Ps 64:5. Thus Satan lets fly a temptation so secretly, that he is hardly suspected in the thing. Sometimes he useth a wife's tongue to do his errand; another while he gets behind the back of a husband, friend, servant, etc., and is not seen all the while he is doing his work. Who would have thought to have found a devil in Peter, tempting his Master, or suspected that Abraham should be the instrument to betray his beloved wife into the hands of a sin? yet it was so. Nay, sometimes he is so secret, that he borrows God's bow to shoot his arrows from, and the poor Christian is abused, thinking it is God chides and is angry, when it is the devil tempts him to think so, and only counterfeits God's voice. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 8. *(first clause).*

In these cases,
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: This even handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. *William Shakespeare.*

Verse 8. *Their own tongue to fall upon themselves.* That is, their own words shall be brought as a testimony against them, and condemn them. "The tongue is a little member" (Jas 3:5), and therefore a light member; yet it falls heavy, as heavy as lead. A man were better have his house fall upon him, than that, in this sense, his tongue should fall upon him. Some have been pressed to death because they would not speak, but stood mute before the judge; but more have been pressed to death by their sinful freedom, or rather licentiousness in speaking; this hath brought them to judgment, and cast them in judgment... A strange thing, that the fall of a man's tongue should oppress his body and whole estate; yet so it is, the weight of a man's tongue falling upon him crushes him to powder. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8. *Their own tongue to fall upon themselves.* The arrows of idle words, though shot out of sight, and possibly quite forgotten, will hereafter drop down upon the heads of such as drew the bow. Words are but wind, is the common saying, but they are such wind as will either blow the soul to its haven of rest, if holy, wholesome, savoury, spiritual, and tending to edification, or else sink it into the Dead Sea and bottomless gulf of eternal misery, if idle, profane, frothy, and unprofitable. *Edward Reyner (1600-1670) in "Rules for the Government of the Tongue."*

Verse 10. *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him.* That is, if they have failed in their trust heretofore, and not given God honour by confiding in him, yet these wonderful works of God (of which he speaks in the Psalm) work this hope. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10. *All the upright in heart.* The word of this text, *jashar*, signifies *rectitudinem*, and *planitiem*, it signifies a direct way; for the devil's way was circular, compassing the earth; but the angel's way to heaven upon Jacob's ladder was a straight, a direct way. And then it signifies, as a direct and straight, so a plain, a smooth, an even way, a way that hath been beaten into a path before, a way that the fathers and the church have walked in before, and not a discovery made by our curiosity, or our confidence, in venturing from ourselves, or embracing from others, new doctrines and opinions. The persons, then, whom God proposes to be partakers of his retributions, are first, *recti* (that is, both direct men, and plain men), and then *recti corde*, this qualification, this straightness and smoothness must be in the heart; all the upright in heart shall have it. Upon this earth, a man cannot possibly make one step in a straight and a direct line. The earth itself being round, every step we make upon it must necessarily be a segment, an arc of a circle. But yet, though no piece of a circle be a straight line, yet if we take any piece, nay, if we take the whole circle, there is no corner, no angle in any place, in any entire circle. A perfect rectitude we cannot have in any way in this world; in every calling there are some inevitable temptations. But, though we cannot make up one circle of a straight line (that is impossible to human frailty), yet we may pass on without angles and corners, that is, without disguises in our religion, and without the love of craft, and falsehood, and circumvention, in our civil actions. A compass is a necessary thing in a ship, and the help of that compass brings the ship home safe, and yet that compass hath some variations, it doth not look directly north; neither is that star which we call the north pole, or by which we know the north pole, the very pole itself; but we call it so, and we make our uses of it, and our conclusions by it, as if it were so, because it is the nearest star to that pole. He that comes as near uprightness as infirmities admit, is an upright man, though he love some obliquities. *John Donne.*

Verse 10. *All the upright in heart shall glory.* The Psalm began in the first person singular, *Hear my voice, O God*, but it ends by comprehending all the righteous. He who is most anxious about his own salvation will be found to be the man of the truest and widest love to others; while he who talks most of unselfishness in religion is generally the most selfish. We cannot take a more efficient method for benefiting others than by being earnestly prayerful for ourselves that we may be preserved from sin. Our example will in itself be

useful, and our godliness, by putting power into our testimony, will increase the value of every rebuke, exhortation, or encouragement we may utter. Our sin is or will be the church's sorrow, and the way to make all the upright rejoice is to be upright ourselves. *C. H. S.*

Verse 10. *Shall glory.* This retribution is expressed in the original in the word *halal*; and *halal*, to those translators that made our Book of Common Prayer, presented the signification of gladness, for so it is there: *They shall be glad*. So it did to the translators that came after, for there it is, *They shall rejoice*; and to our last translators it seemed to signify glory, *They shall glory*, say they. But the first translation of all into our language (which was long before any of these three), calls it *praise*, and puts it into the passive: *All men of rightful heart shall be praised*. And so truly *jithhalelu*, in the original, bears it, nay, requires it; which is not of praise which they shall give to God, but of a praise that they shall receive for having served God with an upright heart; not that they shall praise God in doing so, but that godly men shall praise them for having done so. All this shall grow naturally out of the root; for the root of this word is *lucere, splendere*, to shine out in the eyes of men, and to create in them a holy and a reverential admiration; as it was John Baptist's praise, that he was "*A burning and a shining lamp*." Properly it is, by a good and a holy exemplary life, to occasion others to set a right value upon holiness, and to give a due respect for holy men... *Shall glory*. It is so far from diminishing this glory, as that it exalts our consolation that God places this retribution in the future; if they do not yet, certainly they *shall* glory, and if they do now, that glory shall not go out, still they shall, they shall for ever glory. *John Donne*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1.

1. *The preservation of life desired.*

- (a) The desire expressed.
- (b) Qualified—from violent death, from fear of, etc.

2. *The preservation of life prayed for.*

- (a) For self improvement.
- (b) For usefulness.
- (c) For the divine glory. *G. R.*

Verse 2. (*first clause*). Applied to Satan.

1. *The danger considered.*

- (a) The enemy, wicked, mighty, malicious, experienced.
- (b) His counsel. He tempts cunningly, and with deliberation.
- (c) The secrecy of it. He may be exciting others against me, or sowing evil in myself.

2. *The deliverance implored. Hide me.*

- (a) Keep me from being tempted.
- (b) Keep me from evil when tempted.
- (c) Bring me out of it all unharmed.
- (d) Meanwhile, let me be in thy secret place.

3. *The consolation of faith.*

- (a) God does preserve praying ones.
- (b) Our enemy is *his* enemy.
- (c) He has preserved us.
- (d) We are his own.
- (e) His honour is involved.

Verse 3. *Bitter words.* An excellent topic in reference both to the sinner and to professed saints.

Verse 3. *The whetting of the tongue.* Fresh faults discovered, evil motives imputed, exaggerations invented, lies forged, innuendoes suggested, old slanders furnished, and ancient hatreds rekindled.

Verse 6. (*two first clauses*). The fault hunter; his motive, his character, his pretences, and his punishment.

Verse 9.

1. *The subject for consideration*—Judgments upon the wicked.

- (a) As Judgments.
- (b) As judgments from God—that work of God—his doing.

2. *The consideration of the subject.*

- (a) They are intended to be considered by others.
- (b) They are to be considered wisely.

3. *The effect of this consideration.*

- (a) Fear of God.
- (b) Praise to God; shall declare, etc. *G. R.*

Verses 9-10.

- 1. An act of God; something of his doing.
- 2. Its effect upon men in general: *All men shall fear, and shall declare*, etc.
- 3. A special duty resulting from it, incumbent on good men: *The righteous*, etc. *H. Dove.*

Verse 10.

- 1. *The persons.*
 - (a) What they are, in distinction from others; the righteous; the justified.
 - (b) What they are in themselves; upright in heart; not perfect, but sincere.
- 2. *Their privilege.*
 - (a) Amidst all their persecutions to joy in God.
 - (b) Amidst all their dangers to trust in God. *G. R.*

Psalm 65

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. This title is very similar to many we have before studied. *To the Chief Musician*. It is consigned to the care of the usual overseer of song. When a man does his work well, there is no use in calling in others for novelty's sake. *A Psalm and song of David*. The Hebrew calls it a *Shur and Mizmor*, a combination of psalm and song, which may be best described by the term, "A Lyrical Poem." In this case the Psalm may be said or sung, and be equally suitable. We have had two such Psalms before, Psalms 30 and 48, and we have now the first of a little series of four following each other. It was meant that Psalms of pleading and longing should be followed by hymns of praise.

SUBJECT AND DIVISION. David sings of the glory of God in his church, and in the fields of nature: here is the song both of grace and providence. It may be that he intended hereby to commemorate a remarkably plentiful harvest, or to compose a harvest hymn for all ages. It appears to have been written after a violent rebellion had been quelled, Ps 65:7, and foreign enemies had been subdued by signal victory, Ps 65:8. It is one of the most delightful hymns in any language. We shall view in Ps 65:1-4 the way of approach to God, then from Ps 65:5-8 we shall see the Lord in answer to prayer performing wonders for which he is praised, and then from Ps 65:9-13 we shall sing the special harvest song.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion.* Though Babylon adores Antichrist, Zion remains faithful to her King; to him, and to him only, she brings her perpetual oblation of worship. Those who have seen in Zion the blood of sprinkling, and know themselves to belong to the church of the firstborn, can never think of her without presenting humble praise to Zion's God; his mercies are too numerous and precious to be forgotten. The praises of the saints wait for a signal from the divine Lord, and when he shows his face they burst forth at once. Like a company of musicians gathered to welcome and honour a prince, who wait till he makes his appearance, so do we reserve our best praises till the Lord reveals himself in the assembly of his saints; and, indeed, till he shall descend from heaven in the day of his appearing. Praise also waits like a servant or courtier in the royal halls—gratitude is humble and obedient. Praise attends the Lord's pleasure, and continues to bless him, whether he shows tokens of present favour or no; she is not soon wearied, but all through the night she sings on in sure hope that the morning cometh. We shall continue to wait on, tuning our harps, amid the tears of earth; but O what harmonies will those be which we will pour forth, when the home bringing is come, and the King shall appear in his glory. The passage may be rendered "praise is silent for thee; "it is calm, peaceful, and ready to adore thee in

quietness. Or, it may mean, our praise is but silence compared with thy deservings, O God. Or, in solemn silence we worship thee, because our praise cannot be uttered; accept, therefore, our silence as praise. Or, we are so engrossed in thy praise, that to all other things we are dumb; we have no tongue for anything but thee. Perhaps the poet best expressed the thought of the psalmist when he said—

"A sacred reverence checks our songs,
And praise sits silent on our tongues."

Certainly, when the soul is most filled with adoring awe, she is least content with her own expressions, and feels most deeply how inadequate are all mortal songs to proclaim the divine goodness. A church, bowed in silent adoration by a profound sense of divine mercy, would certainly offer more real praise than the sweetest voices aided by pipes and strings; yet, vocal music is not to be neglected, for this sacred hymn was meant to be sung. It is well before singing to have the soul placed in a waiting attitude, and to be humbly conscious that our best praise is but silence compared with Jehovah's glory. And unto thee shall the vow be performed. Perhaps a special vow made during a season of drought and political danger. Nations and churches must be honest and prompt in redeeming their promises to the Lord, who cannot be mocked with impunity. So, too, must individuals. We are not to forget our vows, or to redeem them to be seen of men—*unto God* alone must they be performed, with a single eye to his acceptance. Believers are all under covenant, which they made at conversion, and have renewed upon being baptised, joining the church, and coming to the table, and some of them are under special pledges which they entered into under peculiar circumstances; these are to be piously and punctually fulfilled. We ought to be very deliberate in promising, and very punctilious in performing. A vow unkept will burn the conscience like a hot iron. Vows of service, of donation, of praise, or whatever the may be, are no trifles; and in the day of grateful praise they should, without fail, be fulfilled to the utmost of our power.

Verse 2. *O thou that hearest prayer.* This is thy name, thy nature, thy glory. God not only has heard, but is now hearing prayer, and always must hear prayer, since he is an immutable being and never changes in his attributes. What a delightful title for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Every right and sincere prayer is as surely heard as it is offered. Here the psalmist brings in the personal pronoun *thou*, and we beg the reader to notice how often "thou, ""thee, "and "thy, "occur in this hymn; David evidently believed in a personal God, and did not adore a mere idea or abstraction. Unto thee shall all flesh come. This shall encourage men of all nations to become suppliants to the

one and only God, who proves his Deity by answering those who seek his face. Flesh they are, and therefore weak; frail and sinful, they need to pray; and thou art such a God as they need, for thou art touched with compassion, and dost condescend to hear the cries of poor flesh and blood. Many come to thee now in humble faith, and are filled with good, but more shall be drawn to thee by the attractiveness of thy love, and at length the whole earth shall bow at thy feet. To come to God is the life of true religion; we come weeping in conversion, hoping in supplication, rejoicing in praise, and delighting in service. False gods must in due time lose their deluded votaries, for man when enlightened will not be longer be fooled; but each one who tries the true God is encouraged by his own success to persuade others also, and so the kingdom of God comes to men, and men come to it.

Verse 3. *Iniquities prevail against me.* Others accuse and slander me, and in addition to my own sins rise up and would beset me to my confusion, were it not for the remembrance of the atonement which covers every one of my iniquities. Our sins would, but for grace, prevail against us in the court of divine justice, in the court of conscience, and in the battle of life. Unhappy is the man who despises these enemies, and worse still is he who counts them his friends! He is best instructed who knows their deadly power, and flees for refuge to him who pardons iniquity. As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. Thou dost cover them all, for thou hast provided a covering propitiation, a mercyseat which wholly covers thy law. Note the word *our*, the faith of the one penitent who speaks for himself in the first clause, here embraces all the faithful in Zion; and he is so persuaded of the largeness of forgiving love that he leads all the saints to sing of the blessing. What a comfort that iniquities that prevail against us, do not prevail against God. They would keep us away from God, but he sweeps them away from before himself and us; they are too strong for us, but not for our Redeemer, who is mighty, yea, and almighty to save. It is worthy of note that as the priest washed in the laver before he sacrificed, so David leads us to obtain purification from sin before we enter upon the service of song. When we have washed our robes and made them white in his blood, then shall we acceptably sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

Verse 4. *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee.* After cleansing comes benediction, and truly this is a very rich one. It comprehends both election, effectual calling, access, acceptance, and sonship. First, we are chosen of God, according to the good pleasure of his will, and this alone is blessedness. Then, since we cannot and will not come to God of ourselves, he works graciously in us, and attracts us powerfully; he subdues our

unwillingness, and removes our inability by the almighty workings of his transforming grace. This also is no slight blessedness. Furthermore, we, by his divine drawings, are made nigh by the blood of his Son, and brought near by his spirit, into intimate fellowship; so that we have access with boldness, and are no longer as those who are afar off by wicked works: here also is unrivalled blessedness. To crown all, we do not come nigh in peril of dire destruction, as Nadab and Abihu did, but we approach as chosen and accepted ones, to become dwellers in the divine household: this is heaped up blessedness, vast beyond conception. But dwelling in the house we are treated as sons, for the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever. Behold what manner of love and blessedness the Father has bestowed upon us that we may dwell in his house, and go no more out for ever. Happy men who dwell at home with God. May both writer and reader be such men. That he may dwell in thy courts. Acceptance leads to abiding: God does not make a temporary choice, or give and take; his gifts and calling are without repentance. He who is once admitted to God's courts shall inhabit them for ever; he shall be

"No more a stranger or a guest,
But like a child at home."

Permanence gives preciousness. Terminating blessings are but half blessings. To dwell in the courts of the Great King is to be ennobled; to dwell there for ever is to be emparadised: yet such is the portion of every man whom God has chosen and caused to approach unto him, though once his iniquities prevailed against him.

Verse 5. *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation.* God's memorial is that he hears prayer, and his glory is that he answers it in a manner fitted to inspire awe in the hearts of his people. The saints, in the commencement of the Psalm, offered praise in reverential silence; and now, in the like awe stricken spirit, they receive answers to their prayers. The direct allusion here is, no doubt, to the Lord's overthrow of the enemies of his people in ways calculated to strike terror into all beholders; his judgments in their severe righteousness were calculated to excite fear both among friends and foes. Who would not fear a God whose blows are so crushing? We do not always know what we are asking for when we pray; when the answer comes, the veritable answer, it is possible that we may be terrified by it. We seek sanctification, and trial will be the reply: we ask for more faith, and more affliction is the result: we pray for the spread of the gospel, and persecution scatters us. Nevertheless, it is good to ask on, for nothing which the Lord grants in his love can do us any harm. Terrible things will turn out to be blessed things after all, where they come in answer to prayer. See in this verse how

righteousness and salvation are united, the terrible things with the gracious answers. Where but in Jesus could they be blended? The God who saves may answer our prayers in a way which puts unbelief into a flutter; but when faith spies the Saviour, she remembers that "things are not what they seem," and she is of good courage. He who is terrible is also our refuge from terror when we see him in the Well beloved.

Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth. The dwellers in the far off isles trust in God; those most remote from Zion yet confide in the ever living Jehovah. Even those who dwell in countries, frozen or torrid, where nature puts on her varied terrors, and those who see dread wonders on the deep, yet fly from the terrors of God and place their confidence in the God of terrors. His arm is strong to smite, but also strong to save. And of them that are afar off upon the sea. Both elements have their elect band of believers. If the land gave Moses elders, the sea gave Jesus apostles. Noah, when all was ocean, was as calm with God as Abraham in his tent. All men are equally dependent upon God: the seafaring man is usually most conscious of this, but in reality he is not more so than the husbandman, nor the husbandman than anyone else. There is no room for self confidence on land or sea, since God is the only true confidence of men on earth or ocean. Faith is a plant of universal growth, it is a tree of life on shore and a plant of renown at sea; and, blessed be God, those who exercise faith in him anywhere shall find that he is swift and strong to answer their prayers. A remembrance of this should quicken our devotions when we approach unto the Lord our God.

Verse 6. *Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains.* He, as it were, fixed them in their sockets, and preserved them from falling by earthquake or storm. The firmest owe their stability to him. Philosophers of the forget God school are too much engrossed with their laws of upheaval to think of the Upheaver. Their theories of volcanic action and glacier action, etc., etc., are frequently used as bolts and bars to shut the Lord out of his own world. Our poet is of another mind, and sees God's hand settling Alps and Andes on their bases, and therefore he sings in his praise. Let me for ever be just such an unphilosophical simpleton as David was, for he was nearer akin to Solomon than any of our modern theorists. Being girded with power. The Lord is so himself, and he therefore casts a girdle of strength around the hills, and there they stand, braced, belted, and bulwarked with his might. The poetry is such as would naturally suggest itself to one familiar with mountain scenery; power everywhere meets you, sublimity, massive grandeur, and stupendous force are all around you; and God is there, the author and source of all. Let us learn that we poor puny ones, if we wish for true establishment, must go to the strong for

strength. Without him, the everlasting hills would crumble; how much more shall all our plans, projects, and labours come to decay. Repose, O believer, where the mountains find their bases—viz., in the undiminished might of the Lord God.

Verse 7. *Which stilleth the noise of the seas.* His soft breath smooths the sea into a glass, and the mountainous waves into ripples. God does this. Calms are of the God of peace; it needs not that we look for a hurricane when it is said that he cometh. He walked of old in the garden in the cool of the day; he is resting even now, for his great seventh day is not yet over, and he is always "the Lord and giver of peace." Let mariners magnify the God who rules the waves. The noise of their waves. Each separate brawler amid the riot of the storm is quieted by the divine voice. And the tumult of the people. Nations are as difficult to rule as the sea itself, they are as fitful, treacherous, restless, and furious; they will not brook the bridle nor be restrained by laws. Canute had not a more perilous seat by the rising billows than many a king and emperor has had when the multitude have been set on mischief, and have grown weary of their lords. God alone is King of nations. The sea obeys him, and the yet more tumultuous nations are kept in check by him. Human society owes its preservation to the continued power of God: evil passions would secure its instant dissolution; envy, ambition, and cruelty would create anarchy tomorrow if God did not prevent; whereof we have had clear proof in the various French revolutions. Glory be unto God who maintains the fabric of social order, and checks the wicked, who would fain overthrow all things. The child of God in seasons of trouble should fly at once to him who stills the seas: nothing is too hard for him.

Verse 8. *They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid of thy tokens.* Signs of God's presence are not few, nor confined to any one region. Zembla sees them as well as Zion, and Terra del Fuego as surely as the Terra Sacra. These tokens are sometimes terrible phenomena in nature—such as earthquakes, pestilence, tornado, or storm; and when these are seen, even the most barbarous people tremble before God. At other times they are dread works of providence—such as the overthrow of Sodom, and the destruction of Pharaoh. The rumour of these judgments travels to earth's utmost verge, and impresses all people with a fear and trembling at such a just and holy God. We bless God that we are not afraid but rejoice at his tokens; with solemn awe we are glad when we behold his mighty acts. We fear, but not with slavish fear. Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. East and west are made happy by God's favour to the dwellers therein. Our rising hours are bright with hope, and our evening moments mellow with thanksgiving.

Whether the sun go forth or come in we bless God and rejoice in the gates of the day. When the fair morning blushes with the rosy dawn we rejoice; and when the calm evening smiles restfully we rejoice still. We do not believe that the dew weeps the death of the day; we only see jewels bequeathed by the departing day for its successor to gather up from the earth. Faith, when she sees God, rounds the day with joy. She cannot fast, because the bridegroom is with her. Night and day are alike to her, for the same God made them and blessed them. She would have no rejoicing if God did not make her glad; but, blessed be his name, he never ceases to make joy for those who find their joy in him.

Verse 9. *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it.* God's visits leave a blessing behind; this is more than can be said of every visitor. When the Lord goes on visitations of mercy, he has abundance of necessary things for all his needy creatures. He is represented here as going round the earth, as a gardener surveys his garden, and as giving water to every plant that requires it, and that not in small quantities, but until the earth is drenched and soaked with a rich supply of refreshment. O Lord, in this manner visit thy church, and my poor, parched, and withering piety. Make thy grace to overflow towards my graces; water me, for no plant of thy garden needs it more.

"My stock lies dead and no increase
Doth my dull husbandry improve;
O let thy graces without cease
Drop from above."

Thou greatly enrichest it. Millions of money could not so much enrich mankind as the showers do. The soil is made rich by the rain, and then yields its riches to man; but God is the first giver of all. How truly rich are those who are enriched with grace; this is great riches. With the river of God, which is full of water. The brooks of earth are soon dried up, and all human resources, being finite, are liable to failure; but God's provision for the supply of rain is inexhaustible; there is no bottom or shore to his river. The deluge poured from the clouds of yesterday may be succeeded by another tomorrow, and yet the waters above the firmament shall not fail. How true this is in the realm of grace; there *the river of God is full of water*, and "of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." The ancients in their fables spake of Pactolus, which flowed over sands of gold; but this river of God, which flows above and from which the rain is poured, is far more enriching; for, after all, the wealth of men lies mainly in the harvest of their fields, without which even gold would be of no value whatever.

Thou preparest them corn. Corn is specially set apart to be the food of man. In its various species it is a divine provision for the nutriment of our race, and is

truly called the staff of life. We hear in commerce of "prepared corn flour, "but God prepared it long before man touched it. As surely as the manna was prepared of God for the tribes, so certainly is corn made and sent by God for our daily use. What is the difference whether we gather wheat ears or manna, and what matters it if the first come upward to us, and the second downward? God is as much present beneath as above; it is as great a marvel that food should rise out of the dust, as that it should fall from the skies. When thou hast so provided for it. When all is prepared to produce corn, the Lord puts the finishing stroke, and the grain is forthcoming; not even, when all the material is prepared, will the wheat be perfected without the continuous and perfecting operation of the Most High. Blessed be the Great Householder; he does not suffer the harvest to fail, he supplies the teeming myriads of earth with bread enough from year to year. Even thus does he vouchsafe heavenly food to his redeemed ones: "He hath given meat unto them that fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant."

Verse 10. *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof.* Ridge and furrow are drenched. The ridges beaten down and settled, and the furrows made to stand like gutters flooded to the full. Thou makest it soft with showers. The drought turned the clods into iron, but the plenteous showers dissolve and loosen the soil. Thou blessest the springing thereof. Vegetation enlivened by the moisture leaps into vigour, the seed germinates and sends forth its green shoot, and the smell is that as of a field which the Lord has blessed. All this may furnish us with a figure of the operations of the Holy Spirit in beating down high thoughts, filling our lowly desires, softening the soul, and causing every holy thing to increase and spread.

Verse 11. *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.* The harvest is the plainest display of the divine bounty, and the crown of the year. The Lord himself conducts the coronation, and sets the golden coronal upon the brow of the year. Or we may understand the expression to mean that God's love encircles the year as with a crown; each month has its gems, each day its pearl. Unceasing kindness girdles all time with a belt of love. The providence of God in its visitations makes a complete circuit, and surrounds the year. And thy paths drop fatness. The footsteps of God, when he visits the land with rain, create fertility. It was said of the Tartar hordes, that grass grew no more where their horses' feet had trodden; so, on the contrary, it may be said that the march of Jehovah, the Fertiliser, may be traced by the abundance which he creates. For spiritual harvests we must look to him, for he alone can give "times of refreshing" and feasts of Pentecost.

Verse 12. *They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness.* Not alone where man is found do the showers descend, but away in the lone places, where only wild animals have their haunt, there the bountiful Lord makes the refreshing rain to drop. Ten thousand oases smile while the Lord of mercy passes by. The birds of the air, the wild goats, and the fleet stags rejoice as they drink from the pools, new filled from heaven. The most lonely and solitary souls God will visit in love. And the little hills rejoice on every side. On all hands the eminences are girt with gladness. Soon they languish under the effects of drought, but after a season of rain they laugh again with verdure.

Verse 13. *The pastures are clothed with flocks.* The clothing of man first clothes the fields. Pastures appear to be quite covered with numerous flocks when the grass is abundant. The valleys also are covered over with corn. The arable as well as the pasture land is rendered fruitful. God's clouds, like ravens, bring us both bread and flesh. Grazing flocks and waving crops are equally the gifts of the Preserver of men, and for both praise should be rendered. Sheep shearing and harvest should both be holiness unto the Lord. They shout for joy. The bounty of God makes the earth vocal with his praise, and in opened ears it lifts up a joyous shout. The cattle low out the divine praises, and the rustling ears of grain sing a soft sweet melody unto the Lord.

"Ye forests bend, ye harvests wave to him;
 Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
 As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.
 Bleat out afresh, ye hills; ye mossy rocks
 Retain the sound; the broad responsive low
 Ye valleys raise; for the GREAT SHEPHERD reigns,
 And his *unsuffering* kingdom yet will come."

They also sing. The voice of nature is articulate to God; it is not only a shout, but a song. Well ordered are the sounds of animate creation as they combine with the equally well tuned ripple of the waters, and sighings of the wind. Nature has no discords. Her airs are melodious, her chorus is full of harmony. All, all is for the Lord; the world is a hymn to the Eternal, blessed is he who, hearing, joins in it, and makes one singer in the mighty chorus.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

From Psalm 65 onwards we find ourselves in the midst of a series of Psalms which, with a varying arrangement of the words, are inscribed both kwmzm and wyv (65-68.) The two words signify a *Psalm song*. This series, as is

universally the case, is arranged according to the community of prominent watch words. In Ps 65:2 we read: *To thee is the vow paid*; and in Ps 66:13: *I will pay thee my vows*; in Ps 66:20: *Blessed be Elohim*; and in Ps 67:8: *Elohim shall bless us*. Besides Psalm 66 and 67 have this feature in common, that *tugml*, which occurs fifty-five times in the Psalter, is accompanied by the name of the poet in every instance, with the exception of these two anonymous Psalms. The frequently occurring *Sela* of both Psalms also indicates that they were intended to have a musical accompaniment. *Franz Delitzsch*.

Title. *A Psalm of Jeremiah and Ezekiel*. The Psalm is assigned to them, not as being its authors, but because it is supposed that it was often rehearsed by them at the beginning of the return from captivity, to teach us that those things ought especially to be sung concerning that happy restoration which these prophets were wont to sing about. But this inscription is not in the Hebrew text, nor in some translations, but only in certain versions. Jeremiah was not carried away to Babylon; see Jer 39:11, etc. Moreover, both he and Ezekiel died before the return. *Poole's Synopsis*.

Whole Psalm. The author of the Psalm is mentioned, but not the date of its composition; but from an examination of its contents, it would seem to have been intended as a song for the "day of atonement," and for the "feast of tabernacles," which followed immediately after. Nu 29:7,12. The sins of the year were then "covered over," and a thorough purification of the sanctuary was made by a special service of expiation. The labours of the year were all by that time concluded, and its fruits secured; and Israel could look on the goodness of God towards them, through its entire extent; and this Psalm was penned to serve as a fitting expression of their feelings. It opens with a reference to the "silence" that reigned in the sanctuary; to the profound, unbroken, solemn stillness that reigned within it; while, in deep abasement, the people without waited in hushed expectation the return of their high priest from the immediate presence of God, Le 16:17. It goes on to a statement of the blessedness of those who are accepted of God, and admitted to fellowship with One so unspeakably great; and concludes with a description of the various processes by which the Almighty had fitted the earth to yield a year's supplies for his people. *Dalman Hapstone*, in *"The Ancient Psalms in appropriate Meters... with Notes."* 1867.

Whole Psalm. We have here a psalm of thanksgiving to be sung in the Temple during a public festivity, at which the sacrifices were to be offered which had been vowed during a long and protracted drought (Ps 65:1-2). To the thanksgiving, however, for a gracious rain, and the hope of an abundant harvest (Ps 65:9-14), is added gratitude for a signal deliverance during a time of distress and commotion affecting all the nations around (Ps 65:7-8). Thus the

Psalm becomes a song of praise to Jehovah as the God of history and the God of nature, alike. *From the "Psalms Chronologically Arranged. By Four Friends."* 1867.

Whole Psalm. This is a charming psalm. Coming after the previous sad ones, it seems like the morning after the darkness of night. There is a dewy freshness about it, and from the ninth verse to the end there is a sweet succession of landscape pictures that remind one of the loveliness of spring; and truly it is a description, in natural figures, of that happy state of men's minds which will be the result of the "Day spring's visiting us from on high." Lu 1:7-8. *O. Prescott Hiller.*

Verse 1. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion.* The believer sometimes seems to want words to exalt God, and stops, as it were, in the middle; his thoughts want words. Thus praise waits, or is silent for God; it is silent to other things, and it waits to be employed about him. The soul is often put to a nonplus in crying up the grace of God, and wants words to express its greatness; yea, to answer the elevation of the thoughts; the heart indites a song of praise, but it cannot tune it. The psalmist is stopped, as it were, through admiration (which is *silentium intellectus*), for when the mind can rise no higher, it falls admiringly; hence some say, God is most exalted with fewest words. *Alexander Carmichael.*

Verse 1. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God.* Mercy is not yet come, we expect it; whilst thou art preparing the mercy, we are preparing the praise. *Edward Leigh in "Annotations on the Five Poetical Books of the Old Testament,"* 1657.

Verse 1. *Praise waiteth on thee.* As a servant, whose duty it is to do what thou commandest; or, *for thee*; is ready to be offered in thy courts for special favours. I think there is an allusion to the daily service in which God was praised. *Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 1. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God. Te decet hymnus,* so the vulgar edition reads this place. To thee, O Lord, belong our hymns, our psalms, our praises, our cheerful acclamations, and conformable to that, we translate it, *Praise waiteth for thee, O God.* But if we take it according to the original, it must be *tibi, silentium laus est*, Thy praise, O Lord, consists in silence. That man praises God best that says least of him; of his mysterious essence, of his unrevealed will and secret purposes. *Abraham Wright.*

Verse 1. *"To thee is silence and praise." Piscator.*

Verse 1. The Hebrew may be rendered, *Praise is silent for thee*. As if the holy man had said, "Lord, I quietly wait for a time to praise thee; my soul is not in an uproar because you stay. I am not murmuring, but rather stringing my harp and tuning my instrument with much patience and confidence, that I may be ready to strike up when the joyful news of my deliverance come." *William Gurnall*.

Verse 1. *To thee belongeth silence praise*. Praise without any tumult. (Alexander.) It has been said, "The most intense feeling is the most calm, being condensed by repression." And Hooker says of prayer, "The very silence which our unworthiness putteth us unto doth itself make request for us, and that in the confidence of his grace. Looking inward, we are stricken dumb; looking upward, we speak and prevail." Horsley renders it, "Upon thee is the repose of prayer." *Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verse 1. *Praise is silent for thee*. The Chaldee interpretation is, that our praise is not sufficiently worthy that we should praise God. The very praises of angels are esteemed as nothing before him. For so its rendering is: "*Before thee, O God, whose Majesty dwells in Zion, the praise of angels is regarded as silence*."... Jerome's version here is, "*To thee silence is praise, O God, in Zion*." Atheneus says, silence is a divine thing; and Thomas a Kempis calls silence the nutriment of devotion. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 1. *To thee belong submission, praise, O God, in Sion*. (Version of the American Bible Union.) Thou hast a claim for submission in times of sorrow, for praise in seasons of joy. *Thomas J. Conant, in "The Psalms... with occasional notes."* 1871.

Verse 1. *Vow*. A vow is a voluntary and deliberate promise made unto God in an extraordinary case. "It is a religious promise made unto God in a holy manner:" so a modern writer defines it. (Szegedinus.) It is a "holy and religious promise, advisedly and freely made unto God, concerning something which to do or to omit appeareth to be grateful and well pleasing unto him:" so Bucanus. I forbear Aquinas's definition of a vow. If these which I have given satisfy not, then view it in the words of Peter Martyr, a man of repute, and well known to our own nation in the days of Edward VI., of ever blessed memory: "It is a holy promise, whereby we bind ourselves to offer somewhat unto God." There is one more who defines it, and he is a man whose judgment, learning, and holiness hath perfumed his name; it is learned Perkins, in his "Cases of Conscience." "A vow," saith he, "is a promise made unto God of things lawful and possible." *Henry Hurst*(—1690), in "*The Morning Exercises*."

Verse 1. (last clause). The reference here is to the vows or promises which the people had made in view of the manifested judgments of God, and the proofs of his goodness. Those vows they were now ready to carry out in expressions of praise. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2. *O thou that hearest prayer*, etc. This is one of his titles of honour, he is a God that hears prayer; and it is as truly ascribed to him as mercy or justice. He hears all prayer, therefore, *unto thee shall all flesh come*. He never rejects any that deserves the name of prayer, how weak, how unworthy soever the petitioner be. *All flesh!* And will he (may faith say) reject mine only? Ro 10:12, "He is rich unto all that call upon him;" Ps 86:5, "Thou art plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee;" Heb 11:6, "A rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This must be believed as certainly as we believe that God is. As sure as God is the true God, so sure is it that none who sought him diligently departed from him without a reward. He rewards all seekers, for *indefinita in materia necessaria aequipollet universali*. And if all, why not me? You may as well doubt that he is God, as doubt that he will not reward, not hear prayer; so Jas 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." *David Clarkson.*

Verse 2. *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come*. What avails prayer, if it be not heard? But God's people need not lay it aside on that score. Our text bears two things with respect to that matter.

1. A comfortable title ascribed to God, with the unanimous consent of all the sons of Zion, who are all praying persons: *O thou that hearest prayer*. He speaks to *God in Zion*, or Zion's God, that is in New Testament language, to God in Christ. An absolute God thundereth on sinners from Sinai, there can be no comfortable intercourse betwixt God and them, by the law: but in Zion, from the mercyseat, in Christ, he is the hearer of prayer; they give in their supplications, and he graciously hears them. Such faith of it they have, that praise waits there for the prayer hearing God.

2. The effect of the savour of this title of God, spread abroad in the world: *Unto thee shall all flesh come*: not only Jews, but Gentiles. The poor Gentiles who have long in vain implored the aid of their idols, hearing and believing that God is the hearer of prayer, will flock to him, and present their petitions. They will throng in about his door, where by the gospel they understand beggars are so well served. They will *come in even unto thee*, Hebrew. They will come in even to thy seat, thy throne of grace, even unto thyself through the Mediator... That God is the hearer of prayer, and will hear the prayers of his people, is evident from these considerations:

First. The supernatural instinct of praying that is found in all that are born of God, Ga 4:6. It is as natural for them to fall a praying when the grace of God has touched their hearts, as for children when they are born into the world to cry, or to desire the breasts. Zec 12:10, compared with Ac 9:11, where in the account that is given of Paul, at his conversion, it is particularly noticed, "Behold, he prayeth." Hence the whole saving change on a soul comes under the character of this instinct. Jer 3:4,19.

Secondly. The intercession of Christ, Ro 8:34. It is a great part of the work of Christ's intercession to present the prayers of his people before his Father, Re 8:4, to take their causes in hand, contained in their supplications. 1Jo 2:1.

Thirdly. The promises of the covenant, whereby God's faithfulness is impawned for the hearing of prayer, as Mt 7:7: see also Isa 65:24.

Fourthly. The many encouragements given in the Word to the people of God, to come with their cases unto the Lord by prayer. He invites them to his throne of grace with their petitions for supply of their needs. So 2:14. He sends afflictions to press them to come. Ho 5:15. He gives them ground of hope of success, Ps 50:15, whatever extremity their case is brought to. Isa 41:17. He shows them that however long he may delay their trial, yet praying and not fainting shall be successful at length. Lu 18:8.

Fifthly. The gracious nature of God, with the endearing relations he stands in to his people. Ex 22:27. He wants not power and ability to fulfil the holy desires of his people; he is gracious, and will withhold no good from them that they really need. He has the bowels of a father to pity them, the bowels of a mother to her sucking child. He has a most tender sympathy with them in all their afflictions, the touches on them are as on the apple of his eye; and he never refuses them a request, but for their good. Ro 8:28.

Sixthly. The experiences which the saints of all ages have had of the answer of prayer. The faith of it brings them to God at conversion, as the text intimates: and they that believe cannot be disappointed. Lastly. The present ease and relief that prayer sometimes gives to the saints, while yet the full answer of prayer is not come. Ps 138:3. *Thomas Boston (1676-1732).*

Verse 2. *O thou that hearest prayer.* Observe

1. That God is called the hearer of prayers, since he hears, without distinction of persons, the prayers of every one poured forth with piety, not only of the

Jews, but also of the Gentiles; as in Ac 10:34-35... It follows, therefore, as a necessary consequence, *that all flesh should come to him*.

2. *To come to God*, is not indeed simply tantamount to saying, *to draw near to God*, to adore, call upon, and worship him, but to come *to Zion* for the purpose of adoring God; for it was just now said, that God must be praised in Zion, and to this the phrase, *to come to God*, must be referred. On this account also *la* is not used, but *de*, whose proper force is *right up to God*, or to the place of the habitation of God to render adoration to God. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 2. *To thee shall all flesh come.* To Christ "*all flesh comes*," that is (1.) every sinner and carnal man. He himself says, Mt 9:13 "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." The Grecian priest in olden times, when approaching to receive the sacrifice, used to exclaim, *Who comes there?* and the reply was, *Many and good*. But God received publicans and sinners, and invites them to his banquet, and eateth with them; but for the purpose of delivering them from sin. "*All flesh shall see the salvation of God.*" (2.) *All flesh* may be taken for the whole flesh, the whole body; all the senses and members of the body shall come to God that they may pay him tribute as their King. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 2. *All flesh.* By *flesh* is meant man in his weakness and need. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 3. *Iniquities prevail against me.* There are two ways in which iniquities may prevail against the Christian—the first is in the growing sense of his guilt, the second is in the power of their acting. This prevalence cannot be entire, for sin shall not have dominion over them; but it may be occasional and partial. There are two ways, according to Scripture, in which God purges our transgressions; and they always go together. The one is by pardoning mercy. Thus David prays: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Thus the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. The other is by sanctifying grace: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." And this is as much the work of God as the former. He subdues our iniquities as well as forgives them. *William Jay*.

Verse 3. *Iniquities.* Literally, *Words of iniquities*, by some regarded as a pleonastic phrase for iniquities themselves. More probably, however, the phrase means the charge or accusation of iniquity. *Joseph Addison Alexander*.

Verse 3. The deeds of iniquity are said *To prevail against us*, in so far as they are too strong and powerful for us to deny or refute, and to subject us to a demand of those penalties which the sin merits; hence there remains no other

refuge than the clemency and grace of God, the Judge. See Ps 143:2 130:3-4. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 3. *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* In the Hebrew it is, Thou shalt hide them. It alludes to the mercy seat which was covered with the wings of the Cherubim; so are the sins of the godly, when repented of, covered with the wings of mercy and favour. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3. *Thou shalt purge them away; or, Thou coverest them.* The pronoun is emphatic, as though to express the conviction that God and God alone could do this. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3. The holy prophets, and penmen of Scripture, have no grounds of hope for pardon of sin, save those which are common to the meanest of God's people; for David, in his confession, cometh in by himself alone, aggravating his own sins most: *Iniquities prevail against me*, saith he. But in hope of pardon, he joins with the rest of God's people, saying, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* *David Dickson.*

Verses 3-4. Now, soul, thou art molested with many lusts that infect thee, and obstruct thy commerce with heaven; yea, thou hast complained to thy God, what loss thou hast suffered by them; is it now presumption to expect relief from him, that he will rescue thee from them, that thou mayest serve him without fear, who is thy liege Lord? You have the saints for your precedents; who, when they have been in combat with their corruptions, yea, been foiled by them, have even then exercised their faith on God, and expected the ruin of those enemies, which, for the present, have overrun them. *Iniquities prevail against me*; he means his own sins; but see his faith; at the same time that they prevailed over him, he beholds God destroying them, as appears in the very next words, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* See here, poor Christian, who thinkest that thou shalt never get above deck, holy David has a faith, not only for himself, but also for all believers, of whose number I suppose thee one. And mark the ground he hath for this his confidence, taken from God's choosing act: *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.* As if he had said, Surely he will not let them be under the power of sin, or in want of his gracious succour, whom he sets so near himself. This is Christ's own argument against Satan, in the behalf of his people. *"The Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee."* Zec 3:2. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 4. *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest.* The benedictions of the Psalter advance in spirituality and indicate a growth. The first blessed the godly

reader of the word. Ps 1:1. The second described the pardoned child. Ps 32:1. The third pronounced a blessing upon faith. Ps 34:8 40:4. The fourth commended the active and generous believer, abundant in deeds of charity (Ps 41:1); and this last mounting to the fountain head of all benediction, blesses the elect of God. *C. H. S.*

Verse 4. *The man whom thou choosest.* Christ, whom God chose, and of whom he said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, " is, indeed, "over all, God blessed for ever; "but in him his elect are blessed too. For his sake, not for our own, are we chosen; in him, not in ourselves, are we received by God, being accepted in the Beloved; and, therefore, in him are we blessed: he is our blessing. With that High Priest who has ascended into the holy place and entered within the vail, we enter into the house of God; we learn to dwell therein; we are filled with its spiritual joys; we partake of its holy mysteries and sacraments of grace and love. *From "A Plain Commentary on the Book of Psalms."* 1859.

Verse 4. *We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.* We shall be so filled, that nothing can be said to be wanting, we shall have nothing to look for outside. What can be wanting in the house of him who made everything, who is the master of everything, who will be all unto all, in whom is an inexhaustible treasure of good. Of him is said in Psalm 103, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with thy likeness." *Robert Bellarmine* (1542-1621).

Verse 4. *Satisfied with the goodness of thy house.* There is an allusion here to the oblations which were devoted to God, of which, also, sacred persons partook. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 5. *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us.* The reason why he answers thus is, because what God doth for his people, take one thing with another, is still in order to the crucifying of the flesh; and what more *terrible* than such a death? We pray for *pleasing* things, as we imagine, but as we are flesh as well as spirit; so the flesh hath still a part in every prayer, and what we beg is partly carnal, and upon the matter, in part, we beg we know not what. Now, the answer as it comes from God, take all together, is spiritual, which is a crucifying thing to sinful flesh; hence comes all the terror... You pray for pardon; that is a pleasing thing, yet rightly understand not pleasing to the flesh; it mortifies corruption, breaks the heart, engages to a holy life: every answer from our God to us, one way or the other, first or last, shall tend that way. God useth so to give good things unto his children, as withal to give himself, and show to them his heavenly glory in what is done... Now God is *terrible* to sinful flesh: so far as he appears, it dies. Jacob, therefore, whilst he

conquered God in prayer, himself was overcome, signified by that touch upon his thigh put out of joint, where the chiefest stress in wrestling lies. When we are weak, then are we strong; because, as God appears, we die unto ourselves and live in him. *William Carter, in a Fast Sermon entitled, "Light in Darkness."* 1648.

Verse 5. God's judgments are these *terribilia*, terrible, fearful things; and he is faithful in his covenant; and by terrible judgments he will answer, that is, satisfy our expectation: and that is a convenient sense of these words. But the word which we translate *righteousness* here, is *tzadok*, and *tzadok* is not faithfulness, but holiness; and these *terrible things* are reverend things; and so Tremellius translates it, and well. *Per res reverendas, by reverend things*, things to which there belongs a reverence—*thou shalt answer us*. And thus, the sense of this place will be, that the God of our salvation (that is, God working in the Christian church) calls us to holiness, to righteousness, by terrible things; not terrible in the way and nature of revenge, but terrible, that is, stupendous, reverend, mysterious; so that we should not make religion too homely a thing, but come always to all acts and exercises of religion with reverence, with fear, and trembling, and make a difference between religious and civil actions. *John Donne*.

Verse 5. God's deliverance of his church and people *by terrible things* is *righteousness*. The meaning of the point is this: God in all the deliverances of his people by terrible things, doth therein manifest his righteousness. He doth therein nothing but what is according to righteousness and justice. To clear this, consider that there is a double righteousness, the righteousness of his word, which is the righteousness of his faithfulness, and the righteousness of his works, or his just acts of righteousness. And God doth manifest both these in his deliverance of his people by terrible things. *John Bewick*. 1644.

Verse 5. But what is the meaning when they say, *wilt thou answer us? Us*, who are inhabitants of Zion, who are constituted thy people, and truly worship Thee; *us*, moreover, in contact with enemies, who stirred up strife against us, and wished us ill; *us*, lastly, who aim at and seek the stability of the Kingdom and Church, and every kind of felicity and safety; with such things *wilt thou answer us*, it says, that is, for our advantage and benefit, and according to our vows, and therefore by pleading our cause, and deciding in our favour, and satisfying our desires; and in this way rendering us happy and establishing us, and subduing and confounding our foes. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 5. *Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth*. How could God be the confidence of all the ends of the earth, if he does not reign and constantly

work? The stability of the mountains is ascribed not to certain physical laws, but to the power of God. The noise of the seas is stilled not by laws without a powerful agent, but by the immediate influence of the Almighty Ruler. Human laws also may be the means of restraining persecution, but they are only means; and it is God who stilleth the tumult of the people. It is God who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to sing. The Scriptures, in viewing the works which God does through means, never lose sight of God himself. God visits and waters the earth: God prepares the corn. Without his own immediate power, the laws of nature could not produce their effect. How consoling and satisfactory is this view of Divine Providence, compared with that of an infidel philosophy, that forbids us to go further back than to the power of certain physical laws, which it grants, indeed, were at first established by God, but which can now perform their office without him. *Alexander Carson*. (1776-1844.)

Verse 5. *All the ends of the earth.* God is in himself potentially, *The confidence of all the ends of the earth.* Hereafter he will be recognised by all to be so (Ps 23:27-28), of which the Queen of Sheba's coming to Solomon "from the uttermost parts of the earth" is a type. Mt 12:42. *A. R. Faussett*.

Verse 5. *And of them that are afar off upon the sea.* We must beseech God in the words of this Psalm, that since He stands upon the shore, and beholds our perils, he would make us, who are tossed on the turbulent sea, secure for his name's sake, and enable us to hold between Scylla and Charybdis, the middle course, and escaping the danger on either hand, with a sound vessel and safe merchandise, reach the port. *Lorinus (from Augustine)*.

Verses 5-8. The divine watering of the earth is obviously symbolical of the descent of the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension; and when on the great day of Pentecost the devout Jews, "out of every nation under heaven," heard the apostle speaking in their several tongues the wonderful works of God, it was a testimony that God was beginning spiritually to make *the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice*. To God, *which stilleth the noise of the waves and the tumult of the people*, the apostles betook themselves in prayer after their first conflict with Jewish authorities, the first conflict of the infant Christian community with the powers of this world: the language of the Psalm (Ps 65:5), *O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea*, is reflected in the opening words of their prayer on that occasion (Ac 4:24), "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; "and if, when they prayed, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, "it was no idle sign that *by terrible*

things in righteousness were they being answered by the God of their salvation. These are, of course, mere illustrations of the inner harmony of Scripture; but, as such, they may not be without their value. *Joseph Francis Thrupp.*

Verse 6. *Setteth fast the mountains.* It is by thy strength they have been raised, and by thy power they are girded about and preserved. He represents the mountains as being formed and pitched into their proper places by the mighty hand of God; and shows that they are preserved from splitting, falling down, or moulding away, as it were, by a girdle by which they are surrounded. The image is very fine. They were hooped about by the divine power. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 8. Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to *rejoice*. That is, thou makest men to rejoice, they are glad, they rejoice in, or at, the outgoings in the morning. And at the evening men rejoice too, for then they go to their rest, being wearied with the labour of the day. Or, we may thus expound it: Thou makest men who live at the outgoings of the morning, and at the outgoings of the evening, to rejoice. As if it had been said, Thou makest the eastern people and the western people, all people from east to west, rejoice. And that which makes all people to rejoice, naturally, is the rising of light with them in the east, and the coming of light towards them in the west. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8. *Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.* How contrary soever light and darkness are to each other, and how inviolable soever the partition between them (Ge 1:4), both are equally welcome to the world in their season; it is hard to say which is more welcome to us, the light of the morning which befriends the business of the day, or the shadows of the evening which befriend the repose of the night. Doth the watchman wait for the morning? so doth the hireling earnestly desire the shadow. Some understand it of the morning and evening sacrifice, which good people greatly rejoiced in, and in which God was constantly honoured. Thou makest them to sing, so the word is; for every morning and every evening songs of praise were sung by the Levites; it was that which the duty of every day required. And we are to look upon our daily worship alone, and with our families, to be both the most needful of our daily business, and the most delightful of our daily comforts; and if therein we keep up our communion with God, the outgoings both of the morning and of the evening are thereby made truly to rejoice. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 8. Lyranus, Dionysius Carthusianus, Cajetanus, Placidus Parmensis, (who treads in the footsteps of Cajetanus though he does not mention him) take the first clause to refer to the wonder of all mankind at the wonderful works of God on the land and the sea; and explain the second respecting the sacrifices

which were wont to be offered in the morning and evening; that God made these acceptable to himself and delightful to those who offered them, especially after the return from captivity. In the beginning of the Psalm sacrifices are hinted at by *praise* and *vows*, as we have seen, and in the history of Esdra it is recorded, that *the morning and evening sacrifice were offered unto the Lord* by those who had returned; and that those who approached, when they entered, and others who had made their offerings, when they departed, gave praises to God. Hence it is here said, that the outgoings of the morning and of the evening, that is to say, when they who praise God go forth from either sacrifice, God will be well pleased, he will receive delight from that praise, and it will be grateful to him. *Lorinus*.

Verse 8. Figuratively, *the outgoings of the morning*, or dawn, is the light of grace in the beginning of conversion; "*the outgoing of the evening*" is the final light of grace in the hour of death. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 9. *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it*, etc. How beautiful are the words of the inspired poet, read in this month of harvest, nearly three thousand years after they were written! For nearly three thousand years since the royal poet looked over the plains of Judea covered with the bounty of God, and broke forth into his magnificent hymn of praise, has the earth rolled on in her course, and the hand of God has blessed her, and all her children, with seed time and harvest, with joy and abundance. The very steadfastness of the Almighty's liberality, flowing like a mighty ocean through the infinite vast of the universe, makes his creatures forget to wonder at its wonderfulness, to feel true thankfulness at its immeasurable goodness. The sun rises and sets so surely; the seasons run on amid all their changes with such inimitable truth, that we take as a matter of course that which is amazing beyond all stretch of imagination, and good beyond the wildest expansion of the noblest human heart. The poor man, with his half a dozen children, toils, and often dies, under the vain labour of winning bread for them. God feeds his family of countless myriads swarming over the surface of all countless worlds, and none know need but through the follies of themselves, or the cruelty of their fellows. God pours his light from innumerable suns on innumerable rejoicing planets; he waters them everywhere in the fittest moment; he ripens the food of globes and of nations, and gives them fair weather to garner it. And from age to age, amid his endless creatures of endless forms and powers, in the beauty and the sunshine, and the magnificence of nature, he seems to sing throughout creation the glorious song of his own divine joy, in the immortality of his youth, in the omnipotence of his nature, in the eternity of his patience, and the abounding boundlessness of his love. What a family hangs on his sustaining arm! The life and soul of infinite

ages, and of uncounted worlds! Let a moment's failure of his power, of his watchfulness, or of his will to do good, occur, and what a sweep of death and annihilation through the universe! How stars would reel, planets expire, and nations perish! But from age to age, no such catastrophe occurs, even in the midst of national crimes, and of atheism that denies the hand that made and feeds it. Life springs with a power ever new; food springs up as plentiful to sustain it, and sunshine and joy are poured over all from the invisible throne of God, as the poetry of the existence which he has given. If there come seasons of dearth, or of failure, they come but as warnings to proud and tyrannic man. The potato is smitten that a nation may not be oppressed for ever; and the harvest is diminished that the laws of man's unnatural avarice may be rent asunder. And then, again, the sun shines, the rain falls, and the earth rejoices in a renewed beauty, and in a redoubled plenty. *William Howitt, in "The Year Book of the Country."* 1850.

Verse 9. *Thou visitest the earth.* God seems to come with the coming in of each of the seasons. In some respects, during winter, God seems like a man travelling into a far country. Darkness, and barrenness, and coldness, suggest absence on the part of God. The spring looks like his return. The great change it involves cheerily whispers, "He is not far from any one of us." In longer days, and a warmer atmosphere, and a revived earth, God comes to us. These things are not of necessity, but of providence. There are second causes, but above all these is the First Cause, intelligent, loving, and free, God rules in all, over all, and above all. He is not displaced or supplanted by the forces and agencies which he employs, he is not absorbed by care of other worlds, he is not indifferent toward the earth. A personal superintendence and providence are not beneath his dignity, or in anywise distasteful to him. As Maker, and Life giver, and Father, *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it.* *Samuel Martin, in "Rain upon the Mown Grass, and other Sermons."* 1871.

Verse 9. The psalmist is here foretelling the gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of the nations of the earth to Christ. *Origen.*

Verse 9. The chiefs of Hebrew theology attribute four keys to God, which he never entrusted to any angel or seraph, and as the first of these they place *the key of rain*. He himself is said, in Job 28:26, to give a law to the rain, and in chapter Job 26:8, *to bind up the waters in the clouds.* *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 9. *With the river of God, which is full of water.* That is, the clouds figuratively described. *Edward Leigh (1602-3-1671).*

Verse 9. *The river of God*, as opposed to earthly streams. However these may fail, the divine resources are exhaustless. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 9. *The river of God.* The Chaldee paraphrase is, *From the fountain of God which is in the heavens, which is full of the rainstorms of blessing, thou wilt prepare their cornfields.* *Lorinus.*

Verse 9. *Thou preparest their grain; for so dost thou prepare the earth.* (Version of American Bible Union.) *So*, namely, with this design, and for this end. In the Hebrew, "for so dost thou prepare her; "referring to "the earth, "which in Hebrew is *fem.*, while grain is *masc.* The meaning can be expressed in English only by using the word (earth) which the Hebrew pronoun represents. The English pronoun (it) would necessarily refer to "grain, "and would represent neither the meaning of the Hebrew nor its form. *Thomas J. Conant.*

Verse 9. *Thou preparest them corn*, etc. Corn is the special gift of God to man. There are several interesting and instructive ideas connected with this view of it. All the other plants we use as food are unfit for his purpose in their natural condition, and require to have their nutritious qualities developed, and their natures and forms to a certain extent changed by a gradual process of cultivation. There is not a single useful plant grown in our gardens and fields, but is utterly worthless for food in its normal or wild state; and man has been left to himself to find out, slowly and painfully, how to convert these crudities of nature into nutritious vegetables. But it is not so with corn. It has from the very beginning been an abnormal production. God gave it to Adam, we have every reason to believe, in the same perfect state of preparation for food in which we find it at the present day, It was made expressly for man, and given directly into his hands. "Behold, "says the Creator, "I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth; "that is, all the cereal plants—such as corn, wheat, barley, rice, maize, etc., whose peculiar characteristic it is to produce seed... There is another proof that corn was created expressly for man's use, in the fact that it has never been found in a wild state. The primitive types from which all our other esculent plants were derived are still to be found in a state of nature in this or other countries. The wild beet and cabbage still grow on our seashores; the crab apple and the sloe, the savage parents of our luscious pippins and plums, are still found among the trees of the wood; but where are the original types of our corn plants? Where are the wild grasses, which, according to some authors, the cumulative process of agriculture carried on through successive ages, have developed into corn, wheat, and barley? Much has been written, and many experiments have been tried, to determine the natural origin of these cereals, but every effort has

hitherto proved in vain. Reports have again and again been circulated that corn and wheat have been found growing wild in some parts of Persia and the steppes of Tartary, apparently far from the influence of cultivation; but when tested by botanical data, these reports have turned out, in every instance, to be unfounded. Corn has never been known as anything else than a cultivated plant. History and observation prove that it cannot grow spontaneously. It is never, like other plants, self sown and self diffused. Neglected of men, it speedily disappears and becomes extinct. It does not return, as do all other cultivated varieties of plants, to a natural condition, and so become worthless as food, but utterly perishes, being constitutionally unfitted to maintain the struggle for existence with the aboriginal vegetation of the soil. All this proves that it must have been produced miraculously; or, in other words, given by God to man directly, in the same abnormal condition in which it now appears; for nature never could have developed or preserved it. In the mythologies of all the ancient nations it was confidently affirmed to have had a supernatural origin. The Greeks and Romans believed it to be the gift of the goddess Ceres, who taught her son, Triptolemus, to cultivate and distribute it over the earth; and from her, the whole class of plants received the name of cereals, which they now bear. And we only express the same truth when we say to him, whom these pagans ignorantly worshipped, *Thou preparest them corn, when thou hast provided for it*. Let me bring forth one more proof of special design, enabling us to recognise the hand of God in this mercy. Corn is universally diffused. It is almost the only species of plant which is capable of growing everywhere, in almost every soil, in almost any situation. In some form or other, adapted to the various modifications of climate and physical conditions, which occur in different countries, it is spread over an area of the earth's surface as extensive as the occupancy of the human race... Rice is grown in tropical countries where periodical rains and inundations, followed by excessive heat, occur, and furnishes the chief article of diet for the largest proportion of the human race. Wheat will not thrive in hot climates, but flourishes all over the temperate zone, at various ranges of elevation, and is admirably adapted to the wants of highly civilized communities. Maize spreads over an immense geographical area in the new world, where it has been known from time immemorial, and formed a principal element of that Indian civilisation which surprised the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru. Barley is cultivated in those parts of Europe and Asia where the soil and climate are not adapted for wheat; while oats and rye extend far into the bleak north, and disappear only from those desolate Arctic regions where man cannot exist in his social capacity. By these striking adaptations of different varieties of grain, containing the same essential ingredients, to different soils and climates, Providence has furnished the indispensable food for the sustenance of the human race throughout the whole habitable globe; and

all nations, and tribes, and tongues can rejoice together, as one great family, with the joy of harvest. *Hugh Macmillan, in "Bible Teachings in Nature."* 1868.

Verses 9-13. I do not know any picture of rural life that in any measure comes up to the exquisite description here brought before us, and which every one's heart at once recognises as so true to nature in all its branches. In the brief compass of five verses we have the whole scene vividly sketched, from the first preparation of the earth or soil; the provision of the corn seed for the sower; the rain in its season, the former and the latter rain, watering the ridges, settling the furrows, and causing the seed to swell and to spring forth, and bud and blossom; then the crowning of the whole year in the appointed weeks of harvest, and men's hearts rejoicing before God according to the joy in harvest, the very foot paths dropping with fatness, and the valleys shouting and singing for joy. Our harvest homes are times of rejoicing too, but I would that our tillers and reapers of the soil would as piously refer all to God as the psalmist did. *Thou waterest the earth, Thou greatly enrichest it, Thou preparest the corn, Thou waterest the ridges, Thou settlest the furrows, Thou makest it soft with showers, Thou blessest the springing thereof, Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.* Not one word of man, of man's skill, or of man's labour, not one thought of self. How different from him whose grounds brought forth abundantly, and whose only thought was, "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, drink, and be merry." *Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 13. The phrase, *the pastures are clothed with flocks*, cannot be regarded as the vulgar language of poetry. It appears peculiarly beautiful and appropriate, when we consider the numerous flocks which whitened the plains of Syria and Canaan. In the eastern countries, sheep are much more prolific than with us, and they derive their name from their great fruitfulness; bringing forth, as they are said to do, "thousands and ten thousands in their streets," Ps 144:13. They, therefore, formed no mean part of the wealth of the East. *James Anderson, in editorial Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 13. The hills, where not tilled, were bushy and green, and sprinkled with numerous flocks; the valleys broad and covered with a rich crop of wheat; the fields full of reapers and gleaners in the midst of the harvest, with asses and camels receiving their loads of sheaves, and feeding unmuzzled and undisturbed upon the ripe grain. *Edward Robinson.*

Verse 13. It may seem strange, that he should first tell us, that *they shout for joy*, and then add the feebler expression, that *they sing*; interposing, too, the insensitive particle, *pa, aph, they shout for joy, YEA, they also sing.* The verb,

however, admits of being taken in the future tense, *they shall sing*; and this denotes a continuation of joy, that they would rejoice, not only one year, but through the endless succession of the seasons. I may add, what is well known, that in Hebrew the order of expression is frequently inverted in this way. *John Calvin*.

Verse 13. *They also sing. They ardently sing*: such is the real meaning of pa; primarily "heat" or "warmth, "thence "ardour, passion, anger, "and thence again "the nostrils, "as the supposed seat of this feeling. *John Mason Good*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The fitness, place, use, and power of silence in worship.

Verse 1. The limitations, advantages, and obligations of vows.

Verse 2. (*first clause*). The hearing and granting of prayer is the Lord's property, his usual practice, his pleasure, his nature, and his glory. *David Dickson*.

Verse 3.

1. *The humble confession*. Sins prevail against us.

(a) *When* we are not alert, or go into temptation, and even after most sacred engagements.

(b) *How*. Through our inbred corruption, natural constitution, suddenness of temptation, neglect of means of grace, and want of fellowship.

(c) In *whom*. In the best of men: David says, *against me*. Let us take home the caution.

2. *The reassuring confidence*. Sin is forgiven.

(a) By God: *Thou*.

(b) By atonement: covering all.

(c) Effectually: *purge away*.

(d) Comprehensively: *our transgressions*.

Verse 3.

1. *A cry of distress.* Man soul besieged: *Iniquities prevail against me.*

2. *A shout of delight.* Man soul relieved: *Thou shalt purge them away.* E. G. Gange.

Verse 4. Nearness to God is the foundation of a creature's happiness. This doctrine appears in full evidence, while we consider the three chief ingredients of true felicity, *viz.*, the contemplation of the noblest object, to satisfy all the powers of the understanding; the love of the supreme good, to answer the utmost propensities of the will, and the sweet and everlasting sensation and assurance of the love of an Almighty Friend, who will free us from all the evils which our nature can fear, and confer upon us all the good which a wise and innocent creature can desire. Thus all the capacities of man are employed in their highest and sweetest exercises and enjoyments. *Isaac Watts.*

Verse 4. Election, effectual calling, access, adoption, final perseverance, satisfaction. This verse is a body of divinity in miniature.

Verse 5. Treat the first clause experimentally, and show how prayers for our own sanctification are answered by trial; for God's glory, by our persecution; for our babes' salvation, by their death; for the good of others, by their sickness, etc.

Verse 7. The Lord, the giver, creator, and preserver of peace.

Verse 8. Tokens of God's presence; those causing terror, and those inspiring joy.

Verse 8. (*last clause*). The peculiar joys of morning and evening.

Verse 9. *The river of God.* John Bunyan's treatise on "The Water of Life" would be suggestive on this topic.

Verse 9. Divine visits and their consequences.

Verses 9-13. A Harvest Sermon.

1. *The general goodness of God,* Visiting the earth in rotation of seasons: "Seed time and harvest, "etc.

2. *The greatness of his resources:* The river of God, which is full of water; not like Elijah's brook, which dried up.

3. *The variety of his benefactions:* Corn; Water; Blessest the springing thereof, etc.

4. *The perpetuity of his blessings:* Crownest the year. *E. G. G.*

Verse 13. The song of nature and the ear which hears it.

Psalm 66

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician.* He had need be a man of great skill, worthily to sing such a Psalm as this: the best music in the world would be honoured by marriage with such expressions. *A Song* or *Psalm*, or a *Song and Psalm*. It may be either said or sung; it is a marvellous poem if it be but read; but set to suitable music, it must have been one of the noblest strains ever heard by the Jewish people. We do not know who is its author, but we see no reason to doubt that David wrote it. It is in the Davidic style, and has nothing in it unsuited to his times. It is true the "house" of God is mentioned, but the tabernacle was entitled to that designation as well as the temple.

SUBJECT AND DIVISION. Praise is the topic, and the subjects for song are the Lord's great works, his gracious benefits, his faithful deliverances, and all his dealings with his people, brought to a close by a personal testimony to special kindness received by the prophet bard himself. Ps 66:1-4 are a kind of introductory hymn, calling upon all nations to praise God, and dictating to them the words of a suitable song. Ps 66:5-7 invite the beholder to "*Come and see*" the works of the Lord, pointing attention to the Red Sea, and perhaps the passage of Jordan. This suggests the similar position of the afflicted people which is described, and its joyful issue predicted, Ps 66:8-12. The singer then becomes personal, and confesses his own obligations to the Lord (Ps 66:13-15); and, bursting forth with a vehement "*Come and hear*," declares with thanksgiving the special favour of the Lord to himself, Ps 66:16-20.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Make a joyful noise unto God.* "In Zion, "where the more instructed saints were accustomed to profound meditation, the song was silent unto God, and was accepted of him; but in the great popular assemblies a joyful noise was more appropriate and natural, and it would be equally acceptable. If praise is to be wide spread, it must be vocal; exulting sounds stir the soul and cause a sacred contagion of thanksgiving. Composers of tunes for the congregation should see to it that their airs are cheerful; we need not so much noise, as *joyful* noise. God is to be praised with the voice, and the heart should go therewith in holy exultation. All praise from all nations should be rendered unto the Lord. Happy the day when no shouts shall be presented to Juggernaut or Boodh, but all the earth shall adore the Creator thereof. All ye lands. Ye heathen nations, ye who have not known Jehovah hitherto, with one consent let the whole earth rejoice before God. The languages of the lands are many, but their praises should be one, addressed to one only God.

Verse 2. *Sing forth the honour of his name.* The noise is to be modulated with tune and time, and fashioned into singing, for we adore the God of order and

harmony. The honour of God should be our subject, and to honour him our object when we sing. To give glory to God is but to restore to him his own. It is our glory to be able to give God glory; and all our true glory should be ascribed unto God, for it is his glory. "All worship be to God only," should be the motto of all true believers. The name, nature, and person of God are worthy of the highest honour. Make his praise glorious. Let not his praise be mean and grovelling: let it arise with grandeur and solemnity before him. The pomp of the ancient festivals is not to be imitated by us, under this dispensation of the Spirit, but we are to throw so much of heart and holy reverence into all our worship that it shall be the best we can render. Heart worship and spiritual joy render praise more glorious than vestments, incense, and music could do.

Verse 3. *Say unto God.* Turn all your praises to him. Devotion, unless it be resolutely directed to the Lord, is no better than whistling to the wind. How terrible art thou in thy works. The mind is usually first arrested by those attributes which cause fear and trembling; and, even when the heart has come to love God, and rest in him, there is an increase of worship when the soul is awed by an extraordinary display of the more dreadful of the divine characteristics. Looking upon the convulsions which have shaken continents, the hurricanes which have devastated nations, the plagues which have desolated cities, and other great and amazing displays of divine working, men may well say: *How terrible art thou in thy works.* Till we see God in Christ, the terrible predominates in all our apprehensions of him. Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit *themselves unto thee*; but, as the Hebrew clearly intimates, it will be a forced and false submission. Power brings a man to his knee, but love alone wins his heart. Pharaoh said he would let Israel go, but he lied unto God; he submitted in word but not in deed. Tens of thousands, both in earth and hell, are rendering this constrained homage to the Almighty; they only submit because they cannot do otherwise; it is not their loyalty, but his power, which keeps them subjects of his boundless dominion.

Verse 4. *All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee.* All men must even now prostrate themselves before thee, but a time will come when they shall do this cheerfully; to the worship of fear shall be added the singing of love. What a change shall have taken place when singing shall displace sighing, and music shall thrust out misery! They shall sing to thy name. The nature and works of God will be the theme of earth's universal song, and he himself shall be the object of the joyful adoration of our emancipated race. Acceptable worship not only praises God as the mysterious Lord, but it is rendered fragrant by some measure of knowledge of his name or character. God would not be worshipped as an unknown God, nor have it said of his people, "Ye worship ye

know not what." May the knowledge of the Lord soon cover the earth, that so the universality of intelligent worship may be possible: such a consummation was evidently expected by the writer of this Psalm; and, indeed, throughout all Old Testament writings, there are intimations of the future general spread of the worship of God. It was an instance of wilful ignorance and bigotry when the Jews raged against the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. Perverted Judaism may be exclusive, but the religion of Moses, and David, and Isaiah was not so. Selah. A little pause for holy expectation is well inserted after so great a prophecy, and the uplifting of the heart is also a seasonable direction. No meditation can be more joyous than that excited by the prospect of a world reconciled to its Creator.

Verse 5. *Come and see the works of God.* Such glorious events, as the cleaving of the Red Sea and the overthrow of Pharaoh, are standing wonders, and throughout all time a voice sounds forth concerning them—"Come and see." Even till the close of all things, the marvellous works of God at the Red Sea will be the subject of meditation and praise; for, standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire, the triumphal armies of heaven sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. It has always been the favourite subject of the inspired bards, and their choice was most natural. He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. For the defence of his church and the overthrow of her foes he deals terrific blows, and strikes the mighty with fear. O thou enemy, wherefore dost thou vaunt thyself? Speak no more so exceeding proudly, but remember the plagues which bowed the will of Pharaoh, the drowning of Egypt's chariots in the Red Sea, the overthrow of Og and Sihon, the scattering of the Canaanites before the tribes. This same God still liveth, and is to be worshipped with trembling reverence.

Verse 6. *He turned the sea into dry land.* It was no slight miracle to divide a pathway through such a sea, and to make it fit for the traffic of a whole nation. He who did this can do anything, and must be God, the worthy object of adoration. The Christian's inference is that no obstacle in his journey heavenward need hinder him, for the sea could not hinder Israel, and even death itself shall be as life; the sea shall be dry land when God's presence is felt. They went through the flood on foot. Through the river the tribes passed dry shod, Jordan was afraid because of them.

"What ailed thee, O thou mighty sea?
 Why rolled thy waves in dread?
 What bade thy tide, O Jordan, flee
 And bare its deepest bed?"

"O earth, before the Lord, the God
Of Jacob, tremble still;
Who makes the waste a watered sod,
The flint a gushing rill."

There did we rejoice in him. We participate this day in that ancient joy. The scene is so vividly before us that it seems as if we were there personally, singing unto the Lord because he hath triumphed gloriously. Faith casts herself bodily into the past joys of the saints, and realises them for herself in much the same fashion in which she projects herself into the bliss of the future, and becomes the substance of things hoped for. It is to be remarked that Israel's joy was in her God, and there let ours be. It is not so much what he has done, as what he is, that should excite in us a sacred rejoicing. "He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."

Verse 7. *He ruleth by his power for ever.* He has not deceased, nor abdicated, nor suffered defeat. The prowess displayed at the Red Sea is undiminished: the divine dominion endures throughout eternity. His eyes behold the nations. Even as he looked out of the cloud upon the Egyptians and discomfited them, so does he spy out his enemies, and mark their conspiracies. His hand rules and his eye observes, his hand has not waxed weak, nor his eye dim. As so many grasshoppers he sees the people and tribes, at one glance he takes in all their ways. He oversees all and overlooks none. Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. The proudest have no cause to be proud. Could they see themselves as God sees them they would shrivel into nothing. Where rebellion reaches to a great head, and hopes most confidently for success, it is a sufficient reason for abating our fears, that the Omnipotent ruler is also an Omniscient observer. O proud rebels, remember that the Lord aims his arrows at the high soaring eagles and brings them down from their nest among the stars. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." After a survey of the Red Sea and Jordan, rebels, if they were in their senses, would have no more stomach for the fight, but would humble themselves at the Conqueror's feet. Selah. Pause again, and take time to bow low before the throne of the Eternal.

Verse 8. *O bless our God, ye people.* Ye chosen seed, peculiarly beloved, it is yours to bless your covenant God as other nations cannot. Ye should lead the strain, for he is peculiarly your God. First visited by his love, ye should be foremost in his praise. And make the voice of his praise to be heard. Whoever else may sing with bated breath, do you be sure to give full tongue and volume to the song. Compel unwilling ears to hear the praises of your covenant God. Make rocks, and hills, and earth, and sea, and heaven itself to echo with your joyful shouts.

Verse 9. *Which holdeth our soul in life.* At any time the preservation of life, and especially the soul's life, is a great reason for gratitude but much more when we are called to undergo extreme trials, which of themselves would crush our being. Blessed be God, who, having put our souls into possession of life, has been pleased to preserve that heaven given life from the destroying power of the enemy. And suffereth not our feet to be moved. This is another and precious boon. If God has enabled us not only to keep our life, but our position, we are bound to give him double praise. Living and standing is the saint's condition through divine grace. Immortal and immoveable are those whom God preserves. Satan is put to shame, for instead of being able to slay the saints, as he hoped, he is not even able to trip them up. God is able to make the weakest to stand fast, and he will do so.

Verse 10. *For thou, O God, hast proved us.* He proved his Israel with sore trials. David had his temptations. All the saints must go to the proving house; God had one Son without sin, but he never had a son without trial. Why ought we to complain if we are subjected to the rule which is common to all the family, and from which so much benefit has flowed to them? The Lord himself proves us, who then shall raise a question as to the wisdom and the love which are displayed in the operation? The day may come when, as in this case, we shall make hymns out of our griefs, and sing all the more sweetly because our mouths have been purified with bitter draughts. Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Searching and repeated, severe and thorough, has been the test; the same result has followed us as in the case of precious metal, for the dross and tin have been consumed, and the pure ore has been discovered. Since trial is sanctified to so desirable an end, ought we not to submit to it with abounding resignation.

Verse 11. *Thou broughtest us into the net.* The people of God in the olden time were often enclosed by the power of their enemies, like fishes or birds entangled in a net; there seemed no way of escape for them. The only comfort was that God himself had brought them there, but even this was not readily available, since they knew that he had led them there in anger as a punishment for their transgressions; Israel in Egypt was much like a bird in the fowler's net. Thou laidest affliction upon our loins. They were pressed even to anguish by their burdens and pains. Not on their backs alone was the load, but their loins were pressed and squeezed with the straits and weights of adversity. God's people and affliction are intimate companions. As in Egypt every Israelite was a burden bearer, so is every believer while he is in this foreign land. As Israel cried to God by reason of their sore bondage, so also do the saints. We too often forget that God lays our afflictions upon us; if we remembered this fact,

we should more patiently submit to the pressure which now pains us. The time will come when, for every ounce of present burden, we shall receive a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Verse 12. *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.* They stormed, and hector, and treated us like the mire of the street. Riding the high horse, in their arrogance, they, who were in themselves mean men, treated the Lord's people as if they were the meanest of mankind. They even turned their captives into beasts of burden, and rode upon their heads, as some read the Hebrew. Nothing is too bad for the servants of God when they fall into the hands of proud persecutors. We went through fire and through water. Trials many and varied were endured by Israel in Egypt, and are still the portion of the saints. The fires of the brick kiln and the waters of the Nile did their worst to destroy the chosen race; hard labour and child murder were both tried by the tyrant, but Israel went through both ordeals unharmed, and even thus the church of God has outlived, and will outlive, all the artifices and cruelties of man. Fire and water are pitiless and devouring, but a divine fiat stays their fury, and forbids these or any other agents from utterly destroying the chosen seed. Many an heir of heaven has had a dire experience of tribulation; the fire through which he has passed has been more terrible than that which chars the bones, for it has fed upon the marrow of his spirit, and burned into the core of his heart; while the waterfloods of affliction have been even more to be feared than the remorseless sea, for they have gone in even unto the soul, and carried the inner nature down into deeps horrible, and not to be imagined without trembling. Yet each saint has been more than conqueror hitherto, and, as it has been, so it shall be. The fire is not kindled which can burn the woman's seed, neither does the dragon know how to vomit a flood which shall suffice to drown it. But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. A blessed issue to a mournful story. Canaan was indeed a broad and royal domain for the once enslaved tribes: God, who took them into Egypt, also brought them into the land which flowed with milk and honey, and Egypt was in his purposes *en route* to Canaan. The way to heaven is *via* tribulation.

"The path of sorrow and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown."

How wealthy is the place of every believer, and how doubly does he feel it to be so in contrast with his former slavery: what songs shall suffice to set forth our joy and gratitude for such a glorious deliverance and such a bountiful heritage. More awaits us. The depth of our griefs bears no proportion to the height of our bliss. For our shame we have double, and more than double. Like Joseph we shall rise from the prison to the palace, like Mordecai we shall

escape the gallows prepared by malignity, and ride the white horse and wear the royal robe appointed by benignity. Instead of the net, liberty; instead of a burden on the loins, a crown on our heads; instead of men riding over us, we shall rule over the nations: fire shall no more try us, for we shall stand in glory on the sea of glass mingled with fire; and water shall not harm us, for there shall be no more sea. O the splendour of this brilliant conclusion to a gloomy history. Glory be unto him who saw in the apparent evil the true way to the real good. With patience we will endure the present gloom, for the morning cometh. Over the hills faith sees the daybreak, in whose light we shall enter into the wealthy place.

Verse 13. *I will.* The child of God is so sensible of his own personal indebtedness to grace, that he feels that he must utter a song of his own. He joins in the common thanksgiving, but since the best public form must fail to meet each individual case, he makes sure that the special mercies received by him shall not be forgotten, for he records them with his own pen, and sings of theme with his own lips. I will go into thy house with burnt offerings; the usual sacrifices of godly men. Even the thankful heart dares not come to God without a victim of grateful praise; of this as well as of every other form of worship, we may say, "the blood is the life thereof." Reader, never attempt to come before God without Jesus, the divinely promised, given, and accepted burnt offering. I will pay thee my vows. He would not appear before the Lord empty, but at the same time he would not boast of what he offered, seeing it was all due on account of former vows. After all, our largest gifts are but payments; when we have given all, we must confess, "O Lord, of thine own have we given unto thee." We should be slow in making vows, but prompt in discharging them. When we are released from trouble, and can once more go up to the house of the Lord, we should take immediate occasion to fulfil our promises. How can we hope for help another time, if we prove faithless to covenants voluntarily entered upon in hours of need.

Verse 15. *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings.* The good man will give his best things to God. No starveling goat upon the hills will he present at the altar, but the well fed bullocks of the luxuriant pastures shall ascend in smoke from the sacred fire. He who is miserly with God is a wretch indeed. Few devise liberal things, but those few find a rich reward in so doing. With the incense of rams. The smoke of burning rams should also rise from the altar; he would offer the strength and prime of his flocks as well as his herds. Of all we have we should give the Lord his portion, and that should be the choicest we can select. It was no waste to burn the fat upon Jehovah's altar, nor to pour the precious ointment upon Jesus' head; neither are large gifts and bountiful

offerings to the church of God any diminution to a man's estate: such money is put to good interest and placed where it cannot be stolen by thieves nor corroded by rust. I will offer bullocks with goats. A perfect sacrifice, completing the circle of offerings, should show forth the intense love of his heart. We should magnify the Lord with the great and the little. None of his ordinances should be disregarded; we must not omit either the bullocks or the goats. In these three verses we have gratitude in action, not content with words, but proving its own sincerity by deeds of obedient sacrifice. Selah. It is most fit that we should suspend the song while the smoke of the victims ascends the heavens; let the burnt offerings stand for praises while we meditate upon the infinitely greater sacrifice of Calvary.

Verse 16. *Come and hear.* Before, they were bidden to come and see. Hearing is faith's seeing. Mercy comes to us by way of ear gate. "Hear, and your soul shall live." They saw how terrible God was, but they heard how gracious he was. All ye that fear God. These are a fit audience when a good man is about to relate his experience; and it is well to select our hearers when inward soul matters are our theme. It is forbidden us to throw pearls before swine. We do not want to furnish wanton minds with subjects for their comedies, and therefore it is wise to speak of personal spiritual matters where they can be understood, and not where they will be burlesqued. All God fearing men may hear us, but far hence ye profane. And I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I will count and recount the mercies of God to me, to my soul, my best part, my most real self. Testimonies ought to be borne by all experienced Christians, in order that the younger and feebler sort may be encouraged by the recital to put their trust in the Lord. To declare man's doings is needless; they are too trivial, and, besides, there are trumpeters enough of man's trumpety deeds; but to declare the gracious acts of God is instructive, consoling, inspiriting, and beneficial in many respects. Let each man speak for himself, for a personal witness is the surest and most forcible; second hand experience is like "cauld kale het again; "it lacks the flavour of first hand interest. Let no mock modesty restrain the grateful believer from speaking of himself, or rather of God's dealings to himself, for it is justly due to God; neither let him shun the individual use of the first person, which is most correct in detailing the Lord's ways of love. We must not be egotists, but we must be egotists when we bear witness for the Lord.

Verse 17. *I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.* It is well when prayer and praise go together, like the horses in Pharaoh's chariot. Some cry who do not sing, and some sing who do not cry: both together are best. Since the Lord's answers so frequently follow close at the

heels of our petitions, and even overtake them, it becomes us to let our grateful praises keep pace with our humble prayers. Observe that the psalmist did both cry and speak; the Lord has cast the dumb devil out of his children, and those of them who are least fluent with their tongues are often the most eloquent with their hearts.

Verse 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart.* If, having seen it to be there, I continue to gaze upon it without aversion; if I cherish it, have a side glance of love toward it, excuse it, and palliate it; The Lord will not hear me. How can he? Can I desire him to connive at my sin, and accept me while I wilfully cling to any evil way? Nothing hinders prayer like iniquity harboured in the breast; as with Cain, so with us, sin lieth at the door, and blocks the passage. If thou listen to the devil, God will not listen to thee. If you refuse to hear God's commands, he will surely refuse to hear thy prayers. An imperfect petition God will hear for Christ's sake, but not one which is wilfully miswritten by a traitor's hand. For God to accept our devotions, while we are delighting in sin, would be to make himself the God of hypocrites, which is a fitter name for Satan than for the Holy One of Israel.

Verse 19. *But verily God hath heard me.* Sure sign this that the petitioner was no secret lover of sin. The answer to his prayer was a fresh assurance that his heart was sincere before the Lord. See how sure the psalmist is that he has been heard; it is with him no hope, surmise, or fancy, but he seals it with a *verily*. Facts are blessed things when they reveal both God's heart as loving, and our own heart as sincere. He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. He gave his mind to consider my cries, interpreted them, accepted them, and replied to them; and therein proved his grace and also my uprightness of heart. Love of sin is a plague spot, a condemning mark, a killing sign, but those prayers, which evidently live and prevail with God, most clearly arise from a heart which is free from dalliance with evil. Let the reader see to it, that his inmost soul be rid of all alliance with iniquity, all toleration of secret lust, or hidden wrong.

Verse 20. *Blessed be God.* Be his name honoured and loved. *Which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.* He has neither withdrawn his love nor my liberty to pray. He has neither cast out my prayer nor me. His mercy and my cries still meet each other. The psalm ends on its key note. Praise all through is its spirit and design. Lord enable us to enter into it. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is said to be recited on Easter day, by the Greek church: it is described in the Greek Bible as *A Psalm of the Resurrection*, and may be understood to refer, in a prophetic sense, to the regeneration of the world, through the conversion of the Gentiles. *Daniel Cresswell*.

Verse 1. *Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:* Hebrew, *all the earth*; shout aloud for joy, as the people did at the return of the ark, so that the earth rang again. God shall show himself to be the God not of *Jews* only, but of *Gentiles* also; these shall as well cry *Christ*, as those *Jesus*; these say, *Father*, as those *Abba*. And, as there was great joy in Samaria when the gospel was there received (Ac 8:8), so shall there be the like in all other parts of the earth. *John Trapp*.

Verse 1. *All ye lands.* Where, consider, that he does not sing praises well, who desires to sing alone. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 2. *Make his praise glorious.* Another meaning is, *give or place glory*, that is, your glory *to his praise*, be fully persuaded when you praise him that it will redound to your own glory, regard this as your own glory; praise him in such a way that all your praises may be given to glorify God; or, let your glory tend in this direction that he may be praised. Desire not the glory of eternal blessedness, unless for the praise of God, as the blessed spirits in that temple do nothing but say glory to God, and sing the hymn of his glory without end, "Holy, holy, holy." *Lorinus*.

Verse 3. *Say. Dicite, say,* says David, delight to speak of God; *Dicite*, say something. There was more required than to think of God. Consideration, meditation, contemplation upon God and divine objects, have their place and their season; but this is more than that, and more than admiration too; for all these may come to an end in ecstasies, and in stupidities, and in useless and frivolous imaginations. *John Donne*.

Verse 3. *Unto God.* To God, not *concerning* God, as some interpret, but *to God himself*; to his praises, and with minds raised to God, as it is in Ps 66:4, *sing to himself*; Gejerus also correctly remarks, that the following discourse is addressed to God. Besides, it is to *our* God, as in Ps 66:8, *O bless our God, ye people*: he is called God absolutely, because he alone is the true God. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 3. *How terrible.* Take from the Bible its awful doctrines, and from providence its *terrible* acts, and the whole system, under which God has placed us, would be emasculated. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3. *Thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee.* In this, our first consideration is, that *God himself hath enemies*; and then, how should we hope to be, nay, why should we wish to be, without them. God had good, that is, glory from his enemies; and we may have good, that is, advantage in the way to glory, by the exercise of our patience, from enemies too. Those for whom God had done most, the angels, turned enemies first; vex not thou thyself, if those whom thou hast loved best hate thee deadliest... God himself hath enemies. *Thine enemies shall submit*, says the text, to God; there thou hast one comfort, though thou have enemies too; but the greater comfort is, that God calls thine enemies his. *Nolite tangere Christus meos* (Ps 105:15), says God of all holy people; you were as good touch me, as touch any of them, for, "they are the apple of mine eye" (Ps 17:8). Our Saviour Christ never expostulated for himself; never said, Why scourge you me? why spit you upon me? why crucify you me? As long as their rage determined in his person, he opened not his mouth; when Saul extended the violence to the church, to his servants, then Christ came to that, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" ...Here is a holy league, defensive and offensive; God shall not only protect us from others, but he shall fight for us against them; our enemies are his enemies. *Condensed from John Donne.*

Verse 3. *Thine enemies submit themselves.* Literally, *lie unto thee*. This was remarkably the case with *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*. They promised again and again to let the people go, when the hand of the Lord was upon them; and they as frequently falsified their word. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 3. (*second clause*). In times of affliction every hypocrite—all tag and rag—will be ready to come in to God in an outward profession; but usually this submission to God at this time is not out of truth. Hence it is said, *Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee*: in the original it is, *they shall lie unto thee*, and so it is translated by Arias Montanus, and some others, noting hereby that a forced submission to God is seldom in truth. *Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 3. The earthquakes in New England occasioned a kind of religious panic. A writer, who was then one of the ministers of Boston, informs us, that immediately after the great earthquake, as it was called, a great number of his flock came and expressed a wish to unite themselves with the church. But, on conversing with them, he could find no evidence of improvement in their

religious views or feelings, no convictions of their own sinfulness; nothing, in short, but a kind of superstitious fear, occasioned by a belief that the end of the world was at hand. All their replies proved that they had not found God, though they had seen *the greatness of his power* in the earthquake. *Edward Payson, D.D.*

Verse 5. *Come and see the works of God.* An indirect censure is here passed upon that almost universal thoughtlessness which leads men to neglect the praises of God. *John Calvin.*

Verse 5. *Come and see.* The church at all times appeals to the world, *Come and see*, as Jesus said to the two disciples of John the Baptist, and Philip to Nathanael. Joh 1:39,46. God's marvels are to be seen by all, and *seeing* them is the first step towards *believing* in their divine author. *A. R. Faussett.*

Verse 6. *He turned the sea into dry land.* The psalmist refers to the passage through the Red Sea and the Jordan, not as to transactions which took place and were concluded at a given period of time, but as happening really in every age. God's guidance of his people is a constant drying up of the sea and of the Jordan, and the joy over his mighty deeds is always receiving new materials. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 6. *There did we rejoice in him;* where those things have been done, there have we rejoiced in him, not taking any credit to ourselves as if they were our acts, but rejoicing and glorying in God, and have praised him, as may be seen in Exodus 15 and Joshua 3. The prophet uses the future for the past, unless, perhaps, he meant to insinuate that these miracles would be succeeded by much greater ones, of which they were only the types and figures. A much greater miracle is that men should pass over the bitter sea of this life, and cross the river of mortality, that never ceases to run, and which swallows up and drowns so many, and still come safe and alive to the land of eternal promise, and there rejoice in God himself, beholding him face to face; and yet this greater miracle is so accomplished by God, that many pass through this sea as if it were dry land, and cross this river with dry feet; that is to say, having no difficulty in despising all things temporal, be they good or be they bad; that is to say, being neither attached to the good things, nor fearing the evil things, of this world, that they may arrive in security at the heavenly Jerusalem, where we will rejoice in him, not in hope, but in complete possession for eternity. *Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 7. *His eyes behold the nations.* The radical meaning of the word *hku* is *augazein*, to shine, and metonymically *to examine with a bright eye*; to inspect

with a piercing glance, and thence *to behold*, for either good or evil, as Pr 15:3: "*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*" Here it is taken in an adverse sense, and means, to watch from a watch tower, to threaten from a lofty place. Ps 37:32: "*The wicked watcheth the righteous;*" and Job 15:22: He is waited for "*from the watch tower for the sword;*" that is to say, *the sword is drawn above the head of the wicked, as if it threatened him from the watch tower of God.* But, at the same time, there is also a reference to God's looking from the pillar of fire, and of cloud, upon the host of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Ex 14:24. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 7. *His eyes behold the nations.* This should give check to much iniquity. Can a man's conscience easily and delightedly swallow that which he is sensible falls under the cognizance of God, when it is hateful to the eye of his holiness, and renders the action odious to him? "Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?" saith Job, (Job 31:4)... The consideration of this attribute should make us humble. How dejected would a person be if he were sure all the angels in heaven, and men upon earth, did perfectly know his crimes, with all their aggravations! But what is created knowledge to an infinite and just censuring understanding? When we consider that he knows our actions, whereof there are multitudes, and our thoughts, whereof there are millions; that he views all the blessings bestowed upon us; all the injuries we have returned to him; that he exactly knows his own bounty, and our ingratitude; all the idolatry, blasphemy, and secret enmity in every man's heart against him; all tyrannical oppressions, hidden lusts, omissions of necessary duties, violations of plain precepts, every foolish imagination, with all the circumstances of them, and that perfectly in all their full anatomy, every mite of unworthiness and wickedness in every circumstance... should not the consideration of this melt our hearts into humiliation before him, and make us earnest in begging pardon and forgiveness of him. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 9. *Which holdeth our soul in life.* As the works of creation at first, and upholding all by his power and providence, are yoked together as works of a like wonder, vouchsafed the creation in common, Heb 1:2-3; so just in the like manner we find regeneration and perseverance joined, as the sum of all other works in this life. Thus "begotten again," and "kept by the power of God to salvation," are joined by the Apostle, 1Pe 1:3,5, "Called and preserved in Christ Jesus;" so in Jude 1:1... "Blessed be God," says Peter, "who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again." And, *O bless our God, ye people, which holdeth our souls in life,* says the psalmist. Yea, if we do narrowly eye the words in either, both Peter and the psalmist do bless God for both at once.

Blessed be God for "begetting us," who are also "kept by the power of God;" so it follows in Peter. In the psalmist both are comprehended in this one word:

1. *Which putteth our souls in life* (so the margin, out of the Hebrew), that is, who puts life into your soul at the first, as he did into Adam when he made him a living soul;

2. And then which *holdeth*, that is, continueth our souls in that life. So the translators render it also, according to the psalmist's scope, and *O bless the Lord*, saith the psalmist, for these and both these. *Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 9. *Which holdest our soul in life.* It is truth, that all we have is in the hand of God; but God keeps our life in his hand last of all, and he hath that in his hand in a special manner. Though the soul continue, *life* may not continue; there is the soul when there is not life: life is that which is the union of soul and body. *Thou holdest our soul in life*; that is, thou holdest soul and body together. So Daniel describes God to Belshazzar, Da 5:23, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." The breath of princes is in the hand of God, and the same hand holds the breath of the meanest subject. This may be matter of comfort to us in times of danger, and times of death: when the hand of man is lifted up to take thy life, remember thy life is held in the hand of God; and as God said to Satan (Job 2:6): Afflict the body of Job, but save his life; so God saith still to bloody wretches, who are as the limbs of Satan: The bodies of such and such are in your hands, the estates of such and such are in your hands, but save their lives. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 9. *Putteth our soul in life.* An elegant and emphatic expression, only to be understood by observing the exact force of the words. The *soul* is the *life*, as is well known, the word Myv is *to place, to place upon, to press in*, the word Myyx signifies properly *joinings, fastenings together*, and hence those faculties and powers by which nature is held together and made firm. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 9. *Which holdeth our soul in life.* He holdeth our soul in life, that it may not drop away of itself; for being continually in our hands, it is apt to slip through our fingers. *Matthew Henry*.

Verse 9. *And suffereth not our feet to be moved.* It is a great mercy to be kept from desperate courses in the time of sad calamities, to be supported under burdens, that we sink not; and to be prevented from denying God, or his truth, in time of persecution. *David Dickson*.

Verse 10. *Thou, O God, hast proved us.* It is not known what corn will yield, till it come to the flail; nor what grapes, till they come to the press. Grace is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose leaves; the fire of affliction fetcheth it out.—*Thou hast tried us as silver.* The wicked also are tried (Re 3:10), but they prove reprobate silver (Jer 6:28), or at best, as alchemy gold, that will not bear the seventh fire, as Job did (Job 23:10). *John Trapp.*

Verse 10. *As silver is tried.* Convinced from the frequent use of this illustration, that there was something more than usually instructive in the process of assaying and purifying silver, I have collected some few facts upon the subject. The hackneyed story of the refiner seeing his image in the molten silver while in the fire, has so charmed most of us, that we have not looked further; yet, with more careful study, much could be brought out. *To assay silver requires great personal care in the operator.* "The principle of assaying gold and silver is very simple theoretically, but in practice great experience is necessary to insure accuracy; and there is no branch of business which demands more personal and undivided attention. The result is liable to the influence of so many contingencies, that no assayer who regards his reputation will delegate the principal process to one not equally skilled with himself. Besides the result ascertainable by weight, there are allowances and compensations to be made, which are known only to an experienced assayer, and if these were disregarded, as might be the case with the mere novice, the report would be wide from the truth." (Encyclopaedia Britannica.) Pagnini's version reads: "Thou hast melted us by blowing upon us, "and in the monuments of Egypt, artificers are seen with the blowpipe operating with small fire places, with cheeks to confine and reflect the heat; the worker evidently paying personal attention, which is evident also in Mal 3:3, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." *To assay silver requires a skilfully constructed furnace.* The description of this furnace would only weary the reader, but it is evidently a work of art in itself. Even the trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold which perisheth. He has refined us, but not with silver, he would not trust us there, the furnace of affliction is far more skilfully arranged than that. *To assay silver the heat must be nicely regulated.* "During the operation, the assayer's attention should be directed to the heat of the furnace, which must be neither too hot nor too cold: if too hot, minute portions of silver will be carried off with the lead, and so vitiate the assay; moreover, the pores of the cupel being more open, greater absorption will ensue, and there is liability to loss from that cause. One indication of an excess of heat in the furnace, is the rapid and perpendicular rising of the fumes to the ceiling of the muffle, the mode of checking and controlling which has been pointed out in the description of the improved furnace. When the fumes are observed to fall to the bottom of the muffle, the

furnace is then too cold; and if left unaltered, it will be found that the cupellation has been imperfectly performed, and the silver will not have entirely freed itself from the base metals. (Encyclopaedia Britannica.) *The assayer repeats his trying process.* Usually two or more trials of the same piece are made, so that great accuracy may be secured. Seven times silver is said to be purified, and the saints through varied trials reach the promised rest." *C. H. S.*

Verse 11. *Thou broughtest us into the net*, etc. Our enemies have pursued us (like to wild beasts taken by the hunter) into most grievous straits (1Sa 13:6). They have used us like beasts of burden, and laid sore loads upon us, which they have fast bound upon our backs. *Thou laidest affliction upon our loins.* *Coarctationem in lumbis*; we are not only hampered, as in a net, but fettered, as with chains; as if we had been in the jailor's or hangman's hands. *John Trapp.*

Verse 12. *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.* The agents are *men*. Man is a sociable living creature, and should converse with man in love and tranquillity. Man should be a supporter of man; is he become an overthrower? He should help and keep him up; doth he ride over him and tread him under foot? O apostasy, not only from religion, but even from humanity! *Quid homini inimicissimum? Homo.* (Seneca.) The greatest danger that befalls man comes whence it should least come, from man himself. *Caetera animantia*, says Pliny, *in suo genere, probe degunt*, &c. Lions fight not with lions; serpents spend not their venom on serpents; but man is the main suborner of mischief to his own kind...

1. *They ride.* What need they mount themselves upon beasts, that have feet malicious enough to trample on us? They have a "foot of pride," Ps 36:11, from which David prayed to be delivered; a presumptuous heel, which they dare lift up against God; and, therefore, a tyrannous toe, to spurn dejected men. They need not horses and mules, that can kick with the foot of a revengeful malice, Ps 32:9.

2. *Over us.* The way is broad enough wherein they travel, for it is the devil's road. They might well miss the poor, there is room enough besides; they need not ride over us. It were more brave for them to jostle with champions that will not give them the way. We never contend for their path; they have it without our envy, not without our pity. Why should they ride over us?

3. *Over our heads.* Is it not contentment enough to their pride to *ride*, to their malice to *ride over us*, but must they delight in bloodiness to ride over our

heads? Will not the breaking of our arms and legs, and such inferior limbs, satisfy their indignation? Is it not enough to rack our strength, to mock our innocence, to prey on our estates, but must they thirst after our bloods and lives? *Quo tendit saeva libido?* Whither will their madness run? But we must not tie ourselves to the letter. Here is a mystical or metamorphical gradation of their cruelty. Their riding is proud; their riding over us is malicious; and their riding over our heads is bloody oppression. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12. (*first clause*). The time was when the Bonners and butchers rode over the faces of God's saints, and made (Madefy, to moisten, to make wet) the earth with their bloods, every drop whereof begot a new believer. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12. *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.* This verse is like that sea (Mt 8:24) so tempestuous at first, that the vessel was covered with waves; but Christ's rebuke quieted all, and there followed a great calm. Here are cruel Nimrods riding over innocent heads, as they would over fallow lands; and dangerous passages through fire and water; but the storm is soon ended, or rather the passengers are landed. *Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.* So that this strain of David's music, or psalmody, consists of two notes—one mournful, the other mirthful; the one a touch of distress, the other of redress: which directs our course to an observation of *misery* and of *mercy*; of grievous misery, of gracious mercy. There is desolation and consolation in one verse: a deep dejection, as laid under the feet of beasts; a happy deliverance, *broughtest us out into a wealthy place.* In both these strains God hath his stroke; he is a principal in this concert. He is brought in for an *actor*, and for an *author*; and actor in the persecution, and author in the deliverance. *Thou causest*, etc; *Thou broughtest*, etc. In the one he is a causing worker; in the other a sole working cause. In the one he is joined with company: in the other he works alone. He hath a finger in the former; his whole hand is in the latter. We must begin with *misery* before we come to *mercy*. If there were no trouble, we should not know the worth of a deliverance. The passion of the saints is given, by the hearty and ponderous description, for very grievous; yet it is written in the forehead of the text, "The Lord caused it." *Thou causest men to ride*, etc. Hereupon, some wicked libertine may offer to rub his filthiness upon God's purity, and to plead an authentic derivation of all his villainy against the saints from the Lord's warrant: *He caused it.* We answer, to the justification of truth itself, that God doth ordain and order every persecution that striketh his children, without any allowance to the instrument that gives the blow. God works in the same action with others, not after the same manner. In the affliction of Job were three agents—God, Satan, and the Sabians. The devil works on his body, the

Sabeans on his goods; yet Job confessed a third party: "The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away." Here oppressors trample on the godly, and God is said to cause it. He causeth affliction for trial (so Ps 66:10-11: *Thou hast tried us*, etc.); they work it for malice; neither can God be accused nor they excused. *Thomas Adams*.

Verse 12. *Thou hast placed men over our heads.* Thus Jerome renders, although the Hebrew noun *vwga*, is in the singular, the word itself denotes *an obscure, mean man*, who is mentioned with indignity, but ought to be buried in oblivion. The singular noun is taken collectively, and so also is *wgvar*, with the affix. Such were the Egyptian and Babylonish idolaters, whom the Hebrew served. *To place any one over the head of another*, or, as the Hebrew word *tbkrrh* means, *to ride*, to be superior to, to subdue to oneself and subject, and to sit upon and insult, just as the horseman rules with the rein, and spur, and whip the beast which he rides. *Lorinus*.

Verse 12. *To ride over our heads.* This is an allusion to beasts of burden, and particularly to camels, whose heads the rider almost sits over, and so domineers over them as he pleases. *Thomas Fenton, in "Annotations on the Book of Job, and the Psalms."* 1732.

Verse 12. *We went through fire and through water.* The children of Israel when they had escaped the Red Sea, and seen their enemies the Egyptians dead, they thought all was cocksure, and therefore sang *Epicinia*, songs of rejoicing for the victory. But what followed within a while? The Lord stirred up another enemy against them from out their bowels, as it were, which was hunger, and this pinched them sorer, they thought, than the Egyptian. But was this the last? No; after the hunger came thirst, and this made them to murmur as much as the former; and after the thirst came fiery serpents, and fire and pestilence, and Amalekites, and Midianites, and what not? Thus hath it been with the church not only under the law, but also under Christ, as it might be easily declared unto you. Neither hath it been better with the several members thereof; they likewise have been made conformable to the body and to the Head. What a sight of temptations did Abraham endure? So Jacob, so Joseph, so the patriarchs, so the prophets? Yea, and all they that would live godly in Christ Jesus, though their sorrow in the end were turned to joy, yet they wept and lamented first. Though they were brought at the length to a wealthy place, yet they passed through fire and water first. *Miles Smith*, 1624.

Verse 12. *We went through fire and through water.* There was a great variety of such perils; and not only of several, but of contrary sorts: *We went through fire and through water*, either of which singly and alone denotes an extremity

of evils. Thus, through water (Ps 69:1-2): "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Or, through fire (Eze 15:7): "And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I set my face against them." But when through both successively, one after the other, this denotes an accumulation of miseries, or trials, indeed: as we read Isa 43:2, with God's promise to his people in such conditions: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Which promise is here, you see, acknowledged by the psalmist to have been performed: God was with the three children when they walked through the fire, in the very letter of Isaiah's speech; and with the children of Israel when they went through the water of the Red Sea. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 12. *We went through fire and through water.* In allusion, probably, to the ordeal by fire and water, which is of great antiquity. On the question who had interred the body of Polynices:

"All denied:
Offering, in proof of innocence, to grasp
The burning steel, to walk through fire, and take
Their solemn oath they knew not of the deed."

Sophocles. From T. S. Millington's "Testimony of the Heathen to the Truths of Holy Writ." 1863.

Verse 12. *Fire and water.* The Jewish law required both these for purification of spoil in war, where they could be borne. Nu 31:23: "Everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified through the water of separation." God's saints are, therefore, subject to both ordeals. *C. H. S.*

Verse 12. *But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.* Every word is sweetly significant, and amplifies God's mercy to us. Four especially are remarkable:—

1. The deliverer;
2. The deliverance;
3. The delivered; and,
4. Their felicity or blessed advancement.

So there is the deliverer, *aliquid celsitudinis*, *Thou*; in the delivery, *certitudinis*, *broughtest out*, in the delivered, *solitudinis*, *us*; in the happiness, *plenitudinis*, *into a wealthy place*. There is highness and lowness, sureness and fulness. The deliverer is great, the deliverance is certain, the distress grievous, the exaltation glorious. There is yet a first word, that like a key unlocks this golden gate of mercy, a *veruntamen*:—BUT. This is *vox respirationis*, a gasp that fetcheth back again the very life of comfort. *But thou broughtest*, etc. We were fearfully endangered into the hands of our enemies; they rode and trod upon us, and drove us through hard perplexities. *But thou*, etc. If there had been a full point or period at our misery, if those gulfs of persecution had quite swallowed us, and all our light of comfort had been thus smothered and extinguished we might have cried, *Periit spes nostra*, yea, *periit salus nostra*.—Our hope, our help is *quite* gone. He had mocked us that would have spoken, Be of good cheer. This same *but* is like a happy oar, that turns our vessel from the rocks of despair, and lands it at the haven of comfort. *Thomas Adams*.

Verse 12. (*second and third clause*).

1. The outlet of the trouble is happy. They are in fire and water, yet they get through them; we went through fire and water, and did not perish in the flames or floods. Whatever the troubles of the saints are, blessed be God there is a way through them.

2. The inlet to a better state is much more happy. *Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place*, into a well watered place; for the word is, *like the gardens of the Lord*, and therefore fruitful. *Matthew Henry*.

Verse 12. (*last clause*). Thou, O God, with the temptation hast given the issue. *Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place*.

1. Thou hast proved, and thou hast brought.

2. Thou laidest the trouble, and thou tookest it off; yea, and hast made us an ample recompense, for thou hast brought us to a moist, pleasant, lovely, fertile, rich place, a happy condition, a flourishing condition of things, so that thou hast made us to forget all our trouble. *William Nicholson*, in "*David's Harp strung and tuned*." 1662.

Verse 12. *A wealthy place*. The hand of God led them in that fire and water of affliction through which they went; but who led them out? The psalmist tells us in the next words: *Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place*; the margin saith, *into a moist place*. They were in fire and water before. *Fire* is the

extremity of heat and dryness; *water* is the extremity of moistness and coldness. *A moist place* notes a due temperament of heat and cold, of dryness and moistness, and therefore elegantly shadows that comfortable and contented condition into which the good hand of God had brought them, which is significantly expressed in our translation by *a wealthy place*; those places flourishing most in fruitfulness, and so in wealth, which are neither over hot nor over cold, neither over dry nor over moist. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 13. You see all the parts of this song; the whole concert or harmony of all is praising God. You see *quo loco*, in his house; *quo modo*, with burnt offering; *quo animo*, paying our vows. *Thomas Adams*.

Verse 13. *Burnt offerings.* For ourselves, be we sure that the best sacrifice we can give to God is obedience; not a dead beast, but a living soul. The Lord takes not delight in the blood of brutish creatures. It is the mind, the life, the soul, the obedience, that he requires: 1Sa 15:22, "To obey is better than sacrifice." Let this be our burnt offering, our holocaust, a sanctified body and mind given up to the Lord, Ro 12:1-2. First, the heart: "My son, give me thy heart." Is not the heart enough? No, the hand also: Isa 1:16, Wash the hands from blood and pollution. Is not the hand enough? No, the foot also: "Remove thy foot from evil." Is not the foot enough? No, the lips also: "Guard the doors of thy mouth;" Ps 34:13, "Refrain thy tongue from evil." Is not thy tongue enough? No, the ear also: "Let him that hath ears to hear, hear." Is not the ear enough? No, the eye also: "Let thine eyes be towards the Lord." Is not all this sufficient? No, give body and spirit: 1Co 6:20, "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." When the eyes abhor lustful objects, the ear slanders, the foot erring paths, the hands wrong and violence, the tongue flattery and blasphemy, the heart pride and hypocrisy; this is thy holocaust, thy whole burnt offering. *Thomas Adams*.

Verses 13, 15. In the *burnt offerings*, we see his approach to the altar with the common and general sacrifice; and next, in his *paying vows*, we see he has brought his *peace offerings* with him. Again, therefore, he says at the altar: *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings* (Ps 66:15). This is the general offering, brought from the best of his flock and herd. Then follow the *peace offerings*: *With the incense (trjq, fuming smoke) of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.* Having brought his offerings, he is in no haste to depart, notwithstanding; for his heart is full. Ere, therefore, he leaves the sanctuary, he utters the language of a soul at peace with God: Ps 66:16-20. This, truly, is one whom *the very God of peace* has sanctified, and whose whole spirit, and body, and soul he will preserve blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th 5:23. *Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verses 13-15. He tells what were the vows he promised in his troubles, and says he promised the richest sacrifice of cattle that could be made according to the law. These were three—rams, cows, and goats. Rams included lambs; cows included heifers; and goats, kids. *Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 14. *Which my lips have uttered.* Hebrew, *have opened*; that is which I have uttered, *diductis labiis*, with lips wide open. *Videmus qualiter vota nuncupari soleant*, saith Vatablus. Here we see after what sort vows used to be made, when we are under any pressing affliction; but when once delivered, how heavily many come off in point of payment. *John Trapp.*

Verse 14. Express mention is made of *opened lips* to indicate that the vows were made with great vehemence of mind, and in a state of need and pressure; so that his *lips* were *broken through* and widely opened. For the root, *huk* contains the idea of *opening anything with violence*; to *break open*, as the Latin expression is, *rumpere labia*. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 15. *I will offer*, etc. Thou shalt have the best of the herd and of the fold. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 15. *Fatlings.* For as I will not come empty into thy house, so I will not bring thee a niggardly present; but offer sacrifices of all sorts, and the best and choicest in every kind. *Symon Patrick.*

Verse 15. *Bullocks with goats.* That is, I will liberally provide for every part of the service at the tabernacle. *Thomas Scott.*

Verse 16. *Come and hear, all ye that fear God.* One reason why the saints are so often inviting all that fear God to come unto them is, because the saints see and know the great good that they shall get by those that fear God. The children of darkness are so wise in their generation as to desire most familiarity and acquaintance with those persons whom they conceive may prove most profitable and advantageous to them, and to pretend much friendship there where is hope of most benefit. And shall not the saints, the children of light, upon the same account wish and long for the society of those that fear God, because they see what great good they shall gain by them? It is no wonder that the company of those that fear God is so much in request, since it is altogether gainful and commodious; it's no wonder they have many invitations, since they are guests by which something is still gotten; and, indeed, among all persons living, those that fear God are the most useful and enriching. *Samuel Heskins, in "Soul Mercies Precious in the Eyes of Saints... set forth in a little Treatise on Ps 66:16." 1654.*

Verse 16. *All ye that fear God.* For such only will hear to good purpose; others either cannot, or care not. *And I will declare,* etc. Communicate unto you my soul secrets and experiments. There is no small good to be gotten by such declarations. Bilney, perceiving Latimer to be zealous without knowledge, came to him in his study and desired him for God's sake to hear his confession. "I did so, "saith Latimer, "and, to say the truth, by this confession I learned more than afore in many years. So from that time forward I began to smell the word of God, and forsake the school doctors, and such fooleries." *John Trapp.*

Verse 16. *Ye that fear God.* Observe the invitation given to those only *who fear God*, because "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; "he loosens the feet to *come*, opens the ears to *hear*; and therefore, he who has no fear of God will be called to no purpose, either to come or to hear. *Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 16. *I will declare.* Consider the ends which a believer should purpose in the discharge of this duty ("of communicating Christian experience"). The principal end he should have in view when he declares his experience is the glory of that God, who hath dealt so bountifully with him. He would surely have the Lord exalted for his faithfulness and goodness to him; he would have it published that the name of the Lord might be great; that sinners might know that his God is faithful to his word; that he hath not only engaged to be "a present help in time of need, "but that he hath found him in reality to be so. As he knows the enemies of God are ready enough to charge him with neglect of his people, because of the trials and afflictions they are exercised with; so he would, in contradiction to them, declare what he hath found in his own experience, that in very faithfulness he afflicts those that are dearest to him. And with what lustre doth the glory of God shine, when his children are ready to acknowledge that he never called them out to any duty but his grace was sufficient for them; that he never laid his hand upon them in any afflictive exercise, but he, at the same time, supplied them with all those supports which they stood in need of? I say, for Christians thus to stand up, on proper occasions, and bear their experimental testimony to the faithfulness and goodness of God, what a tendency hath it to make the name of the Lord, who hath been their strong tower, glorious in the midst of the earth... How may we blush and be ashamed, that we have so much conversation in the world and so little about what God hath done for our souls? It is a very bad sign upon us, in our day, that the things of God are generally postponed; while either the affairs of state, or the circumstances of outward life, or other things, perhaps, of a more trifling nature, are the general subjects of our conversation. What! are we ashamed of the noblest, the most interesting subject? It is but a poor sign that we have felt anything of it, if we think it unnecessary to declare it to our fellow

Christians. What think you? Suppose any two of us were cast upon a barbarous shore, where we neither understood the language, nor the customs of the inhabitants, and were treated by them with reproach and cruelty; do you think we should not esteem it a happiness that we could unburden ourselves to each other, and communicate our griefs and troubles? And shall we think it less so, while we are in such a world as this, in a strange land, and at a distance from our Father's house? Shall we neglect conversing with each other? No; let our conversation not only be in heaven, but about spiritual and heavenly things. *Samuel Wilson (1703-1750), in "Sermons on Various Subjects."*

Verse 16. *I will declare.* After we are delivered from the dreadful apprehensions of the wrath of God, it is our duty to be publicly thankful. It is for the glory of our Healer to speak of the miserable wounds that once pained us; and of that kind hand that saved us when we were brought very low. It is for the glory of our Pilot to tell of the rocks and of the sands; the many dangers and threatening calamities that he, by his wise conduct, made us to escape: and to see us safe on the shore, may cause others that are yet afflicted, and tossed with tempests, to look to him for help; for he is able and ready to save them as well as us. We must, like soldiers, when a tedious war is over, relate our combats, our fears, our dangers, with delight; and make known our experiences to doubting, troubled Christians, and to those that have not yet been under such long and severe trials as we have been. *Timothy Rogers (1660-1729), in "A Discourse on Trouble of Mind."*

Verse 17. This verse may be rendered thus:—*I cried unto him with my mouth, and his exaltation was under my tongue*; that is, I was considering and meditating how I might lift up and exalt the name of God, and make his praise glorious. Holy thoughts are said to be under the tongue when we are in a preparation to bring them forth. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 17. *He was extolled with my tongue.* It is a proof that prayer has proceeded from unworthy motives, when the blessings which succeed it are not acknowledged with as much fervency as when they were originally implored. The ten lepers all cried for mercy, and all obtained it, but only one returned to render thanks. *John Morison.*

Verse 17. *He was extolled with my tongue: literally an extolling (of Him was) under my tongue*, implying fulness of praise (Ps 10:7). A store of praise being conceived as *under the tongue*, whence a portion might be taken on all occasions. The sense is, *scarcely had I cried unto him when, by delivering me, he gave me abundant reason to extol him.* (Ps 34:6.) *A. R. Faussett.*

Verse 17. *With my tongue.* Let the praise of God be in thy tongue, under thy tongue, and upon thy tongue, that it may shine before all men, and that they may see that thy heart is good. The fish *lucerna* has a shining tongue, (A reviewer condemns us for quoting false natural history, but no intelligent reader will be misled thereby.—Editor.) from which it takes its name; and in the depths of the sea the light of its tongue reveals it: if thy heart has a tongue, shining with the praises of God, it will sufficiently show itself of what sort it is. Hence the old saying, "Speak, that I may see thee." *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* The very supposition that "if he regarded iniquity in his heart, the Lord would not hear him," implies the possibility that such may be the state even of believers; and there is abundant reason to fear that it is in this way their prayers are so often hindered, and their supplications so frequently remain unanswered. Nor is it difficult to conceive how believers may be chargeable with regarding iniquity in their heart, even amidst all the solemnity of coming into the immediate presence of God, and directly addressing him in the language of prayer and supplication. It is possible that they may put themselves into such a situation, in a state of mind but little fitted for engaging in that holy exercise; the world, in one form or another, may for the time have the ascendancy in their hearts; and there may have been so much formality in their confessions, and so much indifference in their supplications, that when the exercise is over, they could not honestly declare that they really meant what they acknowledged, or seriously desired what they prayed for. A Christian, it is true, could not be contented to remain in a state like this; and, when he is awakened from it, as he sooner or later will be, he cannot fail to look back upon it with humiliation and shame. But we fear there are seasons in which believers themselves may make a very near approach to such a state; and what then is the true interpretation of prayers offered up at such a moment? It is in fact saying, that there is something which, for the time, they prefer to what they are formally asking of God; that, though the blessing which they do ask may be for a time withheld, yet they would find a compensation in the enjoyment of the worldly things which do at the moment engross their affections; and that, in reality, they would not choose to have at that instant such an abundant communication of spiritual influence imparted to them, as would render these worldly objects less valuable in their estimation, and would turn the whole tide of their affections towards spiritual things... The Christian may sometimes betake himself to prayer, to ask counsel of God in some perplexity regarding divine truth, or to seek direction in some doubtful point of duty; but, instead of being prepared fairly to exercise his judgment in the hope that, while doing so, the considerations that lie of the side of truth will be made to his mind clear and

convincing; he may have allowed his inclinations so to influence and bias his judgment towards the side of error, or in favour of the line of conduct which he wishes to pursue, that when he asks counsel it may only be in the hope that his previous opinion will be confirmed, and when he seeks direction it is in reality on a point about which he was previously determined... Another case is, I fear, but too common, and in which the believer may be still more directly chargeable with regarding iniquity in his heart. It is possible that there may be in his heart or life something which he is conscious is not altogether as it should be—some earthly attachment which he cannot easily justify—or some point of conformity to the maxims and practices of the world, which he finds it difficult to reconcile with christian principle; and yet all the struggle which these have from time to time cost him, may only have been an effort of ingenuity on his part to retain them without doing direct violence to conscience—a laborious getting up of arguments whereby to show how they may be defended, or in what way they may lawfully be gone into; while the true and simple reason of his going into them, namely, the love of the world, is all the while kept out of view. And, as an experimental proof of how weak and inconclusive all these arguments are, and at the same time how unwilling he still is to relinquish his favourite objects, he may be conscious that in confessing his sins he leaves them out of the enumeration, rather because he would willingly pass them over, than because he is convinced that they need not be there; he may feel that he cannot and dare not make them the immediate subject of solemn and deliberate communing with God; and, after all his multiplied and ingenuous defences, he may be reconciled to them at last, only by ceasing to agitate the question whether they are lawful or not. *Robert Gordon, D.D., 1825.*

Verse 18. Whence is it that a man's regarding or loving sin in his heart hinders his prayers from acceptance with God?

1. The first reason is, because in this case he cannot pray by the Spirit. All prayers that are acceptable with God are the breathings of his own Spirit with us. Ro 8:26. As without the intercession of Christ we cannot have our prayers accepted, so without the intercession of the Spirit we cannot pray...

2. The second reason is, because as long as a man regards iniquity in his heart he cannot pray in faith; that is, he cannot build a rational confidence upon any promise that God will accept him. Now, faith always respects the promise, and promise of acceptance is made only to the upright: so long, therefore, as men cherish a love of sin in their heart, they either understand not the promises, and so they pray without understanding, or they understand them, and yet misapply

them to themselves, and so they pray in presumption: in neither case, they have little cause to hope for acceptance...

3. The third reason is, because while we regard iniquity in our hearts we cannot pray with fervency; which, next to sincerity, is the great qualification of prayer, to which God has annexed a promise of acceptance (Mt 11:12): "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Mt 7:7: those only that seek are like to find, and those that knock to have admittance; all which expressions denote vehemence and importunity. Now, the cause of vehemence, in our prosecution of any good, is our love of it; for proportionable to the affection we bear to anything is the earnestness of our desires and the diligence of our pursuit after it. So long, therefore, as the love of sin possesses our hearts, our love to spiritual things is dull, heavy, inactive, and our prayers for them must needs be answerable. O the wretched fallacy that the soul will here put upon itself! At the same time it will love its sin and pray against it; at the same time it will entreat for grace, with a desire not to prevail: as a father confesses of himself, that before his conversion he would pray for chastity, with a secret reserve in his wishes that God would not grant his prayer. Such are the mysterious, intricate treacheries by which the love of sin will make a soul deceive and circumvent itself. How languidly and faintly will it pray for spiritual mercies; conscience, in the meanwhile, giving the lie to every such petition! The soul, in this case, cannot pray against sin in earnest; it fights against it, but neither with hope nor intent to conquer; as lovers, usually, in a game one against another, with a desire to lose. So, then, while we regard iniquity, how is it possible for us to regard spiritual things, the only lawful object of our prayers? and, if we regard them not, how can we be urgent with God for the giving of them? And where there is no fervency on our part, no wonder if there is no answer on God's. *Robert South, 1633-1716.*

Verse 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Though the subject matter of a saint's prayer be founded on the word, yet if the end he aims at be not levelled right, this is a door at which his prayer will be stopped: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Jas 4:3. Take, I confess, a Christian in his right temper, and he aims at the glory of God; yet, as a needle that is touched with a loadstone may be removed from its point to which nature hath espoused it, though trembling till it again recovers it; so a gracious soul may in a particular act and request vary from this end, being jogged by Satan, yea, disturbed by an enemy nearer home—his own unmortified corruption. Do you not think it possible for a saint, in distress of body and spirit, to pray for health in the one, and comfort in the other, with too selfish a respect to his own ease and quiet? Yes, surely; and to

pray for gifts and assistance in some eminent service, with an eye to his own credit and applause; to pray for a child with too inordinate a desire that the honour of his house may be built up in him. And this may be understood as the sense, in part, of that expression, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*. For though to desire our own health, peace, and reputation, be not an iniquity, when contained within the limits that God hath set; yet, when they overflow at such a height, as to overtop the glory of God, yea, to stand but in a level with it, they are a great abomination. That which in the first or second degree is wholesome food, would be rank poison in the fourth or fifth: therefore, Christian, catechize thyself, before thou prayest: O, my soul, what sends thee on this errand? Know but thy own mind what thou prayest for, and thou mayest soon know God's mind how thou shalt speed. Secure God his glory, and thou mayest soon know God's mind how thou shalt speed. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*

1. They regard iniquity in their heart, who practise it secretly, who are under restraint from the world, but are not possessed of an habitual fear of the omniscient God, the searcher of all hearts, and from whose eyes there is no covering of thick darkness where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. Jer 23:24.

2. They regard iniquity in the heart, who entertain and indulge the desire of sin, although in the course of providence they may be restrained from the actual commission of it. I am persuaded the instances are not rare, of men feeding upon sinful desires, even when through want of opportunity, through the fear of man, or through some partial restraint of conscience, they dare not carry them into execution.

3. They regard iniquity in their heart, who reflect upon past sins with delight, or without sincere humiliation of mind. Perhaps our real disposition, both towards sin and duty, may be as certainly discovered by the state of our minds after, as in the time of action. The strength and suddenness of temptation may betray even a good man into the commission of sin; the backwardness of heart and power of inward corruption may make duty burdensome and occasion many defects in the performance; but every real Christian remembers his past sins with unfeigned contrition of spirit, and a deep sense of unworthiness before God; and the discharge of his duty, however difficult it may have been at the time, affords him the utmost pleasure on reflection. It is otherwise with many; they can remember their sins without sorrow, they can speak of them without shame, and sometimes even with a mixture of boasting and vain glory. Did you

never hear them recall their past follies, and speak of them with such relish, that it seems to be more to renew the pleasure than to regret the sin? Even supposing such persons to have forsaken the practice of some sin, if they can thus look upon them with inward complacency, their seeming reformation must be owing to a very different cause from renovation of heart.

4. They regard iniquity in their heart, who look upon the sins of others with approbation; or, indeed, who can behold them without grief. Sin is so abominable a thing, so dishonouring to God, and so destructive to the souls of men, that no real Christian can witness it without concern. Hence it is so frequently taken notice of in Scripture, as the character of a servant of God, that he mourns for the sins of others. Ps 119:136,158.

5. In the last place, I suspect that they regard sin in the heart, who are backward to bring themselves to the trial, and who are not truly willing that God himself would search and try them. If any, therefore, are unwilling to be tried, if they are backward to self examination, it is an evidence of a strong and powerful attachment to sin. It can proceed from nothing but from a secret dread of some disagreeable discovery, or the detection of some lust which they cannot consent to forsake... There are but too many who though they live in the practice of sin, and regard iniquity in their hearts, do yet continue their outward attendance on the ordinances of divine institution, and at stated times lay hold of the seals of God's covenant. Shall they find any acceptance with him? No. He counts it a profane mockery; he counts it a sacrilegious usurpation. Ps 50:16-17. Shall they have any comfort in it? No: unless in so far as in righteous judgment he suffers them to be deceived; and they are deceived, and they are most unhappy, who lie longest under the delusion. Ps 50:21. Shall they have any benefit by it? No: instead of appeasing his wrath, it provokes his vengeance; instead of enlightening their minds, it blinds their eyes; instead of sanctifying their nature, it hardens their hearts. See a description of those who had been long favoured with outward privileges and gloried in them. Joh 12:39-40. So that nothing is more essential to an acceptable approach to God in the duties of his worship in general, and particularly to receiving the seals of his covenant, than a thorough and universal separation from all known sin. Job 11:13-14. *John Witherspoon (1722-1749), in a Sermon entitled "The Petitions of the Insincere Unavailing."*

Verses 18-20. Lord, I find David making a syllogism, in mood and figure, two propositions he perfected. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me; but verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.* Now I expected that David should have concluded thus: "Therefore I regard not wickedness in my heart; but far otherwise he concludes": *Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.* Thus

David had deceived, but not wronged me. I looked that he should have clapped the crown on his own, and he puts it on God's head. I will learn this excellent logic; for I like David's better than Aristotle's syllogisms, that whatsoever the premise be, I make God's glory the conclusion. *Thomas Fuller*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 3. The terrible in God's works of nature and providence.

Verse 4.

1. *Who?* All the earth.

- (a) All, collectively, all classes and tribes.
- (b) All numerically.
- (c) All harmoniously.

2. *What?* Shall worship and sing.

- (a) Humiliation; then,
- (b) Exultation.

3. *When?* Shall, &c. Denotes

- (a) Futurity.
- (b) Certainty. God has spoken it. All things are tending towards it. *G. R.*

Verse 5. Here is—

1. A subject for general study: the *Works of God*.

2. For particular study: *his doings towards*, etc.

- (a) These are the most wonderful.
- (b) In these we are most concerned.

Verse 7. Sovereignty, immutability ("for ever"), and omniscience,—the enemies of proud rebels.

Verse 8. (*last clause*). To get a hearing for the gospel—difficult, necessary, and possible. Ways and means for so doing.

Verses 8-9.

1. Praise *to*.

(a) As God.

(b) As *our* God.

2. Praise *for*. Preservation.

(a) Of natural life.

(b) Of spiritual life.

3. Praise *by, ye people*.

(a) On your own account.

(b) On account of others.

Or

(a) Individually.

(b) Unitedly. *G. R.*

Verse 9. Perseverance the subject of gratitude.

1. The maintenance of the inner life.

2. The integrity of the outward character.

Verse 10. The assaying of the saints.

Verse 10.

1. The design of the afflictions.

(a) To prove them.

(b) To reprove them.

2. The illustration of that design. As silver, etc.

3. The issue of the trial.

Verses 11-12. The hand of God should be acknowledged.

1. In our temptations: *Thou broughtest us*.

2. In our bodily afflictions: *Thou laidest*, etc.

3. In our persecutions: *Thou hast caused*, etc.
4. In our deliverances: *Thou broughtest us out*, etc. *G. R.*

Verse 12. *Fire and water.* Varied trials.

1. Discover different evils.
2. Test all parts of manhood.
3. Educate varied graces.
4. Endear many promises.
5. Illustrate divine attributes.
6. Afford extensive knowledge.
7. Create capacity for the varied joys of heaven.

Verse 12. (*first clause*). The rage of oppression. *Thomas Adam's Sermon.*

Verse 12. (*last clause*). A plentiful place, free from penury; a pleasant place, void of sorrow; a safe place, free from dangers and distresses. *Daniel Wilcocks.*

Verse 12. (*last clause*). The victory of patience, with the expiration of malice. *Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

Verse 12. (*last clause*). The wealth of a soul whom God has tried and delivered. Among other riches he has the wealth of experience, of strengthened graces, of confirmed faith, and of sympathy for others.

Verse 13. God's house; or, the place of praises. *Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

Verses 13-15.

1. Resolutions made (Ps 66:13).
 - (a) What? To offer praise.
 - (b) Why? For deliverance.
 - (c) Where? In thy house.
2. Resolutions uttered (Ps 66:14).
 - (a) To God.
 - (b) Before men.
3. Resolutions fulfilled.

- (a) In public acknowledgment.
- (b) In heartfelt gratitude.
- (c) In more frequent attendance at the house of God.
- (d) The renewed self dedication.
- (e) In increased liberality. *G. R.*

Verse 16.

1. What has God done for the soul of every Christian?
 2. Why does the Christian wish to declare what God has done for his soul?
 3. Why does he wish to make this declaration to those who only fear God?
- (a) Because they alone can understand such a declaration.
 - (b) They alone will really believe him.
 - (c) They only will listen with interest, or join with him in praising his Benefactor. *E. Payson.*

Verse 16.

1. Religious teaching should be *simple: I will declare.*
2. *Earnest: Come and hear.*
3. *Seasonable: All ye that.*
4. *Discriminating: Fear God.*
5. *Experimental: What he hath, etc.*

Verse 17.

1. The two principal parts of devotion. Prayer and praise.
 2. Their degree. In prayer, crying. In praise, extolling.
 3. Their order.
- (a) Prayer.
 - (b) Then praise. What is won by prayer is worn in praise.

Verses 18-19.

1. The test admitted.
2. The test applied.
3. The test approved.

Verse 19. The fact that God has heard prayer.

Verse 20. The mercy of God.

1. In permitting prayer.
2. In inclining to prayer.
3. In hearing prayer.

WORK UPON THE SIXTY-SIXTH PSALM

"A fourth Proceeding in the Harmony of King David's Harp. That is to say; *A Godly and learned Exposition of six Psalms more of the princely Prophet David, beginning with the 62, and ending with the 67, Psalm.*" Done in Latin by the reverend Doctor VICTORINUS STRIGELIUS, Professor of Diunitie in the university of Lypsia in Germany, Anno 1562. Translated into English by Richard Robinson, Citizen of London. 1596... London... 1596.

(The above is the "*fourth*," and, as far as we have been able to discover, the *last* part of R. Robinson's Translation of Strigelius. The four parts, separately titled and paged, contain Expositions of Psalms 1-67. Dates: 1591-3-5-6.)

Psalm 67

Exposition
 Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
 Hints to the Village Preacher
 Other Works

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician.* Who he was matters not, and who we may be is also of small consequence, so long as the Lord is glorified. *On Neginoth*, or upon stringed instruments. This is the fifth Psalm so entitled, and no doubt like the others was meant to be sung with the accompaniment of "harpers harping with their harps." No author's name is given, but he would be a bold man who should attempt to prove that David did not write it. We will be hard pushed before we will look for any other author upon whom to father these anonymous odes which lie side by side with those ascribed to David, and wear a family likeness to them. *A Psalm or Song.* Solemnity and vivacity are here united. A Psalm is a song, but all songs are not Psalms: this is both one and the other.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.* This is a fit refrain to the benediction of the High Priest in the name of the Lord, as recorded in Nu 6:24-25. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." It begins at the beginning with a cry for *mercy*. Forgiveness of sin is always the first link in the chain of mercies experienced by us. Mercy is a foundation attribute in our salvation. The best saints and the worst sinners may unite in this petition. It is addressed to the God of mercy, by those who feel their need of mercy, and it implies the death of all legal hopes or claims of merit. Next, the church begs for a blessing; *bless us*—a very comprehensive and far reaching prayer. When we bless God we do but little, for *our* blessings are but words, but when God blesses he enriches us indeed, for his blessings are gifts and deeds. But his blessing alone is not all his people crave, they desire a personal consciousness of his favour, and pray for a smile from his face. These three petitions include all that we need here or hereafter. This verse may be regarded as the prayer of Israel, and spiritually of the Christian church. The largest charity is shown in this Psalm, but it begins at home. The whole church, each church, and each little company, may rightly pray, *bless us*. It would, however, be very wrong to let our charity end where it begins, as some do; our love must make long marches, and our prayers must have a wide sweep, we must embrace the whole world in our intercessions. Selah. Lift up the heart, lift up the voice. A higher key, a sweeter note is called for.

Verse 2. *That thy way may be known upon earth.* As showers which first fall upon the hills afterwards run down in streams into the valleys, so the blessing

of the Most High comes upon the world through the church. We are blessed for the sake of others as well as ourselves. God deals in a way of mercy with his saints, and then they make that way known far and wide, and the Lord's name is made famous in the earth. Ignorance of God is the great enemy of mankind, and the testimonies of the saints, experimental and grateful, overcome this deadly foe. God has set a way and method of dealing out mercy to men, and it is the duty and privilege of a revived church to make that way to be everywhere known. Thy saving health among all nations, or, *thy salvation*. One likes the old words, "saving health," yet as they are not the words of the Spirit but only of our translators, they must be given up: the word is *salvation*, and nothing else. This all nations need, but many of them do not know it, desire it, or seek it; our prayer and labour should be, that the knowledge of salvation may become as universal as the light of the sun. Despite the gloomy notions of some, we cling to the belief that the kingdom of Christ will embrace the whole habitable globe, and that all flesh shall see the salvation of God: for this glorious consummation we agonize in prayer.

Verse 3. *Let the people praise thee, O God.* Cause them to own thy goodness and thank thee with all their hearts; let nations do this, and do it continually, being instructed in thy gracious way. Let all the people praise thee. May every man bring his music, every citizen his canticle, every peasant his praise, every prince his psalm. All are under obligations to thee, to thank thee will benefit all, and praise from all will greatly glorify thee; therefore, O Lord, give all men the grace to adore thy grace, the goodness to see thy goodness. What is here expressed as a prayer in our translation, may be read as a prophecy, if we follow the original Hebrew.

Verse 4. *O let the nations be glad and sing for joy,* or, they shall joy and triumph. When men know God's way and see his salvation, it brings to their hearts much happiness. Nothing creates gladness so speedily, surely, and abidingly as the salvation of God. Nations never will be glad till they follow the leadership of the great Shepherd; they may shift their modes of government from monarchies to republics, and from republics to communes, but they will retain their wretchedness till they bow before the Lord of all. What a sweet word is that *to sing for joy!* Some sing for form, others for show, some as a duty, others as an amusement, but to sing from the heart, because overflowing joy must find a vent, this is to sing indeed. Whole nations will do this when Jesus reigns over them in the power of his grace. We have heard hundreds and even thousands sing in chorus, but what will it be to hear whole nations lifting up their voices, as the noise of many waters and like great thunders. When shall

the age of song begin? When shall groans and murmurs be exchanged for holy hymns and joyful melodies?

For thou shalt judge the people righteously. Wrong on the part of governors is a fruitful source of national woe, but where the Lord rules, rectitude is supreme. He doeth ill to none. His laws are righteousness itself. He rights all wrongs and releases all who are oppressed. Justice on the throne is a fit cause for national exultation. And govern the nations upon earth. He will lead them as a shepherd his flock, and through his grace they shall willingly follow, then will there be peace, plenty, and prosperity. It is a great condescension on God's part to become the Shepherd of nations, and to govern them for their good: it is a fearful crime when a people, who know the salvation of God, apostatize and say to the Lord, "Depart from us." There is some cause for trembling lest our nation should fall into this condemnation; may God forbid. Selah. Before repeating the chorus, the note is again elevated, that full force may be given to the burst of song and the accompaniment of harps.

"Strings and voices, hands and hearts,
In the concert bear your parts;
All that breathe, your Lord adore,
Praise him, Praise him, evermore!"

Verse 5. These words are no vain repetition, but are a chorus worthy to be sung again and again. The great theme of the psalm is the participation of the Gentiles in the worship of Jehovah; the psalmist is full of it, he hardly knows how to contain or express his joy.

Verse 6. *Then shall the earth yield her increase.* Sin first laid a curse on the soil, and grace alone can remove it. Under tyrannical governments lands become unproductive; even the land which flowed with milk and honey is almost a wilderness under Turkish rule; but, when the principles of true religion shall have elevated mankind, and the dominion of Jesus shall be universally acknowledged, the science of tillage shall be perfected, men shall be encouraged to labour, industry shall banish penury, and the soil shall be restored to more than its highest condition of fertility. We read that the Lord turneth "a fruitful land into barrenness, "for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, and observation confirms the truth of the divine threatening; but even under the law it was promised, "The Lord shall make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land for good." There is certainly an intimate relation between moral and physical evil, and between spiritual and physical good. Alexander notes that the Hebrew is in the past tense, and he concludes that it is ungrammatical to render it in the

future; but to us it seems that the prophet bard, hearing the nations praise the Lord, speaks of the bounteous harvest as already given in consequence. On the supposition that all the people praise Jehovah, the earth has yielded her increase. The future in the English appears to be the clearest rendering of the Hebrew. And God, even our own God, shall bless us. He will make earth's increase to be a real blessing. Men shall see in his gifts the hand of that same God whom Israel of old adored, and Israel, especially, shall rejoice in the blessing, and exult in her own God. We never love God aright till we know him to be ours, and the more we love him the more we long to be fully assured that he is ours. What dearer name can we give to him than "mine own God." The spouse in the song has no sweeter canticle than "my beloved is mine and I am his." Every believing Jew must feel a holy joy at the thought that the nations shall be blessed by Abraham's God; but every Gentile believer also rejoices that the whole world shall yet worship the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our Father and our God.

Verse 7. *God shall bless us.* The prayer of the first verse is the song of the last. We have the same phrase twice, and truly the Lord's blessing is manifold; he blesses and blesses and blesses again. How many are his beatitudes! How choice his benedictions! They are the peculiar heritage of his chosen. He is the Saviour of all men, but specially of them that believe. In this verse we find a song for all future time. God shall bless us is our assured confidence; he may smite us, or strip us, or even slay us, but he must bless us. He cannot turn away from doing good to his elect. And all the ends of the earth shall fear him. The far off shall fear. The ends of the earth shall end their idolatry, and adore their God. All tribes, without exception, shall feel a sacred awe of the God of Israel. Ignorance shall be removed, insolence subdued, injustice banished, idolatry abhorred, and the Lord's love, light, life, and liberty, shall be over all, the Lord himself being King of kings and Lord of lords. *Amen, and Amen.*

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. How admirably balanced are the parts of this missionary song! The people of God long to see all the nations participating in their privileges, "visited with God's salvation, and gladdened with the gladness of his nation" (Ps 106:5). They long to hear all the nationalities giving thanks to the Lord, and hallowing his name; to see the face of the whole earth, which sin has darkened so long, smiling with the brightness of a second Eden. This is not a vapid sentiment. The desire is so expressed as to connect with it the thought of duty and responsibility. For how do they expect that the happy times are to be reached? They trust, in the first instance, to the general diffusion of the

knowledge of God's way, the spreading abroad of the truth regarding the way of salvation. With a view to that, they cry for a time of quickening from the presence of the Lord, and take encouragement in this prayer from the terms of the divinely appointed benediction. As if they had said, "Hast thou not commanded the sons of Aaron to put thy name upon us, and to say: The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord cause his face to shine on thee and be gracious to thee? Remember that sure word of thine. God be gracious unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us. Let us be thus blessed, and we shall in our turn become a blessing. All the families of the earth shall, through us, become acquainted with thy salvation." Such is the church's expectation. And who shall say it is unreasonable? If the little company of a hundred and twenty disciples who met in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, all of them persons of humble station, and inconspicuous talents, were endued with such power by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that within three hundred years the paganism of the empire was overthrown, one need not fear to affirm that, in order to the evangelisation of the world, nothing more is required than that the churches of Christendom be baptised with a fresh effusion of the same Spirit of power. *William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm. There are seven stanzas; twice three two line stanzas, having one of three lines in the middle, which forms the clasp or spangle of the septiad, a circumstance which is strikingly appropriate to the fact that the psalm is called "the Old Testament Paternoster" in some of the old expositors. *Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 1. *God be merciful unto us, and bless us*, etc. God forgives, then he gives; till he be merciful to pardon our sins through Christ, he cannot bless or look kindly on us sinners. All our enjoyments are but blessings in bullion, till gospel grace and pardoning mercy stamp and make them current. God cannot so much as bear any good will to us, till Christ makes peace for us; "On earth peace, good will toward men." Lu 2:14. And what joy can a sinner take, though it were to hear of a kingdom fallen to him, if he may not have it with God's good will. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 1. *God be merciful unto us.* Hugo attributes these words to penitents; *Bless us*, to those setting out in the Christian life; *Cause his face to shine upon us*, to those who have attained, or the sanctified. The first seek for pardon, the second for justifying peace, the third for edification and the grace of contemplation. *Lorinus.*

Verses 1-2. Connect the last clause of Ps 67:1 with the first of Ps 67:2, and observe that God made his face to shine upon Moses, and made known to him

his way. "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel, "as if the common people could only see the deeds of the Lord, but his way, his plans, his secrets were revealed only to him upon whom the light of God's face had shone. *C. H. S.*

Verse 2. *That thy way may be known*, etc. The psalmist here supposes that there *are* certain rules or principles, in accordance with which God bestows blessings on mankind; and he prays that those rules and principles may be everywhere made known upon the earth. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2. *That thy way may be known*, etc. By nature we know little of God, and nothing of Christ, or the way of salvation by him. The eye of the creature, therefore, must be opened to see the way of life before he can by faith get into it. God doth not use to waft souls to heaven like passengers in a ship, who are shut under the hatches, and see nothing all the way they are sailing to their port; if so, that prayer might have been spared which the psalmist, inspired of God, breathes forth in the behalf of the blind Gentiles: *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations*. As faith is not a naked assent, with affiance and innitency (Act of leaning on) on Christ; so neither is it a blind assent, without some knowledge. If, therefore, you continue still in thy brutish ignorance, and knowest not so much as who Christ is, and what he hath done for the salvation of poor sinners, and what thou must do to get interest in him, thou art far enough from believing. If the day be not broke in thy soul, much less is the Sun of Righteousness arisen by faith in thy soul. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 2. *That thy way may be known*. The sinful Jew, obstinate in his unbelief, shall see and hate. He shall see, and be enraged at the salvation of the Gentiles; but let us see and *know*, that is, love. For *to know* is often put for *to love*, as in the passages—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them: I know mine, and am known of mine; "that is, I love my own sheep, and they love me... There is here a sudden transition from the third person to the second, that in speaking of God he might not say, "*His way*," or "*his salvation*," but *Thy way*, and *Thy salvation* setting forth the vehemence of an ardent suppliant, and the grace of God as he reveals himself to that suppliant while still pouring forth his prayers. *Gerhohus (1093-1169).*

Verse 2. *That thy way may be known*, etc. As light, so the participation of God's light is communicative: we must not pray for ourselves alone, but for all others, that God's way may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations. *Thy way*; that is, thy will, thy word, thy works. God's will must be known on earth, that it may be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Except we know our Master's will, how shall we do it? *Ergo*, first pray with David here:

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth; and then, Let all the people praise thee. God's will is revealed in his word, and his word is his way wherein we must walk, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. Or, *Thy way*; that is, thy works, as David elsewhere (Ps 25:10): "All thy ways of the Lord are mercy and truth." Or, as others (Augustine; Jerome; Hilary) most fitly: *Thy way*, that is, thy *Christ*; "*Thy saving health*", that is, thy *Jesus*: for "I am the way," saith our Saviour (Joh 14:6): "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me;" wherefore, "*Let thy Son be known upon earth; thy Jesus among all nations.*" *John Boys.*

Verse 3. *Let the people praise thee.* Mark the sweet order of the blessed Spirit: first, mercy; than, knowledge; last of all, praising of God. We cannot see his countenance except he be merciful to us; and we cannot praise him except his way be known upon earth. His mercy breeds knowledge; his knowledge, praise. *John Boys.*

Verse 3. *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.* What then? "*Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*" We have comforts increased, the more we praise God for what we have already received. The more vapours go up, the more showers come down; as the rivers receive, so they pour out, and all run into the sea again. There is a constant circular course and recourse from the sea, unto the sea; so there is between God and us; the more we praise him, the more our blessings come down; and the more his blessings come down, the more we praise him again; so that we do not so much bless God as bless ourselves. When the springs lie low, we pour a little water into the pump, not to enrich the fountain, but to bring up more for ourselves. *Thomas Manton.*

Verse 3. This verse is exceedingly emphatic.

1. First, by an apostrophe to God, in the pronoun, Thee. As if he said: Let the people praise *thee*, not strange gods; for thou art the only true God.

2. Secondly, inasmuch as it is not said, Let *us* praise thee, O God; but let the *people* praise thee, and let *all* the people. For here is expressed the longing of the pious heart, and its fond desire that God should be praised and magnified throughout all lands and by all people of the round earth.

3. Thirdly, by the iteration, in which the same particle is repeated in this and the fifth verse no less than four times, as if the duty could not be sufficiently

inculcated. It is not enough to have said it once; it is delightful to repeat it again. *Wolfgang Musculus (1497-1563)*.

Verse 4. *For thou shalt judge the people righteously*, etc. The Psalmist may here seem to contradict himself; for if mercy make men rejoice, then judgment occasions men to tremble. Answer is made, that all such as have known the ways of the Lord, and rejoice in the strength of his salvation, all such as have the pardon of their sins assured and sealed, fear not that dreadful assize, because they know the judge is their advocate. Or, (as Jerome,) let all nations rejoice, because God doth judge righteously, being the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Ac 10:34. Or, *let all nations rejoice*, because God doth govern all nations; that whereas theretofore they wandered in the fond imaginations of their own hearts, in wry ways, in byways; now they are directed by the Spirit of truth to walk in God's highway, which leads unto the celestial Jerusalem; now they shall know Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. For judging is often used for ruling. 1Sa 7:15 2Co 1:10. So David doth here expound himself: *thou shalt judge*. that is, *thou shalt govern the nations*. *John Boys*.

Verse 4. *Govern*. Lead and guide them as the shepherd his flock. *Benjamin Boothroyd*.

Verse 4. *And lead(margin) the nations*. God now *overrules* the nations in their ways, but surely they are *led* by another guide. There is a bridle in their jaws causing them to err. They are held and shaken in the sieve of vanity, until he come to whom the government pertains. *Arthur Pridham*.

Verses 5-6. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the *people praise thee!* What then? *Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us*. Our unthankfulness is the cause of the earth's unfruitfulness. While man is blessing God *for* his mercies, He is blessing man *with* his mercies. *William Secker, in "The Nonsuch Professor," 1660*.

Verse 6. *Then shall the earth yield her increase*. An increase of wealth is but the natural result of increased piety and intelligence. There are certain qualities essential to temporal prosperity. These are industry, economy, moderation; and such are the qualities begotten of godliness. . . . Nor is it an unreasonable expectation that our globe should, under the reign of righteousness, yield all those temporal advantages of which it is capable. Science, favoured by piety, may greatly add to the earth's fruitfulness; and mechanical genius may still farther abbreviate human toil, and increase human comforts. The great inventions and discoveries of science, by which toil is lessened and comfort

enhanced, are all the product of Christian minds... Can we, then, doubt that in the era to which we look forward, labour shall cease to be a burden? Can we believe that the life of the labouring classes is to continue to be all but a ceaseless round of toil and vexation—every hand stretched out to procure something that is needed, or to ward off something that is feared? Scripture predicts the mitigation of the curse; and, in the discoveries of science, and the inventions of mechanics, we see the means by which the prediction is to be accomplished. This consummation may still be in the distant future; but if we do not grudge the oak years for its growth, the glory to be revealed is surely worthy of a process as gradual. *William Reid, in "Things to Come Practically Considered," 1871.*

Verse 6. *God, even our own God, shall bless us.* What a rapturous expression is that: *God, even our own God, shall bless us!* and that, "Thy God, thy glory!" Upon interest in God follows their interest in his glory and blessedness; which is so much the dearer and more valuable, as it is theirs; their glory from their God. They shall be blessed by God, their own God; "drink waters out of their own well." How endearing a thing is propriety! Another man's son is ingenuous, comely, personable; this may be a matter of envy; but mine own is so, this is a joy. I read in the life of a devout nobleman of France, (Monsieur de Renti) that receiving a letter from a friend in which were inserted these words: "*Deus meus et omnia*, "my God and my all, he thus returns back to him: "I know not what your intent was to put into your letter these words, '*Dues meus et omnia*, My God and my all:' only you invite me thereby to return the same to you, and to all creatures. 'My God and my all: my God and my all; my God and my all.' If, perhaps, you take this for your motto, and use it to express how full your heart is of it, think you it possible I should be silent upon such an invitation, and not express my sense thereof? Likewise be it known unto you, therefore, that he is 'my God and my all; 'and, if you doubt of it, I shall speak of it a hundred times over. I shall add no more, for anything else is superfluous to him that is truly penetrated with 'my God and my all; 'I leave you, therefore, in this happy state of jubilation, and conjure you to beg for me, of God, the solid sense of these words." And do we think, "my God and my all." or, "my God and my glory, "will have lost its emphasis in heaven? or that it will be less significant among awakened souls? These things concur, then, concerning the object; it is more excellent, even divine, entire, permanent, and *theirs*: how can it but satisfy? *John Howe, in "The Blessedness of the Righteous."*

Verse 6. *Our own God.* How inexpressible was the inward pleasure wherewith we may suppose those words to have been uttered. How delightful an appropriation! as if it were intended to be said, the blessing itself were less

significant, it could not have that savour with it, if it were not from our own God. Not only, therefore, allow but urge your spirits thus to look towards God, that you may both delight in him as being in himself the most excellent one, and also as being yours; for know, you are not permitted only, but obliged to eye, accept, and rejoice in him as such. *John Howe.*

Verses 6-7. The promise refers directly to the visible fertility of the renewed earth at the time of Israel's recovery, but it includes a fuller reference to higher things; for the true increase yielded by any of God's works is the revenue of praise which redounds to his holy name. Such, then, is the promise I have to bring before you. In its widest sense, the lower creation is now made subject to vanity, because of man's sin; but in the kingdom of Christ this curse will be removed, and all God's works will yield their full increase—a tribute of unmingled honour and praise to his name. Let us consider (1.) The preparation for this increase. (2.) The increase itself. (3.) The blessing of God, which will crown it.

I. THE PREPARATIONS FOR THIS INCREASE. What are the means? What is the way of its accomplishment? Whence does it proceed? Our Psalm is full of instruction. Consider—

1. *Its fountain:* the free mercy of God. The Psalm begins, *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.* Whatever the details and steps of the work of redemption, all must be traced up to this original fountain, the sovereign grace and mercy of our God... The eternal, free, unchangeable, inexhaustible mercy of our God revealed through his dear Son Jesus Christ; this is the fountain head of the blessed increase here foretold...

2. *The order* in which this increase is granted may next be considered. Salvation is given to the Jew first, and then also to the Greek. The prayer of this Psalm is, *Cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.* It is the divine plan first to choose his people and bless them, and then to make them a blessing, as we see in Abraham, the father of the faithful. It is through his church that God blesses the world... The same principle is true in every revival of pure religion... But all this order of divine mercy has yet to be more fully seen in what is before us; in the restoration of Israel, and in its effect upon the world at large...

3. *The immediate precursor of this increase is the return of our Lord* from heaven, the coming of Christ to judge the earth and reign over all nations. The Psalm calls all nations to rejoice in this: *O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon*

earth. ... The world craves, and will crave more and more for righteous government. The Lord has promised to supply this natural want of the human heart, though he take vengeance on his hardened enemies. Even in the coming of the Lord to judgment, goodness will so finally triumph that the nations are to be glad and sing for joy... It is the Lord judging the people and governing the nations, and all the people praising him, that prepares directly and immediately for the promised blessedness. *Then shall the earth yield her increase.*

II. THE INCREASE ITSELF. This increase has many aspects. Let us view them in a climax of benefits.

1. *Natural fertility.* The first sentence of curse and barrenness, of thorns and thistles, was pronounced on Adam's fall, and renewed on Cain's murder. It seems to have been specially removed after the deluge... Even now, two thirds of our world are ocean, incapable of increase; half of the rest, and perhaps more, is almost desert, and of the remainder the largest part is very imperfectly tilled. There is room, even in the latter, for a vast increase, when the whole earth might become like the garden of the Lord.

2. *The redemption of art.* Its activity, its talent, and discoveries are now great and wonderful; but it is mainly turned to human self sufficiency and vanity, and bears little fruit to God's glory and the highest benefit of man. But in the period predicted in this Psalm, every creature, when redeemed to man's use, shall be also reclaimed to God's glory...

3. *The redemption of science....*

4. *Society will yield its increase to God....* Men now live as without God in the world, full though it be of proofs of his wisdom and love... What a change when every social circle shall be a fellowship of saints, and all bent to one great purpose, the divine glory and the blessedness of each other.

5. *The soul shall yield its increase.* The earth is only the figure of the human heart, a soil ever fertile for good or evil. Thus the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, regards it: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Then the thorns and briers of a crooked and perverse generation will cease... The fruits of righteousness will abound from the human race to the glory of God. Much praise, much zeal, much reverence, much humility, will

distinguish his servants. Faith, hope, and love will all be in the fullest exercise. Christ will be all and in all, and every power will be consecrated to him. This is the best increase the earth yields to God.

6. *The large number of God's true servants*, thus yielding themselves to him, is another part of this blessedness...

7. *The perpetuity of this increase* has to be added to this glory. This is according to the promise made to the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. *Condensed from Edward Bickersteth's Sermon in the "Bloomsbury Lent Lectures," 1848.*

Verses 6-7. Double blessings from God—temporal and spiritual, blessings peculiar to the Jews, and blessings suited to Christians. O Lord, I refuse not the temporal blessings it pleases thee to send me; I will receive them with humble gratitude as the gift of thy goodness: but I entreat from thee especially for spiritual blessings; and that thou wouldest treat me rather as a Christian than as a Jew. *Pasquier Quesnel (1634-1719), in "Les Psaumes de David avec des Reflexions Morales."*

Verse 7. Note, how joy in God, and fear of God, are combined. By joy the sadness and anxiety of diffidence are excluded, but by fear contempt and false security are banished. So Psalm 2, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." *Wolfgang Musculus.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1.

1. Here is mercy in God the Father.
2. Here is blessing as the fruit of that mercy in God the Son.
3. Here is the experience of that blessing in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 1. The need of seeking a blessing for ourselves.

Verses 1-2. The prosperity of the church at home, the hope for missions abroad.

Verse 2.

1. The way of God towards the earth.

- (a) A way of mercy.
- (b) Of blessing.
- (c) Of comfort.

2. The knowledge of that way.

- (a) By outward means.
- (b) By inward teaching.

3. The effect of that knowledge. Salvation among all nations.

Verse 2. What is the true health of men?

Verse 3. Viewed,

- 1. As the desire of every renewed heart.
- 2. As a prayer.
- 3. As a prophecy.

Verse 4.

- 1. The reign of God in the world: it is not left to itself.
- 2. The joy of the world on that account: *Let the nations, etc.*
- 3. The reason of that joy: *He will judge righteously.*
 - (a) As faithful to his law.
 - (b) Faithful to his promises of mercy.

Verses 5-7.

- 1. The prayer (Ps 67:5).
- 2. The promise (Ps 67:6).
 - (a) Of temporal good.
 - (b) Of spiritual good.
- 3. The prediction (Ps 67:7).

Verses 6-7. See "Spurgeon's Sermons, "No. 819: "The Minstrelsy of Hope."

Verse 7.

1. God to man: *shall bless us.*
2. Man to God: *shall fear him.*

WORK UPON THE SIXTY-SEVENTH PSALM

In "*The Works of JOHN BOYS*," 1626, folio, pp. 42-45, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

Psalm 68

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician, a Psalm or Song of David.* We have already said enough upon this title when dealing with Psalms 65 and 66. The present is obviously a song to be sung at the removal of the ark; and in all probability was rehearsed when David conducted it with holy joy from the house of Obededom to the prepared place on Mount Zion. It is a most soul stirring hymn. The first verses were often the battle song of the Covenanters and Ironsides; and the whole Psalm fitly pictures the way of the Lord Jesus among his saints, and his ascent to glory. The Psalm is at once surpassingly excellent and difficult. Its darkness in some stanzas is utterly impenetrable. Well does a German critic speak of it as a Titan very hard to master. Our slender scholarship has utterly failed us and we have had to follow a surer Guide. We trust our thoughts may not however prove unprofitable.

DIVISION. With the words of the first two verses the ark is uplifted, and the procession begins to move. In Ps 68:3-6, the godly in the assembly are exhorted to commence their joyous songs, and arguments are adduced to help their joy. Then the glorious march of Jehovah in the wilderness is sung: Ps 68:7-10, and his victories in war are celebrated in verses Ps 68:11-14. The joyous shouts are louder as Zion comes in sight, and the ark is borne up the hill: Ps 68:15-19. On the summit of the mount the priests sing a hymn concerning the Lord's goodness and justice; the safety of his friends, and ruin of his foes: Ps 68:20-23. Meanwhile the procession is described as it winds up the hill: Ps 68:24-27. The poet anticipates a time of wider conquest, Ps 68:28-31: and concludes with a noble burst of song unto Jehovah.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Let God arise.* In some such words Moses spake when the cloud moved onward, and the ark was carried forward. The ark would have been a poor leader if the Lord had not been present with the symbol. Before we move, we should always desire to see the Lord lead the way. The words suppose the Lord to have been passive for awhile, suffering his enemies to rage, but restraining his power. Israel beseeches him to "arise, "as elsewhere to "awake, ""gird on his sword, "and other similar expressions. We, also, may thus importunately cry unto the Lord, that he would be pleased to make bare his arm, and plead his own cause. Let his enemies be scattered. Our glorious Captain of the vanguard clears the way readily, however many may seek to obstruct it; he has but to arise, and they flee, he has easily over thrown his foes in days of yore, and will do so all through the ages to come. Sin, death, and hell know the terror of his arm; their ranks are broken at his approach. Our enemies are *his* enemies, and in this is our confidence of victory. Let them also that hate him flee before him. To hate the infinitely good God is infamous, and the worst punishment is not too severe. Hatred of God is impotent. His proudest foes can do him no injury. Alarmed beyond measure, they shall flee before it comes to

blows. Long before the army of Israel can come into the fray, the haters of God shall flee before HIM who is the champion of his chosen. He comes, he sees, he conquers. How fitting a prayer is this for the commencement of a revival! How it suggests the true mode of conducting one:—the Lord leads the way, his people follow, the enemies flee.

NEW TRANSLATION

In order that our readers may see the Psalm at a glance in a good translation, we subjoin the version of FRANZ DELITZSCH; recommending our ministerial brethren to procure the volumes of his valuable Commentary on the Psalms, issued by the Messrs. CLARK, of Edinburgh.

HYMN OF WAR AND VICTORY IN THE STYLE OF DEBORAH

2 LET Elohim arise, let His enemies be scattered,
And let those who hate Him flee before His face.

3 As smoke is driven away, do Thou drive them away;
As wax melteth before the fire,
Let the wicked perish before Elohim.

4 And let the righteous rejoice, let them exult before Elohim,
And let them be glad with joy.

5 Sing unto Elohim, harp His name,
Pave a highway for Him who rideth along through the steppes;
Jah is his name, and exult ye before Him.

6 A Father of the fatherless and an Advocate of the widows
Is Elohim in His holy habitation.

7 Elohim maketh a household for the solitary,
He leadeth forth prisoners into prosperity;
Yet the rebellious abide in a land of drought.

8 Elohim, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,
When thou didst march along in the wilderness—Sela.

9 The earth shook,
The heavens also dropped before Elohim,
Yon Sinai before Elohim, the God of Israel.

10 With plentiful rain didst Thou, Elohim, water Thine inheritance,
And when it was parched, THOU hast confirmed it.

11 Thy creatures have settled down therein,
Thou didst provide with Thy goodness for the poor, Elohim.

12 The Lord will sound forth the mandate;
Of the women who herald victory there is a great army.

13 The kings of hosts shall flee, shall flee,
And she that tarrieth at home, shall divide the spoil.

14 If ye encamp among the sheep folds,
The dove's wings are covered with silver
And her feathers with glistening gold.

15 When the Almighty scattereth kings therein,
It becometh snow white upon Zalmon.

16 A mountain of Elohim is the mountain of Bashan,
A mountain full of peaks is the mountain of Bashan.

17 Why look ye enviously, ye many peaked mountains,
Upon the mountain which Elohim hath chosen, to dwell thereon?
Yea, Jahve will dwell (there) for ever.

18 The war chariots of Elohim are myriads, a thousand thousands,
The Lord is among them, it is a Sinai in holiness.

19 Thou hast ascended up to the height, Thou hast led captives captive,
Thou hast received gifts among men,
Even from the rebellious, that Jah Elohim might dwell (there).

20 Blessed be the Lord:
Day by day doth He bear our burden,
He, God, is our salvation. (*Sela.*)

21 He, God, is to us a God for deeds of deliverance,
And Jahve the Lord hath ways of escape for death.

22 Yea, Elohim will smite the head of His enemy,
The hairy scalp of him who stalks along in his trespasses.

23 The Lord hath said: Out of Bashan will I bring back,
I will bring back out of the depths of the sea,

24 That thou mayest bathe thy foot in blood,
That the tongue of thy dogs may have its share of the enemy.

25 They behold Thy splendid procession, Elohim,
The splendid procession of my God, my King in holiness.

26 Before went the singers, behind the players on stringed instruments,
In the midst of damsels striking timbrels.

27 In the choirs of the congregation bless ye Elohim,
The Lord, ye who are out of the fountain of Israel.

28 There is Benjamin the youngest, their ruler;
The princes of Judah—their motley band,
The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali,

29 Thy God hath commanded thy supreme power—
Uphold in power, Elohim, what Thou hast wrought for us!—

30 From Thy temple above Jerusalem
Let kings present offerings unto Thee.

31 Threaten the wild beast of the reed, the troops of bulls with the calves of the people,
That they may prostrate themselves with ingots of silver!—
He hath scattered the peoples that delight in wars.

32 Magnates come out of Egypt,
Cush—quickly do his hands stretch out unto Elohim.

33 Ye kingdoms of the earth, sing unto Elohim,
Praising the Lord with stringed instruments—(*Sela.*)

34 To Him who rideth in the heaven of heavens of the primeval time—
Lo, He made Himself heard with His voice, a mighty voice.

35 Ascribe ye might unto Elohim!
Over Israel is His majesty.
And His omnipotence in the heights of the heavens.

36 Terrible is Elohim out of thy sanctuaries;
 "The God of Israel giveth might and abundant strength to the people!"
 Blessed be Elohim!

Verse 2. *As smoke is driven away.* Easily the wind chases the smoke, completely it removes it, no trace is left; so, Lord, do thou to the foes of thy people. They fume in pride, they darken the sky with their malice, they mount higher and higher in arrogance, they defile wherever they prevail. Lord, let them breath, thy Spirit, thy Providence, make them to vanish for ever from the march of thy people. Philosophic scepticism is as flimsy and as foul as smoke; may the Lord deliver his Church from the reek of it. As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the *presence of God*. Wax is hard when by itself, but put it to the fire, how soft it is. Wicked men are haughty till they come into contact with the Lord, and then they faint for fear; their hearts melt like wax when they feel the power of his anger. Wax, also, burns and passes away; the taper is utterly consumed by the flame: so shall all the boastful power of the opposers of the gospel be as a thing of nought. Rome, like the candles on her altars, shall dissolve, and with equal certainty shall infidelity disappear. Israel saw, in the ark, God on the mercyseat—power in connection with propitiation—and they rejoiced in the omnipotence of such a manifestation; this is even more clearly the confidence of the New Testament church, for we see Jesus, the appointed atonement, clothed with glory and majesty, and before his advance all opposition melts like snow in the sun; the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. When he comes by his Holy Spirit, conquest is the result; but when he arises in person, his foes shall utterly perish.

Verse 3. *But let the righteous be glad.* The presence of God on the throne of grace is an overflowing source of delight to the godly; and let them not fail to drink of the streams which are meant to make them glad. Let them rejoice before God. The courtiers of the happy God should wear the garments of gladness, for in his presence is fulness of joy. That presence, which is the dread and death of the wicked, is the desire and delight of the saints. Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Let them dance with all their might, as David did, for very joy. No bounds should be set to joy in the Lord. "Again, I say, rejoice," says the apostle, as if he would have us add joy to joy without measure or pause. When God is seen to shine propitious from above the mercyseat in the person of our Immanuel, our hearts must needs leap within us with exultation, if we are indeed among those made righteous in his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. Move on, O army of the living God, with shouts of abounding triumph, for Jesus leads the van.

Verse 4. *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name.* To time and tune, with order and care, celebrate the character and deeds of God, the God of his people. Do it again and again; and let the praise, with resolution of heart, be all directed to him. Sing not for ostentation, but devotion; not to be heard of men, but of the Lord himself. Sing not to the congregation, but "unto God," Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH. Remember his most great, incomprehensible, and awful name; reflect upon his self existence and absolute dominion, rise to the highest pitch of joyful reverence in adoring him. Heaven beholds him riding on the clouds in storm, and earth has seen him marching over its plains with majesty. The Hebrew seems to be: "Cast up a highway for him who marches through the wilderness, "in allusion to the wanderings of the tribes in the desert. The marches of God were in the waste howling wilderness. His eternal power and Godhead were there displayed in his feeding, ruling, and protecting the vast hosts which he had brought out of Egypt. The ark brought all this to remembrance, and suggested it as a theme for song. The name JAH is an abbreviation of the name Jehovah; it is not a diminution of that name, but an intensified word, containing in it the essence of the longer, august title. It only occurs here in our version of Scripture, except in connection with other words such as Hallelujah. And rejoice before him. In the presence of him who marched so gloriously at the head of the elect nation, it is most fitting that all his people should display a holy delight. We ought to avoid dulness in our worship. Our songs should be weighty with solemnity, but not heavy with sadness. Angels are nearer the throne than we, but their deepest awe is consonant with the purest bliss; our sense of divine greatness must not minister terror but gladness to our souls; we should *rejoice before him*. It should be our wish and prayer, that in this wilderness world, a highway may be prepared for the God of grace. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God, "is the cry of gospel heralds, and we must all zealously aim at obedience thereto; for where the God of the mercyseat comes, blessings innumerable are given to the sons of men.

Verse 5. *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.* In the wilderness the people were like an orphan nation, but God was more than a father to them. As the generation which came out of Egypt gradually died away, there were many widows and fatherless ones in the camp, but they suffered no want or wrong, for the righteous laws and the just administrators whom God had appointed, looked well to the interests of the needy. The tabernacle was the Palace of Justice; the ark was the seat of the great King. This was a great cause for joy to Israel, that they were ruled by the ONE who would not suffer the poor and needy to be oppressed. To this day and for ever, God is, and will be, the peculiar guardian of the defenceless. He is the

President of Orphanages, the Protector of Widows. He is so glorious that he rides on the heavens, but so compassionate that he remembers the poor of the earth. How zealously ought his church to cherish those who are here marked out as Jehovah's especial charge. Does he not here in effect say, "Feed my lambs"? Blessed duty, it shall be our privilege to make this one of our life's dearest objects. The reader is warned against misquoting this verse; it is generally altered into "*the husband* of the widow, "but Scripture had better be left as God gave it.

Verse 6. *God setteth the solitary in families.* The people had been sundered and scattered over Egypt; family ties had been disregarded, and affections crushed; but when the people escaped from Pharaoh they came together again, and all the fond associations of household life were restored. This was a great joy. He bringeth out those which are bound with chains. The most oppressed in Egypt were chained and imprisoned, but the divine Emancipator brought them all forth into perfect liberty. He who did this of old continues his gracious work. The solitary heart, convinced of sin and made to pine alone, is admitted into the family of the Firstborn; the fettered spirit is set free, and its prison broken down, when sin is forgiven; and for all this, God is to be greatly extolled, for he hath done it, and magnified the glory of his grace. But the rebellious dwell in a dry land. If any find the rule of Jehovah to be irksome, it is because their rebellious spirits kick against his power. Israel did not find the desert dry, for the smitten rock gave forth its streams; but even in Canaan itself men were consumed with famine, because they cast off their allegiance to their covenant God. Even where God is revealed on the mercyseat, some men persist in rebellion, and such need not wonder if they find no peace, no comfort, no joy, even where all these abound. Justice is the rule of the Lord's kingdom, and hence there is no provision for the unjust to indulge their evil lustings: a perfect earth, and even heaven itself, would be a dry land to those who can only drink of the waters of sin. Of the most soul satisfying of sacred ordinances these witless rebels cry, "what a weariness it is!" and, under the most soul sustaining ministry, they complain of "the foolishness of preaching." When a man has a rebellious heart, he must of necessity find all around him a dry land.

Verse 7. *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people.* What a sweetly suitable association, "thou" and "thy people; "—thou before, and thy people following! The Lord went before, and, therefore, whether the Red Sea or burning sand lay in the way, it mattered not; the pillar of cloud and fire always led them by a right way. When thou didst march through the wilderness. He was the Commander in chief of Israel, from whom they received all orders, and the march was therefore *his* march. "His stately step the region drear beheld."

We may speak, if we will, of the "wanderings of the children of Israel," but we must not think them purposeless strayings, they were in reality a well arranged and well considered march. SELAH. This seems an odd place for a musical pause or direction, but it is better to break a sentence than spoil praise. The sense is about to be superlatively grand, and, therefore, the *selah* intimates the fact to the players and singers, that they may with suitable solemnity perform their parts. It is never untimely to remind a congregation that the worship of God should be thoughtfully and heartily presented.

Verse 8. *The earth shook.* Beneath the sublime tread the solid ground trembled. The heavens also dropped at the presence of God, as if they bowed before their God, the clouds descended, and "a few dark shower drops stole abroad." Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God. Moses tell us, in Exodus 19, that "the whole mountain quaked greatly." That hill, so lone and high, bowed before the manifested God. The God of Israel. The one only living and true God, whom Israel worshipped, and who had chosen that nation to be his own above all the nations of the earth. The passage is so sublime, that it would be difficult to find its equal. May the reader's heart adore the God before whom the unconscious earth and sky act as if they recognised their Maker and were moved with a tremor of reverence.

Verse 9. *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain.* The march of God was not signalized solely by displays of terror, for goodness and bounty were also made conspicuous. Such rain as never fell before dropped on the desert sand, bread from heaven and winged fowl fell all around the host; good gifts were poured upon them, rivers leaped forth from rocks. The earth shook with fear, and in reply, the Lord, as from a cornucopia, shook out blessings upon it; so the original may be rendered. Whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. As at the end of each stage, when they halted, weary with the march, they found such showers of good things awaiting them that they were speedily refreshed. Their foot did not swell all those forty years. When they were exhausted, God was not. When they were weary, He was not. They were his chosen heritage, and, therefore, although for their good he allowed them to be weary, yet he watchfully tended them and tenderly considered their distresses. In like manner, to this day, the elect of God in this wilderness state are apt to become tired and faint, but their ever loving Jehovah comes in with timely succours, cheers the faint, strengthens the weak, and refreshes the hungry; so that once again, when the silver trumpets sound, the church militant advances with bold and firm step towards "the rest which remaineth." By this faithfulness, the faith of God's people is confirmed, and their hearts established;

if fatigue and want made them waver, the timely supply of grace stays them again upon the eternal foundations.

Verse 10. *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein.* In the wilderness itself, enclosed as in a wall of fire, thy chosen church has found a home; or, rather, girdled by the shower of free grace which fell all around the camp, thy flock has rested. The congregation of the faithful find the Lord to be their "dwelling place in all generations." Where there were no dwellings of men, God was the dwelling of his people. Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor. Within the guarded circle there was plenty for all; all were poor in themselves, yet there were no beggars in all the camp, for celestial fare was to be had for the gathering. We, too, still dwell within the circling protection of the Most High, and find goodness made ready for us: although poor and needy by nature, we are enriched by grace; divine preparations in the decree, the covenant, the atonement, providence, and the Spirit's work, have made ready for us a fulness of the blessing of the Lord. Happy people, though in the wilderness, for all things are ours, in possessing the favour and presence of our God.

Verse 11. In the next verse we do not sing of marching, but of battle and victory. The Lord gave the word. The enemy was near, and the silver trumpet from the tabernacle door was God's mouth to warn the camp: then was there hurrying to and fro, and a general telling of the news; great was the company of those that published it. The women ran from tent to tent and roused their lords to battle. Ready as they always were to chant the victory, they were equally swift to publish the fact that the battle note had been sounded. The ten thousand maids of Israel, like good handmaids of the Lord, aroused the sleepers, called in the wanderers, and bade the valiant men to hasten to the fray. O for the like zeal in the church of today, that, when the gospel is published, both men and women may eagerly spread the glad tidings of great joy.

Verse 12. *Kings of armies did flee apace.* The lords of hosts fled before the Lord of Hosts. No sooner did the ark advance than the enemy turned his back: even the princely leaders stayed not, but took to flight. The rout was complete, the retreat hurried and disorderly;—they "did flee, did flee; "helter skelter, pell mell, as we say.

"Where are the kings of mighty hosts?
Fled far away, fled far and wide.
Their triumph and their trophied boasts
The damsels in their bowers divide."

And she that tarried at home divided the spoil. The women who had published the war cry shared the booty. The feeblest in Israel had a portion of the prey. Gallant warriors cast their spoils at the feet of the women and bade them array themselves in splendour, taking each one "a prey of divers colours, of divers colours of needlework on both sides." When the Lord gives success to his gospel, the very best of his saints are made glad and feel themselves partakers in the blessing.

Verse 13. *Though ye have lien among the pots.* Does he mean that the women at home, who had been meanly clad as they performed their household work, would be so gorgeously arrayed in the spoil, that they would be like doves of silver wing and golden plumage? Or, would he say that Israel, which had been begrimed in the brick kilns of Egypt, should come forth lustrous and happy in triumph and liberty? Or, did the song signify that the ark should be brought from its poor abode with Obededom into a fairer dwelling place? It is a hard passage, a nut for the learned to crack. If we knew all that was known when this ancient hymn was composed, the allusion would no doubt strike us as being beautifully appropriate, but as we do not, we will let it rest among the unriddled things. Alexander reads it, "When ye shall lie down between the borders, ye shall be like the wings, "etc., which he considers to mean, "when settled in peace, the land shall enjoy prosperity; "but this version does not seem to us any more clear than our authorized one. Of making many conjectures there is no end; but the sense seems to be, that from the lowest condition the Lord would lift up his people into joy, liberty, wealth, and beauty. Their enemies may have called them squatters among the pots—in allusion to their Egyptian slavery; they may have jested at them as scullions of Pharaoh's kitchen; but the Lord would avenge them and give them beauty for blackness, glory for grime. Yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her *feathers with yellow gold*. The dove's wing flashed light like silver, and anon gleams with the radiance of "the pale, pure gold." The lovely, changeable colours of the dove might well image the mild, lustrous beauty of the nation, when arrayed in white holiday attire, bedecked with their gems, jewels, and ornaments of gold. God's saints have been in worse places than among the pots, but now they soar aloft into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Verse 14. *When the almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.* The victory was due to the Almighty arm alone; he scattered the haughty ones who came against his people, and he did it as easily as snow is driven from the bleak sides of Salmon. The word *white* appears to be imported into the text, and by leaving it out the sense is easy. A traveller informed the writer that on a raw and gusty day, he saw the side of what he supposed to be

Mount Salmon suddenly swept bare by a gust of wind, so that the snow was driven hither and thither into the air like the down of thistles, or the spray of the sea: thus did the Omnipotent one scatter all the potentates that defied Israel. If our authorized version must stand, the conjectures that the bleached bones of the enemy, or the royal mantles cast away in flight, whitened the battle field, appear to be rather too far fetched for sacred poetry. Another opinion is, that Salmon was covered with dark forests, and appeared black, but presented quite another aspect when the snow covered it, and that by this noteworthy change from sombre shade to gleaming whiteness, the poet sets forth the change from war to peace. Whatever may be the precise meaning, it was intended to pourtray the glory and completeness of the divine triumph over the greatest foes. In this let all believers rejoice.

Verse 15. Here the priests on the summit of the chosen hill begin to extol the Lord for his choice of Zion as his dwelling place. The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan, or more accurately, "a hill of God is Bashan, "that is to say, Bashan is an eminent mountain, far exceeding Zion in height. According to the Hebrew custom, every great or remarkable thing is thus designated. Where we talk of the Devil's Dyke, the Devil's Ditch, the Devil's Punch Bowl, etc., the more commendable idiom of the Hebrews speaks of the hill of God, the trees of the Lord, the river of God, etc. An high hill as the hill of Bashan, or rather, "a mount of peaks is Bashan." It does not appear that Zion is compared with Bashan, but contrasted with it. Zion certainly was not a high hill comparatively; and it is here conceded that Bashan is a greater mount, but not so glorious, for the Lord in choosing Zion had exalted it above the loftier hills. The loftiness of nature is made as nothing before the Lord. He chooses as pleases him, and, according to the counsel of his own will, he selects Zion, and passes by the proud, uplifted peaks of Bashan; thus doth he make the base things of this world, and things that are despised, to become monuments of his grace and sovereignty.

Verse 16. *Why leap ye, ye high hills?* Why are ye moved to envy? Envy as ye may, the Lord's choice is fixed. Lift up yourselves, and even leap from your seats, ye cannot reach the sublimity which Jehovah's presence has bestowed on the little hill of Moriah. This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in. Elohim makes Zion his abode, yea, Jehovah resides there. Yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever. Spiritually the Lord abides eternally in Zion, his chosen church, and it was Zion's glory to be typical thereof. What were Carmel and Sirion, with all their height, compared to Zion, the joy of the whole earth! God's election is a patent of nobility. They are choice men whom God has chosen, and that place is superlatively honoured which he honours with his presence.

Verse 17. *The chariots of God are twenty thousand.* Other countries, which in the former verse were symbolically referred to as "high hills," gloried in their chariots of war; but Zion, though far more lowly, was stronger than they, for the omnipotence of God was to her as two myriads of chariots. The Lord of Hosts could summon more forces into the field than all the petty lords who boasted in their armies; his horses of fire and chariots of fire would be more than a match for their fiery steeds and flashing cars. The original is grandly expressive: "the war chariots of Elohim are myriads, a thousand thousands." The marginal reading of our Bibles, *even many thousands*, is far more correct than the rendering, *even thousands of angels*. It is not easy to see where our venerable translators found these "angels," for they are not in the text; however, as it is a blessing to entertain them unawares, we are glad to meet with them in English, even though the Hebrew knows them not; and the more so because it cannot be doubted that they constitute a right noble squadron of the myriad hosts of God. We read in De 33:2, of the Lord's coming "with ten thousands of saints," or holy ones, and in Heb 12:22, we find upon mount Zion "an innumerable company of angels," so that our worthy translators putting the texts together, inferred the angels, and the clause is so truthfully explanatory, that we have no fault to find with it. *The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place*, or, "it is a Sinai in holiness." God is in Zion as the Commander in chief of his countless hosts, and where he is, there is holiness. The throne of grace on Zion is as holy as the throne of justice on Sinai. The displays of his glory may not be so terrible under the new covenant as under the old; but they are even more marvellous if seen by the spiritual eye. Sinai has no excellency of glory beyond Zion; but the rather it pales its light of law before the noontide splendours of Zion's grace and truth. How joyful was it to a pious Hebrew to know that God was as truly with his people in the tabernacle and temple as amid the terrors of the Mount of Horeb; but it is even more heart cheering to us to be assured that the Lord abides in his church, and has chosen it to be his rest for ever. May we be zealous for the maintenance of holiness in the spiritual house which God condescends to occupy; let a sense of his presence consume, as with flames of fire, every false way. The presence of God is the strength of the church; all power is ours when God is ours. Twenty thousand chariots shall bear the gospel to the ends of the earth; and myriads of agencies shall work for its success. Providence is on our side, and it "has servants everywhere." There is no room for a shade of doubt or discouragement, but every reason for exultation and confidence.

Verse 18. *Thou hast ascended on high.* The ark was conducted to the summit of Zion; God himself took possession of the high places of the earth, being extolled and very high. The antitype of the ark, the Lord Jesus, has ascended

into the heavens with signal marks of triumph. To do battle with our enemies, the Lord descended and left his throne; but now the fight is finished, he returns to his glory; high above all things is he now exalted. Thou hast led captivity captive. A multitude of the sons of men are the willing captives of Messiah's power. As great conquerors of old led whole nations into captivity, so Jesus leads forth from the territory of his foe a vast company as the trophies of his mighty grace. From the gracious character of his reign it comes to pass that to be led into captivity by him is for our captivity to cease, or to be itself led captive; a glorious result indeed. The Lord Jesus destroys his foes with their own weapons: he puts death to death, entombs the grave, and leads captivity captive. Thou hast received gifts for men, or, received gifts among men: they have paid thee tribute, O mighty Conqueror, and shall in every age continue to do so willingly, delighting in thy reign. Paul's rendering is the gospel one: Jesus has "received gifts for men, "of which he makes plentiful distribution, enriching his church with the priceless fruits of his ascension, such as apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and all their varied endowments. In him, the man who received gifts for man, we are endowed with priceless treasures, and moved with gratitude, we return gifts to him, yea, we give him ourselves, our all. Yea, for the rebellious also: these gifts the rebels are permitted to share in; subdued by love, they are indulged with the benefits peculiar to the chosen. The original runs, "even the rebellious, "or, "even from the rebellious, "of which the sense is that rebels become captives to the Lord's power, and tributaries to his throne.

"Great King of grace my heart subdue,
I would be led in triumph too;
As willing captive to my Lord,
To own the conquests of his word."

That the Lord God might dwell among them. In the conquered territory, Jah Elohim would dwell as Lord of all, blessing with his condescending nearness those who were once his foes. When Canaan was conquered, and the fort of Zion carried by storm, then was there found a resting place for the ark of God; and so when the weapons of victorious grace have overcome the hearts of men, the Lord God, in all the glory of his name, makes them to be his living temples. Moreover, the ascension of Jesus is the reason for the descent of the Lord God, the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus dwells with God, God dwells with men. Christ on high is the reason for the Spirit below. It was expedient that the Redeemer should rise, that the Comforter should come down.

Verse 19. *Blessed be the Lord.* At the mention of the presence of God among men the singers utter an earnest acclamation suggested by reverential love, and

return blessings to him who so plentifully blesses his people. Who daily loadeth us with benefits. Our version contains a great and precious truth, though probably not the doctrine intended here. God's benefits are not few nor light, they are loads; neither are they intermittent, but they come "daily; "nor are they confined to one or two favourites, for all Israel can say, *he loadeth us with benefits*. Delitzsch reads it, "He daily bears our burden; "and Alexander, "Whoever lays a load upon us, the Mighty God is our salvation." If he himself burdens us with sorrow, he gives strength sufficient to sustain it; and if others endeavour to oppress us, there is no cause for fear, for the Lord will come to the rescue of his people. Happy nation, to be subdued by a King whose yoke is easy, and who secures his people from all fear of foreign burdens which their foes might try to force upon them.

Even the God of our salvation. A name most full of glory to him, and consolation to us. No matter how strong the enemy, we shall be delivered out of his hands; for God himself, as King, undertakes to save his people from all harm. What a glorious stanza this is! It is dark only because of its excessive light. A world of meaning is condensed into a few words. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light, therefore blessed be the Saviour's name for evermore. All hail! thou thrice blessed Prince of Peace! All thy saved ones adore thee, and call thee blessed. Selah. Well may the strings need tuning, they have borne an unparalleled strain in this mighty song. Higher and yet higher, ye men of music, lift up the strain. Dance before the ark, ye maidens of Israel; bring forth the timbrel, and sing unto the Lord who hath triumphed gloriously.

Verse 20. *He that is our God is the God of salvation.* The Almighty who has entered into covenant with us is the source of our safety, and the author of our deliverances. As surely as he is our God he will save us. To be his is to be safe. *And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.* He has ways and means of rescuing his children from death: when they are at their wit's end, and see no way of escape, he can find a door of deliverance for them. The gates of the grave none can open but himself, we shall only pass into them at his bidding; while on the heavenward side he has set open the doors for all his people, and they shall enjoy triumphant issues from death. Jesus, our God, will save his people from their sins, and from all else besides, whether in life or death.

Verse 21. *But God shall wound the head of his enemies.* The Preserver is also the Destroyer. He smites his foes on the crown of their pride. The seed of the woman crushes the serpent's head. There is no defence against the Lord, he can in a moment smite with utter destruction the lofty crests of his haughty foes. And the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his *trespasses*. He may glory in his outward appearance, and make his hair his pride, as Absalom did;

but the Lord's sword shall find him out, and pour out his soul. Headstrong sinners will find that providence overcomes them despite their strong heads. They who go on in sin will find judgments come on them; and the adornment of their pride may be made the instrument of their doom. He covers the head of his servants, but he crushes the head of his foes. At the second coming of the Lord Jesus, his enemies will find his judgments to be beyond conception terrible.

Verse 22. This verse, by the insertion of the words, *my people*, is made to bear the meaning which the translators thought best; but, if their interpolated word is omitted, we probably get nearer to the sense. *The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring again from the depths of the sea.* Though his foes should endeavour to escape, they should not be able. Amos describes the Lord as saying, "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them." As there is no resisting Israel's God, so is there no escape from him, neither the heights of Bashan nor the depths of the great sea can shelter from his eye of detection, and his hand of justice. The powers of evil may flee to the utmost ends of the earth, but the Lord will arrest them, and lead them back in chains to adorn his triumph.

Verse 23. *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies.*

Vengeance shall be awarded to the oppressed people, and that most complete and terrible. And the tongue of thy dogs in the same. So overwhelming should be the defeat of the foe that dogs should lick their blood. Here "the stern joy which warriors feel" expresses itself in language most natural to the oriental ear. To us, except in a spiritual sense, the verse sounds harshly; but read it with an inner sense, and we also desire the utter and crushing defeat of all evil, and that wrong and sin may be the objects of profound contempt. Terrible is the God of Israel when he cometh forth as a man of war, and dreadful is even the Christ of God when he bares his arm to smite his enemies. Contemplate Revelation 19 and note the following:—"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God... And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit upon them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Verse 24. *They have seen thy goings, O God.* In the song the marchings of the Lord had been described; friends and foes had seen his goings forth with the ark and his people. We suppose that the procession was now climbing the hill, and entering the enclosure where the tabernacle of the ark was pitched; it was suitable at this moment to declare with song that the tribes had seen the glorious progress of the Lord as he led forth his people. Even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. The splendid procession of the ark, which symbolised the throne of the great King, was before the eyes of men and angels as it ascended to the holy place; and the psalmist points to it with exultation before he proceeds to describe it. All nature and providence are, as it were, a procession attending the great Lord, in his visitations of this lower globe. Winter and summer, sun and moon, storm and calm, and all the varied glories of nature swell the pomp of the King of kings, of whose dominion there is no end.

Verse 25. *The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after.* This was the order of the march, and God is to be worshipped evermore with due decorum. First the singers, and lastly the musicians, for the song must lead the music, and not the music drown the singing. In the midst of the vocal and instrumental band, or all around them, were the maidens: among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. Some have imagined that this order indicates the superiority of vocal to instrumental music: but we need not go so far for arguments, when the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel already teach us that truth. The procession depicted in this sublime song was one of joy, and every means was taken to express the delight of the nation in the Lord their God.

Verse 26. *Bless ye God in the congregations.* Let the assembled company magnify the God whose ark they followed. United praise is like the mingled perfume which Aaron made, it should all be presented unto God. He blesses us;

let him be blessed. Even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. A parallel passage to that in Deborah's song: "They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord." The seat of the ark would be the fountain of refreshing for all the tribes, and there they were to celebrate his praises. "Drink," says the old inscription, "drink, weary traveller; drink and pray." We may alter one word, and read it, drink and praise. If the Lord overflows with grace, we should overflow with gratitude. Ezekiel saw an ever growing stream flow from under the altar, and issue out from under the threshold of the sanctuary, and wherever it flowed it gave life: let as many as have quaffed this life giving stream glorify "the fountain of Israel."

Verse 27. *There is little Benjamin with their ruler.* The tribe was small, having been greatly reduced in numbers, but it had the honour of including Zion within its territory. "And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." Little Benjamin had been Jacob's darling, and now the tribe is made to march first in the procession, and to dwell nearest to the holy place. The princes of Judah and their council. Judah was a large and powerful tribe, not with one governor, like Benjamin, but with many princes "and their company," for so the margin has it. "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel," and the tribe was a quarry of stones wherewith to build up the nations: some such truth is hinted at in the Hebrew. The princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. Israel was there, as well as Judah; there was no schism among the people. The north sent a representative contingent as well as the south, and so the long procession set forth the hearty loyalty of all the tribes to their Lord and King. O happy day, when all believers shall be one around the ark of the Lord; striving for nothing but the glory of the God of grace. The prophet now puts into the mouth of the assembly a song, foretelling the future conquests of Jehovah.

Verse 28. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength.* His decree had ordained the nation strong, and his arm had made them so. As a commander in chief, the Lord made the valiant men pass in battle array, and bade them be strong in the day of conflict. This is a very rich though brief sentence, and, whether applied to an individual believer, or to the whole church, it is full of consolation. Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. As all power comes from God at first, so its continual maintenance is also of him. We who have life should pray to have it more "abundantly;" if we have strength we should seek to be still more established. We expect God to bless his own work. He has never left any work unfinished yet, and he never will. "When we were without

strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly; "and now, being reconciled to God, we may look to him to perfect that which concerneth us, since he never forsakes the work of his own hands.

Verse 29. *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.* The palace of God, which towered above Jerusalem, is prophesied as becoming a wonder to all lands, and when it grew from the tabernacle of David to the temple of Solomon, it was so. So splendid was that edifice that the queen of far off Sheba came with her gifts; and many neighbouring princes, overawed by the wealth and power therein displayed, came with tribute to Israel's God. The church of God, when truly spiritual, wins for her God the homage of the nations. In the latter day glory this truth shall be far more literally and largely verified.

Verse 30. *Rebuke the company of spearmen; or, the beasts of the reeds,* as the margin more correctly renders it. Speak to Egypt, let its growing power and jealousy be kept in order, by a word from thee. Israel remembers her old enemy, already plotting the mischief, which would break out under Jeroboam, and begs for a rebuking word from her Omnipotent Friend. Antichrist also, that great red dragon, needs the effectual word of the Lord to rebuke its insolence. The multitude of the bulls, the stronger foes; the proud, headstrong, rampant, fat, and roaring bulls, which sought to gore the chosen nation,—these also need the Lord's rebuke, and they shall have it too. All Egypt's sacred bulls could not avail against a "thus saith Jehovah." Popish bulls, and imperial edicts have dashed against the Lord's church, but they have not prevailed against her, and they never shall. With the calves of the people. The poorer and baser sort are equally set on mischief, but the divine voice can control them; multitudes are as nothing to the Lord when he goes forth in power; whether bulls or calves, they are but cattle for the shambles when Omnipotence displays itself. The gospel, like the ark, has nothing to fear from great or small; it is a stone upon which every one that stumbleth shall be broken.

Till every one submit himself with pieces of silver. The Lord is asked to subdue the enemies of Israel, till they rendered tribute in silver ingots. Blessed is that rebuke, which does not break but bend; for subjection to the Lord of hosts is liberty, and tribute to him enriches him that pays it. The taxation of sin is infinitely more exacting than the tribute of religion. The little finger of lust is heavier than the loins of the law. Pieces of silver given to God are replaced with pieces of gold. Scatter thou the people that delight in war. So that, notwithstanding the strong expression of Ps 68:23, God's people were peace men, and only desired the crushing of oppressive nations, that war might not occur again. Let the battles of peace be as fierce as they will; heap coals of fire

on the heads of enemies, and slay their enmity thereby. That "they who take the sword should perish by the sword," is a just regulation for the establishment of quiet in the earth. What peace can there be, while blood thirsty tyrants and their myrmidons are so many? Devoutly may we offer this prayer, and with equal devotion, we may bless God that it is sure to be answered, for "he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire."

Verse 31. *Princes shall come out of Egypt.* Old foes shall be new friends. Solomon shall find a spouse in Pharaoh's house. Christ shall gather a people from the realm of sin. Great sinners shall yield themselves to the sceptre of grace, and great men shall become good men, by coming to God. Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Cush shall hasten to present peace offerings. Sheba's queen shall come from the far south. Candace's chamberlain shall ask of Him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Abyssinia shall yet be converted, and Africa become the willing seeker after grace, eagerly desiring and embracing the Christ of God. Poor Ethiopia, thy hands have been long manacled and hardened by cruel toil, but millions of thy sons have in their bondage found the liberty with which Christ made men free; and so thy cross, like the cross of Simon of Cyrene, has been Christ's cross, and God has been thy salvation. Hasten, O Lord, this day, when both the civilization and the barbarism of the earth shall adore thee, Egypt and Ethiopia blending with glad accord in thy worship! Here is the confidence of thy saints, even thy promise; hasten it in thine own time, good Lord.

Verse 32. *Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth.* Glorious shall that song be in which whole empires join. Happy are men that God is one who is consistently the object of joyous worship, for not such are the demons of the heathen. So sweet a thing is song that it ought to be all the Lord's; a secular concert seems almost a sacrilege, a licentious song is treason. O sing praises unto the Lord. Again and again is God to be magnified; we have too much sinning against God, but cannot have too much singing to God. Selah. Well may we rest now that our contemplations have reached the millennial glory. What heart will refuse to be lifted up by such a prospect!

Verse 33. *To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old.* Before, he was described in his earthly manifestations, as marching through the desert; now, in his celestial glory, as riding in the heavens of the primeval ages. Long ere this heaven and earth were made, the loftier abodes of the Deity stood fast; before men or angels were created, the splendours of the Great King were as great as now, and his triumphs as glorious. Our knowledge reaches but to a small fragment of the life of God, whose "goings forth were of old, even from

everlasting." Well might the Jewish church hymn the eternal God, and well may we join therewith the adoration of the Great Firstborn:

"Ere sin was born, or Satan fell,
He led the host of morning stars.
Thy generation who can tell?
Or count the number of thy years?"

Lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Was there a thunderclap just then heard in heaven? Or, did the poet's mind flash backward to the time when from the heaven of heavens the voice of Jehovah broke the long silence and said, "Light be, "and light was. To this hour, the voice of God is power. This gospel, which utters and reveals his word, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Our voices are fitly called to praise him whose voice spoke us into being, and gives us the effectual grace which secures our well being.

Verse 34. *Ascribe ye strength unto God.* When even his voice rends the rocks and uproots the cedars, what cannot his hand do? His finger shakes the earth; who can conceive the power of his arm? Let us never by our doubts or our daring defiances appear to deny power unto God; on the contrary, by yielding to him and trusting in him, let our hearts acknowledge his might. When we are reconciled to God, his omnipotence is an attribute of which we sing with delight. His excellency is over Israel. The favoured nation is protracted by his majesty; his greatness is to them goodness, his glory is their defence. And his strength is in the clouds. He does not confine his power to the sons of men, but makes it like a canopy to cover the skies. Rain, snow, hail, and tempest are his artillery; he rules all nature with awe inspiring majesty. Nothing is so high as to be above him, or too low to be beneath him; praise him, then, in the highest.

Verse 35. *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places.* You inspire awe and fear. Thy saints obey with fear and trembling, and thine enemies flee in dismay. From thy threefold courts, and especially from the holy of holies, thy majesty flashes forth and makes the sons of men prostrate themselves in awe. The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his *people*. In this thou, who art Israel's God by covenant, art terrible to thy foes by making thy people strong, so that one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. All the power of Israel's warriors is derived from the Lord, the fountain of all might. He is strong, and makes strong: blessed are they who draw from his resources, they shall renew their strength. While the self sufficient faint, the All sufficient shall sustain the feeblest believer, Blessed be God. A short but sweet conclusion. Let our souls say Amen to it, and yet again, Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. In this Psalm we have especial reason to condemn or to admire the timidity, or the caution and delicacy, of our translators, whichever it may be considered, for the manner in which they have rendered the names of the Almighty. They almost universally translate them "God" or "Lord; "whereas, it has been observed that, almost all the remarkable titles of the Deity are employed in describing and praising the person addressed here. He is called "Elohim" in Ps 68:2; "Adonai, "Ps 68:12; "Shaddai, "Ps 68:15; "Jehovah, "Ps 68:17; "Jah, "Ps 68:19; and "Al, "Ps 68:20. The Hebrew names of God have, each of them, a distinct and peculiar meaning. No one word will suffice for them all. The vague use of the terms "God" and "Lord" in our translation can never convey to the reader's mind the important ideas which the original expression, if properly translated, would bear, and we have lost a strong additional confirmation of the deity of Messiah, by abandoning the testimony which the ascription to him of God's peculiar titles would give to this great truth. *R. H. Ryland.*

Whole Psalm. As 65 opened with a reference to the form of blessing (Nu 6:24-26), so this with a reference to the prayer used when the cloud pillar summoned the camp to commence a march. *There* the presence (*panim*) of God shed saving light on his people; here his enemies flee from it (*mippanayv*), Ps 68:1... In the Jewish ritual the Psalm is used at Pentecost, the Anniversary of the Giving of the Law, and the Feast of Finished Harvest... The remarkable character of the Psalm is indicated by the fact that there are no fewer than thirteen words in it which are not found elsewhere. The Pentecostal Gift of Tongues seems needed for its full exposition. *William Kay.*

Whole Psalm. By many critics esteemed the loftiest effusion of David's lyrical muse. *William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm. To judge from the antiquity of its language, the concise description, the thoroughly fresh, forcible, and occasional artlessly ironical expression of its poetry, we consider this poem as one of the most ancient monuments of Hebrew poetry. *Boettcher.*

Whole Psalm. It must be confessed that in this Psalm there are as many precipices, and as many labyrinths, as there are verses, or even words. It has not inappropriately been designated the cross of critics, the reproach of interpreters. *Simon de Muis.*

Whole Psalm. The beginning of this Psalm clearly intimates that the inspired psalmist had light given him to see the march of Israel through the wilderness, the ark of the covenant moving before the people to find a resting place. The psalmist is filled with praise, when he is enabled to see that God revealed his Fatherly love in the whole of that movement—that his eye was upon the fatherless, the widow, the solitary, and afflicted; but David is also carried by the Spirit to the Mount of Olives, where he sees the ascending Lord; he sees the triumphal chariots, with an innumerable company of angels, and then beholds the Lord welcomed in glory as the mighty Conqueror; and not only so, but as having received or purchased gifts for men, even the rebellious (Ps 68:18), "that the Lord God might dwell among them, "or *within them*. "Wherefore, "the command of our Father is, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, "etc. (2Co 6:17-18). The doxology of God's people is, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits." Our blessed Master attends day by day to all our wants, and causes his love to flow to us, because he is God our Salvation—Selah. What comfort ought this to afford under every condition! for the Lord Jesus goes before us through the desert. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The widow, the fatherless, the desolate, are all the objects of his care and love. He has gone before us to prepare our heavenly rest; the work is finished. He now comes, day by day, to load us with blessings, and at the last will carry us safely through death into life and glory. To the Lord our Saviour belong the issues from death; then, "Death, where is thy sting?" etc. *Ridley H. Herschell, in "Strength in Weakness. Meditations on some of the Psalms in time of Trial, "1860.*

Verse 1. *Let God arise*, etc. The moving ark (See Nu 10:35-36) is a type of Jesus going forth to cast down rebel foes. It is high joy to trace the Antitype's victorious march. How mightily the Lord advanced! The strength of God was in his arm. His sword was Deity. His darts were barbed with all Jehovah's might. "He had on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." Re 19:16. His foes, indeed, strove mightily. It was no easy work to rescue souls from Satan's grasp, or to lay low the prison house of darkness. The enemy rushed on, clad in his fiercest armour, wild in his keenest rage, wily in his deadliest crafts. He plied his every temptation, as a terrific battery. But the true Ark never quailed. The adversary licked the dust. Malignant passions maddened in opposing breasts. The kings stood up; rulers took counsel; all plots were laid; the ignominious death was planned and executed. But still the Ark moved on. The cross gave aid, not injury. The grave could not detain. Death could not vanquish. The gates of hell fly open. The mighty conqueror appears. And, as in Canaan, the ark ascended Zion's hill amid triumphant shouts, so Jesus mounts on high. The heaven of heavens receives

him. The Father welcomes the all conquering Saviour. Angelic hosts adore the glorious God man. The Rising Prayer has full accomplishments, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee." And now, from glory's throne, he cheers his humble followers in their desert march. Their toils, their conflicts, and their fears are many. They oftentimes seem as a poor worm beneath the crushing feet. But they survive, they prosper, they lift up their head. As of old the ark was victory, so Jesus is victory now. Yes, every child of faith shall surely set a conquering foot upon the host of foes. Hear this, ye mad opposers, and desist. Where are the nations who resisted Israel? Where are the Pharaohs, the beleaguered kings, the Herods, the chief priests, the Pilates? Share not their malice, lest you share their end. Read in this word your near destruction, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee." And, as the Rising Prayer has never failed, so, too, the Resting Prayer now teems with life. "Return, O Lord." Jesus is ready to fly back. Israel's many thousands wait, but wait not in vain. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb 10:37. O joyful day, triumphant sight! What ecstasy, what shouts, what glory! Salvation's Lord returns. Welcome, welcome to him! *Henry Law, in "Christ is All." The Gospel of the Old Testament,* 1858.

Verse 1. *Arise.* The mercifulness of God is seen in his patience toward the wicked, implied in the word *arise*, for he seemeth, as it were, to *sleep* (Ps 44:23), and not to mark what is done amiss. The Lord is patient, and would have none to perish, but would have all men to come to repentance. He was longer in destroying one city (*Jericho*, Jos 6:4), than in building the whole world; slow to wrath, and ready to forgive, desiring not the death of a sinner, but rather he should amend. He doth not arise to particular punishments, much less to the general judgement, but after long suffering and great goodness. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I," said our Lord, "have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Mt 23:37. *John Boys.*

Verse 1. *Let his enemies be scattered.* You may, if you please, take the words either as a prayer, or as a *prophecy*: *as a prayer* that they *may*; or as a prophecy, that they *shall be scattered*. Or, you may read it, *Surgente Domino, As soon as the Lord shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered*, and so make it a theological axiom: and so it is a proposition *aeternae veritatis*, everlastingly true, true in the first age of the world, and true in the last age of the world, and will be true to the world's end. We may make it our prayer, that they may be destroyed; and we may prophesy, that they shall be destroyed. *Summa votorum est, non ex incerto poscentis, sed ex cognitione scientiaeque sperantis*, saith

Hilary. It is a prayer not proceeding from a doubting and wavering heart, as if God did at sometimes deliver his church, and at others fail and leave her to the will of her enemies; but grounded upon certain knowledge and infallible assurance that he will "*arise, and not keep silence,* " and avenge himself of his enemy. For there is a kind of presage and prophecy in prayer: if we pray as we should, he hath promised to grant our request; which is a fairer assurance than any prophet can give us. *Let God arise,* and *God will arise,* is but the difference of a tense, and the Hebrews commonly use the one for the other...

In this prayer or prophecy, or conclusion, you may, as in a glass, behold the providence of God over his people, and the destiny and fatal destruction of wicked men. Or, you may conceive God sitting in heaven, and looking down upon the children of men, and laughing to scorn all the designs of his enemies; his *exsurgat*, his rising, as a tempest to scatter them, and as a fire to melt them. And these two, *exsurgat* and *dissipabuntur*, the rising of God and the destruction of his enemies, divide the text, and present before our eyes two parties or sides, as it were, in main opposition. Now, though the *exsurgat* be before the *dissipabuntur*, God's rising before the scattering, yet there must be some persons to rouse God up and awake him before he will arise to destroy. We will, therefore, as the very order of nature required, consider first the persons which are noted out unto us by three several appellations, as by so many marks and brands in their forehead. They are,

1. *Enemies;*
2. *Haters of God;*
3. *Wicked men.*

But God, *rising* in this manner, is more especially against the fact than the person, and against the person only for the fact. We must, therefore, search and inquire after that; and we find it wrapped up and secretly lurking in the *dissipabuntur*, in their punishment; for scattering supposes a gathering together, as corruption doth generation. That, then, which moved God to rise is this: his *enemies*, they that *hated him, the wicked*, were gathered together, and consulted against God and his church, as we see it this day; and, seeing it, are here met together to fall down before God in all humility, that he may arise and scatter them. This is *nunc opportunitatis*, the very time and appointed time *for* God to *arise*. In which phrase is implied a kind of pause and deliberation, as if God were not always up, and ready to execute judgment. And, hereby, he manifests—

1. His patience to the wicked: he is not always up, as it were, to destroy his enemies;
2. His justice, which cometh at length, though it come not so soon as men in misery expect;
3. His mercy to his children: though for a while he seem to sleep, and not to hearken to the voice of their complaints, yet, at last, he rises up and helps them.

Lastly, we shall take notice of the effects, or end, of this rising; and that is the destruction of his enemies, here drawn out to our view, in four several expressions, as in so many colours:—

1. *Dissipabuntur*, they shall be scattered;
2. *Fugient*, they shall fly;
3. *Deficient*, they shall vanish like smoke;
4. *Liquefient*, they shall be melted as wax; which all meet and are concentrated in *peribunt*, *they shall perish at the presence of God*. *Anthony Farindon*.

Note continued on *See Psalms on "Job 42:10."*

Verses 1-3. *See Psalms on "Ps 68:1"* for further information.

Verse 3. *But let the righteous be glad.* The wicked flee from the presence of God, since it inspires them with terror; the righteous on the other hand rejoice in it, because nothing delights them more than to think that God is near them. *John Calvin*.

Verse 4. *Extol him that rideth upon the heavens.* Or, as Symmachus, Jerome, Bishop Lowth, Merrick, and others render, "Prepare the way for him who rideth through the deserts": *twbre aravoth*; i.e., who rode through the wilderness on the cherubim; alluding to the passage of the ark. *"Comprehensive Bible."*

Verse 4. *Rideth.* Said, perhaps, with allusion to the cherubim on which Jehovah was borne (Ps 18:10), God himself being the Leader and Captain of his people, riding as it were at their head as an earthly captain might lead his army, riding on a war horse. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 4. *Upon the heavens.* The ancient versions in general render the word *twkrek super occasus*, or *occasum*. The *desert* or *solitude* is the proper and

general meaning of it, and there is no authority to render it by *the heavens*, but that of the Rabbins, which, indeed, is little or none; and of the Chaldee paraphrase which gives it twbrek hyrqy hyorwk *super thronam gloriae ejus in nono caelo* who sits upon the throne of his glory in the ninth heaven. The psalmist here alludes, as I apprehend, to the passage of the Israelites through the deserts in their way to the promised land, and describes it in many of the principal circumstances of it in the following verses; and God is said to *ride*, or *be carried through the deserts*, as the ark of his presence was carried through them, and accompanied the Israelites in all their various stages during their continuance and pilgrimage in them. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 4. God always goes at the head of his people through the deserts of suffering and need; in the deserts of trouble they find in him a true leader. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4. *His name JAH.* JAH, as the concentration of Jehovah, is the more emphatic term (*Stier*). It occurs for the first time in Ex 15:2. *Frederic Fysh, in "A Lyrical Literary Version of the Psalms," 1850.*

Verse 5. *A father of the fatherless.* In a spiritual sense, the *orphans*, whose father God is, says Hilary, are those who have renounced their father the Devil, and those to whom Christ, at his departure, sent another *Comforter*, according to his promise—"I will not leave you orphans." *Lorinus.*

Verse 5. Does not Jas 1:27 refer to this verse, for we have *the fatherless, the widow*, and then the *holiness*, of the God we serve? *Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 5. *God in his holy habitation.* Albeit the Lord be infinite and uncomprehended by any place, yet hath he appointed a trysting place where his people shall find him by his own ordinance, to wit, the assembly of his saints, his holy temple shadowing forth Christ to be incarnate, who now is in heaven, now is incarnate, and sitting at the right hand of God, in whom dwells the Godhead; here, here is God to be found. *David Dickson.*

Verse 6. *God setteth the solitary in families.* It may be interpreted of the fruitfulness and increase of the church with converts, under the gospel dispensation, even from among the Gentiles, who were before solitary, or were alone, without God and Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; but, being called and converted by the ministry of the word, were brought into and placed in gospel churches, or families... Gospel churches, like families, have a master over them, who is Christ the Son and firstborn, of whom they are named; where are saints of various ages, sizes, and standing; some fathers,

some young men, and some children; where are provisions suitable for them, and stewards to give them their portion of meat in due season, who are the ministers of the word; and laws and rules, by which they are directed and regulated, and everything is kept in good decorum. *John Gill*.

Verse 8. *The God of Israel.* Sinai was the seat not only of God, but of the *covenant God* of the people of Israel; from which the law was proclaimed, and the covenant struck between God and his people. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 9. The *Thou* in the Hebrew is emphatic: *Thine inheritance, even when it was wearied (i.e., worn out) thou didst confirm; or, "fortify it."* Thou who alone couldst strengthen one worn out, didst so for thy people. *A. R. Fausset*.

Verse 9. *A liberal rain.* The words translated *a liberal rain*, read literally in the Hebrew *a rain of freenesses*; and I agree with interpreters in thinking that he alludes to the blessing as having come in the exercise of free favour, and to God, as having of his own unprompted goodness provided for all the wants of his people. Some read, *a desirable rain*; others *a rain flowing without violence, or gentle*; but neither of these renderings seems eligible. Others read, *a copious or plentiful rain*; but I have already stated what appears to me to be the preferable sense. *John Calvin*.

Verse 9. *A gracious rain*; that is, of manna. *Edmund Law (1703-1787)*, quoted by *Richard Warner in loc.*, 1828.

Verse 9. *Rain.* One fountain, says Cyril, waters thy paradise, and the rain that falls upon all the world is the same; it is white in the bloom of the hawthorn, red in the rose, purple in the hyacinth, and diverse kinds, and all in all; yet it itself is the same and of the same kind. . . . So also the Holy Spirit, though he is one and the same and not divisible, yet to every one he divideth grace according as he wills. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 9. *A plentiful rain.* Thy love has been as a shower! The returns, but a dew drop, and that dew drop stained with sin. *James Harrington Evans*, 1785-1849.

Verse 10. *Thy congregation.* The words are choice and expressive. Addressing God, (the poet) intentionally and emphatically calls the people of Israel *Ktyx thy combined congregation*, in contrast to former divisions and various dissensions, to signify, that the people was now welded together, formed into one society, and united at the same time, that it was well ordered, and

constituted as the *society of God*, wherein his laws flourished and were wont to be observed. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 10. *Thy congregation.* Or, *Thy living creatures*, Ktyh, ta zwa, LXX *animalia*, Vulgate; probably a reference to the immense number of quails which were miraculously brought to the camp of the Israelites, and, in a manner, *dwelt around it*. Note in the "*Congregational Bible*."

Verse 10. *Thy congregation.* Or, *Thy living creatures*. That desolate place, where only wild beasts before could live, was now by those showers of manna (Ps 68:9) enabled to sustain a multitude of other *tamer living creatures*, even of *men* and all their *flocks* and *herds*. *Henry Hammond*.

Verse 10. (*first clause*). Rather:—"As for thy food (manna and quails), they dwelt in the midst of it." *Edmund Law*.

Verse 10. (*first clause*). *As to thy food, they dwelt amidst it*. The ambiguity of the word *hyx* has occasioned various renderings of this line. Parkhurst considers the radical sense of *hyx* is "to be vigorous, strong; "hence the noun denotes *force*, a body of men (2Sa 23:13); and also that which gives strength, the means of support, or food (Jud 6:4 17:10); and compare Ne 9:6. Our translators took the term in the first sense; I take it in the second, because the connection seems to require it, and because (*tyx*) refers always to a body of men, as soldiers, as actually engaged in some kind of warfare. Hence what is called the *troop* of Philistines (2Sa 23:13) is called the *camp* of the Philistines. 1Ch 11:15. And, lastly, because the common version has no antecedent to which *hk*, *in it*, or *amidst it*, can refer; but this version has one in the noun *food*. I think there is then a reference not only to the manna, but to the quails, which God brought in abundance around the camp. Ex 16:13 Nu 11:31. Thus he *prepared in his goodness for the poor*. *Benjamin Boothroyd*.

Verse 10. *Thou hast prepared in thine own sweetness for the poor, O God. In thine own sweetness*, not in his sweetness. For the needy he is, for he hath been made weak, in order that he may be made perfect: he hath acknowledged himself indigent, that he may be replenished. *Augustine*.

Verse 11. *The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it*. You shall find, when the enemies of the church are destroyed, that God hath many preachers made that do teach his praises... The words in the original are very significant, and do note two things. First, the word which you read *company*, in the Hebrew it is "army, "great was the army of preachers. An army of preachers is a great matter; nay, it is a great matter to have seven or

eight good preachers in a great army; but to have a whole army of preachers that it glorious. Secondly, it doth note out the heartiness of this preaching army, for the word vpg, soul, is to be understood as in that place of Ecclesiastes; it is said there, "The words or book of the preacher, "which, being in the feminine gender, doth suppose *nephesh*, and as if he should say, as Vatablus hath it; the words or book of him that hath a preaching soul or heart, or the words of a preaching soul or heart. So here where it is said, great is the army of preachers, the word being in the feminine gender, it is as if he should say, great is the army of preaching souls, whose very hearts within them shall preach of the Lord's works. Now, my brethren, it is much to have a preaching army; but if this army shall with heart and soul preach of God's praise, O that is a blessed thing. Yet thus shall it be when the enemies of God shall be destroyed. And, therefore, seeing God will not lose all those sermons of his own praises, in due time the enemies of the church shall be scattered. *William Bridge, in "The True Soldier's Conroy."* 1640.

Verse 11. It is owing to the word, the appointment, and power of God, that any persons are induced or enabled to preach the gospel. *John Newton (1725-1807), in "Messiah."*

Verses 11-12. This account of Israel's victories is applicable to victories obtained by the exalted Redeemer, when the enemies of man's salvation were vanquished by the resurrection of Christ, and the heathen nations were compelled to own his power; and this great victory was first notified by *women* to the disciples. *From "A Practical Illustration of the Book of Psalms; by the Author of the Family Commentary on the New Testament." (Mrs. Thompson.)* 1826.

Verses 11-12. The Lord did give his word at his ascension, and there were a multitude of them that published it, and by this means kings of armies were put to flight: they conquered by the word: there is not such another way to rout kings and their armies. *William Strong.* 1654.

Verses 11-14.

The Lord giveth the word!
 A great company of women announce the glad tidings!
 Kings with their armies flee—they flee!
 And those, who dwell within the house, divide the spoil!
 Although they lie among the hearth stones,
 They are become like a dove's wings overlaid with silver,
 And like her pinions overlaid with yellow gold.

When the Almighty scattereth kings,
They glisten therein, as snow upon Salmon.

Those who dwell within the house—i.e., the women. They are thus described in allusion to their retired habits of life, in eastern countries. *Lie among the hearth stones*—i.e., are habitually employed in the lowest domestic offices and whose ordinary dress, therefore, is mean and soiled. *The hearth stones*—Hebrew rests (for boilers). *They are become*—by being decked in the spoils of the enemy.—*Glisten as snow*—Hebrew (each woman) *is snowy: therein*—i.e., in the spoils distributed amongst them. *French and Skinner's Translation and Notes.*

Verse 12. *Kings of armies did flee apace.* In the Hebrew it is, they fled, they fled; fled is twice. Why so? That is, they did flee very hastily, and they fled most confusedly, they fled all ways; they fled, they fled, noting the greatness of the flight. *William Bridge.*

Verse 12. *The kings of hosts shall flee.* The "hosts" are the numerous well equipped armies which the kings of the heathens lead forth to the battle against the people of God. The unusual expression, "kings of hosts," sounds very much like an ironically disparaging antithesis to the customary "Jahve of Hosts." *Bottcher, quoted by Delitzsch.*

Verse 12. *She that tarried at home.* That is, all the noncombatants, saith Kimchi. Or, the women also (those *domi portae*) came forth to pillage. These days of the gospel do abound with many godly matrons and holy virgins. And it is easy to observe that the New Testament affords more store of good women than the old. *John Trapp.*

Verse 12. *Divided the spoil,* not merely (as Hupfeld) "receives her portion of the spoil," but rather, "distributes among her daughters and handmaidens, etc., the share of the spoil" which her husband has brought home. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 14. *Salmon* or *Zalmon*, properly *Tsalmon*, *Nwmlu* a woody hill near Shechem (Jud 9:48). Whether it is this that's referred to in Ps 69:14, is disputed. Some interpreters take *Nwmlu* here in its etymological meaning of darkness, *Mlu*; thus Luther renders the clause "so wird es helle wo es dunkel ist," *thus it be bright where it is dark*, and understands it with a Messianic reference. Ewald adopts much the same rendering. The majority, however, retain the name as a proper name, but exhibit great variety in their explanation of the passage. Hengstenberg thinks that the phrase, "it snows on *Tsalmon*," is equivalent to "there is brightness where there was darkness," the hill, originally dark with

wood, is now white with snow. De Dieu supposes a comparison: Tsalmon is white with the bones of the slaughtered kings, as if with snow. Some suppose that there is here a mere note of time: it was winter, the snow was on Tsalmon (Herder); and this Hupfeld adopts, with the explanation that the statement is made derisively, with reference to those who tarried at home, deterred by the winter's snow. He considers the passage (Ps 68:12-14) as a fragment of an ancient song, celebrating some of the early conquests of Israel in Canaan, and deriding those, who, from indolence or fear, shrank from the enterprise. He translates thus:

"The kings of the armies, flee, flee,
And the housewife shares the spoil!
Will ye lie among the shippens?
Pigeons feathers decked with silver,
And their wings with yellow gold!
As the Almighty scattered kings therein,
It was snowing on Tsalmon."

—*William Lindsay Alexander, in "A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature." 1866.*

Verse 14. The verb may be viewed as in the second person—*Thou, O God! didst make it fair and white as Mount Salmon with snow.* The reader may adopt either construction, for the meaning is the same. It is evident that David insists still upon the figure of the whiteness of silver, which he had previously introduced. The country had, as it were, been blackened or sullied by the hostile confusion into which it was thrown, and he says that it had now recovered its fair appearance, and resembled Salmon, which is well known to have been ordinarily covered with snows. Others think that Salmon is not the name of a place, but an appellative, meaning *a dark shade*. I would retain the commonly received reading. At the same time, I think that there may have been an allusion to the etymology. It comes from the word Mlu, *tselem*, signifying *a shade*, and Mount Salmon had been so called on account of its blackness. This makes the comparison more striking; for it intimates that as the snows whitened this black mountain, so the country had resumed its former beauty, and put on an aspect of joy, when God dispelled the darkness which had lain upon it during the oppression of enemies. *John Calvin.*

Verse 14. *It was as white as snow in Salmon.* That is, this thine inheritance, thy peculiar people, appeared as bright and glorious in the sight of their neighbours, as the snowy head of Salmon glistens by the reflection of the sunbeams.
Thomas Fenton.

Verse 14. *White as snow in Salmon.* The expression here used seems to denote, that everything seemed as bright and cheerful to the mind of God's people, as Salmon does to their eyes, when glistening with snow. As snow is much less common, and lies a much shorter time in Judaea than in England, no wonder that it is much more admired; accordingly, the son of Sirach speaks of it with a kind of rapture. "The eye will be astonished at the beauty of its whiteness, and the heart transported at the raining of it." Eccclus. 43:18 or 20. *Samuel Burder.*

Verse 14. *Salmon.* Dean Stanley conjectures that Salmon is another name for Mount Ebal; it was certainly near Shechem (see Jud 9:48), but it is almost hopeless to expect to identify it, for Mr. Mills, the industrious author of "Nablus and the modern Samaritans," could not find any one who knew the name of Salmon, neither could he discover any traditions in reference to it, or indeed any allusion to it in Samaritan literature. The word signifies a shade, and may, perhaps, popularly be accepted as identical with the name the "Black Forest." *C. H. S.*

Verse 15. *Hill of Bashan.* The world's physical greatness must yield to the church's spiritual grandeur. The "hill of God" is here an emblem of the *world kingdoms*, which (Ps 65:6) are great only by the grace of God. A great hill reminds us of the *creative* power of God. Hence, "the hill of Elohim" (the general name of God as *the Creator*) stands in contrast to *the hill* which (Ps 68:16) "the Lord" (Jehovah) will dwell in for ever. It lay in the north, in the region east of Jordan, or the land of Hermon, the kingdom of Og, the most formidable enemy whom Israel encountered on their march to Canaan. "The hill of Bashan is the high snow summit of Anti Lebanon, or Hermon, the extreme limit of Bashan. There was a peculiar propriety, from its position on the boundary between Judaea and the heathen world, in employing it as a symbol of the world's might (Ps 68:22 42:6 89:12)" (*Hengstenberg*). The original name of Hermon as Sion; *i.e.*, *lofty* (De 4:48); allied in sound to Zion, which suggested the contrast here between *the world hills* and *the Lord's hill*. *A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 15-16.

"A mountain of God Mount Bashan is.
A mountain of peaks Mount Bashan is,
Why are ye piqued, ye peaked mountains?
At the mountain *which* God desires to dwell in?
Yea, Jehovah will dwell therein forever."
—*Frederic Fysh's Version.*

Verse 16. *Why leap ye?* As triumphing, and making a show of your natural advantages over Sion. Or, to insult over it, and compare and equalise yourselves in honour with it; poetical kind of speeches. Others translate it, *Why gaze you, as though you were ravished with admiration?* John Diodati.

Verse 16. *This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in.* This low, little, barren hill of Zion; and God's election maketh the difference, as it did of Aaron's rod from the rest, and doth still of the church from the rest of the world. The Lamb Christ is on Mount Zion. Re 14:1. John Trapp.

Verse 17. *The chariots of God.* What are these "chariots of God?" Come, we will not stand to mince the matter, look but round about thee, and thou shalt see those *innumerable* chariots and angels here spoken of; for so many *creatures* as thou seest, so many angels and chariots of God thou seest; they are all his host, they are all his chariots wherein he rides; and, whether you see it or no, *The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.* The glory of the Lord fills them all (had we but our eyes open to see it so), and they are all at his command, and there is not one creature but doth his pleasure. Oh, brethren! how glorious and blessed a thing it is, that looking round about us to behold and see, that look how many creatures *visible* and *invisible* you see or conceive in thy mind to be, for thy soul now to look on them as so many fiery chariots and horsemen for its defence, protection, and preservation! And, on the other hand, "How fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, "who hath all these chariots and horsemen at his command to execute his will and vengeance on those that neglect, hate, and oppose him. John Everard, in *"Militia Caelestis, or the Heavenly Host."* 1653.

Verse 17.

"About his chariot numberless were poured
Cherubs, and seraph, potentates, and thrones,
And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots win
From the armoury of God, where stand of old Myriads."
—John Milton, in *"Paradise Lost."*

Verse 17. *Twenty-thousand;* rather, *two myriads*, Mytbr singular wkr; for twbr only here in the dual, the infinite number doubled. *"Thousands of angels,* "literally, *thousands of iteration; i.e., with margin, many thousands* (Bythner, Gesenius, &c.). Nagv only here, from hgv, *to repeat*. The rendering of *angels* was probably suggested by the reference to Sinai, next clause (see De 33:2, where for *saints* read *holy ones*;) *chariots* bkr being used collectively for those who rode in them, as often elsewhere. William de Burgh.

Verse 18. *Thou hast ascended on high*, etc. Some think it refers to God's goings forth on behalf of his people Israel, leading them forth to victory, taking their enemies captive, and enriching them with the spoils. Suppose it be so, we are warranted to consider it as mainly referring to Christ, for so the apostle has applied it. Eph 4:8. The apostle not only applies it to Christ, but *proves* it applicable. Thus he reasons (Ps 68:9-10), "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended," etc. The captivity which he led captive was our spiritual enemies who had led us captive—Satan, death; and, having obtained the victory, he proceeds to divide the spoils. *Gifts to men*—as David made presents. And hence comes our ordinances, ministers, etc. There was a glorious fulfilment immediately after his ascension, in a rich profusion of gifts and graces to his church, like David's presents. Here it is *received*; in Ephesians, *gave*. He received that he might give; received the spoil that he might distribute it. But, as I wish to appropriate the passage to the work allotted me, the whole of that to which I would at this time call your attention will be contained in two things:

1. *The great blessings of the Christian ministry.*

(a) Ministers are *received for*, and are *given to*, you by Christ. As men, and as sinful men, ministers are as nothing, and wish not to make anything of themselves; but, as the gifts of Christ, it becomes you to make much of them. (1.) If you *love Christ*, you will make much of your minister, on account of his being *his* gift—a gift designed to supply Christ's absence in a sort. He is gone ("ascended"), but he gives you his servants. By and by you hope to be with him, but as yet you are as sheep in the wilderness. He gives you a shepherd. (2.) If you *fear God*, you will be afraid of treating your pastor amiss, seeing he is the gift of Christ. God took it ill of Israel for despising Moses. Nu 12:8. He is "*my servant*."

(b) Ministers are not only given to, but *received for* you, of God the Father, as a covenant blessing, among the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. In this view, consider that Christ received nothing at his Father's hand but what cost him dear—cost him his life. Or, if the allusion be to the dividing of the spoils, suppose we say, he received them as a conqueror receives the spoils at the hand of the foe. Your minister was one of those who, like yourselves, were brands consuming in the fire. Christ took him from your enemies and gives him to you. Make much of the gift on this account. "This I received of the Amorite."

(c) Consider your unworthiness of such a blessing. You are *men*, mere men, and what is more, *rebellious* men, who had joined with Satan. And must you share the spoils? It is not usual to divide the spoils amongst rebels... Men that

put him to death had these gifts given to them; and we should all have done the same. Some of you, it is likely, have been vile and abandoned characters and yet, etc...

(d) The end of it: *That the Lord God might dwell among them.* "But will God, indeed, dwell with men?" God had not dwelt with the world, nor in it, while sin bore the rule; but Christ's mediation was for the bringing it about. "Will God, indeed, dwell with men?" He will, and how? It is by the means of ordinances and ministers. A church of Christ is God's house; and where any one builds a house, it is a token that he means to dwell there. What a blessing to a village, a country, for God to build a house in it. It is by this that we may hope for a blessing upon the means to the conversion of our children and friends, and for the edification of believers.

2. *Point out some corresponding duties as answering to these your privileges.*

(a) Constant and diligent attendance at the house of God. If the house of God be God's dwelling, let it be yours, your home. If God gives you a pastor, do you thankfully receive and prize him. He hath not dealt so with every village.

(b) Cheerfully contribute to his support. Christ has given you freely, and you ought to give him freely. Consider it is not as a gift, but as a debt, and not as done to him, but to Christ.

(c) Follow those things which make for peace, with which the presence and blessing of God are connected.

(d) Shun those things that tend to provoke the Lord to withdraw his gifts, and to cease to dwell among you. *Andrew Fuller's Sketch of a Sermon, addressed to the Church at Moulton, on the Ordination of Mr. (since Doctor) Carey, August 1st, 1787.*

Verse 18. But who is he of whom it is written, that *he ascended up on high*? I confess that the sixty-eighth Psalm, wherein these words are first written, is literally to be understood, not of any triumph, for the slaughter of the host of Sennacherib, which was done in the time of king Hezekiah (as the Jews do most fabulously dream), when the very title of this Psalm, that ascribes it unto David, doth sufficiently confute this vanity; nor yet for any of the victories of David which he obtained against his bordering enemies, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Idumaeans, and the Philistines (as some would have it); but of that great and glorious pomp which was then done and showed, when king David with great joy and triumph did bring the *ark* of the covenant into the hill

of Sion; and, therefore, these words, *Thou art gone up on high*, so dignify that the ark, which formerly had lain in an *obscure* place, and was transported from one place to another, was now ascended and seated in a most *illustrious and conspicuous* place, even in the kingly palace; and these words. *Thou hast led captivity captive*, do signify those *enemies* which formerly had spoiled and wasted divers countries; but now, being *vanquished* by king David, were led *captive* in this triumph (for so it was the manner of those times, as Plutarch doth excellently declare in the life of Paulus Amilius); and the other words, *thou hast received gifts for men*, do signify those spoils that were freely offered for conditions of peace, and were triumphantly carried about in this pompous show, for the greater solemnity of the same; and then (as the manner was among the chieftains when they triumphed, *Bellica laudatis dona dedisse viris*, to bestow warlike gifts upon worthy men), gifts were bestowed on several men, in several manner, as Sigonius sheweth. Yet I say that, *mystically*, this Psalm is an epinikion, or a triumphal song, penned by king David upon the foresight of Jesus Christ arising from the dead, and with great joy and triumph *ascending* up into heaven, and thence sending his Holy Spirit unto his apostles and disciples; and having overcome all his enemies, collecting by the ministry of his preachers, his churches and chosen people together, and so guiding and defending them here in this life, until he doth receive them into eternal glory. *Griffith Williams*. 1636.

Verse 18. *Thou hast led captivity captive*. The expression is emphatic. He has conquered and triumphed over all the powers which held us in captivity, so that captivity itself is taken captive. The spirit and force of it is destroyed; and his people, when released by him, and walking in his ways, have no more to apprehend from those whose captives they were, than a conqueror has to fear from a prisoner in chains. The energy of the phrase is not unlike that of the apostle: "Death is swallowed up in victory." *John Newton*.

Verse 18. *Thou hast led captivity captive*, etc. The ancient prophecy of David is fulfilled here on the foot of mount Olivet. To take "captivity captive," signifies that Christ conquered the allied principalities and powers, the devil, sin, death, and hell; and that he deprived them of the instruments wherewith they enslaved men. He not only silenced the cannon on the spiritual Gibraltar, but he took rock, fortifications, and all. He not only silenced the horrible and destructive battlements of the powerful and compactly united ghostly enemies, but he threw down the towers, razed the castles, and took away the keys of the dungeons. He is the Master henceforth, and for ever. He did, also, at the same time, save his people. Where, O Jesus, is the army of which thou art the Captain? "Here! all the names are written in pearls on the breastplate which I

wear as a high priest." He had no sooner left the grave than he began to distribute his gifts, and did so all along the road on his way to his Father's house; and, especially after he entered the heaven of heavens, did he shower down gifts unto men, as a mighty conqueror loaded with treasures with which to enrich and adorn his followers and people. They were gifts of mercy: gifts to the rebellious; to those who threw down their arms at his feet in penitent submission, *that the Lord God may dwell among them*. The apostle shows that a portion of these gifts are gifts of ministry. Accordingly, whenever God condescends to dwell among a people and in a country, he gives that people and country this ministry. He sends them his gospel in the mouths of faithful servants. He establishes there his house; the board and the candlestick; and then, in his Spirit, he dwells there and blesses his heritage. *Christmas Evans*. 1766-1838.

Verse 18. The apostle (Eph 4:8) does not quote the words of the Psalm literally, but according to the sense. The phrase, *Thou hast received gifts*, as applied to Christ as his glorification, could only be for the purpose of distribution, and hence the apostle quotes them in this sense, *He gave gifts to men*. This Hebrew phrase may be rendered either, "Thou hast received gifts in the human nature, "or, "Thou hast received gifts for the sake of man" (see Ge 18:28 2Ki 14:6). The apostle uses the words in the sense of the *purpose* for which the gifts were received, and there is no contradiction between the psalmist and the apostle. Thus, the difficulties of this quotation vanish when we examine them closely, and the Old and New Testaments are in complete harmony. Rosenmueller expounds Psalm 18, and never mentions the name of Christ; and the neologists in general see no Messiah in the Old Testament. To these, indeed, Eph 4:8, if they had any modesty, would present a formidable obstacle. Paul asserts the Psalm belongs to Christ, and they assert he is mistaken, and that he has perverted (De Wette) and destroyed its meaning. They assert that *Lamarom*, "on high, "means the heights of Mount Zion, and Paul says it means heaven. Which is right? (see the scriptural usage of the word, Ps 7:7 18:16 93:4 102:19 Jer 25:30 Isa 37:23). These passages connect the word with the heavenly mansions, and justify the application of the apostle. *William Graham, in "Lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians."*

Verse 18. No sooner is Christ inaugurated in his throne, but he scatters his coin, and gives gifts. He gives gifts, or the gift of gifts, the gift of the Holy Ghost. "If thou knewest the gift of God, " said Christ to the Samaritan woman (Joh 4:10): that gift was the water of life, and that water of life was the Spirit, as John, who knew best his mind, gave the interpretation, "This spake he of the Spirit." Joh 7:39. O my soul, consider of this princely gift of Christ! Such a gift

was never before, but when God gave his Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son; "and Christ so loved the world, that he gave his Spirit. But, O my soul, consider especially to whom this Spirit was given; the application of the gift is the very soul of thy meditation: "unto us a Son is given, "saith the prophet (Isa 9:6); and "unto us the Holy Ghost is given, " saith the apostle (Ro 5:5); and yet above all consider the reasons of this gift in reference to thyself. Was it not to make thee a temple and receptacle of the Holy Ghost? Stand a while on this! Admire, O my soul, at the condescending, glorious, and unspeakable love of Christ in this! It was infinite love to come down into our nature when he was incarnate; but this is more, to come down into thy heart by his Holy Spirit: he came near to us then, but as if that were not near enough, he comes nearer now, for now he unites himself unto thy person, now he comes and dwells in thy soul by his Holy Spirit. *Isaac Ambrose. 1592-1674.*

Verse 18. *Thou hast received gifts for men.* The glorious ascending of God from Mount Sinai, after the giving of the law, was a representation of his "ascending up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, "as Eph 4:10. And, as God then "led captivity captive" in the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who had long held his people in captivity and under cruel bondage; so dealt the Lord Christ now in the destruction and captivity of Satan and all his powers (Col 2:15); only, whereas it is said in the Psalm that he "received gifts for men, "here (Eph 4:8) it is said that "he gave gifts to men, "wherein no small mystery is couched; for, although Christ is God, and is so gloriously represented in the Psalm, yet an intimation is given that he should act what is here mentioned in a condition wherein he was capable to receive from another, as he did in this matter. Ac 2:33. And so the phrase in the original doth more than insinuate: *Mdab twgtm txql* "Thou hast received gifts in Adam, "—in the man, of human nature. And signifies as well to *give* as to *receive*, especially when anything is received to be given. Christ received this gift in the human nature to give it unto others. Now, to what end is this glorious theatre, as it were, prepared, and all this preparation made, all men being called to the preparation of it? It was to set out the greatness of the gift he would bestow, and the glory of the work which he would effect; and this was to furnish the church with ministers, and ministers with gifts for the discharge of their office and duty. And it will one day appear that there is more glory, more excellency, in giving one poor minister unto a congregation, by furnishing him with spiritual gifts for the discharge of his duty, than in the pompous instalment of a thousand popes, cardinals, or metropolitans. The worst of men, in the observance of a few outward rites and ceremonies, can do the latter; Christ only can do the former, and that as he is ascended up on high to that purpose. *John Owen.*

Verse 18. As the passage which we have now been considering is applied by Paul in a more spiritual sense to Christ (Eph 4:8), it may be necessary to show how this agrees with the meaning and scope of the psalmist. It may be laid down as an incontrovertible truth, that David, in reigning over God's ancient people, shadowed forth the beginning of Christ's eternal kingdom. This must appear evident to every one who remembers the promise made to him of a never failing succession, and which received its verification in the person of Christ. As God illustrated his power in David, by exalting him with the view of delivering his people, so has he magnified his name in his only begotten Son. But let us consider more particularly how the parallel holds. Christ, before he was exalted, emptied himself of his glory, having not merely assumed the form of a servant, but humbled himself to the death of the cross. To show how exactly the figure was fulfilled, Paul notices, that what David had foretold was accomplished in the person of Christ, by his being cast down to the lowest parts of the earth in the reproach and ignominy to which he was subjected, before he ascended to the right hand of his Father. Ps 22:7. That in thinking upon the ascension, we might not confine our views to the body of Christ, our attention is called to the result and fruit of it, in his subjecting heaven and earth to his government. Those who were formerly his inveterate enemies he compelled to submission and made tributary; this being the effect of the word of the Gospel, to lead men to renounce their pride and their obstinacy, to bring down every high thought which exalteth itself, and reduce the senses and the affections of men to obedience unto Christ. As to the devils and reprobate men who are instigated to rebellion and revolt by obstinate malice, he holds them bound by secret control, and prevents them from executing intended destruction. So far the parallel is complete. Nor, when Paul speaks of Christ having *given gifts to men*, is there any real inconsistency with what is here stated, although he has altered the words, having followed the Greek version in accommodation to the unlearned reader. It was not himself that God enriched with the spoils of the enemy, but his people; and neither did Christ seek, or need to seek, his advancement, but made his enemies tributary, that he might adorn his Church with the spoil. From the close union subsisting between the head and the members, to say that God manifest in the flesh received gifts from the captives, is one and the same thing with saying that he distributed them to his Church. What is said in the close of the verse is no less applicable to Christ; that he obtained his victories that as God he might dwell among us. Although he departed, it was not that he might remove to a distance from us, but, as Paul says, "that he might fill all things." Eph 4:10. By his ascension to heaven, the glory of his divinity has been only more illustriously displayed; and, though no longer present with us in the flesh, our souls receive spiritual nourishment from

his body and blood, and we find, notwithstanding distance of place, that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. *John Calvin.*

Verse 18. *Thou hast received gifts for men.* Hebrew Mdak, *in man*; "*in human nature*", says Dr. Adam Clarke, "and God, manifest in human flesh, dwells among mortals." "The gifts which Jesus Christ distributes *to man* he has received *in man*, in and by virtue of his *incarnation*, and it is in consequence of his being made man that it may be said, 'the Lord God dwells among them; 'for Jesus was called *Immanuel*, 'God with us, 'in consequence of his incarnation." *Editors note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 18. *Yea, for the rebellious also.* I feared, also, that this was the mark that the Lord did set on Cain, even continual fear and trembling under the heavy load of guilt that he had charged upon him for the blood of his brother Abel. Thus did I wind and twine and shrink under the burden that was upon me, which burden also did so oppress me, that I could neither stand, nor go, nor lie, either at rest or quiet. Yet that saying would sometimes come to my mind, He hath received gifts for the rebellious. Ps 68:18. "The rebellious, "thought I; why, surely, they are such as once were under subjection to their prince, even those who, after they have sworn subjection to his government, have taken up arms against him; and this, thought I, is my very condition; once I loved him, feared him, served him; but now I am a rebel; I have sold him. I have said, let him go if he will; but yet he has gifts for rebels, and then why not for me? *John Bunyan, in "Grace Abounding."*

Verse 18. (*last clause*). Thou didst not regard their former disobedience, but, even although seeing them contradicting, thou didst continue to do them good, until thou madest them *thine own abode* oikhthron. *Theodoret.*

Verse 18. (*last clause*). The Chaldee has, "Upon the rebellious, who become proselytes and return by repentance, the shechinah of the glory of the Lord God dwelleth."

Verse 19. *Blessed be the Lord*, etc. I think the sweet singer of Israel seems to raise his note to the emulation of the choir of heaven in the melody of their *Allelujahs*; yea, let me say, now that he sings above in that blessed consort of glorious spirits, his ditty cannot be better than this that he sang here upon earth, and wherein we are about to bear our parts at this time. Prepare, I beseech you, both your ears for David's song, and your hearts and tongues for your own. And first, in this angelic strain your thoughts cannot but observe the descant and the ground. The descant of gratulation, *Blessed be the Lord*, wherein is both applause and excitation; an applause given to God's goodness, and an excitation

of others to give that applause. The ground is a threefold respect. Of what God is in himself, *God and Lord*; of what God is and doth to us, *which loadeth us daily with benefits*; of what he is both in himself and to us, *the God of our salvation*; which last (like to some rich stone) is set off with a dark foil: *To God the Lord belong the issues from death*. So, in the first for his own sake, in the second for our sakes, in the third for his own and ours; as God, as Lord, as a benefactor; as a Saviour and deliverer. *Blessed be the Lord*. It is not hard to observe that David's *Allelujahs* are more than his *Hosannas*, his thanks more than his suits. Ofttimes doth he praise God when he begs nothing; seldom ever doth he beg that favour, for which he doth not raise up his soul to an anticipation of thanks; neither is this any other than the universal under song of all his heavenly ditties, *Blessed be the Lord*. *Praises* (as our former translation hath it) is too low; honour is more than praise; blessing is more than honour. Neither is it for nothing that from this word Krb, *to bless*, is derived Krb, *the knee*, which is bowed in blessing; and the crier before *Joseph* proclaimed *Abrech*, calling for the honour of the knee from all beholders. Ge 41:43. Every slight, trivial acknowledgment of worth is a praise; blessing is in a higher strain of gratitude, that carries the whole sway of the heart with it in a kind of divine rapture. Praise is a matter of compliment; blessing of devotion. The apostle's rule is, *that the less is blessed of the greater*, *Abraham* of the King of Salem, the prophet's charge is, *that the greater should be blessed of the less*, yea, the greatest of the least, God of man. This agrees well; blessing is an act that will bear reciprocation; God blesseth man imperatively; man blesseth God optatively. God blesseth man in the acts of mercy; man blesseth God in the notions, in the expressions of thanks. God blesses man when he makes him good and happy; man blesseth God when he confesseth how good, how gracious, how glorious he is; so as the blessing is wholly taken up in agnation, (acknowledgment), in celebration: in the one we acknowledge the bounty of God to us; in the other we magnify him vocally, really, for that bounty. O see, then, what high account God makes of the affections and actions that his poor, silly, earth creeping creatures; that he gives us in them power to bless himself, and takes it as an honour to be blessed of us. *David* wonders that God should so vouchsafe to bless man; how much more must we needs wonder at the mercy of God, that will vouchsafe to be blessed by man, a worm, an atom, a nothing? Yet both, *James* tells us, that *with the tongue we bless God*; and the psalmist calls for it here as a service of dear acceptance, *Blessed be the Lord*. Even we men live not (chameleon like) upon the air of thanks, nor grow the fatter for praises; how much less our Maker? O God, we know well that whatsoever men or angels do, or do not, thou canst not but be infinitely blessed in thyself; before ever any creature was, thou didst equally enjoy thy blessed self from all eternity: what can this worthless, loose film of flesh either add to or detract

from thine infiniteness? Yet thou, *that humbleth thyself to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth*, humblest thyself also to accept the weak breath of our praises, that are sent up to thee from earth to heaven. How should this encourage the vows, the endeavours of our hearty thankfulness, to see them graciously taken? If men would take up with good words, with good desires, and quit our bonds for thanks, who would be a debtor? With the God of Mercy this cheap payment is current. If he, then, will honour us so far as to be blessed of us, Oh let us honour him so far as to bless him. *Joseph Hall, in "A Sermon of Public Thanksgiving for the Wonderful Mitigation of the late Mortality."* 1625.

Verse 19. *Blessed be the Lord.* It is not a little remarkable to see the saints so burdened and overcharged with the duty of singing his praise, that,

1. They are forced to come off with an excess of praise, and offer to praise him and even leave it, as it were, as they found it, and say no more, lest they should spill his praises; but, as Re 5:12, "Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory and honour, "though I be not worthy or able to give it to him.

2. That they speak broken language and half sentences in their songs, when they are deeply loaden with the deep sense of his love, as *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits*; there is no more in the original but *Blessed be the Lord, that loadeth us*. *John Spalding, in "Synaxis Sacra."* 1703.

Verse 19. *Who daily loadeth us with benefits.* Though some may have more than others, yet every one hath his load, as much as he can carry. Every vessel cannot bear up with the like sail, and therefore God, to keep us from oversetting, puts on so much as will safest bring us to heaven, our desired port. *Ezekiel Hopkins.*

Verse 19. *Who daily loadeth us with benefits.* Such is man's self love that no inward worth can so attract his praises as outward beneficence. While thou makest much of thyself, every one shall speak well of thee; how much more while thou makest much of them! Here God hath met with us also. Not to perplex you with scanning the variety of senses wherewith I have observed this Psalm, above all other of David's, to abound; see here, I beseech you, a fourfold gradation of divine bounty. First, here are *benefits*. The word is not expressed in the original, but necessarily implied in the sense: for there are but three loads whereof man is capable from God, favours, precepts, punishments, the other two are out of the road of gratulation. When we might therefore have expected judgments, behold *benefits*. And those, secondly, not sparingly hand fulled out to us, but dealt to us by the whole load: *loaded with benefits*. Whom, thirdly, doth he load but *us*? Not worthy and well deserving subjects, but *us*, Myrrwm,

rebels. And, lastly, this he doth, not at one dole and no more (as even churls' rare feasts use to be plentiful), but Mwy Mwy successively, unweariedly, perpetually. One favour were too much, here are *benefits*; a sprinkling were too much, here is a *load*; once were too oft, here is *daily* enlarging, (largeness, bounty). Cast your eyes, therefore, a little upon this threefold exaggeration of beneficence; the measure, *a load of benefits*; the subject, unworthy *us*; the time, *daily*. *Who daily loadeth us with benefits*. Where shall we begin to survey this vast load of mercies? Were it no more, but that he hath given us a world to live in, a life to enjoy, air to breathe in, earth to tread on, fire to warm us, water to cool and cleanse us, clothes to cover us, food to nourish us, sleep to refresh us, houses to shelter us, variety of creatures to serve and delight us; here were a just load. But now, if we yet add to these, civility of breeding, dearness of friends, competency of estate, degrees of honour, honesty or dignity of vocation, favour of princes, success in employments, domestic comforts, outward peace, good reputation, preservation from dangers, rescue from evils; the load is well mended. If yet, ye shall come closer, and add due proportion of body, integrity of parts, perfection of senses, strength of nature, mediocrity of health, sufficiency of appetite, vigour of digestion, wholesome temper of seasons, freedom from cares; this course must needs heighten it yet more. If still ye shall add to these, the order, and power, and exercise of our inward faculties, enriched with wisdom, art, learning, experience, expressed by a handsome elocution, and shall now lay all these together that concern estate, body, mind; how can the axle tree of the soul but crack under the load of these favours? But, if from what God hath done for us as men, we look to what he hath done for us as Christians; that he enlivened us by his Spirit, fed us by his word and sacraments, clothed us with his merits, bought us with his blood, becoming vile to make us glorious, a curse, to invest us with blessedness; in a word, that he hath given himself to us, his Son for us; *Oh the height, and depth, and breadth* of the rich mercies of our God! Oh the boundless, topless, bottomless, load of divine benefits, whose immensity reaches from the centre of this earth, to the unlimited extent of the very imperial heavens! "*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he hath done for the children of men.*" Joseph Hall.

Verse 20. *Our God is the God of salvation* (that is of deliverance, of outward deliverance); *and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death*, or the goings out from death; that is, God hath all ways that lead out from death in his own keeping, he keepeth the key of the door that lets us out from death. When a man is in the valley of the shadow of death, where shall he issue out? Where shall he have a passage? Nowhere, saith man, he shall not escape. But God keepeth all the passages; when men think they have shut us up in the jaws of

death, he can open them, and deliver us. *To him belong the issues from death*; it is an allusion to one that keepeth a passage or a door: and God is a faithful keeper, and a friendly keeper, who will open the door for the escape of his people, when they cry unto him. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 20. *And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.* Buildings stand by the benefit of their foundations that sustain them, support them; and of their buttresses that comprehend them, embrace them; and of their contignations (a framing together; from *contigno*, to join together, or lay with beams and rafters), that knit and unite them. The foundation suffers them not to sink; the buttresses suffer them not to swerve; the contignation and knitting suffer them not to cleave. The body of our building is in the former part of this verse; it is this; He that is our God is the God of salvation; *ad salutes*, of salvations, in the plural, so it is in the original; the God that gives us spiritual and temporal salvation too. But of this building, the foundation, the buttresses, the contignation, are in this part of the verse, which constitutes our text, and in the three diverse acceptations of the words amongst our expositors, *Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death*. For, first, the foundation of this building (that our God is the God of all salvation) is laid in this, *That unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death*; that is, it is in his power to give us an issue and deliverance, even then, when we are brought to the jaws and teeth of death, and to the lips of that whirlpool, the grave; and so, in this acceptance, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio a morte*, a deliverance from death; and this is the most obvious and most ordinary acceptance of these words, and that upon which our translation lays hold: *the issues from death*. And then, secondly, the buttresses that comprehend and settle this building: that, *He that is our God is the God of salvation*, are thus raised; *Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death*, that is, the disposition and manner of our death, what kind of issue and transmigration we shall have out of this world, whether prepared or sudden, whether violent or natural, whether in our perfect senses or shaken or disordered by sickness; there is (no) condemnation to be argued out of that, no judgment to be made upon that; for howsoever they die, *precious in his sight is the death of his saints*, and with him are the issues of death, the ways of our departing out of this life are in his hands; and so in this sense of the words, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio in morte*, a deliverance in death; not that God will deliver us from dying, but that he will have a care of us in the hour of death, of what kind soever our passage be; and this sense and acceptance of the words, the natural frame and contexture doth well and pregnantly administer unto us. And then, lastly, the contignation and knitting of this building, that He that is our God, is the God of all salvation, consists in this, *Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death*, that is, that this God the

Lord, having united and knit both natures in one, and being God, having also come into this world, in our flesh, he could have no other means to save us, he could have no other issue out of this world, no return to his former glory, but by death. And so in this sense, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio per mortem*, a deliverance by death, by the death of this God our Lord, Christ Jesus; and this, St. Augustine's acceptation of the words, and those many and great persons that have adhered to him. In all these three lines then, we shall look upon these words, first as the God of power, the Almighty Father, rescues his servants from the jaws of death; and then, as the God of mercy, the glorious Son rescues us by taking upon himself the issue of death; and then (between these two), as the God of comfort, the Holy Ghost rescues us from all discomfort, by his blessed impressions before; that what manner of death soever be ordained for us, yet this *exitus mortis* shall be *introitus in vitam*, our issue in death shall be an entrance into everlasting life. And these three considerations, our deliverance *a morte, in morte, per mortem*, from death, in death, and by death, will abundantly do all the offices of the foundation, of the buttresses, of the contignation of this our building, that *He that is our God is the God of salvation*, because *Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death*. *John Donne*.

Verse 20. *The issues from death.* That is, the issue, or escape, from death, both in the resurrection and in the various perils of our present life. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 20. *Issue from death.* The English version cannot be sustained by the Hebrew; for *l* has never the force of *from*, and, therefore, the expression, as Dr. Hammond observes, must signify the several plagues and judgments inflicted by God on impenitent enemies—such as drowning in the sea, killing by the sword, etc.; which were the ways of punishing and destroying the Egyptians and Canaanites. Thus the two members of the verse are "antithetical" the first speaks of God as a deliverer, and the second as a punisher; and in this respect the verse corresponds with the preceding. *George Phillips, in "The Psalms... with a Critical, Exegetical, and Philological Commentary."* 1846.

Verse 21. *The hairy scalp.* That is, even the most fearful enemies, that with their ghastly visage, deformed with long hair, would strike a terror into the hearts of beholders. *Edward Leigh*.

Verse 21. *Hairy scalp.* It was a practice among some of the ancient inhabitants of Arabia to allow their hair to grow luxuriantly on the *top of the head*, and to shave the head in other parts. *Francis Hare*. 1740.

Verse 22. *I will bring the enemy.* Both the preceding and following verse prove that this is the sense, and not as many interpreters supply, *my people*. Bashan was *east* of Judaea, and the *sea* on the west; so that the meaning is, that God would bring his enemies from every quarter to be slain by his people. *Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 23. *That thy foot may be dipped,* etc. The blood of thy enemies, shed in such abundance that thy dogs shall lap and drink it, shall be the sea in which thou shalt pass, and that red without a figure. And, proportionably shall be the destruction on the enemies of Christ and Christians in the age of the Messiah. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 26-28. This Psalm was sung, it is probable, on the removal of the ark into the City of David. Numbers 10. It was now that the ark had rest, and the tribes assembled three times a year at Jerusalem, the place that God had chosen. The text is a lively description of their worship.

1. Offer a few remarks by way of expounding the passage.

(a) Israel had their lesser congregations in ordinary every Sabbath day, and their national ones three times a year. Their business in all was *to bless God*.

(b) This business was to be carried on by *all Israel*, beginning at the fountain head, and proceeding through all its streams. God had blessed Israel; let Israel bless God.

(c) All the tribes are supposed to be present; four are mentioned in the name of the whole, as inhabiting the confines of the land. Their union was a source of joy; they had been divided by civil wars, but now they are met together.

(d) Those tribes which are named had each something particular attending it. Little Benjamin (see Judges 21) had nearly been a tribe lacking in Israel, but now appears with its ruler. Judah had been at war with Benjamin: Saul was a Benjamite; David was of Judah: yet they happily lost their antipathy in the worship of God. Zebulun and Naphtali were distant tribes; yet they were there! dark, too, yet there.

(e) The princes and the people were all together.

(f) They were supposed to be strong, but were reminded that what they had of strength was of God's commanding. Their union and success, as well as that degree of righteousness among them which exalted the nation, was of God

They are not so strong, but that they need strengthening, and are directed to pray as well as praise: *Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*

2. Apply the subject. Two things are here exemplified, namely—diligence and brotherly union; and three things recommended, namely—united praise; united acknowledgment that, for what they are, they are indebted to God; and united prayer for future mercies. Each of these affords a rule for us.

(a) The worship of God must be attended with *diligence*. There are the princes of Zebulun and Naphtali. They had to travel about two hundred miles three times a year, thither and back again; that is, twelve hundred in a year, twenty-four miles a week. Those who neglect the worship of God for little difficulties show that their heart is not in it, and when they do attend cannot expect to profit: "they have snuffed at it." Those whose hearts are in it often reap great advantage. God blessed the Israelites in their journeys, as well as when there (Ps 84:6): "The rain filleth the pools; "and so the Christians. There is a peculiar promise to those that seek him *early*.

(b) The worship of God must be attended to with *brotherly love*. All the tribes must go up together. It is a kind law that enjoins *social* worship; we need each other to stimulate. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." God has made us so that we shall be greatly influenced by each other, both to good and evil. It greatly concerns us to cultivate such a spirit. To this end we must cherish an affectionate behaviour in our common intercourse—bear, forbear, and forgive; and, whatever differences we may have, not suffer them to hinder our worship. The tribes, as we have seen, had their differences; yet they were there. When all Israel met at Hebron to anoint David king, what should we have said if some had kept away because others went?

(c) Our business, when assembled, must be to *bless God* in our congregations; and a pleasant work this is. Israel had reasons, and good reasons, and Christians more. Thank him for his unspeakable gift; bless him for the means of grace, and the hopes of glory. Bless him; he "healeth all thy diseases," etc. Psalm 103. This is an employment that fits for heaven. The tears of a mourner in God's house were supposed to defile his altar. We may mourn for *sin*; but a fretful spirit, discontented and unthankful, defiles God's altar still.

(d) Another part of our business is to unite in acknowledging that whatever we are, we owe it to God alone; "Thy God hath commanded thy strength." We possess a degree of strength both individually and socially. Art thou strong in faith, in hope, in zeal? It is in him thou art strong. Are we strong as a society? It

is God that increaseth us with men like a flock; it is he that keeps us in union, gives us success, etc.

(e) Another part of our business must be to unite in prayer for future mercies. We are not so strong, either as individuals or societies, but that there is room for increase; and this is the proper object of prayer. God has wrought a great work for us in regeneration. God has wrought much for us as a church in giving us increase, respect, and room in the earth. Pray that each may be increased; or, in the words of the text: *Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us*. Are there none who are strangers to all this? *Andrew Fuller*.

Verse 27. *Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, Naphtali*. The two royal tribes,

1. That of Benjamin, from which the first king sprang;
2. That of Judah, from which the second; and the two learned tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali. And we may note, that the kingdom of the Messiah should at length be submitted to by all the potentates and learned men in the world. *Henry Hammond*.

Verse 27. *Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, Naphtali*. The same tribes are prominent in the New Testament, as foremost in the battle of the church against the world. Paul, the "least" of the apostles (1Co 15:8-10), was by origin Saul of Benjamin (Php 3:5). Christ, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," James and John, the brothers, the other James, Thaddaeus, and Simon, were from Judah, and the other apostles were from Nephthalim and Zabulon, or Galilee (Mt 4:13). *A. R. Fausset*.

Verse 27. *Their ruler*. The *prince* of that tribe. The Greek version saith, *in a trance*; taking the Hebrew Mdr to be of Mdr, though it be not found elsewhere in this form; yet rare words but once used are sundry times found in this and other Psalms. These things applied to Christ's times and after are very mystical. *Benjamin*, the least, is put here *first*; so in the heavenly Jerusalem, the *first foundation is a jasper* (Re 21:19), which was the *last* precious stone in Aaron's breastplate, on which *Benjamin's* name was graven (Ex 28:10,20-21). In this tribe *Paul* excelled as a prince of God, though one of the least of the apostles (1Co 15:8-10), who was converted in a *trance* or *ecstasy* (Ac 9:3-4, etc.); and in ecstasies he and other apostles saw the mysteries of Christ's kingdom. *Henry Ainsworth*.

Verse 27. *Their council*; or, *their stone*, the Messiah, that sprang from Judah, Ge 49:24 Ps 118:22. *John Gill*.

Verse 27-28. There are all the twelve tribes of Israel with their rulers present, to conduct the ark of God to the hill, in which it pleaseth him to dwell; for, though all the tribes are not mentioned, these which are named, include the whole, since Zebulun and Naphtali are the most remote, and Judah and Benjamin the nearest tribes to Zion. Benjamin was a dwindled family through the signal depopulation of that tribe, from which it never entirely recovered. Jud 20:43-48 1Ch 12:29. *Edward Garrard Marsh, in "The Book of Psalms translated into English Verse... with Practical and Explanatory Notes." 1832.*

Verse 28. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength.* Singularly appropriate to the occasion for which they were composed are these stimulating words. The ark of God had during several years been kept in private houses. David had pitched a tent for its reception, and intended providing a better shrine; he would deposit the ark in the temporary sanctuary, and he gathers thirty thousand chosen men of Israel, and with these and with a multitude of the people he proceeds to the house in which the ark had been kept. The people *can* render the service of song, so "David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals" (2Sa 6:5). The breach of Uzzah delayed the restoration of the ark three months; but David returned to the work, and with gladness, with burnt offerings and peace offerings, with feasting, dancing, and the sound of a trumpet, he brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the tabernacle he had pitched for it. David *can* provide a sacred place for the ark of his God, and his "God has commanded his strength." Thirty thousand chosen men *can* attend on this occasion, and a multitude besides. Then, why should they tarry at home? The occasion is worthy of their presence, and their "God has commanded their strength." There are sweet singers and skilful players in Israel, and why should they be silent. The occasion calls for praise, and their "God has commanded their strength." There are cattle upon the thousand hills of Canaan, and shall no sacrifice be brought? The occasion demands oblations, and Israel's "God has commanded their strength." There is a mountain in Canaan, beautiful for situation, and rich in historic association. God's ark *can* be brought to this mountain, and if it can be, it ought to be, for Israel's God has commanded Israel's strength. There are twelve tribes in Israel which may unite in bringing up God's ark, then let none hold back, for their "God has commanded their strength." *Thy strength* is thy best—all that is within thee; all that thou canst do, and be, and become; and all that thou hast—the two mites, if these be all, and the alabaster box of spikenard, very costly, if this be thy possession... By that which God is in himself, by that which God is to us, by law on the heart, and by law oral and written, by the new kingdom of his love, and by all his benefits, *Thy God commands thy strength.* He speaks

from the beginning, and from the end of time, from the midst of chaos, and from the new heavens and new earth, from Bethel and from Gethsemane, from Sinai and from Calvary, and he saith to us all, "My son, give me thine heart, " consecrate to me thy best, and devote to me thy strength. *Samuel Martin.*

Verse 30. *Rebuke the wild beasts of the reeds.* This is our marginal version, which is the proper one. Most modern critics consider that the lion is here intended, which frequently makes its den among reeds or brush wood. Innumerable lions wander about among the reeds and copses, on the borders of the rivers of Mesopotamia. The river Jordan was infested with them (Jer 4:7 49:19). Hence, the wild beasts of the reed may signify the Syrian kings, who often contended with David. *Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 30. The idolatrous king of Egypt is here enigmatically represented as dwelling, like the crocodile, among the reeds of the Nile; and with him are introduced the *bulls* and *calves*, who were the gods of the people of Egypt, before whom they were ever dancing in their superstitious revels. "Quell these insults upon thy majesty, nor put down only the superstition of Egypt, but all their pomp of war also, that the Gentiles may be converted unto thee, and the idols be utterly abolished." *Edward Garrard Marsh.*

Verse 30. When the enemies of God rise up against his church, it is time for the church to fall down to God, to implore his aid against those enemies. Holy prayers are more powerful than profane swords. *Thomas Wall, in "A Comment on the Times."* 1657.

Verse 30. These words contain, first, a declaration of God's enemies; secondly, an imprecation against those enemies. The enemies are marshalled into four ranks.

1. A company of spearmen, or (as some translations read it) the beast of the reeds.
2. The multitude of the bulls.
3. The calves of the people.
4. The men that delight in war.

The imprecation is also twofold; the first more gentle; it is but *rebuke the spearmen*; and that with limitation too—*till they submit themselves with pieces of silver*. For they that will not, but delight in war, more severely deal with

such: Scatter them; *Scatter the men that delight in war....* The church of God never wanted enemies, never will. "There is no peace to the wicked, "saith God: there shall be no peace to the godly, say the wicked. The wicked shall have no peace which God can give; the godly shall have no peace which the wicked can take away. *Thomas Wall.*

Verse 30.

1. Scrupulosity.
2. Envy.
3. Ignorance.
4. Ambition or pride.

Upon which these four beasts in the text do act their enmity against the church; scrupulosity sets forth unto us the beast of the reeds; envy, the bulls; ignorance, the calves; and pride, the men *that delight in war.* *Thomas Wall.*

This instance of spiritualising may act rather as a beacon than as an example. The author was an able divine, but in this sermon gives more play to his imagination than his common sense.

Verse 31. *Ethiopia.* It is a matter of fact, familiar to the learned reader, that the names *Ethiopia*, and "*Ethiopians*," are frequently substituted in our English version of the Old Testament, where the Hebrew preserves the proper name, "Cush." And the name, "Cush," when so applied in Scripture, belongs uniformly not to the African, but to the Asiatic, Ethiopia, or Arabia. *Charles Forster, in "The Historical Geography of Arabia."*

Verse 33. *And that a mighty voice; or a voice of strength;* a strong and powerful voice, such as the gospel is, when accompanied with the power and Spirit of God. It is a soul shaking and awakening voice; it is a heart melting and a heart breaking one; it is a quickening and an enlightening voice; it quickens dead sinners, gives life unto them, and the entrance of it gives light to dark minds; it is a soul charming and alluring one; it draws to Christ, engages the affections to him, and fills with unspeakable delight and pleasure. *John Gill.*

Verse 33. *To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens.* He who manages the heavens, directing their course and influence. He formed every orb, ascertained its motion, proportioned its solid contents to the orbit in which it was to revolve, and to the other bodies of the same system; and as an able rider manages his horse, so does God the sun, moon, planets, and all the host of heaven. *W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

Verse 33. The praises of the church are sung to him, who, after his sufferings here below, reascended to take possession of his ancient throne, high above all heavens; who, from thence, speaketh to the world by his glorious gospel, mighty and powerful, as thunder, in its effects upon the hearts of men (see Psalm 29 throughout). The power of Christ's voice, when he was on earth, appeared by the effects which followed, when he said, "Young man, arise:" "Lazarus, come forth:" "Peace, be still;" and it will yet further appear, when "all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth." *George Horne.*

Verse 34. *His strength is in the clouds.* This refers to the phenomena of thunder and lightning; for all nations have observed that the electric fluid is an irresistible agent—destroying life, tearing towers and castles to pieces, rending the strongest oaks, and cleaving the most solid rocks; and the most enlightened nations have justly considered it as an especial manifestation of the power and sovereignty of God. *W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verses 1-2.

First. The church of God ever had, and will have, enemies and haters; for against these doth the psalmist arm himself and the church with this prayer.

Secondly. The church's enemies are God's enemies; they that hate the church, hate God. *Thine* enemies, them that hate thee.

Thirdly. God sometimes seems to sleep or lie still, and let these enemies and haters do what they will for a season, This, also, is implied: he to whom we say, *Arise* is either asleep or lies still.

Fourthly. There is a time when God will arise.

Fifthly. God's rising time is the enemies' scattering time, his hater's flying time.

Sixthly. It is the duty of God's people to pray him up when he seems to be down, and to exalt him in their praises when he doth arise to their rescue and redemption; for these words are both a prayer and a triumph as they are used both by Moses and David. Thomas Case, in a Fast Sermon, preached before the House of Commons, *entitled, "God's Rising, his Enemies' Scattering."* 1644.

Verses 1-3. Prayer for the Second Advent. *A. Macaul.*

Verse 4.

1. The name that inspires the song: *Jah*.

- (a) Self existent.
- (b) Immutable.
- (c) Eternal.

2. The song inspired by that name.

- (a) Of exultation.
- (b) Of confidence.
- (c) Of joy. *G. R.*

Verse 5. The claims of widows and orphans upon the church of God, from God's relation to them and his indwelling in the church.

Verse 6. Comparison of churches to families. See extract from *Dr. Gill*.

Verse 6.

- 1. Two curable evils: "solitary", "bound with chains."
- 2. Two rich blessings: "set in families, ""bringeth out."
- 3. One monster evil, and its miserable consequences.

Verses 7-8.

1. God has his seasons for delivering his people from their troubles: *When thou*, etc.

2. His deliverance is complete: *The earth shook*, etc.; all things gave way before him.

3. The deliverance is greater for the delay.

(a) It is so in itself.

(b) It is more prized: as in the case of Job, Abraham, Israel at the Red Sea, Daniel, his three companions, etc. *G. R.*

Verses 7-9.

1. The presence of God in his church.

- (a) His preeminence: "before."
- (b) As covenant God of Israel.
- (c) As active and making active.
- (d) His rule within: they follow.
- (e) His design without: marching for war.

2. The blessed consequences.

- (a) The most stolid shake.
- (b) The lofty bow.
- (c) Difficulties removed: "Sinai."
- (d) Blessings plenteous.
- (e) Church revived.

Verse 9.

1. God's mercy compared to a shower.

- (a) It is direct from heaven; not through priests.
- (b) It is pure and unmixed.
- (c) No one has a monopoly of it.
- (d) There is no substitute for it.
- (e) It is sovereignly dispensed, as to (1) time; (2) place; (3) manner; and (4) measure.
- (f) It works efficiently. Isa 55:10.
- (g) Prayer can get it.

2. There are seasons when these showers fall.

- (a) In the house of God.
- (b) In the means of grace.

- (c) In prayer.
 - (d) In affliction.
 - (e) When saints are weary (1) through working; (2) through sickness; (3) through non success.
 - (f) By the Holy Spirit refreshing the heart.
3. These showers are meant to "confirm God's people."
 4. They are wanted *now*.

Verse 9.

1. The church is God's inheritance.
 - (a) Chosen.
 - (b) Purchased.
 - (c) Acquired.
2. Though his inheritance, at times it may be weary.
3. When weary, it will be refreshed by him. *G. R.*

Verse 10. (*second clause*). Special goodness, for a special people, specially prepared.

Verse 10. (*second clause*). It is spoken in reference to the *poor*, because,

1. They are the larger mass of mankind; and, whatever pride may think, in the eye of reason, policy, and revelation, by far the most important, useful, and necessary part.
2. They would be more peculiarly affected by deficiency.
3. To encourage those in humble and trying life to depend upon him.
4. To enforce our attention to them from the divine example. *W. Jay.*

Verse 11. The divinity of the gospel; the divers ways and agents for its publication.

Verses 11-12.

1. The word given: "The Lord." etc.
2. The word proclaimed: "Great, "etc.
3. The word obeyed: "Kings, "etc. Thus it was in Old Testament times, when to Joshua, to Gideon, to David, etc., the Lord gave the word, and it ran through the hosts, and "kings of armies, "etc. Thus it was in apostolic times, when the word of reconciliation was given. Thus it is still, and will be more signally than ever hereafter. *G. R.*

Verse 12. (*last clause*). The church in redemption as a spouse tarrying at home; her home duties; the spoil of her Lord's glorious and finished work, and her dividing it.

Verse 13.

1. The contrast.
 - (a) Instead of humiliation, exaltation.
 - (b) Instead of pollution, purity.
 - (c) Instead of inertness, activity.
 - (d) Instead of deformity, beauty.
2. Its application.
 - (a) To penitence and pardon.
 - (b) To depravity and regeneration.
 - (c) To affliction and recovery.
 - (d) To desertion and consolation.
 - (e) To death and glory. *G. R.*

Verse 14.

1. Where earth's greatest battles are fought. "Scattered, ""in it, "*i.e.*, in Zion. "There brake he, "etc.
2. By whom? The Almighty.
3. When? In answer to his people's faith and prayer.
4. How?

- (a) Without noise, gently: as the fall of snow.
- (b) Without human aid: as untrodden snow.
- (c) Without violence: "All bloodless lay the untrodden snow." *G. R.*

Verse 15-16.

1. The superiority of the hill of Zion.

- (a) In fertility, to the hill of Bashan; to earthly pleasures.
- (b) In glory, to other hills; to human heights of learning and power.

2. The reason of that superiority.

- (a) The place of God's choice.
- (b) Of his delight
- (c) Of his abode.
- (d) Of his continuance for ever. *G. R.*

Verse 16.

1. The church the dwelling place of God.

- (a) Elected of old.
- (b) Favoured for ever.
- (c) Affording rest, etc., as a home for God.
- (d) Receiving honour, etc., for herself.

2. The church, therefore, envied by others.

- (a) They feel their own greatness outdone.
- (b) They leap with rage.
- (c) They are unreasonable in so doing.

Verses 17-18.

1. The comparison between Zion and Sinai.

- (a) The same Lord is there: "The Lord is among, "etc.
- (b) The same attendants: "The chariots," etc.

2. The contrast.

- (a) God descended at Sinai, ascended from near Zion.
- (b) Put a yoke upon them at Sinai, leads captivity captive at Zion.
- (c) At Sinai demanded obedience, in Zion bestows gifts.
- (d) In Sinai spoke terror, in Zion receives gifts for the rebellious.
- (e) In Sinai appeared for a short season, in Zion dwells for ever. *G. R.*

Verse 18.

- 1. Christ's *ascension*.
- 2. His *victories*.
- 3. The *gifts* he received for men; and
- 4. The great *end* for which he bestows them. *John Newton*.

Verse 18. *That the Lord God might dwell among them.* It is ground for devout wonder that God should dwell among men, when we contemplate his *immensity, loftiness, independence, holiness, and sovereignty*; yet he does so—

- 1. In the coming of Christ into the world.
 - 2. In the residence of his Spirit in the heart.
 - 3. In the presence of God in his churches.
- William Staughton, D.D. 1770-1829.*

Verse 19.

- 1. The load of benefits.
- 2. The load of obligation.
- 3. The load of praise due in return.

Verse 19.

- 1. Salvation is not to be forgotten in the midst of daily mercies.
- 2. Daily mercies are not to be forgotten in the enjoyment of salvation. *G. R.*

Verse 20. Death in God's hand.

1. Escapes from it.
2. Entrances to it.
3. The exit out of it beyond.
4. The gate which, when closed, shuts us in it for ever.

Verse 20.

1. What God has been to his people.

- (a) Their salvation.
- (b) Their portion: "Our God."

2. What he will be: With them.

- (a) Until death.
- (b) In death.
- (c) After death. *G. R.*

Verse 21. The power, pride, wisdom, and very life of evil, to be conquered by God.

Verse 22.

1. Where his people may be driven.
2. The certainty of their return.
3. The reasons for being assured of this.

Verse 24. *The allowable procession in the sanctuary.* The marshalled order of doctrine, the holy walk of believers, the banners of joy, the music of devotions, the shouts to the King.

Verse 25. (*last clause*). Work for holy women in the church.

Verse 27.

1. The variety of song.
- (a) The royal tribe of Benjamin in the time of Saul.
 - (b) The princely tribe of Judah, as David was prince regent in the time of Saul.

(c) The literary tribe of Zebulun: "Out of Zebulun" they that handle the pen of the writer.

(d) The eloquent tribe: "Naphtali giveth goodly words."

2. The harmony of song. Let all unite in praising the Lord, the fountain of Israel. "Ten thousand thousand are their tongues, "etc. *G. R.*

Verse 30-31.

1. Hindrances to the progress of divine truth.

(a) Idolatry. Worship of the crocodile—*beasts of the reeds*, (LXX)—of bulls and calves, as in Egypt.

(b) Covetousness.

(c) War.

2. The means for their removal. Prayer and the divine *rebuke*. *Scatter thou*, etc.

3. The consequences of this removal; Ps 68:31.

Verse 35.

1. Consider God's jealousy towards his people for his holiness in the three "holy places."

(a) In the outer court of profession.

(b) In the holy place of our priesthood.

(c) In the holy of holies with his Son.

2. Consider his terribleness to his foes, as inferred from those "holy places."

Verse 35. *Blessed be God.* A brief, but very suggestive text.

Psalm 69

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim.* Thus for the second time we have a Psalm entitled "upon the lilies." In the forty-first they were golden lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh, and blooming in the fair gardens which skirt the ivory palaces: in this we have the lily among thorns, the lily of the valley, fair and beautiful, blooming in the garden of Gethsemane. *A Psalm of David.* If any enquire, "of whom speaketh the psalmist this? of himself, or of some other man?" we would reply, "of himself, and of some other man." Who that other is, we need not be long in discovering; it is the Crucified alone who can say, "in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." His footprints all through this sorrowful song have been pointed out by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and therefore we believe, and are sure, that the Son of Man is here. Yet it seems to be the intention of the Spirit, while he gives us personal types, and so shows the likeness to the firstborn which exists in the heirs of salvation, to set forth the disparities between the best of the sons of men, and the Son of God, for there are verses here which we dare not apply to our Lord; we almost shudder when we see our brethren attempting to do so, as for instance Ps 69:5. Especially do we note the difference between David and the Son of David in the imprecations of the one against his enemies, and the prayers of the other for them. We commence our exposition of this Psalm with much trembling, for we feel that we are entering with our Great High Priest into the most holy place.

DIVISION. This Psalm consists of two portions of 18 verses each. These again may each be sub divided into three parts. Under the first head, from Ps 69:1-4, the sufferer spreads his complaint before God; then he pleads that his zeal for God is the cause of his sufferings, in Ps 69:5-12: and this encourages him to plead for help and deliverance, from Ps 69:13-18. In the second half of the Psalm he details the injurious conduct of his adversaries, from Ps 69:19-21; calls for their punishment, Ps 69:22-28, and then returns to prayer, and to a joyful anticipation of divine interposition and its results, Ps 69:29-36.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Save me, O God.* "He saved others, himself he cannot save." With strong cries and tears he offered up prayers and supplications unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Heb 5:7). Thus David had prayed, and here his Son and Lord utters the same cry. This is the second Psalm which begins with a "Save me, O God," and the former (Psalm 54) is but a short summary of this more lengthened complaint. It is remarkable that such a scene of woe should be presented to us immediately after the jubilant ascension hymn of the last Psalm, but this only shows how interwoven are the glories and the sorrows of our ever blessed Redeemer. The head which now is crowned with glory is the same which wore the thorns; he to whom we pray, "Save us, O God," is the selfsame person who cried, "Save me, O God." For the waters are come in unto my soul. Sorrows, deep, abounding, deadly, had penetrated his inner nature. Bodily anguish is not his first complaint; he begins not with the gall which embittered his lips, but with the mighty griefs

which broke into his heart. All the sea outside a vessel is less to be feared than that which finds its way into the hold. A wounded spirit who can bear. Our Lord in this verse is seen before us as a Jonah, crying, "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul." He was doing business for us on the great waters, at his Father's command; the stormy wind was lifting up the waves thereof, and he went down to the depths till his soul was melted because of trouble. In all this he has sympathy with us, and is able to succour us when we, like Peter, beginning to sink, cry to him, "Lord, save, or we perish."

Verse 2. *I sink in deep mire.* In water one might swim, but in mud and mire all struggling is hopeless; the mire sucks down its victim. Where there is no standing. Everything gave way under the Sufferer; he could not get foothold for support—this is a worse fate than drowning. Here our Lord pictures the close, clinging nature of his heart's woes. "He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy." Sin is as mire for its filthiness, and the holy soul of the Saviour must have loathed even that connection with it which was necessary for its expiation. His pure and sensitive nature seemed to sink in it, for it was not his element, he was not like us born and acclimatised to this great dismal swamp. Here our Redeemer became another Jeremiah, of whom it is recorded (Jer 38:6) that his enemies cast him into a dungeon wherein "was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." Let our hearts feel the emotions, both of contrition and gratitude, as we see in this simile the deep humiliation of our Lord. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. The sorrow gathers even greater force; he is as one cast into the sea, the waters go over his head. His sorrows were first within, then around, and now above him. Our Lord was no fainthearted sentimentalist; his were real woes, and though he bore them heroically, yet were they terrible even to him. His sufferings were unlike all others in degree, the waters were such as soaked into the soul; the mire was the mire of the abyss itself, and the floods were deep and overflowing. To us the promise is, "the rivers shall not overflow thee, "but no such word of consolation was vouchsafed to him. My soul, thy Well beloved endured all this for thee. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it; and, because of this, thou hast the rich benefit of that covenant assurance, "as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." He stemmed the torrent of almighty wrath, that we might for ever rest in Jehovah's love.

Verse 3. *I am weary of my crying.* Not of it, but by it, with it. He had prayed till he sweat great drops of blood, and well might physical weariness intervene. My throat is dried, parched, and inflamed. Long pleading with awful fervour had

scorched his throat as with flames of fire. Few, very few, of his saints follow their Lord in prayer so far as this. We are, it is to be feared, more likely to be hoarse with talking frivolities to men than by pleading with God; yet our sinful nature demands more prayer than his perfect humanity might seem to need. His prayers should shame us into fervour. Our Lord's supplications were salted with fire, they were hot with agony; and hence they weakened his system, and made him "a weary man and full of woes." Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. He wanted in his direst distress nothing more than his God; that would be all in all to him. Many of us know what watching and waiting mean; and we know something of the failing eye when hope is long deferred: but in all this Jesus bears the palm; no eyes ever failed as his did or for so deep a cause. No painter can ever depict those eyes; their pencils fail in every feature of his all but fair but all marred countenance, but most of all do they come short when they venture to pourtray those eyes which were fountains of tears. He knew both how to pray and to watch, and he would have us learn the like. There are times when we should pray till the throat is dry, and watch till the eyes grow dim. Only thus can we have fellowship with him in his sufferings. What! can we not watch with him one hour? Does the flesh shrink back? O cruel flesh to be so tender of thyself, and so ungenerous to thy Lord!

Verse 4. *They that hate me.* Surprising sin that men should hate the altogether lovely one, truly is it added, without a cause, for reason there was none for this senseless enmity. He neither blasphemed God, nor injured man. As Samuel said: "Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed?" Even so might Jesus enquire. Besides, he had not only done us no evil, but he had bestowed countless and priceless benefits. Well might he demand, "For which of these works do ye stone me?" Yet from his cradle to his cross, beginning with Herod and not ending with Judas, he had foes without number; and he justly said, they are more than the hairs of mine head. Both the civilians and the military, laics and clerics, doctors and drunkards, princes and people, set themselves against the Lord's anointed. "This is the heir, let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours," was the unanimous resolve of all the keepers of the Jewish vineyard; while the Gentiles outside the walls of the garden furnished the instruments for his murder, and actually did the deed. The hosts of earth and hell, banded together, made up vast legions of antagonists, none of whom had any just ground for hating him.

They that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are *mighty*. It was bad that they were many, but worse that they were mighty. All the ecclesiastical and military powers of his country were arrayed against him. The might of the Sanhedrin, the mob, and the Roman legions were combined in one

for his utter destruction: "Away with such a fellow from this earth; it is not fit that he should live," was the shout of his ferocious foes. David's adversaries were on the throne when he was hiding in caverns, and our Lord's enemies were the great ones of the earth; while he, of whom the world was not worthy, was reproached of men and despised of the people. Then I restored that which I took not away. Though innocent, he was treated as guilty. Though David had no share in plots against Saul, yet he was held accountable for them. In reference to our Lord, it may be truly said that he restores what he took not away; for he gives back to the injured honour of God a recompense, and to man his lost happiness, though the insult of the one and the fall of the other were neither of them, in any sense, his doings. Usually, when the ruler sins the people suffer, but here the proverb is reversed—the sheep go astray, and their wanderings are laid at the Shepherd's door.

Verse 5. *O God, thou knowest my foolishness.* David might well say this, but not David's Lord; unless it be understood as an appeal to God as to his freedom from the folly which men imputed to him when they said he was mad. That which was foolishness to men was superlative wisdom before God. How often might we use these words in their natural sense, and if we were not such fools as to be blind to our own folly, this confession would be frequently on our lips. When we feel that we have been foolish we are not, therefore, to cease from prayer, but rather to be more eager and fervent in it. Fools had good need consult with the infinitely wise. And my sins are not hid from thee. They cannot be hid with any fig leaves of mine; only the covering which thou wilt bring me can conceal their nakedness and mine. It ought to render confession easy, when we are assured that all is known already. That prayer which has no confession in it may please a Pharisee's pride, but will never bring down justification. They who have never seen their sins in the light of God's omniscience are quite unable to appeal to that omniscience in proof of their piety. He who can say, *Thou knowest my foolishness*, is the only man who can add, "*But thou knowest that I love thee.*"

Verse 6. *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake.* If he were deserted, others who were walking in the same path of faith would be discouraged and disappointed. Unbelievers are ready enough to catch at anything which may turn humble faith into ridicule, therefore, O God of all the armies of Israel, let not my case cause the enemy to blaspheme—such is the spirit of this verse. Our blessed Lord ever had a tender concern for his people, and would not have his own oppression of spirit become a source of discouragement to them. Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of *Israel*. He appealed to the Lord of hosts by his power to help

him, and now to the God of Israel by his covenant faithfulness to come to the rescue. If the captain of the host fail, how will it fare with the rank and file? If David flee, what will his followers do? If the king of believers shall find his faith unrewarded, how will the feeble ones hold on their way? Our Lord's behaviour during his sharpest agonies is no cause of shame to us; he wept, for he was man, but he murmured not, for he was sinless man; he cried, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" for he was human, but he added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," for his humanity was without taint of rebellion. In the depths of tribulation no repining word escaped him, for there was no repining in his heart. The Lord of martyrs witnessed a good confession. He was strengthened in the hour of peril, and came off more than a conqueror, as we also shall do, if we hold fast our confidence even to the end.

Verse 7. *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach.* Because he undertook to do the Father's will, and teach his truth, the people were angry; because he declared himself to be the Son of God, the priesthood raved. They could find no real fault in him, but were forced to hatch up a lying accusation before they could commence their sham trial of him. The bottom of the quarrel was, that God was with him, and he with God, while the Scribes and Pharisees sought only their own honour. Reproach is at all times very cutting to a man of integrity, and it must have come with acute force upon one of so unsullied a character as our Lord; yet see, how he turns to his God, and finds his consolation in the fact that he is enduring all for his Father's sake. The like comfort belongs to all misrepresented and persecuted saints. Shame hath covered my face. Men condemned to die frequently had their faces covered as they were dragged away from the judge's seat, as was the case with the wicked Haman in Es 7:8: after this fashion they first covered our Lord with a veil of opprobrious accusation, and then hurried him away to be crucified. Moreover, they passed him through the trial of cruel mockings, besmeared his face with spittle, and covered it with bruises, so that Pilate's "Ecce Homo" called the world's attention to an unexampled spectacle of woe and shame. The stripping on the cross must also have suffused the Redeemer's face with a modest blush, as he hung there exposed to the cruel gaze of a ribald multitude. Ah, blessed Lord, it was our shame which thou wast made to bear! Nothing more deserves to be reproached and despised than sin, and lo, when thou wast made sin for us thou wast called to endure abuse and scorn. Blessed be thy name it is over now, but we owe thee more than heart can conceive for thine amazing stoop of love.

Verse 8. *I am become a stranger unto my brethren.* The Jews his brethren in race rejected him, his family his brethren by blood were offended at him, his

disciples his brethren in spirit forsook him and fled; one of them sold him, and another denied him with oaths and cursings. Alas, my Lord, what pangs must have smitten thy loving heart to be thus forsaken by those who should have loved thee, defended thee, and, if need be, died for thee. And an alien unto my mother's children. These were the nearest of relatives, the children of a father with many wives felt the tie of consanguinity but loosely, but children of the same mother owned the band of love; yet our Lord found his nearest and dearest ones ashamed to own him. As David's brethren envied him, and spake evil of him, so our Lord's relatives by birth were jealous of him, and his best beloved followers in the hour of his agony were afraid to be known as having any connection with him. These were sharp arrows of the mighty in the soul of Jesus, the most tender of friends. May none of us ever act as if we were strangers to him; never may we treat him as if he were an alien to us: rather let us resolve to be crucified with him, and may grace turn the resolve into fact.

Verse 9. *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* His burning ardour, like the flame of a candle, fed on his strength and consumed it. His heart, like a sharp sword, cut through the scabbard. Some men are eaten up with lechery, others with covetousness, and a third class with pride, but the master passion with our great leader was the glory of God, jealousy for his name, and love to the divine family. Zeal for God is so little understood by men of the world, that it always draws down opposition upon those who are inspired with it; they are sure to be accused of sinister motives, or of hypocrisy, or of being out of their senses. When zeal eats us up, ungodly men seek to eat us up too, and this was preeminently the case with our Lord, because his holy jealousy was preeminent. With more than a seraph's fire he glowed, and consumed himself with his fervour. And the reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon *me*. Those who habitually blaspheme God now curse me instead. I have become the butt for arrows intended for the Lord himself. Thus the Great Mediator was, in this respect, a substitute for God as well as for man, he bore the reproaches aimed at the one, as well as the sins committed by the other.

Verse 10. *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.* Having resolved to hate him, everything he did was made a fresh reason for reviling. If he ate and drank as others, he was a man gluttonous and a winebibber; if he wept himself away and wore himself out with fasting, then he had a devil and was mad. Nothing is more cruel than prejudice, its eye colours all with the medium through which it looks, and its tongue rails at all indiscriminately. Our Saviour wept much in secret for our sins, and no doubt his private soul chastening on our behalf were very frequent. Lone mountains and desert places saw repeated agonies, which, if they could disclose them,

would astonish us indeed. The emaciation which these exercises wrought in our Lord made him appear nearly fifty years old when he was but little over thirty; this which was to his honour was used as a matter of reproach against him.

Verse 11. *I made sackcloth also my garment.* This David did literally, but we have no reason to believe that Jesus did. In a spiritual sense he, as one filled with grief, was always a sackcloth wearer. And I became a proverb to them. He was ridiculed as "the man of sorrows," quoted as "the acquaintance of grief." He might have said, "here I and sorrow sit." This which should have won him pity only earned him new and more general scorn. To interweave one's name into a mocking proverb is the highest stretch of malice, and to insult one's acts of devotion is to add profanity to cruelty.

Verse 12. *They that sit in the gate speak against me.* The ordinary gossips who meet at the city gates for idle talk make me their theme, the business men who there resort for trade forget their merchandise to slander me, and even the beggars who wait at men's doors for alms contribute their share of insult to the heap of infamy. And I was the song of the drunkard. The ungodly know no merrier jest than that in which the name of the holy is traduced. The flavour of slander is piquant, and gives a relish to the revellers' wine. The character of the man of Nazareth was so far above the appreciation of the men of strength to mingle strong drink, it was so much out of their way and above their thoughts, that it is no wonder it seemed to them ridiculous, and therefore well adapted to create laughter over their cups. The saints are ever choice subjects for satire. Butler's Hudibras owed more of its popularity to its irreligious banter than to any intrinsic cleverness. To this day the tavern makes rare fun of the tabernacle, and the ale bench is the seat of the scorner. What a wonder of condescension is here that he who is the adoration of angels should stoop to be the song of drunkards! What amazing sin that he whom seraphs worship with veiled faces should be a scornful proverb among the most abandoned of men.

"The byword of the passing throng,
The ruler's scoff, the drunkard's song."

Verse 13. *But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord.* He turned to Jehovah in prayer as being the most natural thing for the godly to do in their distress. To whom should a child turn but to his father. He did not answer them; like a sheep before her shearers he was dumb to them, but he opened his mouth unto the Lord his God, for he would hear and deliver. In an acceptable time. It was a time of rejection with man, but of acceptance with God. Sin ruled on earth, but grace reigned in heaven. There is to each of us an accepted time, and woe to us if we suffer it to glide away unimproved. God's time must be our time, or it will

come to pass that, when time closes, we shall look in vain for space for repentance. Our Lord's prayers were well timed, and always met with acceptance.

O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me. Even the perfect one makes his appeal to the rich mercy of God, much more should we. To misery no attribute is more sweet than mercy, and when sorrows multiply, the multitude of mercy is much prized. When enemies are more than the hairs of our head, they are yet to be numbered, but God's mercies are altogether innumerable, and let it never be forgotten that every one of them is an available and powerful argument in the hand of faith. In the truth of thy salvation. "Jehovah's faithfulness is a further mighty plea." His salvation is no fiction, no mockery, no changeable thing, therefore he is asked to manifest it, and make all men see his fidelity to his promise. Our Lord teaches us here the sacred art of wrestling in prayer, and ordering our cause with arguments; and he also indicates to us that the nature of God is the great treasury of strong reasons, which shall be to us most prevalent in supplication.

Verse 14. *Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.* He turns into prayer the very words of his complaint; and it is well, if, when we complain, we neither feel nor say anything which we should fear to utter before the Lord as a prayer. We are allowed to ask for deliverance from trouble as well as for support under it; both petitions are here combined. How strange it seems to hear such language from the Lord of glory. *Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.* Both from his foes, and the griefs which they caused him, he seeks a rescue. God can help us in all ways, and we may, therefore, put up a variety of requests without fear of exceeding our liberty to ask, or his ability to answer.

Verse 15. *Let not the waterflood overflow me.* He continues to recapitulate the terms of his lament. He is willing to bear suffering, but entreats grace that it may not get the victory over him. He was heard in that he feared. Neither let the deep swallow me up. As Jonah came forth again, so let me also arise from the abyss of woe; here also our Lord was heard, and so shall we be. Death itself must disgorge us. Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. When a great stone was rolled over the well, or pit, used as a dungeon, the prisoner was altogether enclosed, and forgotten like one on the oubliettes of the Bastille; this is an apt picture of the state of a man buried alive in grief and left without remedy; against this the great sufferer pleaded and was heard. He was baptised in agony but not drowned in it; the grave enclosed him, but before she could close her mouth he had burst his prison. It is said that truth lies in a well, but it is assuredly an open well, for it walks abroad in power; and so our great

Substitute in the pit of woe and death was yet the Conqueror of death and hell. How appropriately may many of us use this prayer. We deserve to be swept away as with a flood, to be drowned in our sins, to be shut up in hell; let us, then, plead the merits of our Saviour, lest these things happen unto us.

Verse 16. *Hear me, O Lord.* Do not refuse thy suppliant Son. It is to the covenant God, the ever living Jehovah, that he appeals with strong crying. For thy lovingkindness is good. By the greatness of thy love have pity upon thine afflicted. It is always a stay to the soul to dwell upon the preeminence and excellence of the Lord's mercy. It has furnished sad souls much good cheer to take to pieces that grand old Saxon word, which is here used in our version, *lovingkindness*. Its composition is of two most sweet and fragrant things, fitted to inspire strength into the fainting, and make desolate hearts sing for joy. Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. If the Lord do but turn the eye of pity, and the hand of power, the mourner's spirit revives. It is the gall of bitterness to be without the comfortable smile of God; in our Lord's case his grief culminated in "Lama Sabachthani, "and his bitterest cry was that in which he mourned an absent God. Observe how he dwells anew upon divine tenderness, and touches again that note of abundance, "The multitude of thy compassions."

Verse 17. *And hide not thy face from thy servant.* A good servant desires the light of his master's countenance; that *servus servorum*, who was also *rex regium*, could not bear to lose the presence of his God. The more he loved his Father, the more severely he felt the hiding of his face. For I am in trouble. Stay thy rough wind in the day of thine east wind; do not add sorrow upon sorrow. If ever a man needs the comforting presence of God it is when he is in distress; and, being in distress, it is a reason to be pleaded with a merciful God why he should not desert us. We may pray that our flight be not in the winter, and that God will not add spiritual desertion to all our other tribulations. Hear me speedily. The case was urgent, delay was dangerous, nay deadly. Our Lord was the perfection of patience, yet he cried urgently for speedy mercy; and therein he gives us liberty to do the same, so long as we add, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Verse 18. *Draw nigh unto my soul.* The near approach of God is all the sufferer needs; one smile of heaven will still the rage of hell. And redeem it. It shall be redemption to me if thou wilt appear to comfort me. This is a deeply spiritual prayer, and one very suitable for a deserted soul. It is in renewed communion that we shall find redemption realized. Deliver me because of mine enemies, lest they should, in their vaunting, blaspheme thy name, and boast that thou art not able to rescue those who put their trust in thee. Jesus, in condescending to

use such supplications, fulfils the request of his disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray." Here we have a sad recapitulation of sorrows, with more especial reference to the persons concerned in their infliction.

Verse 19. *Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour.* It is no novelty or secret, it has been long continued; thou, O God, hast seen it; and for thee to see the innocent suffer is an assurance of help. Here are three words piled up to express the Redeemer's keen sense of the contempt poured upon him; and his assurance that every form of malicious despite was observed of the Lord. Mine adversaries are all before thee. The whole lewd and loud company is now present to thine eye: Judas and his treachery; Herod and his cunning; Caiaphas and his counsel; Pilate and his vacillation; Jews, priests, people, rulers, all, thou seest and wilt judge.

Verse 20. *Reproach hath broken my heart.* There is no hammer like it. Our Lord died of a broken heart, and reproach had done the deed. Intense mental suffering arises from slander; and in the case of the sensitive nature of the immaculate Son of Man, it sufficed to lacerate the heart till it broke. "Then burst his mighty heart." And I am full of heaviness. Calumny and insult bowed him to the dust; he was sick at heart. The heaviness of our Lord in the garden is expressed by many and forcible words in the four gospels, and each term goes to show that the agony was beyond measure great; he was filled with misery, like a vessel which is full to the brim. And I looked for some to take pity, but there was none. "Deserted in his utmost need by those his former bounty fed." Not one to say him a kindly word, or drop a sympathetic tear. Amongst ten thousand foes there was not one who was touched by the spectacle of his misery; not one with a heart capable of humane feeling towards him. And for comforters, but I found none. His dearest ones had sought their own safety, and left their Lord alone. A sick man needs comforters, and a persecuted man needs sympathy; but our blessed Surety found neither on that dark and doleful night when the powers of darkness had their hour. A spirit like that of our Lord feels acutely desertion by beloved and trusted friends, and yearns for real sympathy. This may be seen in the story of Gethsemane:—

"Backwards and forwards thrice he ran.
As if he sought some help from man;
Or wished, at least, they would condole—
It was all they could—his tortured soul."

"What ever he sought for, there was none;
Our Captain fought the field alone.

Soon as the chief to battle led,
That moment every soldier fled."

Verse 21. *They gave me also gall for my meat.* This was the sole refreshment cruelty had prepared for him. Others find pleasure in their food, but his taste was made to be an additional path of pain to him. And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. A criminal's draught was offered to our innocent Lord, a bitter portion to our dying Master. Sorry entertainment had earth for her King and Saviour. How often have our sins filled the gall cup for our Redeemer? While we blame the Jews, let us not excuse ourselves. From this point David and our Lord for awhile part company, if we accept the rendering of our version. The severe spirit of the law breathes out imprecations, while the tender heart of Jesus offers prayers for his murderers. The whole of these verses, however, may be viewed as predictions, and then they certainly refer to our Lord, for we find portions of them quoted in that manner by the apostle in Ro 11:9-10, and by Christ himself in Mt 23:38.

Verse 22. *Let their table become a snare before them.* There they laid snares, and there they shall find them. From their feasts they would afford nothing but wormwood for their innocent victim, and now their banquets shall be their ruin. It is very easy for the daily provisions of mercy to become temptations to sin. As birds and beasts are taken in a trap by means of baits for the appetite, so are men snared full often by their meats and drinks. Those who despise the upper springs of grace, shall find the nether springs of worldly comfort prove their poison. The table is used, however, not alone for feeding, but for conversations, transacting business, counsel, amusement, and religious observance: to those who are the enemies of the Lord Jesus that table may, in all these respects, become a snare. This first plague is terrible, and the second is like unto it. And that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a *trap*. This, if we follow the original closely, and the version of Paul in the Romans, is a repetition of the former phrase; but we shall not err if we say that, to the rejecters of Christ, even those things which are calculated to work their spiritual and eternal good, become occasions for yet greater sin. They reject Christ, and are condemned for not believing on him; they stumble on this stone, and are broken by it. Wretched are those men, who not only have a curse upon their common blessings, but also on the spiritual opportunities of salvation.

"Whom oils and balsams kill, what salve can cure?"
This second plague even exceeds the first.

Verse 23. *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not.* They shall wander in a darkness that may be felt. They have loved darkness rather than light, and in

darkness they shall abide. Judicial blindness fell upon Israel after our Lord's death and their persecution of his apostles; they were blinded by the light which they would not accept. Eyes which see no beauty in the Lord Jesus, but flash wrath upon him, may well grow yet more dim, till death spiritual leads to death eternal. And make their loins continually to shake. Their conscience shall be so ill at ease that they shall continually quiver with fear; their backs shall bend to the earth (so some read it) with grovelling avarice, and their strength shall be utterly paralysed, so that they cannot walk firmly, but shall totter at every step. See the terrifying, degrading, and enfeebling influence of unbelief. See also the retaliation of justice: those who will not see shall not see; those who would not walk in uprightness shall be unable to do so.

Verse 24. *Pour out thine indignation upon them.* What can be too severe a penalty for those who reject the incarnate God, and refuse to obey the commands of his mercy? They deserve to be flooded with wrath, and they shall be; for upon all who rebel against the Saviour, Christ the Lord, "the wrath is come to the uttermost." 1Th 2:16. God's indignation is no trifle; the anger of a holy, just, omnipotent, and infinite Being, is above all things to be dreaded; even a drop of it consumes, but to have it poured upon us is inconceivably dreadful. O God, who knoweth the power of thine anger? And let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Grasping them, arresting them, abiding on them. If they flee, let it overtake and seize them; let it lay them by the heels in the condemned cell, so that they cannot escape from execution. It shall indeed be so with all the finally impenitent, and it ought to be so. God is not to be insulted with impunity, and his Son, our ever gracious Saviour, the best gift of infinite love, is not to be scorned and scoffed at for nothing. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, but what shall be the "sorer punishment" reserved for those who have trodden under foot the Son of God?

Verse 25. *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.* This may signify that their posterity shall be cut off, and the abode which they occupy shall be left a ruin; or, as our Lord quoted it, it refers to the temple, which was left by its divine occupant and became a desolation. What occurs on a large scale to families and nations is often fulfilled in individuals, as was conspicuously the case with Judas, to whom Peter referred this prophecy, Ac 1:20, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, let this habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein." The fierce proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar, "that every people, nation, and language, that speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, "is but an anticipation of that dread hour when the enemies of the Lord shall be broken in pieces, and perish out of the land.

Verse 26. *For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten.* They are cruel where they should be pitiful. When a stroke comes to any in the providence of God, their friends gather around them and condole, but these wretches hunt the wounded and vex the sick. Their merciless hearts invent fresh blows for him who is "smitten of God and afflicted." And they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. They lay bare his wounds with their rough tongues. They lampoon the mourner, satirise his sorrows, and deride his woes. They pointed to the Saviour's wounds, they looked and stared upon him, and then they uttered shameful accusations against him. After this fashion the world still treats the members of Christ. "Report," say they, "and we will report it." If a godly man be a little down in estate, how glad they are to push him over altogether, and, meanwhile, to talk everywhere against him. God takes note of this, and will visit it upon the enemies of his children; he may allow them to act as a rod to his saints, but he will yet avenge his own elect. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy; and I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction."

Verse 27. *Add iniquity unto their iniquity.* Unbelievers will add sin to sin, and so, punishment to punishment. This is the severest imprecation, or prophecy, of all. For men to be let alone to fill up the measure of their iniquity, is most equitable, but yet most awful. And let them not come into thy righteousness. If they refuse it, and resist thy gospel, let them shut themselves out of it.

"He that will not when he may,
When he would he shall have nay."

Those who choose evil shall have their choice. Men who hate divine mercy shall not have it forced upon them, but (unless sovereign grace interpose) shall be left to themselves to aggravate their guilt, and ensure their doom.

Verse 28. *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.* Though in their conceit they wrote themselves among the people of God, and induced others to regard them under that character, they shall be unmasked and their names removed from the register. Enrolled with honour, they shall be erased with shame. Death shall obliterate all recollection of them; they shall be held no longer in esteem, even by those who paid them homage. Judas first, and Pilate, and Herod, and Caiaphas, all in due time, were speedily wiped out of existence; their names only remain as bywords, but among the honoured men who live after their departure they are not recorded. And not be written with the righteous. This clause is parallel with the former, and shows that the inner meaning of being blotted out from the book of life is to have it made evident

that the name was never written there at all. Man in his imperfect copy of God's book of life will have to make many emendations, both of insertion and erasure; but, as before the Lord, the record is for ever fixed and unalterable. Beware, O man, of despising Christ and his people, lest thy soul should never partake in the righteousness of God, without which men are condemned already. Imprecations, prophecies, and complaints are ended, and prayer of a milder sort begins, intermingled with bursts of thankful song, and encouraging foresight of coming good.

Verse 29. *But I am poor and sorrowful.* The psalmist was afflicted very much, but his faith was in God. The poor in spirit and mourners are both blessed under the gospel, so that here is a double reason for the Lord to smile on his suppliant. No man was ever poorer or more sorrowful than Jesus of Nazareth, yet his cry out of the depths was heard, and he was uplifted to the highest glory. Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. How fully has this been answered in our great Master's case, for he not only escaped his foes personally, but he has become the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him, and this continues to glorify him more and more. O ye poor and sorrowful ones, lift up your heads, for as with your Lord so shall it be with you. You are trodden down today as the mire of the streets, but you shall ride upon the high places of the earth ere long; and even now ye are raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

Verse 30. *I will praise the name of God with a song.* He who sang after the passover, sings yet more joyously after the resurrection and ascension. He is, in very truth, "the sweet singer of Israel." He leads the eternal melodies, and all his saints join in chorus. And will magnify him with thanksgiving. How sure was our Redeemer of ultimate victory, since he vows a song even while yet in the furnace. In us, also, faith foresees the happy issue of all affliction, and makes us even now begin the music of gratitude which shall go on for ever increasing in volume, world without end. What clear shining after the rain we have in this and succeeding verses. The darkness is past, and the glory light shines forth as the sun. All the honour is rendered unto him to whom all the prayer was presented; he alone could deliver and did deliver, and, therefore, to him only be the praise.

Verse 31. *This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.* No sacrifice is so acceptable to God, who is a Spirit, as that which is spiritual. He accepted bullocks under a dim and symbolical dispensation; but in such offerings, in themselves considered, he had no pleasure. "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" Here he puts dishonour upon mere outward offerings by speaking of the horns and

hoofs, the offal of the victim. The *opus operatum*, which our ritualists think so much of, the Lord puffs at. The horning and hoofing are nothing to him, though to Jewish ritualists these were great points, and matters for critical examination; our modern rabbis are just as precise as to the mingling of water with their wine, the baking of their wafers, the cut of their vestments, and the performance of genuflections towards the right quarter of the compass. O fools, and slow of heart to perceive all that the Lord has declared. "Offer unto God thanksgiving" is the everlasting rubric of the true directory of worship. The depths of grief into which the suppliant had been plunged gave him all the richer an experience of divine power and grace in his salvation, and so qualified him to sing more sweetly "the song of loves." Such music is ever most acceptable to the infinite Jehovah.

Verse 32. *The humble shall see this and be glad.* Grateful hearts are ever on the look out for recruits, and the rejoicing psalmist discerns with joy the fact, that other oppressed and lowly men observing the Lord's dealings with his servants are encouraged to look for a like issue to their own tribulations. The standing consolation of the godly is the experience of their Lord, for as he is so are we also in this world; yea, moreover, his triumph has secured ours, and therefore, we may on the most solid grounds rejoice in him. This gave our great leader satisfaction as he foresaw the comforts which would flow to us from his conflict and conquest. And your heart shall live that seek God. A similar assurance is given in Psalm 22, which is near akin to this. It would have been useless to seek if Jesus' victories had not cleared the way, and opened a door of hope; but, since the Breaker has gone up before us, and the King at the head of us, our hope is a living one, our faith is living, our love is living, and our renewed nature is full of a vitality which challenges the cold hand of death to damp it.

Verse 33. *For the Lord heareth the poor.* The examples of David and David's Lord, and tens of thousands of the saints, all go to prove this. Monarchs of the nations are deaf to the poor, but the Sovereign of the Universe has a quick ear for the needy. None can be brought lower than was the Nazarene, but see how highly he is exalted: descend into what depths we may, the prayer hearing God can bring us up again. And despiseth not his prisoners. Poor men have their liberty, but these are bound; however, they are God's prisoners, and, therefore, prisoners of hope. The captive in the dungeon is the lowest and least esteemed of men, but the Lord seeth not as man seeth; he visited those who are bound with chains, and proclaims a jail delivery for his afflicted. God despises no man, and no prayer that is honest and sincere. Distinctions of rank are nothing with him; the poor have the gospel preached to them, and the prisoners are

loosed by his grace. Let all poor and needy ones hasten to seek his face, and to yield him their love.

Verse 34. *Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.* The doxology of a glowing heart. The writer had fathomed the deeps, and had ascended to the heights; and, therefore, calls on the whole range of creation to bless the Lord. Our Well Beloved here excites us all to grateful adoration: who among us will hold back? God's love to Christ argues good to all forms of life; the exaltation of the Head brings good to the members, and to all in the least connected with him. Inasmuch as the creation itself also is by Christ's work to be delivered from bondage, let all that have life and motion magnify the Lord. Glory be unto thee, O Lord, for the sure and all including pledge of our Surety's triumph; we see in this the exaltation of all thy poor and sorrowful ones, and our heart is glad.

Verse 35. *For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah.* Poor, fallen Israel shall have a portion in the mercy of the Lord; but, above all, the church, so dear to the heart of her glorious bridegroom, shall be revived and strengthened. Ancient saints so dearly loved Zion, that even in their distresses they did not forget her; with the first gleam of light which visited them, they fell to pleading for the faithful: see notable instances of this which have passed under our eye already. Ps 5:11 14:7 22:23 51:18. To us, in these modern times, it is the subject of cheering hope that better days are coming for the chosen people of God, and for this we would ever pray. O Zion, whatever other memories fade away, we cannot forget thee. That they may dwell there, and have it in possession. Whatever captivities may occur, or desolations be caused, the land of Canaan belongs to Israel by a covenant of salt, and they will surely repossess it; and this shall be a sign unto us, that through the atonement of the Christ of God, all the poor in spirit shall enjoy the mercies promised in the covenant of grace. The sure mercies of David shall be the heritage of all the seed.

Verse 36. *The seed also of his servants shall inherit it.* Under this image, which, however, we dare not regard as a mere simile, but as having in itself a literal significance, we have set forth to us the enrichment of the saints, consequent upon the sorrow of their Lord. The termination of this Psalm strongly recalls in us that of the twenty-second. The *seed* lie near the Saviour's heart, and their enjoyment of all promised good is the great concern of his disinterested soul. Because they are his Father's servants, therefore he rejoices in their welfare. And they that love his name shall dwell therein. He has an eye to the Father's glory, for it is to his praise that those who love him should attain, and for ever enjoy, the utmost happiness. Thus a Psalm, which began in the

deep waters, ends in the city which hath foundations. How gracious is the change. Hallelujah.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician, on the lilies, of David. On the lilies,* points to the beauty of the subject treated of. *D. W. Hengstenberg.*

Whole Psalm. The subject of the Psalm is an ideal person, representing the whole class of religious sufferers. The only individual in whom the various traits meet is Christ. That he is not, however, the exclusive, or even the immediate subject, is clear from the confession in Ps 69:5. There is no Psalm, except for the twenty-second, more distinctly applied to him in the New Testament. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Whole Psalm. This has usually been regarded as a Messianic Psalm. No portion of the Old Testament Scriptures is more frequently quoted in the New, with the exception of Psalm 22. When Jesus drives the buyers and sellers from the temple (Joh 2:17), his disciples are reminded of the words of Ps 69:9 (first clause). When it is said (Joh 15:25) that the enemies of Jesus hated him without a cause, and this is looked upon as the fulfilment of Scripture, the reference is probably to verse 4, though it may be also to Ps 35:18. To him, and the reproach which he endured for the sake of God, St. Paul refers the words of this Psalm, Ps 69:9 (second clause): *The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.* In Ps 69:12 we have a foreshadowing of the mockery of our Lord by the soldiers in the praetorium (Mt 27:27-30); in Ps 69:21, the giving of the vinegar and the gall found their counterpart in the scenes of the crucifixion, Mt 27:34. In Joh 19:28, there is an allusion, probably to verse 21 of this Psalm, and to Ps 32:15. The imprecation in Ps 69:25 is said, in Ac 1:20, to have been fulfilled in the case of Judas Iscariot, though, as the words of the Psalm are plural, the citation is evidently made with some freedom. According to Ro 11:9-10, the rejection of Israel may best be described in the words of Ps 69:22-23. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Whole Psalm. This Psalm follows in striking connection with the preceding, and in contrast with the glory of his kingdom. The two have been compared to the transfiguration on the mount, where, after the manifestation of Christ in glory, there appeared, also, Moses and Elias, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. The clearest anticipation of future glory must not shut out the conviction, that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. *W. Wilson.*

Whole Psalm. Remember this is the fourth Psalm which declares at length the passion and resurrection of our Lord. Through the whole Psalm Christ speaks in person. He prays for deliverance by the Father, because he has suffered by the Jews, without cause, many afflictions and persecutions. He supplicates on behalf of his members, that the hope of the faithful, resting on his resurrection, may not be disappointed. By the power of his prescience he declares the future events which should occur to his enemies. *Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, circa 468-560.*

Whole Psalm. In this Psalm the whole Christ speaks; now in his own person, now crying with the voice of his members to God his Father. *Gerhohus.*

Verse 1. *Save me, O God.* Let his distances be never so great, he is resolved to cry after the Lord; and if he get but his head never so little above water, the Lord shall hear of him. One would think his discouragements such as he were past crying any more; *the waters entered into his soul, in deep waters, the streams running over him: he sticketh fast in the mire where is no standing* (he is at the very bottom, and there fast in the mire), *he is weary of crying*; yet, Ps 69:6,13: *But, Lord, I make my prayers to thee*: and as he recovers breath, so breathes out fresh supplications to the Lord. If men or devils would be forbidding to pray, as the multitude sometimes did the poor blind man to cry after Jesus; yet, as he, so an importunate suppliant "*will cry so much the more, Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*" Mr 10:47-48. *Thomas Cobbet.*

Verse 1. *The waters are come in unto my soul.* What means he by *coming in unto his soul*? Surely no other than this:—that they oppressed his spirit, and, as it were, penetrated into his conscience, raising fears and perplexities there, by reason of his sins, which at present put his faith and hope to some disorder; so that he could not for a while see to the comfortable end of his affliction, but was as one under water, covered with his fears, as appears by what follows (Ps 69:2): *I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.* He compares himself to one in a quagmire that can feel no ground to bear him up; and, observe whence his trouble rose, and where the waters made their entrance (Ps 69:5): *O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.* This holy man lay under some fresh guilt, and this made him so uncomfortable under his affliction, because he saw his sin in the face of that, and tasted some displeasure from God for it in his outward trouble, which made it so bitter in the going down; and, therefore, when once he had humbled himself by confessing his sin, and was able to see the coast clear between heaven and him, so as to believe the pardon of his sin, and hope for good news from God again, he then returns to his sweet temper, and sings in the same affliction, where before he sunk. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 3. *I am weary of my crying.* The word *egy* means properly, *to gape, to gasp*, then, *to become weary*.... but *to gasp in his crying*, is not so much to grow weary because of the great vehemence thereof, but while the crying lasts, and while he is in the act, to succumb under the burden of his dangerous and shameful calamity. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 3. *I am weary of my crying.* He had cried to God for the ways of man; he had cried to man of the ways of God; he had not ceased, from his first beginning to teach, till he said upon the cross, "I thirst." His eyes had grown dim, and his flesh was faint and weary with his sufferings, through the long passion of his life on earth. He had been waiting in poverty, and insult, and treachery, and scourging, and pain, until he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" *From "A Plain Commentary."*

Verse 3. *I am weary of my crying*, etc. David is like the post, who layeth by three horses as breathless; his heart, his throat, his eyes... *Objection.* But I have neither weeping one way or other, ordinary nor marred. *Answer.* Looking up to heaven, lifting up of the eyes, goeth for prayer also in God's books. "My prayer unto thee, and will look up," (Ps 5:3). *Mine eyes fail with looking upward* (Ps 69:3). Because, first, prayer is a pouring out of the soul to God, and faith will come out at the eye, in lieu of another door: often affections break out at the window, when the door is closed; as smoke vents at the window, when the chimney refuses passage. Stephen looked up to heaven (Ac 7:55.). He sent a post; a greedy, pitiful, and hungry look up to Christ, out at the window, at the nearest passage, to tell that a poor friend was coming up to him. Second, I would wish no more, if I were in hell, but to send up a look to heaven. There be many love looks of the saints, lying up before the throne, in the bosom of Christ. The twinkling of thy eyes in prayer are not lost to Christ; else Stephen's look, David's look, should not be registered so many hundred years in Christ's written Testament. *Samuel Rutherford, in "The Trial and Triumph of Faith."*

Verse 3. *Crying.* Meanwhile, we see how the saints, in the vicissitudes of affairs, even when they are innocent, are not insensible and stony; they do not despise the threatening perils; they become anxious, they cry and sigh during their temptations. *Musculus.*

Verse 3. *Mine eyes fail.* O pitiable sight! that sight should fail, by which Jesus saw the multitudes and, therefore, ascended the mount to give the precepts of the New Testament; by which, beholding Peter and Andrew, he called them; by which, looking upon the man sitting at the receipt of custom, he called and made him an evangelist; by which, gazing upon the city, he wept over it... With these eyes thou didst look upon Simon, when thou didst say, "*Thou art the son*

of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas." With these eyes thou didst gaze upon the woman who was a sinner, to whom thou didst say, *"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."* Turn these eyes upon us, and never turn them away from our continual prayers. *Gerhohus.*

Verse 3. *I wait for my God.* The hour is coming when our eyes must fail, and be closed; but, even then, *"Let us wait for our God; "in this respect, let us die the death of the righteous person, who died for us; "and let our last end be like this." George Horne.*

Verse 4. *Without a cause.* In suffering, let not the mind be disturbed; for the injustice which is done to the innocent in his sufferings, is not laid to the charge of the sufferer, but to his who inflicts suffering... It is well known what Tertullian relates of Socrates, when his wife met him after his condemnation, and addresses him with a woman's tears: *"Thou art unjustly condemned, Socrates."* His reply was, *"Wouldst thou have me justly?" Lorinus.*

Verse 4. *Then I restored that which I took not away.* It was the great and blessed work of our Lord Jesus here upon the earth, to restore what he took not away. In handling this: (1) Show what it is which was taken away, and from whom? (2) Wherein it appears that Christ took it not away. (3) How he restored it? (4) Why he did so? (5) Use.

1. *What it was which was taken away, and from whom?*

(a) There was glory taken from God. Not his essential glory, nor any perfection of his being, for that cannot be taken away; but that glory which shines forth in the moral government of his creatures, and that glory which we are bound to give him.

(b) There was righteousness, holiness, and happiness taken from man also. (1.) There was a loss of righteousness to the guilty sinner; (2.) of holiness to the polluted sinner: (3.) of happiness to the miserable sinner.

2. *Wherein it appears that Christ did not take away those things from either.*

(a) It is plain, as to God, he never took away any glory from him; for he never did anything dishonourable, or offensive to God. Joh 8:29; Isa 50:5 Lu 1:35.

(b) It is also clear, as to man, that he took not away any righteousness, holiness, or happiness from him. He was not such a fountain of guilt, pollution, and misery, as the first Adam had been, but the contrary.

(c) The Scripture, therefore, speaks of Christ's being cut off, but not for himself, Da 9:26; 1Pe 3:18 Isa 53:4-5.

(d) The innocency of Christ was conspicuous in his very sufferings. Though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. Ac 13:28.

3. *How did Christ restore those things which he took not away?* In general, by his active and passive obedience.

(a) Christ's doing the will of God in such a manner as he did it, was a greater honour to God than ever had been, or could be done before.

(b) Christ's suffering of the will of God, made a considerable addition to the glory of God, which had been impaired by the sin of man, Heb 5:8; Joh 17:4 13:31.

(c) Christ hath provided for the justification of the sinner by the obedience which he fulfilled, Ro 5:8.

(d) Christ communicates that grace which is necessary for our sanctification also.

(e) Christ hath merited for us a present blessedness in this world.

(f) Jesus Christ hath procured for us a more full and absolute blessedness in the world to come.

4. *Why did Jesus Christ make it his work to restore what he took not away?*

(a) It was a necessary work, a work which must be done, in order to his being a Saviour.

(b) It was a work impossible for any mere creature to do; so that if Christ did not, it could not be done by any person besides him. *Timothy Cruso's Sermon.*

Verse 4. *Then I restored that which I took not away.* Rosenmueller observes, that this seems to be a proverbial sentence, to denote an innocent man unjustly treated. According to the law, if a man stole and killed, or sold an ox, he was to restore five oxen; or a sheep, he was to restore four; and if the ox or sheep was found alive, he was to restore two. Hence, to oblige a man to restore when he had taken nothing, was the greatest injustice. Ex 22:1-5. Ainsworth observes,

that though it may be taken for all unjust criminations, whereof David and Christ were innocent, yet in special, it was verified in Christ, who, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, "Php 2:6; notwithstanding, for witnessing himself to be the Son of God, he was put to death by the Jews. Joh 19:7. *Benjamin Boothroyd*.

Verse 4. *I restored that which I took not away.* The devil took away by arrogating in heaven what was not his, when he boasted that he was like the Most High, and for this he pays a righteous penalty... Adam also took away what was not his own, when, by the enticement of the devil, "You will be as gods, "he sought after a likeness to God, by yielding to the deception of the woman. But the Lord Jesus thought it not robbery to be equal with God... And yet his enemies said, "Let him be crucified, for he hath made himself the Son of God." *Gerhohus*.

Verse 4. *I restored that which I took not away.* What a blessed verse is here! Amidst all the opposition and contradiction of sinners against himself, Jesus manifested that character, by which Jehovah had pointed him out to the church by the prophet; "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Isa 58:12. But what was it Christ restored? Nay, all that was lost. Adam by sin had done all that he could to take away God's glory, and with it his own glory and happiness. He had robbed God of his glory, God's law of its due, himself of God's image, and of God's favour. Sin had brought in death, spiritual and eternal; and he and all his descendants stood tremblingly exposed to everlasting misery. All these and more Jesus restored. As man's Surety and man's Representative, and called to it by the authority of Jehovah, the Lord Christ restored to God his glory, and to man God's image of favour; and having destroyed sin, death, hell, and the grave, he restored to his redeemed a better paradise than our nature had lost! Hail, oh, thou blessed Restorer of all our long lost privileges. *Robert Hawker*.

Verse 5. *Thou knowest.* The knowledge of God is of a double use to pious men. The first is, as we observe in this place, to console the innocent: the second is, to make them circumspect, since all their thoughts, and words, and deeds are under the very eye of God. *Musculus*.

Verse 5. *Thou knowest my offences,* etc., that is to say, that I am not an offender. This verse is not a confession of sin, but a protestation of innocence, The writer maintains that he is a sufferer, not for his sins, but for his piety. See Ps 69:7, etc. *George R. Noyes, in "A New Translation of the Book of Psalms, with Notes," etc. 1846.*

Verse 5. *My sins are not hid from thee.* The sins of those for whom Christ died, by being imputed to him, no doubt became his in the eyes of the law, in such a sense as to make him answerable for them. But the Scriptures, be it observed, while they speak of him as "wounded for *our* transgressions, and bruised for *our* iniquities, "and as "bearing *our* sins in his own body on the tree, "as if afraid to use any forms of expression which would even seem to derogate from his immaculate purity, never speak of the sins of those for whom he died as his *own* sins. *James Anderson's Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 5. *My sins are not hid.* Not as the first Adam, do I, the second Adam, hide myself or my *sins*, especially in thy sight, O God; but lifted up upon the cross I suffered without the gate for *sins* in such a way, that I desire that *my sins* should be conspicuous to every creature in heaven, earth, and hell—*my sins* which, as they refer to my person, are marked with no taint, and, as they pertain to my people believing in me, are blotted out by my blood. *Gerhohus.*

Verse 6. *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake,* etc. This says, that unless the carriage and deportment of the godly man redounds to the comfort of all the rest of the godly, it in some way tends to the discredit of the godly. Since this is the case, when they slip aside, or carry not aright; since they are all in hazard of doing so, it should be matter of affecting and afflicting exercise, lest they do so. Fellow professors are ashamed of the person that walketh not aright; they are ashamed that ever they should have been in company or fellowship with him; they are ashamed that ever such a person should have owned such a cause, and that ever such a thing should have befallen a professor of such a cause; and, besides, they are weakened by him in their hopes of persevering for themselves. Again, they are in hazard of being a discredit to all the godly, because, say they, it seems the Lord has granted no peremptory promise, as to the manner of their final perseverance; and corruption enough remains in them still, to overturn all their stock of grace, if they get not present renewed influences. *William Guthrie. 1620-1655.*

Verse 6. *Ashamed for my sake.* I pray that they may *not be confounded* by external enemies with their boundless insults and reproaches, because they seem to be the worshippers of a God crucified and dead, and are themselves like dead men, and lie rotting before his sepulchre, as if their good name were gone. Rather let my enemies who do not wish me to live be terror stricken at my angelic countenance, and fall like the dead. *Gerhohus.*

Verse 6. *For my sake.* yb: more exactly, *in me*. In these words the voice of the Sponsor of his people's peace is clearly audible. The prayer of the Sufferer has its answer in the declarative testimony which now forms the basis of the

gospel: "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." 1Pe 2:6. *Arthur Pridham.*

Verse 6. Because I, for their sakes, do at thy command bear that shame which they should else have done, Lord, take it off from them, because thou hast laid it upon me; so it expressly follows, Ps 69:7: *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 7. *Shame hath covered my face.* It is a great question whether shame or death be the greater evil. There have been those who have rather chosen death, and have wiped off a dishonour with their blood. So Saul slew himself rather than he would fall into the hands of the Philistines, who would have insulted over him, and mocked him as they did Samson. So that king (Jer 38:19) rather chose to lose his country, life and all, than to be given to the Jews, his subjects, to be mocked of them... Confusion of face is one of the greatest miseries that hell itself is set forth unto us by. There is nothing that a noble nature more abhors than shame, for honour is a spark of God's image; and the more of God's image there is in any one, the more is shame abhorred by him, which is the debasing of it, and so the greater and more noble any one's spirit, the more he avoids it. To a base, low spirit, indeed, shame is nothing; but to a great spirit (as to David), than to have his "glory turned into shame," as Ps 4:2, is nothing more grievous. And the greater glory any loseth, the greater is his shame. What must it be then to Christ, who because he was to satisfy God in point of honour debased by man's sin, therefore of all punishments besides, he suffered most of shame; it being also (as was said) one of the greatest punishments in hell. And Christ, as he assumed other infirmities of our nature, that made him passible in other things—as to be sensible of hunger, want of sleep, bodily torments, of unkindness, contempt, so likewise of disgrace and shame. He took that infirmity as well as fear; and though he had a strength to bear and despise it (as the author of the Hebrews speaks), yet none was ever more sensible of it. As the delicacy of the temper of his body made him more sensible of pains than ever any man was, so the greatness of his spirit made him more apprehensive of the evil of shame than ever any was. So likewise the infinite love and candour of his spirit towards mankind made him take in with answerable grief the unkindness and injuries which they heaped upon him. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8. *A stranger unto my brethren.* Unless this aversion of his brethren had pained him, he would not have complained of it. It would not have pained him unless he had felt a special affection for them. *Musculus.*

Verse 8. In the east where polygamy prevails, the husband is a stern and unfeeling despot; his harem a group of trembling slaves; and the children, while

they regard their common father with indifference or terror, cling to their own mother with the fondest affection, as the only part, as the only parent, in whom they feel an interest. Hence it greatly aggravated the affliction of David that he had become *an alien unto his mother's children*: the enmity of the other children of his father, the children of his father's other wives, gave him less concern. *W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

Verse 9. *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* He who recollects that the Scriptures speak of a "peace which passeth understanding, "and a "joy unspeakable and full of glory, "will be more disposed to lament the low state of his own feeling, than to suspect the propriety of sentiments the most rational and scriptural, merely because they rise to a pitch that he has never reached. The Sacred Oracles afford no countenance to the supposition that devotional feelings are to the condemned as visionary and enthusiastic merely on account of their intenseness and elevation; provided they be of the right kind, and spring from legitimate sources, they never teach us to suspect they can be carried too far. David danced before the Lord with all his might, and when he was reproached for degrading himself in the eyes of his people by indulging in such transports, he replied, "If this be vile, I will yet make myself more vile." That the objects which interest the heart in religion are infinitely more durable and important than all others will not be disputed; and why should it be deemed irrational to be affected by them in a degree somewhat suitable to their value? *Robert Hall. 1764-1831.*

Verse 9. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* Consider the examples of the saints of old, who have taken heaven by force. David broke his sleep for meditation. Ps 119:148. His violence for heaven was boiled up to zeal, Ps 119:139: "My zeal hath consumed me." And Paul did "reach forth (epekteinomenoz) unto those things which were before." The Greek word signifies to stretch out the neck, a metaphor taken from racers that strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold upon the prize. We read of Anna, a prophetess (Lu 2:37); "she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." How industrious was Calvin in the Lord's vineyard. When his friends persuaded him for his health's sake to remit a little of his labour, saith he, "Would you have the Lord find me idle when he comes?" Luther spent three hours a day in prayer. It is said of holy Bradford, preaching, reading, and prayer, was his whole life. I rejoice, said bishop Jewel, that my body is exhausted in the labours of my holy calling. How violent were the blessed martyrs! They wore their fetters as ornaments, they snatched up torments as crowns, and embraced the flames as cheerfully as Elijah did the fiery chariot that came to fetch him to heaven. Let racks, fires, pullies, and all

manner of torments come, so I may win Christ, said Ignatius. These pious souls "resisted unto blood." How should this provoke our zeal! Write after these fair copies. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 9. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* Zeal in and for true religion is a praise worthy thing. Was *David* zealous? it may then become a royal spirit. Was *Christ* our Saviour zealous? it may become an heroical spirit. Albeit, zeal is out of grace with most men who sit still, and love to be at quiet rest; yet it is no disgrace to any generous spirit that is regenerate, to have the zeal of God's house to eat him up. It is a slander to call it folly. Was not zealous David wiser than his teachers, than his enemies, than the aged? Lukewarm men call it fury; God's Spirit names it a "live coal, " that hath a most vehement flame. Why bears zeal the imputation of indiscretion, rashness, puritanism, or headiness? Was it David's rashness? It was fervency in religion. Was Christ indiscreet? The wisdom of his Father. Festus called Paul mad, with a loud voice (Ac 26:24), when he spake but words of truth and soberness (Ac 26:25). Christ's kinsmen thought that he was beside himself. Mr 3:21. Was the judgment of such stolid men any disparagement to our Saviour's zeal? Nay, it is a commendation. To root out evil from, and to establish good in, the house of God is a good thing. Ga 4:18. *Thomas Wilson, in "A Sermon preached before sundry of the Honourable House of Commons, "entitled, "David's Zeal for Zion." 1641.*

Verse 9. *Zeal, reproaches.* Grace never rises to so great a height as it does in times of persecution. Suffering times are a Christian's harvest times. Let me instance in that grace of zeal: I remember Moulin speaking of the French Protestants, saith, "When Papists hurt us for reading the Scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them; but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacs, " etc. All the reproaches, frowns, threatenings, oppositions, and persecutions that a Christian meets with in a way of holiness, do but raise his zeal and courage to a greater height. Michal's scoffing at David did but inflame and raise his zeal: "If this be to be vile, I will be more vile, "2Sa 6:20-22. Look, as fire in the winter burns the hotter, by an antiperistasiv because of the coldness of the air; so in the winter of affliction and persecution, that divine fire, the zeal of a Christian, burns so much the hotter, and flames forth so much the more vehemently and strongly. In times of greatest affliction and persecution for holiness' sake, a Christian hath, first, a good captain to lead and encourage him; secondly, a righteous cause to prompt and embolden him; thirdly, a gracious God to relieve and succour him; fourthly, a glorious heaven to receive and reward him; and, certainly, these things cannot but mightily raise him and inflame him under the greatest opposition and persecution. These

things will keep him from fearing, fawning, fainting, sinking, or flying in a stormy day; yea, these things will make his face like the face of an adamant, as God's promised to make Ezekiel's. Eze 3:7-9, and Job 41:24. Now an adamant is the hardest of stones, it is harder than a flint, yea, it is harder than the nether millstone. The naturalists (Pliny) observe, that the hardness of this stone is unspeakable: the fire cannot burn it, nor so much as heat it through, nor the hammer cannot break it, nor the water cannot dissolve it, and, therefore, the Greeks call it an adamant from its untameableness; and in all storms the adamant shrinks not, it shrinks not, it fears not, it changeth not its hue; let the times be what they will, the adamant is still the same. In times of persecution, a good cause, a good God, and a good conscience will make a Christian like an adamant, it will make him invincible and unchangeable. When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was presented to him in a dream, saith the history, a pillar of fire with this motto, *Talis est Basilius*, Basil is such a one, he is all on a light fire for God. Persecutions will but set a Christian all on a light fire for God. *Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 9. *Eaten me up.* The verb means, not only "to eat up, to devour," but "to corrode, or consume," by separating the parts from each another, as fire. And the radical import of the Hebrew word for *zeal* seems to be "to eat into, corrode, as fire." The word, says Parkhurst, is in the Hebrew Bible generally applied to the fervent or ardent affections of the human frame; the effects of which are well known to be ever like those of fire, corroding and consuming. And, accordingly, the poets, both ancient and modern, abound with descriptions of these ardent and consuming affections, taken from fire and its effects. *Richard Mant*.

Verse 9. *Eaten me up.* He who is zealous in his religion, or ardent in his attachments, is said to be eaten up. "Old Muttou has determined to leave his home for ever; he is to walk barefoot to the Ganges for the salvation of his soul: his zeal has eaten him up." *J. Roberts' Oriental Illustrations*.

Verse 9. *The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.* We should, if it were possible, labour to wipe off all the reproach of Christ, and take it upon ourselves that we might rather be spit upon and contemned than Christ. It was a brave speech of Ambrose, "he wished it would please God to turn all the adversaries from the church upon himself, and let them satisfy their thirst with his blood:" this is a true Christian heart. And, therefore, if it be for our sakes, and we have anything in the business by which Christ is reproached, we should be willing rather to sacrifice ourselves, than that Christ should be reproached; and as Jonah, when he knew that the tempest rose for his sake, says he, "Cast me into the sea;" and so Nazianzen, when contention rose about him,

says he, "Cast me into the sea, let me lose my place, rather than the name of Christ should suffer for me." *Jeremiah Burroughs*.

Verse 10. *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.* Behold here, virtue is accounted vice; truth, blasphemy; wisdom, folly. Behold, the peace maker of the world is judged a seditious person; the fulfiller of the law, a breaker of the law; our Saviour, a sinner; our God, a devil. O poor troubled heart! wherefore dost thou weakly wail for any injury or abuse that is offered to thee? God handleth thee no otherwise in this world than he handled his only Son, who hath pledged thee in this bitter potion; not only taking essay thereof, but drinking to thee a full draught. It is not only a comfort, but a glory, to be a partner and fellow sufferer with Christ, who delighteth also to see in us some representation of himself. Dogs bark not at those whom they know, and with whom they are familiar; but against strangers they usually bark; not always for any hurt which they feel or fear, but commonly by nature or depraved custom. How then canst thou be a stranger to the world, if it dost not molest thee; if it detracts not from thee? *Sir John Hayward (1560-1627), in "The Sanctuary of a Troubled Soul."*

Verse 10. There is nothing so well meant, but it may be ill interpreted. *Simon Patrick*.

Verses 10-11. That Christ was derided and scoffed at is plain, from Mark 5; for, when he said, "The girl is not dead, but sleepeth, they laughed him to scorn; "and when he spoke of the necessity of giving alms, "Now, the Pharisees, who were covetous heard all these things, and they derided him." And, in his passion, he was derided by the soldiers, by Herod, by the high priests, and many others. *Robert Bellarmine*.

Verse 11. *I made sackcloth also my garment,* etc. Though we nowhere read that Jesus put on *sackcloth* on any occasion, yet it is not improbable that he did; besides, the phrase may only intend that he mourned and sorrowed at certain times, as persons do when they put on sackcloth; moreover, as the common garb of his forerunner was raiment of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle; it is very likely his own was very mean, suitable to his condition, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor. *And I became a proverb to them;* a byword; so that, when they saw any person in sackcloth or in vile raiment, behold, such an one looks like Jesus of Nazareth. *John Gill*.

Verse 11. *I became a proverb.* Two things are usually implied when a man is said to be a byword. First, that he is in a very low condition: some men are so high that the tongues of the common people dare not climb over them, but

where the hedge is low every man goes over. Secondly, that he is in a despised condition; to be a byword, carries a reflection of disgrace. He that is much spoken of, in this sense, is ill spoken of; and he is quite lost in the opinion of men, who is thus found in their discourse... Hence, observe, great sufferers in many things of this world, are the common subject of discourses, and often the subject of disgrace. Such evils as few men have felt or seen, all men will be speaking of. Great sorrows, especially if they be the sorrows of great men, are turned into songs, and poetry plays its part with the saddest disasters... Holy David met with this measure from men in the day of his sorrows: *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb (or a byword) to them.* In the next verse he tells us in detail who did this: *They that sit in the gate (that is, great ones) speak against me, and I was the song of the drunkard,* that is, of the common sort. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 12. *They that sit in the gate:* i.e., as it is generally interpreted, the judges or chief persons of the state; for the gates of cities were the places of judicature. But Hillary interprets this of those who sat *to beg* at the gates of the city; which seems a more probable interpretation, better to agree with the design of the psalmist, and to suit with the *drunkards*, mentioned in the next clause. *Samuel Burder.*

Verse 12. *They that sit in the gate.* The magistrates at the gate. Literally, "assessors at the gate; ""judges sitting to determine causes." *John Mason Good.*

Verse 12. *I was the song of the drunkards.* Holy walking is the *drunkard's song*, as David was; and so preciseness and strictness of walking is ordinarily: the world cannot bear the burning and shining conversations of some of the saints; they are so cuttingly reprov'd by them, that with those heathens, they curse the sun, that by its shining doth scorch them. It is no new thing; the seed of the serpent did always persecute the seed of the woman; and he that was born after the flesh, persecutes him that was born after the spirit; even so it is now, saith the apostle; and so it is now, may we say. Ishmael mocked Isaac, and is it not so still? Or, if it be not so bold a sin as formerly, it is because the times, not sinner's hearts, are changed; they malign them still, watch for their halting: "report, say they, and we will report it." *John Murcot.*

Verse 12. *I was the song of the drunkards.* When magistrates discountenance true religion, then it becometh a matter of derision to rascals, and to every base villain without control, and a table talk to every tippler. The shame of the cross is more grievous than the rest of the trouble of it: this is the fourth time that the shame of the cross is presented unto God, in these last four verses: *I was the*

song of the drunkards; after complaining of his being reproached and being made a proverb. David Dickson.

Verse 12. There is a tavern, or profane mirth, in drinking, and roaring, and revelling, and instead of another minstrel, David must be *the song of the drunkards*; nor can the Philistines be merry unless Samson be made the fool in the play (Jud 16:25): "Unless they scoff and jeer the ways and servants of God" (as Mr. Greenham saith), "the fools cannot tell how to be merry; "and then the Devil is merry with them for company. But what? Not merry without abusing their host? This some must dearly pay for, when a reckoning is called for; or, they rather called to make it. Then they will be off from their merry pins, and will find that this was very far from being the "Comfort of the Holy Ghost, "wherein and whereby that good Spirit and our Comforter was grieved, and holiness scoffed and laughed at. *Anthony Tuckney (1599-1670), in "A Good Day Well Improved."*

Verse 13. *But as for me, my prayer,* etc. The phrase is full of emphasis; *And I, my prayer to thee:* that is, such am I altogether, this is my main occupation; as it is in Ps 109:4: *And I, a prayer;* this was my employment, this ever my only refuge, this my present help and remedy. *Venema.*

Verse 13. *An acceptable time.* All times are not alike. We will not always find admittance at the same rate, with the same ease. As we will not always be chiding, so he will not always be so pleasing neither. We may knock, and knock again, and yet stand without a while; sometimes, so long, till our knees are ready to sink under us, our eyes ready to drop out, as well as drop with expectation, and our hearts ready to break in pieces, while none heareth, or none regardeth. We should have come before, or pitched our coming at a better time... The prophet David expressly speaks of *an acceptable time* to make our prayers in. And, "Today if you will hear his voice," in the psalmist, paraphrased by the apostle, "Today, while it is called today," shows there is a set day, or days, of audience with God, wherein he sets himself, as it were, with all readiness to hear and help us—an *accepted time*. And will ye, next, know what it is that makes it so? There are but two things that do. Either God's being in a good or pleasing disposition towards us, or our being in a good and pleasing disposition towards him. Come we but to him in either of these, and we have nicked the time; we are sure to be accepted. *Mark Frank. 1613-1664.*

Verse 13.

Heavier the cross, the heartier prayer;
The bruised herbs most fragrant are.

If sky and wind were always fair,
 The sailor would not watch the star;
 And David's Psalms had never been sung
 If grief his heart had never wrung.
 —*From the German.*

Verse 15. Faith in God giveth hope to be helped, and is half a deliverance before the full deliverance come; for the psalmist is now with his head above water, and not so afraid as when he began the Psalm. *David Dickson.*

Verse 15. *The pit.* According to Dean Stanley, the word *Beer* here used is always rendered "well," except in this and three other cases. When such wells no longer yielded a full supply of water they were used as prisons, no care being taken to cleanse out the mire remaining at the bottom. The Dean also tells us in the Appendix to his "Sinai and Palestine," that "they have a broad margin of masonry round this mouth, and often a stone filling up the orifice." The rolling of this stone over the mouth of the well was the well's "shutting her mouth;" and the poor prisoner was, to all intents and purposes, buried alive. *C. H. S.*

Verse 17. *Hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble.* An upright servant, albeit he be troubled for God's cause, and do miss comfort from God; yet will he not change his Master, nor despair of his favour. *David Dickson.*

Verse 17. *Hide not thy face.* The proper sense of the word *rtm*, gives the meaning to the phrase, *veil not thy face from thy servant*. In this there is a reference to a king, who, to prevent promiscuous approach to his chamber, spreads a veil before it, and admits to his presence only his minister of high confidence. So in Ps 31:21. The face of God is his majesty, and his gracious and favourable presence; the *servant* of God is his minister enjoying intimate access, and *to veil the face from him* is to prevent him coming into the presence of God; and, therefore, it belongs to the servant of God to be treated in a widely different manner. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 17. *Thy servant.* Hide not, he says, from thy servant; as if he should say, such as I am, I am thy servant. It belongs to the Master to take care of his servant, if in peril for his sake. In this same verse he says he is in a strait. In Ps 69:18 he declares that he is in jeopardy of his life. *Musculus.*

Verse 19. *Thou hast known my reproach,* etc. It is a great deal of comfort that God does take notice of our reproaches; this was the comfort of the psalmist. If a man suffer reproach, and disgrace, and trouble for his friends, while he is

abroad from them; O, says he, did my friends know what I suffer, and suffer for them, it would comfort me: if it be comfort to be known, much more when they shall be accounted their own. Christ is acquainted with all the sufferings of every member; and, therefore, do not say, I am a poor creature; who takes notice of my sufferings? Heaven takes notice of your sufferings; Christ takes notice of them better than yourselves. *Jeremiah Burroughs*.

Verse 20. *Reproach hath broken my heart.* Mental emotions and passions are well known by all to affect the actions of the heart, in the way of palpitation, fainting, etc. That these emotions and passions, when in overwhelming excess, occasionally, though rarely, produce laceration or rupture of the walls of the heart, is stated by most medical authorities who have written on the affections of this organ; and our poets even allude to this effect as an established fact.

"The grief that does not speak,
Whispers the over fraught heart, and bids it break."

But, if ever human heart was riven and ruptured by the mere amount of mental agony that was endured, it would surely, we might even argue, *a priori*, be that of our Redeemer, when, during those dark and dreadful hours on the cross, he, "being made a curse for us, ""bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows, "and suffered for sin the malediction of God and man, "full of anguish, "and now "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." There are theological as well as medical arguments in favour of the opinion that Christ, in reality, died from a ruptured or broken heart. If the various wondrous prophecies and minute predictions in Psalms 22 and 69, regarding the circumstances connected with Christ's death, be justly held as literally true, such as, "They pierced my hands and my feet, ""They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture, "etc., why should we regard as merely metaphorical, and not as literally true, also, the declarations in the same Psalms, *Reproach hath broken my heart, "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels, "* Sir James Young Simpson (1811-1870), in *W. Stroud's "Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ."*

Verse 20. *I looked for some to take pity, but there was none.* Even under ordinary circumstances we yearn for sympathy. Without it, the heart will contract and droop, and shut like a flower in an unkindly atmosphere, but it will open again amidst the sounds of frankness and the scenes of love. When we are in trouble, this want is in proportion still more pressing; and, for the sorrowful heart to feel alone, is a grief greater than nature can sustain. A glance of sympathy seems to help it more than the gift of untold riches; and a loving look, even from a little child who is sorry for us, or a simple word from some

homely friend, will sometimes brace the spirit to new exertions, and seem almost to waken life within the grasp of death. *Charles Stanford, in "Central Truths."* 1859.

Verse 21. *They gave me also gall, etc.* Such are the comforts often administered by the world, to an afflicted and deserted soul. *George Horne.*

Verse 21. *Gall and vinegar* are here put together to denote the most unpalatable forms of food and drink. The passion of our Lord was providentially so ordered as to furnish a remarkable coincidence with this verse. The Romans were accustomed to give sour wine, with an infusion of myrrh, to convicts on the cross, for the purpose of deadening the pain. This practice was adhered to in our Saviour's case (Mr 15:23). Though in itself not cruel, but the contrary, it formed part of the great process of murderous persecution. On the part of the Roman soldiery it may have been an act of kindness; but, considered as an act of the unbelieving Jews, it was giving *gall and vinegar* to one already overwhelmed with anguish. And so Matthew, in accordance with his general method, represents it as a verification of this passage (Mt 27:34). He does not contradict Mark's account, before referred to, but merely intimates that the wine and myrrh thus offered were to be regarded as identical with the gall and vinegar of this prediction. And, in order to prevent the coincidence from being overlooked, our Lord, before he died, complained of thirst, and vinegar was administered. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 21. *Gall for my meat.* Since the life of sin first began in tasting, contrary to the obedience due to God, the Redeemer of sinners willed to be obedient even unto death, upon the cross, and to end his life, in fulfilment of the prophecy with the bitter taste of gall and vinegar, that, in this manner, we, seeing the beginning of our perdition and the end of our redemption, might feel ourselves to be most sufficiently redeemed and most perfectly cured. *Thome de Jesu (1582), in "The Sufferings of Jesus."*

Verse 21. *Vinegar.* Commentators have frequently remarked the refreshing quality of the Eastern vinegar. I shall not repeat their observations, but rather would ask, why the psalmist prophetically complains of the giving him *vinegar* to drink, in that *deadly thirst*, which, in another Psalm, he describes by the tongue's cleaving to the jaws, if it be so refreshing? Its refreshing quality cannot be doubted; but may it not be replied, that, besides the gall which he mentions, and which ought not to be forgotten, vinegar itself, refreshing as it is, was only made use of by the meanest people? When a *royal* personage has vinegar given him in his thirst, the *refreshment of a slave*, of a *wretched prisoner*, instead of that of a *prince*, he is greatly dishonoured, and may well

complain of it as a bitter insult, or represent such insults by this image. *Sweet wines*, as appears from the ancient *Eastern* translators of the Septuagint, were chiefly esteemed formerly, for that which our version renders "*royal wine* in abundance, according to the state of the King, "(Es 1:7.) they translate, "much and *sweet* wine, such as the *King himself* drank." Perhaps, it was with a view to this, that the soldiers offered our Lord *vinegar* (wine that was become very sour), in opposition to that *sweet* wine princes were wont to drink: for Luke tells us that they did this in mockery (Lu 23:36.) "And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him vinegar." Medicated wine, to deaden their sense of pain, was wont, we are told, to be given to Jewish criminals, when about to be put to death; but, they gave our Lord vinegar, and that in mockery—in mockery (as they did other things) of his *claim to royalty*. But the force of this does not appear, if we do not recollect the quality of the wines drank anciently by princes, which, it seems, were of the *sweet* kind. *Thomas Harmer*.

Verse 22. The imprecations in this verse and those following it are revolting only when considered as the expression of malignant selfishness. If uttered by God, they shock no reader's sensibilities, nor should they, when considered as the language of an ideal person, representing the whole class of righteous sufferers, and particularly him, who though he prayed for his murderers while dying (Lu 23:34), had before applied the words of this very passage to the unbelieving Jews (Mt 23:38), as Paul did afterwards (Ro 11:9-10). The general doctrine of providential retribution, far from being confined to the Old Testament, is distinctly taught in many of our Saviour's parables. See Mt 21:41 22:7 24:51. *Joseph Addison Alexander*.

Verse 22. *Let their table become a snare.* Their table figuratively sets forth their prosperity, the abundance of all things. It represents peace and security, as in Ps 33:5 Job 26:16. It likewise describes mutual friendship, a blending of minds and plans; the emblem and sign whereof *convivia* are accustomed to be. Ps 41:10 Da 11:27. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 22. *Let their table, etc.* One said well, *Licetis perimus omnes*, etc., "Ruin usually ariseth from the use of lawful things; " there being most danger where it is least suspected. In all our comforts, there is a forbidden fruit, which seemeth fair and tasteth sweet, but which must not be touched. *Henry Wilkinson (1675), in "Morning Exercises."*

Verse 22. *Let their table become a snare.* Many would have excused themselves from following Christ, in the parable of the feast: some had bought land, some had married wives, and others had bought yokes of oxen, and could

not come (Lu 14:18-20), that is, an immoderate love of the world hindered them: their lawful enjoyments, from servants, became their idols; they worshipped them more than God, and would not quit them to come to God. But this is recorded to their reproach; and we may herein see the power of self upon the worldly man, and the danger that comes to him by the abuse of lawful things. What, thy wife dearer to thee than thy Saviour! and thy land and oxen preferred to thy soul's salvation. O beware, that thy comforts prove not snares first, and then curses: to overrate them, is to provoke him that gave them to take them away again. Come, and follow him that giveth life eternal to the soul.
William Penn (1644-1718), in "No Cross, No Crown."

Verse 22. *Let their table become a snare.* That is, for a recompense for their inhumanity and cruelty towards me. Michaelis shows how exactly these comminations were fulfilled in the history of the final siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Many thousands of the Jews had assembled in the city to eat the paschal lamb, when Titus unexpectedly made an assault upon them. In this siege, the greater part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem miserably perished.
William Walford.

Verse 22-23. Observe the Divine retribution of the Jews. They gave gall and vinegar as food and drink to Christ; and their own spiritual food and drink has become a snare to them. His eyes were blindfolded; their eyes were darkened. His loins were scourged; their loins were made to shake. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 23-28. He denounces ten plagues, or effects of God's wrath, to come upon them for their wickedness. *David Dickson.*

Verse 24. *Pour out.* Observe what is denoted by *pouring out*. First, the facility with which God is able, without any labour, to destroy his enemies, as easy is it as to incline a vial full of liquid and pour it out. Secondly, the pouring out denotes the abundance of his anger. Thirdly, that his wrath is sudden, overwhelming, and inevitable. When it drops, one must take care; when it is poured forth, it crushes the thoughtless. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 28. *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.* All the Israelites who came up out of Egypt were put down in a muster roll of the living, called "the writing of the house of Israel" (Eze 13:9), and "the book of life." Those who had died were excluded when the names were written out afresh each year. They were, thereby, consigned to oblivion (Pr 10:7). Hence, *the book of life* was used as an image for God's *book of predestination to eternal life* (Ps 139:16 Ex 32:32 Ps 87:6 Da 12:1 Php 4:3 Re 17:8 13:8 Re 21:27; Lu 10:20).

The book of life, *in the human point of view*, has names written in it who have a name to live, but are dead, being in it only by external call, or in their own estimation, and in that of others. But, *in the divine point of view*, it contains only those who are elected finally to life. The former may be blotted out, as was Judas (Re 3:5 Mt 13:12 25:29 7:23 Ex 32:33); but the latter never (Re 20:12,15 Joh 10:28-29 Ac 13:48). *A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 28. *Let them be wiped out*, etc. This verse alludes to the ancient Jewish practice of recording the names of the inhabitants of every division, or tribe, of the people, in a volume somewhat similar to the *Dom-boc* of the Saxons. See Lu 2:1. The names of those who died were blotted out or *wiped* out, and appeared no longer on the list of the living. Such a book is attributed to God in Ps 139:16: and the *blotting out of Moses from God's book*, in Ex 32:32, is a figurative expression, for depriving him of life. *Richard Warner.*

Verse 28. *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living*, etc. We come to the question, Whether to be written in heaven be an infallible assurance of salvation; or, whether any there registered may come to be blotted out? The truth is, that none written in heaven can ever be lost; yet they object against it this verse. Hence, they infer, that some names once there recorded are afterwards put out; but this opinion casteth a double aspersion on God himself. Either it makes him ignorant of future things, as if he foresaw not the end of elect and reprobate, and so were deceived in decreeing some to be saved that shall not be saved; or, that his decree is mutable, in excluding those upon their sins whom he hath formerly chosen. From both these weaknesses St. Paul vindicates him (2Ti 2:19): "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." First, "The Lord knows them that are his; "this were not true if God's prescience could be deluded. Then, his "foundation stands sure; "but that were no sure foundation, if those he hath decreed to be his should afterwards fall out not to be his. The very conclusion of truth is this *impossibilis est deletio*; they which are "written in heaven" can never come into hell. To clear this from the opposed doubt, among many, I will cull out three proper distinctions:

1. One may be said to be written in heaven *simpliciter*, and *secundum quid*. He that is simply written there, *in quantum praedestinatus ad vitam*, because elected to life, can never be blotted out. He that is written after a sort may, for he is written *non secundum Dei praescientiam, sed secundum praesentem justitiam*—not according to God's former decree, but according to his present righteousness. So they are said to be blotted out, not in respect of God's knowledge, for he knows they never were written there; but according to their present condition, apostatising from grace to sin. (*Lyra.*)

2. Some are blotted out *non secundum rei veritatem, sed hominum opinionem*—not according to the truth of the thing but according to men's opinion. It is usual in the Scriptures to say a thing is done *quando innotescat fieri*, when it is declared to be done. Hypocrites have a simulation of outward sanctity, so that men in charity judge them to be written in heaven. But when those glistening stars appear to be only *ignes fatui*, foolish meteors, and fall from the firmament of the church, then we say they are blotted out. The written *ex existentia*, by a perfect being, are never lost; but *ex apparentia*, by a dissembled appearance, may. Some God so writes, *in se ut simpliciter habituri vitam*—that they have life simply in themselves, though not of themselves. Others he so writes, *ut habeant non in se, sed in sua causa*; from which falling they are said to be obliterated. (*Aquinas.*)

3. Augustine says, we must not so take it, that God first writes and then dasheth out. For if a Pilate could say, *Quod scripsi, scripsi*—"What I have written, I have written, "and it shall stand; shall God say, *Quod scripsi expungam*—What I have written, I will wipe out, and it shall not stand? They are written, then, *secundum spem ipsorum, qui ibi se scriptos putabant*—according to their own hope that presumed their names there; and are blotted out *quando ipsis constet illos non ibi fuisse*—when it is manifest to themselves that their names never had any such honour of inscription. This even that Psalm strengthens whence they fetch their opposition: *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous*. So that to be blotted out of that book, it is, indeed, never to be written there. To be wiped out in the end, is but a declaration that such were not written in the beginning. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 32. *Your heart shall live that seek God.* As such who are poor in spirit, and truly humbled, do live upon God's alms, and are daily at his doors for relief of their necessities, and for communion with his gracious goodness; so shall they thrive well in this trade. *David Dickson.*

Verse 32. *Your heart shall live.* The *heart*, or the *soul*, is said *to live, to be converted*, or to return, when it is refreshed and cured of its pains and griefs. In this way it could be said of Jacob, when the good tidings were brought, that his *spirit revived*... On the contrary, when Nabal heard the bad news, it is recorded that *his heart died within him, and he became as a stone*. *Lorinus.*

Verse 33. *The Lord heareth the poor.* The consolation is much greater when it is said, "The Lord heareth the poor, "than if it were written, He hath heard poor David. *Musculus.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Our trials like waters.

1. They should be kept out of the heart.
2. There are, however, leaks which admit them.
3. Take note when the hold is filling.
4. Use the pumps, and cry for help.

Verses 2-3. The sinner aware of his position, unable to hope, overwhelmed with fear, finding no comfort in prayer, unvisited with divine consolation. Direct and console him.

Verse 3.

1. Here is faith in the midst of trouble: *My God*.
2. Hope in the midst of disappointment: *Mine eyes fail, etc.*
3. Prayer in the midst of discouragement: *I am weary, etc.*; *My throat, etc.* Or, (a) There is praying beyond prayer: *I am weary, etc.*; (b) Hoping beyond hope: *Mine eyes, etc. G. R.*

Verse 4. Jesus as the Restorer, the Christian imitating him in the same office; Christianity a power which will do this for the whole race in due season.

Verse 5. *Our foolishness.* Wherein it appears generally, how it may display itself in individuals, what it occasions, and what are the divine provisions to meet it.

Verse 5.

1. God's knowledge of sin is an inducement to repent.
 - (a) Because it is foolish to endeavour to hide any sin from him.
 - (b) Because it is impossible to confess all our sin to him.
2. It is an encouragement to hope for pardon.
 - (a) Because, in the full knowledge of sin, he has declared himself to be merciful and ready to forgive.

(b) Because he has made provision for pardon, not according to our knowledge of sin, but his own.

Verses 8-9.

1. A grievous trial.
2. An honourable reason for it: for Christ's sake.
3. Consoling supports under it.

Verse 9.

1. The object of zeal: *thy house*; thy Zion; thy Church.
2. The degree of zeal: *hath eaten me up*. Our Lord was consumed by his own zeal. So Paul: *And I if I be offered up, etc.*
3. The manifestation of zeal: *The reproaches*, etc.; of thy justice; of thy law; of thy moral government; of thy lovingkindness. "Who himself bare our sins," etc. *G. R.*

Verses 10-12. A prophecy.

1. Of the Saviour's tears: *When I wept*.
2. Of his fasting.
3. Of reproach.
4. Of his humiliation: *I made sackcloth*, etc.
5. Of the perversion of his words: as, "I will destroy this temple," etc.
6. Of the opposition of the Pharisees, and rulers: *They that sit in the gate, etc.*
7. Of the contempt of the lowest of the people: *I was the song, etc. G. R.*

Verse 11. Proverbial sayings of a scoffing character.

Verse 13. *An acceptable time*. While life lasts usually, and especially when we are repentant, feel our need, are importunate, give all glory to God, have faith in his promise, and expect a gracious reply.

Verse 13. *Multitude of thy mercy.* Seen in many forbearances before conversion, countless pardons, innumerable gifts, many promises, frequent visits, and abundant deliverances. Of all these who can count the thousandth part?

Verse 13. *The truth of thy salvation.* An instructive topic. Its reality, certainty, completeness, eternity, etc., all illustrate its *truth* under various aspects.

Verses 14-16.

1. The depth from which prayer may rise.
2. The height to which it may ascend. Thus Jonah, when at the bottom of the sea, says, "My prayer came up," etc. *G. R.*

Verse 17.

1. Prayer: *Hide not thy face.*
2. Person: *Thy servant.*
3. Plea: *For I am in trouble.*
4. Pressure: *Hear me speedily.*

Verse 19.

1. God knows what his people suffer; how much, how long, from whom, for what.
2. His people should find consolation in this knowledge.
 - (a) That trial is permitted by him.
 - (b) That it is apportioned by him.
 - (c) That it has its design from him.
 - (d) That when the design is accomplished, it will be removed by him. *G. R.*

Verse 20. The Saviour's broken heart. Broken hearts, such as are sentimental, caused by disappointed pride, penitence, persecution, sympathy, etc.

Verse 21. The conduct of men to Jesus throughout his entire life, rendering to him evil for all his good, and where good would have seemed to be the inevitable return.

Verse 22. *The table a snare.* Excess in feasting; looseness in conversation; want of principal in confederate councils; superstition in religion.

Verse 23. The judicial curse which falls on some despisers of Christ; their understandings fail to perceive the truth; and they tremble because they are unable to receive strengthening comforts.

Verse 29.

1. The humiliation that precedes exaltation.

(a) Deep: *I am poor and sorrowful.*

(b) Confessed: *I am poor, etc.*

2. The exaltation that follows humiliation.

(a) Divine: *Thy salvation, O Lord. Though the Lord be high, etc.*

(b) Complete: God does nothing by halves.

(c) Preeminent: *Set me up on high. G. R.*

Verse 30-31.

1. The effect of deliverance upon the people of God. It fills them with praise and thanksgiving.

2. The effect in relation to God. He is more pleased with it than with any other offerings: "Whoso offereth praise, "etc. *G. R.*

Verse 32.

1. The joy of a good man's heart is in the experience of others.

2. The life of his heart is in God.

Verse 33.

1. What the people of God are in their own esteem: "poor" and "prisoners."

2. What they are in the divine esteem: not unnoticed; not unheard; not despised.

Verse 34. *The sea*, etc. How God is, should be, and shall be praised by the sea.

Verse 35. Salvation, edification, preservation, peace, full assurance.

Verses 35-36. Observe the sequence:—"Save, ""build, ""dwell and have, ""inherit, ""love and dwell."

Verse 36.

1. The sure evidence of grace: "love his name."
2. The blessing given.
3. The enduring character of it: "shall dwell."

Verse 36.

1. The inheritance: "Inherit it; "we reign with Christ on earth, then in heaven.
2. The title.

(a) Legal: "Seed of his servants"—Abraham, Jacob, David—David's Lord and Son.

(b) Moral: "They that love his name." *G. R.*

Psalm 70

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. *To the Chief Musician, A Psalm of David.* So far the title corresponds with Psalm 40, of which this is a copy with variations. David appears to have written the full length Psalm, and also to have made this excerpt from it, and altered it to suit the occasion. It is a fit pendant to Psalm 69, and a suitable preface to Psalm 71. *To bring to remembrance.* This is the poor man's memorial. David personally pleads with God that he may not be forgotten, but David's Lord may be heard here also. Even if the Lord seems to forget us, we must not forget him. This memorial Psalm acts as a connecting link between the two Psalms of supplicatory expostulation, and makes up with them a precious triad of song.

EXPOSITION

(The Reader is referred for full [Exposition and Notes](#) to Ps 40:13-17, in *"Treasury of David, "Vol. 2, pp 267-268.*)

Verse 1. This is the second Psalm which is a repetition of another, the former being Psalm 53, which was a rehearsal of Psalm 14. The present differs from the Fortieth Psalm at the outset, for that begins with, "Be pleased, "and this, in our version, more urgently with, Make haste; or, as in the Hebrew, with an abrupt and broken cry, *O God, to deliver me; O Lord, to help me hasten.* It is not forbidden us, in hours of dire distress, to ask for speed on God's part in his coming to rescue us. The only other difference between this and verse 13 of Psalm 40, is the putting of *Elohim* in the beginning of the verse for *Jehovah*, but why this is done we know not; perhaps, the guesses of the critics are correct, but perhaps they are not. As we have the words of this Psalm twice in the letter, let them be doubly with us in spirit. It is most meet that we should day by day cry to God for deliverance and help; our frailty and our many dangers render this a perpetual necessity.

Verse 2. Here the words, "together, "and, "to destroy it, "which occur in Psalm 40, are omitted: a man in haste uses no more words than are actually necessary. His enemies desired to put his faith to shame, and he eagerly entreats that they may be disappointed, and themselves covered with confusion. It shall certainly be so; if not sooner, yet at that dread day when the wicked shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt. Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them *be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt:* turned back and driven back are merely the variations of the

translators. When men labour to turn others back from the right road, it is God's retaliation to drive them back from the point they are aiming at.

Verse 3. *Let them be turned back.* This is a milder term than that used in Psalm 40, where he cries, "let them be desolate." Had growing years matured and mellowed the psalmist's spirit? To be "turned back," however, may come to the same thing as to be "desolate;" disappointed malice is the nearest akin to desolation that can well be conceived. For a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha. They thought to shame the godly, but it was their shame, and shall be their shame for ever. How fond men are of taunts, and if they are meaningless ahas, more like animal cries than human words, it matters nothing, so long as they are a vent for scorn and sting the victim. Rest assured, the enemies of Christ and his people shall have wages for their work; they shall be paid in their own coin; they loved scoffing, and they shall be filled with it—yea, they shall become a proverb and a byword for ever.

Verse 4. Anger against enemies must not make us forget our friends, for it is better to preserve a single citizen of Zion, than to kill a thousand enemies. Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee. All true worshippers, though as yet in the humble ranks of seekers, shall have cause for joy. Even though the seeking commence in darkness, it shall bring light with it. And let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be *magnified*. Those who have tasted divine grace, and are, therefore, wedded to it, are a somewhat more advanced race, and these shall not only feel joy, but shall with holy constancy and perseverance tell abroad their joy, and call upon men to glorify God. The doxology, "Let the Lord's name be magnified," is infinitely more manly and ennobling than the dog's bark of "Aha, aha."

Verse 5. *But I am poor and needy.* Just the same plea as in the preceding Psalm, Ps 69:29: it seems to be a favourite argument with tried saints; evidently our poverty is our wealth, even as our weakness is our strength. May we learn well this riddle. Make haste unto me, O God. This is written instead of "yet the Lord thinketh upon me," in Psalm 40: and there is a reason for the change, since the key note of the Psalm frequently dictates its close. Psalm 40 sings of God's thoughts, and, therefore, ends therewith; but the peculiar note of Psalm 70 is "Make haste," and, therefore, so it concludes. Thou art my help and my deliverer. My help in trouble, my deliverer out of it. O Lord, make no tarrying. Here is the name of "Jehovah" instead of "my God." We are warranted in using all the various names of God, for each has its own beauty and majesty, and we must reverence each by its holy use as well as by abstaining from taking it in vain. I have presumed to close this recapitulatory exposition with an original hymn, suggested by the watchword of this Psalm, "MAKE HASTE."

Make haste, O God, my soul to bless!
 My help and my deliverer thou;
 Make haste, for I am in deep distress,
 My case is urgent; help me *now*.
 Make haste, O God! make haste to save!
 For time is short, and death is nigh;
 Make haste ere yet I am in my grave,
 And with the lost forever lie.

Make haste, for I am poor and low;
 And Satan mocks my prayers and tears;
 O God, in mercy be not slow,
 But snatch me from my horrid fears.
 Make haste, O God, and hear my cries;
 Then with the souls who seek thy face,
 And those who thy salvation prize,
 I will magnify thy matchless grace.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Verse 2. *Let them be confounded*; viz., among themselves, and in their own understandings: *and put to shame*; viz., in the sight and presence of men before whom they think to attain great glory, in banding themselves against me.
Thomas Wilcocks.

Verse 3. *Aha, aha.* In describing his human foes, our Saviour represents them as saying to him, *Aha, aha*. These exclamations are ebullitions of exulting insolence. They can escape from the lips of those only who are at once haughty and cruel, and insensible to the delicacies and decorum of demeanour. Doubtless, they would be the favourite expressions of the rude rabble that accompanied the traitor in his ignoble campaign against Incarnate Love, and of the rude aristocratic mob that held over the Apostle of Heaven the mockery of an ecclesiastical trial, and of the larger, more excited, and more rancorous multitude that insultingly accompanied him to the cross, and mocked him, and wagged their heads at him, and railed upon him as he meekly, but majestically, hung on the accursed tree. The prescient Saviour would, no doubt, catch in his ears the distant mutter of all the violent and ruthless exclamations with which his foes were about to rend the air; and, amid these heartless and sneering ejaculations, he could not but feel the keen and poisoning edge of the malevolent and hilarious cry, *Aha, aha*. O miracle of mercy! He who deserved the hallelujahs of an intelligent universe, and the special hosannas of all the

children of men, had first to anticipate, and then to endure from the mouths of the very rebels whom he came to bless and to save, the malicious taunting of *Aha, aha. James Frame.*

Verse 4. *Such as love thy salvation.* They love it for its own sake; they love it for the sake of him who procured it by his obedience until death; they love it for the sake of that Holy Spirit who moved them to seek it and accept it; and they love it for the sake of their own souls, which they cannot but love, and which, without it, would be the most miserable outcasts in the universe. No wonder that in the light of its intrinsic importance, and of its intrinsic relations, they should be "such as love God's salvation." All men are lovers as well as seekers; for all men love. Some love money more than God's salvation; others love pleasure, even the pleasures of sin, more than God's salvation; and others love bustle and business more than God's salvation. But, as the stamp of the material, the temporal and the evanescent, is on all these earthly objects of men's love, the friends of Jesus elevate above them all, as the worthier object of their regard and embrace, the salvation of God. *James Frame.*

Verse 4. *Let God be magnified.* Not only *The Lord be magnified*, but also *always*. Behold, when thou wast straying, and wast turned away from him; he recalled thee: *Be the Lord magnified*. Behold, he hath inspired thee with confession of sins; thou hast confessed, he hath given pardon: *Be the Lord magnified*.... Now, thou hast begun to advance, thou hast been justified, thou hast arrived at a sort of excellence of virtue; is it not a seemly thing that *thou* also sometime be magnified? No! *Let them say, Be the Lord always magnified*. A sinner thou art, to be magnified in order that he may call; you confess, be he magnified in order that he may forgive: now thou livest justly, be he magnified in order that he may direct; you persevere even unto the end, be he magnified in order that he may glorify. *Be the Lord*, then, *always magnified*. Let just men say this, let them say this that seek him. Whosoever doth not say this, doth not seek him... *Be the Lord magnified*. But, wilt thou thyself never be great? wilt thou be nowhere? In him was something, in me nothing; but if in him is whatsoever I am, *be he magnified*, not I. But, what of thee? *But I am poor and needy*: he is rich, he abounding, he needing nothing. Behold my light, behold whence I am illumined, for I cry, "Thou shalt illumine my candle, O Lord; my God, thou shalt illumine my darkness. The Lord doth loose men fettered, the Lord raiseth up men crushed, the Lord maketh wise the blind men, the Lord keepeth the proselytes." Ps 18:28 146:7. What, then, of thee? *But I am needy and poor*. I am like an orphan, my soul is like a widow destitute and desolate; help I seek, always mine infirmity I confess. *But I am poor and needy*. There have been forgiven me my sins, now I have begun to follow the commandments of God;

still, however, I am needy and poor. Why still needy and poor? Because I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind. Ro 7:23. Why needy and poor? Because, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Mt 5:6. Still I hunger, still I thirst. *Augustine*.

Verse 5. *But I am poor and needy.* He had been rich, but for our sake he had become poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. Out of the fulness of his grace he had voluntarily entered, for our sakes, into a state in which he had experience, and most bitter experience, of the want of the means of enjoyment... But the word here rendered *poor* is often elsewhere, translated afflicted; in various ways he was afflicted. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and the acquaintance of grief. He was reproached, and "reproach broke his heart." *James Frame*.

Verse 5. *I am poor and needy.* By this I hold to be meant the chastisements, and fiery trials that come from *God the Father*; the temptations and bitter assaults of that foul and fell fiend, *Satan*; the persecutions and vexations inflicted by the hands of unreasonable *and wicked men*; and (but in this following *Christ* must be exempted) the inward corruptions, disordered motions, unsettled affections, and the original pollutions brought from the mother's womb; with the soul and body's inaptness and unableness with cheerfulness and constancy to run the direct and just paths of God's commandments. Many of these made the Head, all of these (and more, too) the members, *poor and needy*. *John Barlow*. 1618.

Verse 5. *O Lord, make no tarrying.* His prayer for himself, like his prayer for his foes and for his friends, was answered. The Lord made no tarrying. Ere four and twenty hours had rolled past, his rescued spirit was in Paradise, and the crucified thief was with him. O, what a change! The morning saw him condemned at the bar of an earthly tribunal, sentenced to death, and nailed to the bitter tree; before the evening shadowed the hill of Calvary, he was nestling in the bosom of God, and had become the great centre of attraction and of admiration to all the holy intelligences of the universe. The morning saw him led out through the gate of the Jerusalem below, surrounded by a ribald crowd, whose hootings rung in his ear; but ere the night fell, he had passed through the gate of the Jerusalem above, and his tread was upon the streets of gold, and angel anthems rose high through the dome of heaven, and joy filled the heart of God. *James Frame*.

Verse 5. *(third clause).* *Helper*, in all good works; *Deliverer*, from all evil ones. *Make no long tarrying*: it is the cry of the individual sinner. *Dionysius the Carthusian* (1471) quoted in *Neale and Littledale's Commentary*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1.

1. Occasion of his prayer.
 - (a) Affliction.
 - (b) Helplessness.
2. Subject of his prayer. Deliverance, help.
3. Importunity of his prayer. The time of deliverance may be an answer to prayer, as well as deliverance itself.

Verse 1.

1. Times when such urgent prayer is allowable, praiseworthy, or faulty.
2. Reasons for expecting a speedy reply.
3. Consolations if delay should occur.

Verse 2.

1. There are those who seek our soul's hurt.
2. We must oppose them, not dally or yield.
3. Our best weapon is prayer to God.
4. Their defeat is here described.

Verse 3.

1. Who are these who cry "shame"?
2. What master do they serve?
3. What shall their wages be?

Verse 4. Joy for seekers, and employment for finders.

Verse 4. (*last clause*).

1. The character.
2. The saying.
3. The wish.

Verse 5.

1. Who needs help?
2. Who renders help?
3. What it comes to: "deliver."
4. What prayer it suggests.

Verse 5.

1. Confession! *I am poor and needy.*
2. Profession: *Thou art my help*, etc.
3. Supplication: *Make haste; Make no tarrying.*

Psalm 71

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. There is no title to this Psalm, and hence some conjecture that Psalm 70 is intended to be a prelude to it, and has been broken off from it. Such imaginings have no value with us. We have already met with five Psalms without title, which are, nevertheless, as complete as those which bear them. We have here *THE PRAYER OF THE AGED BELIEVER*, who, in holy confidence of faith, strengthened by a long and remarkable experience, pleads against his enemies, and asks further blessings for himself. Anticipating a gracious reply, he promises to magnify the Lord exceedingly.

DIVISION. The first four verses are faith's cry for help; the next four are a testimony of experience. From Ps 71:9-13, the aged saint pleads against his foes, and then rejoices in hope, Ps 71:14-16. He returns to prayer again in Ps 71:17-18, repeats the confident hopes which cheered his soul, Ps 71:19-21; and then he closes with the promise of abounding in thanksgiving. Throughout, this Psalm may be regarded as the utterance of struggling, but unstaggering, faith.

EXPOSITION

Verse 2. *Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape.* Be true, O God, to thy word. It is a righteous thing in thee to keep the promises which thou hast made unto thy servants. I have trusted thee, and thou wilt not be unrighteous to forget my faith. I am taken as in a net, but do thou liberate me from the malice of my persecutors. Incline thine ear unto me, and save me. Stoop to my feebleness, and hear my faint whispers; be gracious to my infirmities, and smile upon me: I ask salvation; listen thou to my petitions, and save me. Like one wounded and left for dead by mine enemies, I need that thou bend over me and bind up my wounds. These mercies are asked on the plea of faith, and they cannot, therefore, be denied.

Verse 3. *Be thou my strong habitation.* Permit me to enter into thee, and be as much at home as a man in his own house, and then suffer me to remain in thee as my settled abode. Whereas foes molest me, I need a dwelling framed and bulwarked, to sustain a siege and resist the attacks of armies; let, then, thine omnipotence secure me, and be as a fortress unto me. Here we see a weak man, but he is in a strong habitation; his security rests upon the tower in which he hides, and is not placed in jeopardy through his personal feebleness. Whereunto I may continually resort. Fast shut is this castle against all adversaries, its gates they cannot burst open; the drawbridge is up, the portcullis is down, the bars are fast in their places; but, there is a secret door, by which friends of the great

Lord can enter at all hours of the day or night, as often as ever they please. There is never an hour when it is unlawful to pray. Mercy's gates stand wide open, and shall do so, till, at the last, the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door. Believers find their God to be their habitation, strong and accessible, and this is for them a sufficient remedy for all the ills of their mortal life.

Thou hast given commandment to save me. Nature is charged to be tender with God's servants; Providence is ordered to work their good, and the forces of the invisible world are ordained as their guardians. David charged all his troops to spare the young man Absalom, but yet he fell. God's commandment is of far higher virtue, for it compels obedience, and secures its end. Destruction cannot destroy us, famine cannot starve us; but we laugh at both, while God's mandate shields us. No stones of the field can throw us down, while angels bear us up in their hands; neither can the beasts of the field devour us, while David's God delivers us from their ferocity, or Daniel's God puts them in awe of us. *For thou art my rock and my fortress.* In God we have all the security which nature which furnishes the rock, and art which builds the fortress, could supply; he is the complete preserver of his people. Immutability may be set forth by the rock, and omnipotence by the fortress. Happy is he who can use the personal pronoun "my"—not only once, but as many times as the many aspects of the Lord may render desirable. Is he a strong habitation? I will call him "*my strong habitation*," and he shall be *my rock, my fortress, my God* (Ps 71:4), *my hope, my trust* (Ps 71:5), *my praise* (Ps 71:6). All mine shall be his, all his shall be mine. This was the reason why the psalmist was persuaded that God had commanded his salvation, namely, because he had enabled his to exercise a calm and appropriating faith.

Verse 4. *Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked.* God is on the same side with us, and those who are our enemies are also his, for they are wicked; therefore will the Lord surely rescue his own confederates, and he will not suffer the evil to triumph over the just. He who addresses such a prayer as this to heaven, does more injury to his enemies than if he had turned a battery of Armstrongs upon them. Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. Being wicked to God, they become unrighteous towards men, and cruel in their persecutions of the godly. Two hands are here mentioned: they grasp and they crush; they strike and they would slay if God did not prevent; had they as many hands as Briarcus, the finger of God would more than match them.

Verse 5. *For thou art my hope, O Lord God.* God who gives us grace to hope in him, will assuredly fulfil our hope, and, therefore, we may plead it in prayer. His name is "Jehovah, the hope of Israel" (Jer 17:13); and, as he cannot be a

false or failing hope, we may expect to see our confidence justified. Thou art my trust from my youth. David had proved his faith by notable exploits when he was a youth and ruddy; it was to him a cheering recollection, and he felt persuaded that the God of his youth would not forsake him in his age. They are highly favoured who can like David, Samuel, Josiah, Timothy, and others say, "Thou art my trust from my youth."

Verse 6. *By thee have I been holden up from the womb.* Before he was able to understand the power which preserved him, he was sustained by it. God knows us before we know anything. The elect of old lay in the bosom of God before they were laid on their mothers' bosoms; and when their infantile weakness had no feet strong enough to carry it, the Lord upheld it. We do well to reflect upon divine goodness to us in childhood, for it is full of food for gratitude. Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels. Even before conscious life, the care of God is over his chosen. Birth is a mystery of mercy, and God is with both mother and babe. If marriages are registered in heaven, we may be sure that births are also. Holy women do well to bless God for his mercy to them in nature's perilous hour; but every one who is born of woman has equal cause for thankfulness. She, whose life is preserved, should render thanks, and so should he whose life is given. My praise shall be continually of thee. Where goodness has been unceasingly received, praise should unceasingly be offered. God is the circle where praise should begin, continue, and endlessly revolve, since in him we live, and move, and have our being.

Verse 7. *I am as a wonder unto many.* "To thousand eyes a mark and gaze am I." The saints are men wondered at; often their dark side is gloomy even to amazement, while their bright side is glorious even to astonishment. The believer is a riddle, an enigma puzzling the unspiritual; he is a monster warring with those delights of the flesh, which are the all in all of other men; he is a prodigy, unaccountable to the judgments of ungodly men; a wonder gazed at, feared, and, by and by, contemptuously derided. Few understand us, many are surprised at us. But thou art my strong refuge. Here is the answer to our riddle. If we are strong, it is in God; if we are safe, our refuge shelters us; if we are calm, our soul hath found her stay in God. When faith is understood, and the grounds of her confidence seen, the believer is no longer a wonder; but the marvel is that so much unbelief remains among the sons of men.

Verse 8. *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.* What a blessed mouthful! A man never grows nauseated though the flavour of it be all day in his mouth. God's bread is always in our mouths, so should his praise be. He fills us with good; let us be also filled with gratitude. This would

leave no room for murmuring or backbiting; therefore, may we well join with holy David in this sacred wish.

Verse 9. *Cast me not off in the time of old age.* David was not tired of his Master, and his only fear was lest his Master should be tired of him. The Amalekite in the Bible history left his Egyptian servant to famish when he grew old and sick, but not so the Lord of saints; even to hoar hairs he bears and carries us. Alas for us, if we were abandoned by our God, as many a courtier has been by his prince! Old age robs us of personal beauty, and deprives us of strength for active service; but it does not lower us in the love and favour of God. An ungrateful country leaves its worn out defenders to starve upon a scanty pittance, but the pensioners of heaven are satisfied with good things. Forsake me not when my strength faileth. Bear with me, and endure my infirmities. To be forsaken of God is the worst of all conceivable ills, and if the believer can be but clear of that grievous fear, he is happy: no saintly heart need be under any apprehension upon this point.

Verse 10. *For mine enemies speak against me.* Dogs howl over a dying lion. When David's arm was able to chastise his foes, they were yet impudent enough to slander him, and he fears that now they will take fresh license in the hour of his weakness. The text most properly means that his enemies had said that God would forsake him; and, therefore, he is the more earnest that the Lord's faithful dealings may give them the lie. And they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together. The psalmist had enemies, and these were most malicious; seeking his utter destruction, they were very persevering, and staid long upon the watch; to this they added cunning, for they lay in ambush to surprise him, and take him at a disadvantage; and all this they did with the utmost unanimity and deliberation, neither spoiling their design by want of prudence, nor marring its accomplishment by a lack of unity. The Lord our God is our only and all sufficient resort from every form of persecution.

Verse 11. *Saying, God hath forsaken him.* O bitter taunt! There is no worse arrow in all the quivers of hell. Our Lord felt this barbed shaft, and it is no marvel if his disciples feel the same. Were this exclamation the truth, it were indeed an ill day for us; but, glory be to God, it is a barefaced lie. Persecute and take him. Let loose the dogs of persecution upon him, seize him, worry him, for there is none to deliver him. Down with him, for he has no friends. It is safe to insult him, for none will come to his rescue. O cowardly boasts of a braggart foe, how do ye wound the soul of the believer: and only when his faith cries to his Lord is he able to endure your cruelty.

Verse 12. *O God, be not far from me.* Nearness to God is our conscious security. A child in the dark is comforted by grasping its father's hand. O my God, make haste for my help. To call God ours, as having entered into covenant with us, is a mighty plea in prayer, and a great stay to our faith. The cry of "make haste" has occurred many times in this portion of the Psalms, and it was evoked by the sore pressure of affliction. Sharp sorrows soon put an end to procrastinating prayers.

Verse 13. *Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul.* It will be all this to them to see thy servant preserved; their envy and malice, when disappointed, will fill them with life consuming bitterness. The defeat of their plans shall nonplus them, they shall be confounded as they enquire the reason for their overthrow; the men they seek to destroy seem so weak, and their cause so contemptible, that they will be filled with amazement as they see them not only survive all opposition, but even surmount it. How confounded must Pharaoh have been when Israel multiplied, despite his endeavours to exterminate the race; and how consumed with rage must the Scribes and Pharisees have become when they saw the gospel spreading from land to land by the very means which they used for its destruction. Let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. He would have their shame made visible to all eyes, by their wearing it in their blushes as a mantle. They would have made a laughing stock of the believer, if his God had forsaken him; therefore, let unbelief and atheism be made a public scoffing in their persons.

Verse 14. The holy faith of the persecuted saint comes to the front in these three verses. But I will hope continually. When I cannot rejoice in what I have, I will look forward to what shall be mine, and will still rejoice. Hope will live on a bare common, and sing on a branch laden down with snow. No date and no place are unsuitable for hope. Hell alone excepted, hope is a dweller in all regions. We may always hope, for we always have grounds for it: we will always hope, for it is a never failing consolation. And will yet praise thee more and more. He was not slack in thanksgiving; in fact, no man was ever more diligent in it; yet he was not content with all his former praises, but vowed to become more and more a grateful worshipper. When good things are both continual and progressive with us, we are on the right tack. We ought to be misers in going good, and our motto should be "more and more." While we do not disdain to "rest and be thankful," we cannot settle down into resting in our thankfulness. "*Superior*" cries the eagle, as he mounts towards the sun: higher and yet higher is also our aim, as we soar aloft in duty and devotion. It is our continual hope that we shall be able more and more to magnify the Lord.

Verse 15. *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day.* We are to bear testimony as experience enables us, and not withhold from others that which we have tasted and handled. The faithfulness of God in saving us, in delivering us out of the hand of our enemies, and in fulfilling his promises, is to be everywhere proclaimed by those who have proved it in their own history. How gloriously conspicuous is righteousness in the divine plan of redemption! It should be the theme of constant discourse. The devil rages against the substitutionary sacrifice, and errorists of every form make this the main point of their attack; be it ours, therefore, to love the doctrine, and to spread its glad tidings on every side, and at all times. Mouths are never so usefully employed as in recounting the righteousness of God revealed in the salvation of believers in Jesus. The preacher who should be confined to this one theme would never need seek another: it is the *medulla theologae*, the very pith and marrow of revealed truth. Has our reader been silent upon this choice subject? Let us, then, press him to tell abroad what he enjoys within: he does not well who keeps such glad tidings to himself. For I know not the numbers thereof. He knew the sweetness of it, the sureness, the glory, and the truth of it; but as to the full reckoning of its plenitude, variety, and sufficiency, he felt he could not reach to the height of the great argument. Lord, where I cannot count I will believe, and when a truth surpasses numeration I will take to admiration. When David spoke of his enemies, he said they were more in number than the hairs of his head; he had, therefore, some idea of their number, and found a figure suitable to set it out; but, in the case of the Lord's covenant mercies, he declares, "I know not the number," and does not venture upon any sort of comparison. To creatures belong number and limit, to God and his grace there is neither. We may, therefore, continue to tell out his great salvation all day long, for the theme is utterly inexhaustible.

Verse 16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord God.* Our translators give us a good sense, but not the sense in this place, which is on this wise, "I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Jehovah." He would enter into those deeds by admiring study, and then, wherever he went, he would continue to rehearse them. He should ever be a welcome guest who can tell us of the mighty acts of the Lord, and help us to put our trust in him. The authorised version may be used by us as a resolve in all our exertions and endeavours. In our own strength we must fail; but, when we hear the voice which saith, "Go in this thy might," we may advance without fear. Though hell itself were in the way, the believer would pursue the path of duty, crying: I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy *righteousness, even of thine only*. Man's righteousness is not fit to be mentioned—filthy rags are best hidden; neither is there any righteousness under heaven, or in heaven, comparable to the divine.

As God himself fills all space, and is, therefore, the only God, leaving no room for another, so God's righteousness, in Christ Jesus, fills the believer's soul, and he counts all other things but dross and dung "that he may win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith." What would be the use of speaking upon any other righteousness to a dying man? and all are dying men. Let those who will cry up man's natural innocence, the dignity of the race, the purity of philosophers, the loveliness of untutored savages, the power of sacraments, and the infallibility of pontiffs; this is the true believer's immovable resolve: "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." For ever dedicated to thee, my Lord, be this poor, unworthy tongue, whose glory it shall be to glorify thee.

Verse 17. *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.* It was comfortable to the psalmist to remember that from his earliest days he had been the Lord's disciple. None are too young to be taught of God, and they make the most proficient scholars who begin betimes. And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. He had learned to tell what he knew, he was a pupil teacher; he continued still learning and declaring, and did not renounce his first master; this, also, was his comfort, but it is one which those who have been seduced from the school of the gospel, into the various colleges of philosophy and scepticism, will not be able to enjoy. A sacred conservatism is much needed in these days, when men are giving up old lights for new. We mean both to learn and to teach the wonders of redeeming love, till we can discover something nobler or more soul satisfying; for this reason we hope that our gray heads will be found in the same road as we have trodden, even from our beardless youth.

Verse 18. *Now also when I am old and grey headed, O God, forsake me not.* There is something touching in the sight of hair whitened with the snows of many a winter: the old and faithful soldier receives consideration from his king, the venerable servant is beloved by his master. When our infirmities multiply, we may, with confidence, expect enlarged privileges in the world of grace, to make up for our narrowing range in the field of nature. Nothing shall make God forsake those who have not forsaken him. Our fear is lest he should do so; but his promise kisses that fear into silence. Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation. He desired to continue his testimony and complete it; he had respect to the young men and little children about him, and knowing the vast importance of training them in the fear of God, he longed to make them all acquainted with the power of God to support his people, that they also might be led to walk by faith. He had leaned on the almighty arm, and could speak experimentally of its all sufficiency, and longed to do so ere life came to a

close. And thy power to every one that is to come. He would leave a record for unborn ages to read. He thought the Lord's power to be so worthy of praise, that he would make the ages ring with it till time should be no more. For this cause believers live, and they should take care to labour zealously for the accomplishment of this their most proper and necessary work. Blessed are they who begin in youth to proclaim the name of the Lord, and cease not until their last hour brings their last word for their divine Master.

Verse 19. *Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high.* Very sublime, unsearchable, exalted, and glorious is the holy character of God, and his way of making men righteous. His plan of righteousness uplifts men from the gates of hell to the mansions of heaven. It is a high doctrine gospel, gives a high experience, leads to high practice, and ends in high felicity. Who hast done great things. The exploits of others are mere child's play compared with thine, and are not worthy to be mentioned in the same age. Creation, providence, redemption, are all unique, and nothing can compare with them. O God, who is like unto thee. As thy works are so transcendent, so art thou. Thou art without compeer, or even second, and such are thy works, and such, especially, thy plan of justifying sinners by the righteousness which thou hast provided. Adoration is a fit frame of mind for the believer. When he draws near to God, he enters into a region where everything is surpassingly sublime; miracles of love abound on every hand, and marvels of mingled justice and grace. A traveller among the high Alps often feels overwhelmed with awe, amid their amazing sublimities; much more is this the case when we survey the heights and depths of the mercy and holiness of the Lord. O God, who is like unto thee.

Verse 20. *Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again.* Here is faith's inference from the infinite greatness of the Lord. He has been strong to smite; he will be also strong to save. He has shown me many heavy and severe trials, and he will also show me many and precious mercies. He has almost killed me, he will speedily revive me; and though I have been almost dead and buried, he will give me a resurrection, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth. However low the Lord may permit us to sink, he will fix a limit to the descent, and in due time will bring us up again. Even when we are laid low in the tomb, the mercy is that we can go no lower, but shall retrace our steps and mount to better lands; and all this, because the Lord is ever mighty to save. A little God would fail us, but not Jehovah the Omnipotent. It is safe to lean on him, since he bears up the pillars both of heaven and earth.

Verse 21. *Thou shalt increase my greatness.* As a king, David grew in influence and power. God did great things for him, and by him, and this is all

the greatness believers want. May we have faith in God, such as these words evince. And comfort me on every side. As we were surrounded with afflictions, so shall we be environed with consolations. From above, and from all around, light shall come to dispel our former gloom; the change shall be great, indeed, when the Lord returns to comfort us. Here is the final vow of praise.

Verse 22. *I will also praise thee with the psaltery.* Love so amazing calls for sweetest praise. David would give his best music, both vocal and instrumental, to the Best of Masters. His harp should not be silent, nor his voice. Even thy truth, O my God. This is ever a most enchanting attribute—viz., the truth or faithfulness of our covenant God. On this we rest, and from it we draw streams of richest consolation. His promises are sure, his love unalterable, his veracity indisputable. What saint will not praise him as he remembers this? Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. Here is a new name, and, as it were, a new song. The Holy One of Israel is at once a lofty and an endearing name, full of teaching. Let us resolve, by all means within our power, to honour him. Here is the final vow of praise.

Verse 23. *My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee.* It shall be no weariness to me to praise thee. It shall be a delightful recreation, a solace, a joy. The essence of song lies in the holy joy of the singer. And my soul, which thou hast redeemed. Soul singing is the soul of singing. Till men are redeemed, they are like instruments out of tune; but when once the precious blood has set them at liberty, then are they fitted to magnify the Lord who bought them. Our being bought with a price is a more than sufficient reason for our dedicating ourselves to the earnest worship of God our Saviour. Here is the final vow of praise.

Verse 24. *My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long.* I will talk to myself, and to thee, my God, and to my fellow men: my theme shall be thy way of justifying sinners, the glorious display of thy righteousness and grace in thy dear Son; and this most fresh and never to be exhausted subject shall be ever with me, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Others talk of their beloveds, and they shall be made to hear of mine. I will become an incessant talker, while this matter lies on my heart, for in all company this subject will be in season. For they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my *hurt*. As in many other Psalms, the concluding stanzas speak of that as an accomplished fact, which was only requested in former verses. Faith believes that she has her request, and she has it. She is the substance of things hoped for—a substance so real and tangible, that it sets the glad soul singing. Already sin, Satan, and the world are vanquished, and the victory is ours.

"Sin, Satan, Death appear
 To harass and appal:
 Yet since the gracious Lord is near,
 Backward they go, and fall."
 "We meet them face to face,
 Through Jesus' conquest blest;
 March in the triumph of his grace,
 Right onward to our rest."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. This Psalm, which has no title in the Hebrew, in the LXX has the title, *By David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first made prisoners*. If any authority be allowed to this title, we must suppose that this was a Psalm written by David, which was used, as particularly adapted to the circumstances of their condition, by the Rechabites, who were descended from Jonadab (Jeremiah 35), and the Jews, who were taken by the Chaldeans as captives to Babylon. However this may be, it seems probable that David was the author of this Psalm, and that he wrote it in his extreme age, and but a little while before he died. The line which follows the next Psalm, and closes the second book, perhaps has a reference to this fact. Some of the Fathers interpret the Psalm mystically of the church in her old age, and her trials at the end of the world. *"Plain Commentary."*

Whole Psalm. The Psalm, I am aware, is anonymous, and is, therefore, by many recent critics referred to some later writer; but I am satisfied that Venema and Hengstenberg have adduced sufficient reasons for retaining the opinion of Calvin and the older expositors, that it is from David's pen, and is the plaintive song of his old age. It shows us the soul of the aged saint, darkened by the remembrance of his great transgression, and by the swarms of sorrows with which that sin filled all his later years. But he finds comfort in reverting to the happy days of his childhood, and especially to the irrevocable trust which he was then enabled to repose in God. The thoughts and feelings expressed remind one of those which invest with such a solemn, tender interest the Second Epistle to Timothy, which embalms the dying thoughts of the great apostle. Like Paul, David takes a retrospect of the Lord's dealings with him from the beginning; and, in effect, declares, with the dying apostle: "I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2Ti 1:12. Only, there is this notable difference between the two, that while Paul gathered confirmation of his faith from the experience of a thirty years' walk with his Lord, David's

experience stretched over more than twice so many years; for it began with his childhood. *William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm. It will be asked how Christ could use such verses as Ps 71:9,18, since these look forward apparently to the frailty of age. The reply to this felt difficulty is, these expressions are used by him in sympathy with his members, and in his own case denote the state equivalent to age. *His* old age was, ere he reached three and thirty years, as Joh 8:57 is supposed to imply: for "Worn out men live fast." Barclay seems to give the right sense in the following lines:—

"Grown old and weak, with pain and grief,
Before his years were half complete."

Besides, the words signify, "Forsake me not from this time onward, even were I to live to grey hairs." This is a view that conveys precious consolation to aged ones, who might be ready to say that Christ could not altogether enter into their feelings, having never experienced the failing weakness of age, the debility, the decay, the bodily infirmities so trying to the spirit. But this Psalm shows us, that in effect he did pass through that stage of our sojourning, worn out and wasted in bodily frame and feeling, by living so much in so short a time. The aged members of his church may find his sweet sympathy breathed out in Isa 46:3-4; and, here they may almost see him learning the lesson in a human way, as he bends under the weight of our frailties. For this reason, among others, this Psalm was specially prized by Robert Blair, one of our godly forefathers. He used to call it "*His Psalm.*" *Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.* As if he should say: O Lord, permit not those who put their trust in thee to be confounded, and to be held up as a laughing stock. I have placed all my hope in thee, and thou art that God who, for the sake of thy goodness and truth, hast never deserted those who hope in thee. If thou shalt suffer me to be confounded, the enemies to triumph, and my hope to be placed in thee in vain, certainly this shame shall fall upon thine own name... Let us, therefore, learn from this place to be more anxious about what may happen to the name of God through us, than to our own; whether it be through us in doing, or in us in suffering. The prophet is fearful lest he should be confounded on account of his hope placed in God, although it was not in his own power, nor could he prevent it... It is necessary, first, that we should be of those who place their hope in God, then it is necessary that this piety of our hearts should not be confined to ourselves only, but should be known to all those who come in contact with us, even our opponents and enemies; else it is not possible for us to dread this kind of confusion feared by the prophet, when nobody knows that our hope is placed in God. No artist suffers confusion, if he

has never shared the good opinion of his fellow men. To no sick man can it be said, Physician, heal thyself, if his reputation for medical skill has never stood high. So of those, it cannot be said, They hoped in God, let him save them if he will have them, of whom it was never remarked that they placed any hope in God. His solicitude, therefore, belongs only to those whose hope is in the Lord; upon others it cannot fall. *Musculus*.

Verse 1. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.* It is a good beginning, and a recommendation to our prayers, when we can declare our faith and trust to be in God alone. *Edward Walter, in "A Help to the profitable reading of the Psalms."* 1854.

Verse 2. *Deliver me in thy righteousness. Incline thine ear.* Let my deliverance be the fruit of thy promise, and of my prayer; and so it will be much the sweeter. *John Trapp*.

Verse 2. *In thy righteousness.* The *righteousness* of God is in this place that virtue by which he makes good his promises—revenges injuries and rewards piety—which is elsewhere called his *veracity*. Upon this perfection David here calls, not because he was innocent before God, but because God had bound himself to him by promises, as if he were, in the presence of the men who were persecuting him, both innocent and righteous; and, therefore, worthy of being delivered from this last terrible calamity into which he has fallen through Absalom, since God had thus acted towards him. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 2. *Thy righteousness.* Not *mine*. He knew that he was being chastened for his sin against Uriah. He pleads no merit of his own. *Simon de Muis*.

Verse 2. *Incline thine ear.* And since I am so wounded that I am not able to send up my cry to thee, the Most High, do thou *incline thine ear to me* as I lie half dead, left by the robbers who have wounded and spoiled me. *Gerhohus*.

Verse 3. *Whereunto I may continually resort.* Would he then want to repair to him always? Our necessities, our work, our danger require it constantly. We are commanded to pray without ceasing. And if, while we acknowledge and feel the obligation, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, we shall not lament it. Loving him, as well as depending upon him, we shall find it good to draw near to God, and delight ourselves in the Almighty; and we shall never find him, when we want him, inaccessible. There is a way to our *strong habitation*, and we know the way. There is a door, and we have the key. No sentinel keeps us back; the dwelling is our *own*: and who dares to forbid us all its accommodations and contents? Kings, however disposed, cannot be always

approachable. Owing to the multitude of their claims, and the limitation of their powers, and the importance of keeping up a sense of their dignity, they are only accessible at certain times, and with stately formalities. But the King of kings allows us to come boldly to the throne of grace; and enjoins us in every thing, by prayer and supplication, to make our requests unto him. We cannot be too importunate, or by our continual coming weary him. *William Jay.*

Verse 3. *Thou hast given commandment to save me.* Let us observe his words; he ascribes to the word and command of God a saving virtue, which no power on earth, none in hell, nor death itself can resist. Only, he says, give the command that I may be saved, and, in a moment, I shall be wholly saved.

Musculus.

Verse 4. *The cruel man* is literally the leavened man, leavened with hatred of truth and enmity to God; and, therefore, a violent opposer of his people. So, in 1Co 5:8 we are cautioned against the "leaven of malice and wickedness, "which, in accordance with the figure, may pervade the whole natural character of an ungodly man, his faculties and affections. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 5. *Thou art my hope.* Not only is our hope *in* him but he himself is our hope. "God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, "saith St. Paul, "our hope." 1Ti 1:1. Yea, there is a deeper, nearer depth: "The glory of the mystery of the gospel, "says St. Paul, "is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ himself is our hope, as the only Author of it; Christ is our hope, as the End of it; and Christ, who is the Beginning and the End, is our hope also by the way; for he saith, "Christ *in* you, the hope of glory." Col 1:27. Each yearning of our hearts, each ray of hope which gleams upon us, each touch which thrills us, each voice which whispers in our inmost hearts of the good things laid up in store for us, if we will love God, are the light of Christ enlightening us, the touch of Christ raising us to new life, the voice of Christ, "Whoso cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out; "it is "Christ in us, the hope of glory, "drawing us up by his spirit who dwelleth in us, unto himself our hope. For our hope is not the glory of heaven, not joy, not peace, not rest from labour, not fulness of our wishes, nor sweet contentment of the whole soul, nor understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, not only a torrent of delight; it is "Christ our God, ""the hope of glory." Nothing which God *could* create is what we hope for; nothing which God could give us out of himself, no created glory, or bliss, or beauty, or majesty, or riches. What we hope for is our Redeeming God himself, his love, his bliss, the joy of our Lord himself who hath so loved us, to be our joy and our portion for ever. *E. B. Pusey.*

Verse 5. *From my youth.* The remembering and acknowledging of God in youth will be great satisfaction in old age. O what joy will reflection upon youthful piety yield! Even Seneca, a heathen, could say: "Youth well spent is the greatest comfort of old age." David could confidently plead with God for deliverance out of the hand of the wicked: *For, saith he, thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth.* "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Ps 71:9,17-18). An ingenuous master will not turn off a superannuated servant. When the proconsul bade Polycarp deny Christ and swear by the emperor, he answered: "I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once injured me, and shall I now deny him?" Jacob could say: "God hath fed me all my life long unto this day; he hath been kind to me all my days, and I trust he will look to me even in the end; and shall I now turn my back on him?" Whither can I go to mend myself for a master? "Thou only hast the words of eternal life." He that hath been the stay of my youth, will be the staff of my age. I dare venture my soul upon his promise who hath hitherto maintained me by his providence. "In the days of my youth, the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, his candle did shine upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness; "and, though now "the sun, and the light, and moon and stars be darkened, "in this my natural horizon, yet "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" "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." I have abundant experience of his grace and presence. O the days of mercy I have had many years ago! A good man said: "I got that in my youth, which I would not for all the world have to get now." *Oliver Heywood.* 1629-1702.

Verse 6. He did not, like most men, recognise the hand of God only when, in an extraordinary manner, it became manifest in life; but his eye of faith regards the ordinary works of God as miracles. The translation from his mother's womb to the light of day is to him an object of praise. (Ps 22:9-10.) And, really, is not the preservation of the embryo, in its narrow confines, a miracle? Is it not a pledge, simultaneously with man's growing into being, of our after experience in life, that we have a God "who bringeth us out of death to light?" (Ps 68:20.) Is not the reason of our finding so little of praise, to be sought in our having no eyes for his daily miracles? The psalmist *has* eyes for the daily miracles of the Lord; and, therefore, his mouth is daily full of the praise of the Lord. *Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 6. Blessed be God that ever I was born. *Halyburton.*

Verse 6. This verse corresponds with the preceding, except that David proceeds farther. He not only celebrates the goodness of God, which he had experienced

from his childhood, but, also, those proofs of it which he had received previous to his birth. An almost similar confession is contained in Ps 22:9-10, by which is magnified the wonderful power and inestimable goodness of God in the generation of men, the way and manner of which would be altogether incredible, were it not a fact with which we are quite familiar. If we are astonished at that part of the history of the flood, in which Moses declares (Ge 8:13), that Noah and his household lived ten months amidst the offensive nuisance produced by so many living creatures, when he could not draw the breath of life, have we not equal reason to marvel that the infant, shut up within its mother's womb, can live in such a condition as would suffocate the strongest man in half an hour? But we thus see how little account we make of the miracles which God works, in consequence of our familiarity with them. The Spirit, therefore, justly rebukes this ingratitude, by commending to our consideration this memorable instance of the grace of God which is exhibited in our birth and generation. When we are born into the world, although the mother do her office, and the midwife may be present with her, and many others may lend their help, yet did not God, putting, so to speak, his hand under us, receive us into his bosom, what would become of us? and what hope would there be in the continuance of our life? Yea, rather, were it not for this, our very birth would be an entrance into a thousand deaths. God, therefore, is with the highest propriety said *to take us out of our mother's bowels*. To this corresponds the concluding part of the verse, *My praise shall be continually of thee* by which the psalmist means that he has been furnished with matter for praising God without intermission. *John Calvin.*

Verse 8. *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise. Let my mouth,* I say, *be so filled with thy praise,* that from the bottom of my heart, even to the lips of my mouth, the plenitude of thy grace, O God, infused into my heart, and diffused over my lips, may loyally magnify thee; so shall I not be found like that people, of whom thou dost say: "This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Isa 29:13. *Gerhohus.*

Verse 9. *Cast me not off in the time of old age,* etc.; for now I have most need of thee. The white rose is soonest cankered; so is the white head soonest corrupted. *Saepe nigrum cor est, caput album.* Satan maketh a prey of old Solomon, Asa, Lot, others; whom when young he could never so deceive. The heathens, therefore, well warn us to look well to our old age, as that which cometh not alone, but is infested with many diseases, both of body and mind. This David knew, and, therefore, prayed as here: *Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.* He is a rare old man that can

say with Caleb (Jos 14:10,14), "Behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, "etc. *John Trapp*.

Verse 9. *Cast me not off in the time of old age*, etc. It is not unnatural or improper for a man who sees old age coming upon him to pray for special grace, and special strength, to enable him to meet what he cannot ward off, and what he cannot but dread; for who can look upon the infirmities of old age, as coming upon himself, but with sad and pensive feelings? Who would wish *to be* an old man? Who can look upon a man tottering with years, and broken down with infirmities; a man whose sight and hearing are gone; a man who is alone amidst the graves of all the friends that he had in early life; a man who is a burden to himself, and to the world; a man who has reached the "Last scene of all that ends the strange, eventful history"—that scene of

"Second childishness, and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything; "
that scene when one can say—

"I have lived long enough; my way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; "

Who can think of all this and not pray for special grace for himself, should he live to see those days of infirmity and weakness? And who, in view of such infirmities, can fail to see the propriety of seeking the favour of God in early years? *Albert Barnes*.

Verse 9. *Cast me not off in the time of old age*, etc. David, mindful of the noble actions which, through God's assistance, he had achieved in his youth, beseeches him not to desert his servant, when persecuted by a rebellious son, in his old age. The weakness and temptations peculiar to that time of life, render this a petition necessary for all to make, before we are overtaken by it. The church findeth but too much occasion to make the same, now that she is sunk in years; when faith languisheth, charity waxeth cold, and the infirmities of a spiritual old age are coming fast upon her. *George Horne*.

Verse 9. *Cast me not off*. God had cast of his predecessor, Saul, and things looked as if he now meant to cast *him* off. His people also seemed disposed, by their joining with Absalom, to cast him off: hence the force of the petition. *Andrew Fuller*.

Verse 9. *Forsake me not when my strength faileth.* Neither will Christ forsake his church in the latter days of its age, when the weakness of faith becomes more prevalent. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 9. *Forsake me not when my strength faileth.* June 28. This day I enter on my eighty-sixth year. I now find I grow old:

1. My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light.
2. My strength is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since.
3. My memory of names, whether of persons, or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them.

What I should be afraid of, is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; But thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God. *John Wesley.*

Verse 11. All kinds of distresses are obnoxious to the worst of misjudgings from malevolent minds. The sufferings of Christ produced this censorious scoff, "Let God deliver him, if he will have him." (Mt 27:43.) David's trouble easily induced his adversaries to conclude that *God had forsaken him, and that there was none to deliver him.* But in troubles of this nature, where especially there are frightful complainings against themselves, men are more easily drawn out to be peremptory in their uncharitable judgments concerning them, because the trouble itself is somewhat rare, and apt to beget hideous impressions, and, withal, the vent which the afflicted parties give by their bemoaning of their estate, in hope to ease themselves thereby, is but taken as a testimony against themselves and the undoubted echoes of their real feelings. *Richard Gilpin* (1625-1700), in "*Daemonologia Sacra; or, a Treatise of Satan's Temptations.*" (In Nichols Series of Puritan Divines.)

Verse 13. *Let them be confounded,* etc. Let them, who were so wicked that they never hoped anything good of me, *be confounded* by the evidence of the blessings which manifestly fall upon me; and, *let them fail,* the grounds of their abuse being taken away, as a fire fails when the fagots are removed. *Gerhohus.*

Verse 13. *Let them be confounded,* etc. By the law of retaliation (*talio*), he might have said: "Be thou an adversary to their souls, and seek their hurt."

Nothing of this is hinted at: his only desire is that they may be confounded and fail, that they may be covered with disgrace and shame. He seeks nothing beyond the frustration of their attempts, that they may begin to be ashamed, and have no cause for boasting that they came off victorious. *Musculus*.

Verse 13. Shame ariseth from utter disappointments. If hope deferred causeth shame, then much more hope destroyed. When a man sees his hopes quite cut off, so that he can no way reach the thing he looked for, shame takes hold of him strongly. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 13. *That are adversaries to my soul.* That hated him with a diabolical hatred, as the devil hates the souls of men, and who has his name *Satan* from the word here used. All wicked men are Satans, full of enmity against God and all good men; and such were David's enemies, spiteful and malicious, and nothing would satisfy them but his life. *John Gill*.

Verse 14. *But I will hope continually.* Behold, O Lord, I have prayed to thee, and I am comforted. Hope has thus taught me. I am glad; because in thee have I trusted, I shall never be confounded. Sorrow returned, equipped with vast array, fortified at all points with swords and spears, and with great clamour beleaguered my city. The din of his horsemen terrified me; and, standing at the gates, he commanded silence, and thus loudly spake: "Behold the man who trusted in God; who said, I shall not be confounded for ever; who took hope for a consoler." And, when he observed me blushing at these words, he drew nearer, and said: "Where are the promises which were thy trust? Where the consolation? Where the deliverance? What have thy tears availed thee? What help have thy prayers brought thee from heaven? Thou hast cried, and no one has answered; thou hast wept, and who have been moved with pity for thee? Thou hast called upon thy God, and he has been silent. Thou hast prayed to him, and he has hidden himself from thee: there has come no voice nor sound... Arise, therefore, and flee for help to man, that he may free thee from thy prison." With these words, there arose such a din of arms in the camp—such a clamour of men and sounding of trumpets—that I could hardly keep up heart; and, unless my beloved Hope had brought me help, Sorrow would have seized and carried me off in chains to his own place. Comes Hope to me, gleaming in divine brightness, and, smiling, said: "O soldier of Christ, how is thy heart? What is this struggle in thy mind?" At these words, I began to blush. "Fear not," she said, "Evil shall not capture thee; thou shalt never perish. Behold, I am with thee, to deliver thee. Dost thou not know what is written (Psalm 12), 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' As one of the foolish women hath this Sorrow spoken; never shall he be able to persuade thee that there is no

God, or that God does not exercise a providence over all." *Girolamo Savonarola*. 1452-1498.

Verse 14. *And I will always hope, and add to (literally, add upon, accumulate, increase) all thy praise.* To all thy praise which I have uttered hitherto, I will continue still to add. *Joseph Addison Alexander*.

Verse 14. *I will expect continually.* But what did he *expect*? That for which he prayed in the ninth verse—the preservation of his prosperity, the presence and the help of God to the very end of life. Wherefore, he adds, *continually*, in perpetuity, in the time of old age,—*usque ad mortem*. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 14. As there is no end to the lovingkindness of Jehovah, there should be none to our gratitude. The hope of a Christian enableth him to be thankful, even in the dark season of affliction. *Mrs. Thomson*.

Verse 15. The *righteousness* of God, here mentioned, includes not only the rectitude of his nature, and the equity of his proceedings, but likewise that everlasting righteousness which his Son hath brought in for our justification. God's *righteousness* and *salvation* are here joined together; and, therefore, let no man think to put them asunder, or expect salvation without righteousness. *Mrs. Thomson*.

Verse 15. *I know not the numbers.* David began his arithmetic, in Ps 71:14, with *addition*: "I will yet praise thee more and more; "but he is fairly beaten in this first rule of sacred mathematics. His calculation fails him, the mere enumeration of the Lord's mercies overwhelms his mind; he owns his inadequacy. Reckon either by time, by place, or by value, and the salvation of God baffles all powers of estimation. *C. H. S.*

Verse 16. *I will go.* The word *to go* must be here taken in the sense of going to battle against enemies. This, he says, he will do, trusting not to his own, but to the power of the Lord, his heart fired with the memory of the righteousness of God. So is it in another place: "Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of our God." *Musculus*.

Verse 16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord.* The minister goes thus by realising this strength and depending on it. In this strength he goes into the path of communion with God, into the fields of conflict, in the privacy of domestic life, and in all the walks of active life. His boast is in the *righteousness* of Christ; and he *mentions* this to God as the ground of his confidence, to himself as the spring of his comforts, to others as the hope of salvation. *Substance of*

Sermon by James Sherman. The first preached by him after his settlement at Surrey Chapel. September 4th, 1836.

Verse 16. *The strength of the Lord God.* The power of God is expressed in the plural number, to show the greatness of it, which is as a garrison to the believer. *John Gill.*

Verse 16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord.* The phrase, *to go in*, or, *with the strengths of God*, does not teach us that he *would go* by means of them, by their help and assistance, as many have thought, *first*, because the word is used to signify the illustrious and mighty deeds of God; *secondly*, because it denotes the *subject* of praise; but *to go with the strength of Jehovah*, as the rendering ought to be... is *to go* as if girt with his former deeds of power—girt with them as if with the *material* of praise. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 17. *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.* Whence was it that David understood "more than the ancients"? (Ps 119:100.) He had a Father to teach him; God was his instructor. Many a child of God complains of ignorance and dulness; remember this, thy Father will be thy tutor; he hath promised to give "his Spirit to lead thee into all truth" (Joh 6:13); and God doth not only inform the understanding, but inclines the will; he doth not only teach us what we should do, but enables us to do it. (Eze 36:27); "I will cause you to walk in my statutes." What a glorious privilege is this, to have the star of the word pointing us to Christ, and the loadstone of the Spirit drawing! *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 17. *Thou hast taught me from my youth.* If you ask me what were the ways by which David was taught, I might ask you what they were not... God taught him by his shepherd's crook; and by the rod and sceptre of a king he taught him. He taught him by the shouts of the multitude—"Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands; "and he taught him just as much, if not more, by the contempt he met in the court of the Philistines. He taught him by the arrows of Jonathan, levelled in friendship; and he taught him by the javelin of Saul levelled at his life. He taught him by the faithlessness of Abiathar, and the faithlessness of even his faithful Joab; and he taught him by the faithfulness of Abishai, and the faithfulness of Mephibosheth; and, let me add too, by the rebellion of Absalom, and the selfishness of Adonijah; they were all means, by which the Lord taught this his servant. And be assured, you that are under his teaching, there is nothing in your lives, but he can teach you by it: by comforts and crosses, by your wounds and your healings, by that which he gives and by what he takes away. He unteaches his child, that he may teach him; shows him his folly, that he may make him wise; strips him of his vain confidence, that he may give him strength; makes him know that he is nothing, that he may show

him that he has all in the Lord—in Jesus his Beloved one. *James Harrington Evans.*

Verse 17. *Thou hast taught me from my youth.* Youth needs a teacher that it may embrace virtue. Seneca says, *Virtue is a hard thing to youth, it needs a ruler and guide; vices are acquired without a master.* How prone he was in his boyhood and youth to vices, we may see in Psalm 25. "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." Jerome, in his Epistle to Nepotianus, says: "As fire in green wood is stifled, so wisdom in youth, impeded by temptations and concupiscence, does not unfold its brightness, unless by hard work, and steady application and prayer, the incentives of youth are inwardly repelled." Hence it is that almost all nations have provided good and wise teachers of the young. Among the Spartans, one was chosen from the Magistrates and Senators to be *paidonomos*, rector of the boys... At Athens there were twelve men named *Sophronistae*, elected by the suffrages of all the tribes, to moderate the manners of youth... God is the teacher of his servants. Plato says, *oiden einai yeioteron*, that there is nothing more divine than the education of children. Of God the Father, or of the whole Trinity, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, says, 1Sa 2:3: "The Lord is a God of knowledge; "(*Scientiarum*, Vulg.) that is, as the Chaldee has it, he knows all things... Socrates says, that he is *the mind of the universe*. Without him, therefore, all are demented; but with him, and through him, in a single moment they become wise. Philo, in his treatise of the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, says, Masters cannot fill the mind of their pupils as if they were pouring water into a vessel; but when God, the fountain of wisdom, communicates knowledge to the human race, he does it without delay, in the twinkling of an eye... *His anointing shall teach you of all things.* 1Jo 2:27. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 17. *From my youth.* Is it such "a crown of glory" to be found old in the ways of righteousness? Do you then begin to be godly betimes; that, if you live in this world you may have this crown set upon your heads when you are ancient; for is it not better for you to be plants of God's house, than weeds upon the dunghill? Those that are wicked are but as weeds upon a dunghill, but you that are godly are as plants in God's own orchard. In Ro 16:7, we find that *Andronicus and Junia* are commended because they were in Christ before Paul: "They were in Christ before me." It is an honourable thing to be in Christ before others; this is honourable when you are young; and then going on in the ways of godliness all your young time, and so in your middle age, and till you come to be old. *Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 17. *Wondrous works.* Observe that he calls the blessing of divine aid so often received in affliction, *wondrous works*. By this expression, he shows us,

with what grievous perils he was tossed; then how he had been snatched from them by the hand of God, contrary to the expectation of all men. Therefore, God is wonderful among his saints. To this end the adversities of the saints tend, that they may show forth in them the wonderful works of God. *Musculus*.

Verses 17-18. The integrity of our hearts and ways, in former walkings after God, and service for God, may by faith in Christ, as in all our justification, be pleaded. See also Isa 38:3 and Ps 119:10. The Lord himself maketh it to himself a motive to show mercy to his people (Isa 63:8 Jer 2:2); only we must use this plea more rarely and sparingly, in a self denying way, in faith in Christ's righteousness, as made ours. *Thomas Cobbet*.

Verse 18. *Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not.* God exalts pardoning grace to some more, and sanctifying grace to others; he is the God of grace. Those ships that have been in long voyages at sea, three or four years out, have gone through hot climates and cold, passed the equinoctial line again and again, and have run through many a difficulty, and great storms, and yet have been kept alive at sea, as they speak, when these shall meet one another at sea near the haven, how will they congratulate? And old disciples should do so, that God hath kept grace alive in their souls. And I would ask you how many thousand ships have you seen cast away before your eyes? How many that have made "shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, "as the apostle speaks? This and that profession, that has run into this and that error damnable, or false opinions and teaching, though all of smaller moment; others that have struck upon quicksands of worldly preferments, and many split upon rocks, and yet you have been kept. This should move you to bless this your God, the God of grace, the more. Come, let me knock at your hearts; are none of you old professors, like old hollow oaks, who stand in the woods among professors still, and keep their stand of profession still, and go to ordinances, etc.; but the "rain they drink in, "as the apostle's word is, serves to no other end but to rot them. "These are nigh unto cursing." Or, have you green fruits still growing on you, as quickly and lively affections to God and Christ, and faith and love, as at the first, and more abounding? O bless God you are so near the haven, and lift up your hearts, your redemption draws near; and, withal, raise your confidence, that that God of grace, who hath called you into his eternal glory, will keep you for it, and possess you of it shortly. *Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 18. *Forsake me not; until, etc.* Apostasy in old age is fearful. He that climbs almost to the top of a tower, then slipping back, hath the greater fall. The patient almost recovered, is more deadly sick by a relapse. There were stars struck from heaven by the dragon's tail (Re 12:4); they had better never have perched so high. The place where the Israelites fell into that great folly

with the daughters of Moab, was in the plain, within the prospect of the Holy Land; they saw their inheritance, and yet fell short of it. So wretched is it for old men to fall near to their very entry of heaven, as old Eli in his indulgence (1 Samuel 2); old Judah in his incest (Genesis 38); old David with Bathsheba; old Asa trusting in the physicians more than in God (2Ch 16:12); and old Solomon built the high places. Some have walked like cherubs in the midst of the stones of fire, yet have been cast as profane out of God's mountain. Eze 28:14,16. Thus the seaman passeth all the main, and suffers wreck in the haven. The corn often promises a plenteous harvest in the blade, and shrinks in the ear. You have seen trees loaden with blossoms, yet, in the season of expectation, no fruit. A comedy that holds well many scenes, and goes lamely off in the last act, finds no applause. Remember Lot's wife (Lu 17:32): think on that pillar of salt, that it may season thee. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 18. *Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation*, etc. Are there better preachers of the works of God to be found than hoary parents in the circle of their children; or grandparents in that of their grandchildren? *Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 18.

With years oppressed, with sorrows worn,
Dejected, harassed, sick, forlorn,
To thee, O God, I pray;
To thee my withered hands arise,
To thee I lift these failing eyes:
Oh, cast me not away!

Thy mercy heard my infant prayer;
Thy love, with all a mother's care,
Sustained my childish days:
Thy goodness watched my ripening youth,
And formed my heart to love thy truth,
And filled my lips with praise.

O Saviour! has thy grace declined?
Can years affect the Eternal Mind,
Or time its love destroy?
A thousand ages pass thy sight,
And all their long and weary flight
Is gone like yesterday.

Then, even in age and grief, thy name
 Shall still my languid heart inflame,
 And bow my faltering knee:
 Oh, yet this bosom feels the fire,
 This trembling hand and drooping lyre,
 Have yet a strain for thee!

Yes, broken, tuneless still, O Lord,
 This voice, transported, shall record
 Thy goodness tried so long;
 Till, sinking slow, with calm decay,
 Its feeble murmurs melt away,
 Into a seraph's song.
 —*Sir Robert Grant.*

Verse 19. *O God, who is like unto thee?* Either for greatness or goodness, for power or for mercy, for justice, truth, and faithfulness; for the perfections of his nature, or the works of his hands; and to be praised, revered, and adored, as he is. *John Gill.*

Verse 19. *Who is like unto thee!* Krmk ym, *Mi camocha.* God is alone: who can resemble him? He is eternal; he can have none *before*, and there can be none *after*; for, in the infinite *unity* of *trinity*, he is that eternal, unlimited, impartible, incomprehensible, and uncompounded, ineffable Being, whose *essence* is hidden from all created intelligences, and whose *counsels* cannot be fathomed by any creature that even his own hand can form. "WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE!" will excite the wonder, amazement, praise, and adoration of angels and men to all eternity. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 20. *Thou shalt quicken me again*, etc. Here Jerome triumphs over the Jews, challenging them when this was ever verified in David, for he was never dead and quickened again; and, therefore, this must needs be expounded of him as that in Psalm 16: "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave; and to the depths of the earth,*" here, answer those words, Eph 4:9, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" Yet, this may also be applied to David, being figuratively understood, as a like speech of Hannah, 1 Samuel 2. *John Mayer.*

Verse 20. *And thou shalt bring me up*, etc. This is an allusion to men who are unhappily fallen into a deep pit of water. The meaning is, Thou shalt draw me out of the extreme danger into which I am plunged, and wherein I shall perish without thy help. *Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 21. Greatness increasing with comfort, and comfort increasing with greatness; very rarely united. *George Rogers.*

Verse 22. *With the psaltery... with the harp.* There was a typical signification in them; and upon this account they are not only rejected and condemned by the whole army of Protestant divines, as for instance, by Zuinglius, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Zepperus, Paraeus, Willet, Ainsworth, Ames, Calderwood, and Cotton; who do, with one mouth, testify against them, most of them expressly affirming that they are a part of the abrogated legal pedagogy; so that we might as well recall the incense, tapers, sacrifices, new moons, circumcision, and all the other shadows of the law into use again. But Aquinas himself also, though a Popish schoolman, pleads against them upon the same account, *quia aliquid figurabant*, and saith, the Church in his time did not use them, *ne videatur judaizare*, lest they should seem to judaize. *Samuel Mather, on The Types.*

Verse 22. *Psaltery... harp.* Suppose singing with instruments were not typical, but only an external solemnity of worship, fitted to the solace of the outward senses of children under age, such as the Israelites were in the Old Testament (Ga 4:1-3); yet now, in the grown age of the heirs of the New Testament, such external pompous solemnities are ceased, and no external worship reserved, but such as holdeth forth simplicity and gravity; nor is any voice now to be heard in the church of Christ, but such as is significant and edifying by signification (1Co 14:10-11,26), which the voice of instruments is not. *John Cotton, 1585-1652.*

Verse 22. *Holy One of Israel.* This name of God occurs in the Psalms only in two other places, Ps 71:78,41 89:18 these last two being, according to Delitzsch, older Psalms than this. In Isaiah, this name of God occurs thirty times; in Habakkuk once; in Jeremiah (who may have adopted it from Isaiah) twice (Jer 50:29 51:5). *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 23. *My lips; my soul.* Hypocrites praise God with the *lips* only; but David joins the *soul* to the lips. *William Nicholson.*

Verse 23. *Greatly.* See how the word great is repeated. Great things done, Ps 71:19; great troubles shown, Ps 71:20; greatness increased, Ps 71:21; and great rejoicing consequent thereon, in Ps 71:23. In a great God, doing great things, it is meet greatly to rejoice. *C. H. S.*

Arguments used to induce to Lord to hear, drawn,

1. From his *justice and equity*: *Deliver me in thy righteousness.*
2. From his *word and promise*: *Thou hast given commandment, etc.*
3. From his *power*: *Thou art my rock. etc.*
4. From his *relation* to him: *My God, my hope.*
5. From the *qualities* of his *adversaries*: *They were wicked, unrighteous, and cruel.*
6. From his *confidence*: *Thou art my hope.*
7. From his *gracious providence*: *By thee have I been holden up, etc.*
8. From his *thankful heart*: *My praise shall be continually, etc.*
9. He had *none to trust to* but God: *Thou art my refuge. Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1. Faith is a present act; faith is a personal act, faith deals only with God, faith knows what she is about, faith kills her fears by prayer.

Verse 2. An appeal.

1. To the power of God: *Deliver me.*
2. To the faithfulness of God: *In thy righteousness.*
3. To the providence of God: *Cause me to escape.*
4. To the condescension of God: *Incline thine ear.*
5. To the mercy of God: *Save me.*

Verse 2. *Cause me to escape.* From whom? From what? How? By what power? For what end?

Verse 3. (*first two clauses*). The believer abiding in God and continually resorting to him.

Verse 3. (*Third clause*). A command based on the divine promise, clothed with divine power, addressed to all necessary agencies, and embracing all exigencies.

Verse 4.

1. When God is for us, the wicked are against us.
2. When the wicked are against us, God is for us.

Verse 5. God the essence of hope and faith.

Verse 7. (*first clause*). may be accommodated to,

1. *The Saviour*.
2. *The Saint*. He is a *wonder* in reference to
 - (a) What he once was;
 - (b) What he now is;
 - (c) What he will hereafter be.
3. *The sinner* is "a wonder unto many;" a wonder to three worlds: to
 - (a) angels;
 - (b) saints;
 - (c) devils and lost souls.
 —*Warwell Fenn*. 1830.

Verse 7. Consider the text, with reference to *David*, to *Christ*, and to the *Christian*.

1. With reference to *David*.
 - (a) David was a wonder as a man.
 - (b) As a king.
 - (c) As a servant of God.
2. With respect to *Christ*.
 - (a) Christ was a wonder in his person.
 - (b) In his life.
 - (c) In his miracles.

- (d) In his teaching.
- (e) In his sufferings.
- (f) In his ascension and mediatorial glory.

3. With regard to the *Christian*.

- (a) The Christian is a wonder to himself.
- (b) To the world.
- (c) To wicked spirits.
- (d) To the angels in heaven.

—*John Cawood*. 1830.

Verse 8.

1. What? filled with what?—murmurings? doubts? fears? No! Praise. My own?—of men? No. *Thy praise. Thy honour.*

2. When? *All the day.*

- (a) The whole day.
- (b) Every day; a good preparation for heaven.

Verse 9. There are some peculiar circumstances of old age which render this blessing—the favour and presence of God—necessary.

1. Old age is a time of but little natural enjoyment, as Barzillai acknowledged, 2Sa 19:35.

2. It is a time of life in which the troubles of life are often known to increase.

3. Old age is a time in which the troubles of life not only increase, but become less tolerable.

4. Old age is a time which ought to command respect, and does so among dutiful children and all serious Christians: but it is often known to be attended with neglect. This is the case especially where they are poor and dependent. It has been the case where public characters have lost their youthful vivacity, and the brilliancy of their talents. *A. Fuller.*

Verse 9. There is,

1. Fear, mixed with faith.

- (a) Natural to old age.
- (b) Suggested by the usage of the world.

2. Faith mixed with fear: "Cast me not, "etc.

- (a) Old age is not a sin.
- (b) It is a crown of glory if found, etc.

Verses 11-12. Two great lies and two sweet prayers.

Verses 13-14.

- 1. What the wicked gain by opposing the righteous: Let them, etc. Ps 71:13.
- 2. What the righteous gain from being opposed by them, Ps 71:14: *But I*, etc.

Verse 14. See "Spurgeon's Sermons, "No. 998; "More and More."

Verse 15.

- 1. The determination avowed.
 - (a) To recount the instances of the divine faithfulness in his deliverances.
 - (b) To recount them publicly: *My mouth*, etc.
 - (c) Constantly: *All the day*.
- 2. The reason assigned: *For I know not*, etc. "Eternity's too short to utter all thy praise." Therefore I begin it now, and will continue it.

Verse 16.

- 1. The resolution: *I will go*.
- 2. The reservation: *Thy strength only—thy righteousness only*.

Verse 17. *O God, thou hast taught me.* None but God can teach us experimentally; and the lessons he teaches are always useful and important. He teaches all his scholars to know themselves—their depravity, poverty, and slavery. He teaches them his law—its purity, claims, and penalty. He teaches them his gospel—its fulness, freeness, and sensibility. He teaches them to know himself; as a reconciled God, as their Father and faithful friend. His teaching is

accompanied with power and authority. We may know divine teaching by its effects: it always produces humility—they sit as his feet; dependence upon him; abhorrence of sin; love to God as a teacher; obedience to the lessons taught; thirst for further attainments; and it brings us daily to Jesus. *James Smith.*

Verse 18. The peculiar testimony of pious old age, what it is based upon, to whom it should be directed, and what we may hope from it.

Verse 19. A sermon might be instructively worked out upon "the high things of God."

Verse 20.

1. The future benefit of present trials: "Hereafter," said Aneas to his shipwrecked companions. "It will delight us to think of these things."
2. The present benefit of future mercies: "Glory to thee for all the grace we have not tasted yet."

Verse 22. A choice subject for song—"thy truth, "which may mean either doctrinal truth, or the attribute of faithfulness, its manifestation in history, and in our own experience.

Verse 22-23.

1. The soul of music: Not in the instrument or the voice, but in the soul. "I will sing with the understanding also." "Making melody in the heart, "etc.
2. The music of the soul. The *soul which thou hast redeemed*. Redemption is the music of souls once lost. Their only song in heaven.

Verse 24. How to make familiar talk edifying and useful.

WORK UPON THE SEVENTY-FIRST PSALM

Hieronymi Savonarolae Ferrariensis Meditationes in Psalmos—*Miserere—In Te Domine Speravi, et Qui Regis Israel* (12mo. Leyden: 1633).

Psalm 72

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. *A Psalm for Solomon.* The best linguists affirm that this should be rendered, *of or by* Solomon. There is not sufficient ground for the rendering *for*. It is pretty certain that the title declares Solomon to be the author of the Psalm, and yet from Ps 72:20 it would seem that David uttered it in prayer before he died. With some diffidence we suggest that the spirit and matter of the Psalm are David's, but that he was too near his end to pen the words, or cast them into form: Solomon, therefore, caught his dying father's song, fashioned it in goodly verse, and, without robbing his father, made the Psalm his own. It is, we conjecture, the Prayer of David, but the Psalm of Solomon. Jesus is here, beyond all doubt, in the glory of his reign, both as he now is, and as he shall be revealed in the latter day glory.

DIVISION. We shall follow the division suggested by Alexander. "A glowing description of the reign of Messiah as righteous, Ps 72:1-7; universal, Ps 72:8-11; beneficent, Ps 72:12-14; and perpetual, Ps 72:15-17; to which are added a doxology, Ps 72:18-19; and a postscript, Ps 72:20."

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Give the king thy judgments, O God.* The right to reign was transmitted by descent from David to Solomon, but not by that means alone: Israel was a theocracy, and the kings were but the viceroys of the greater King; hence the prayer that the new king might be enthroned by divine right, and then endowed with divine wisdom. Our glorious King in Zion hath all judgment committed unto him. He rules in the name of God over all lands. He is king "Dei Gratia" as well as by right of inheritance. And thy righteousness unto the king's son. Solomon was both king and king's son; so also is our Lord. He has power and authority in himself, and also royal dignity given of his Father. He is the righteous king; in a word, he is "the Lord our righteousness." We are waiting till he shall be manifested among men as the ever righteous Judge. May the Lord hasten on his own time the long looked for day. Now wars and fightings are even in Israel itself, but soon the dispensation will change, and David, the type of Jesus warring with our enemies, shall be displaced by Solomon the prince of peace.

Verse 2. *He shall judge thy people with righteousness.* Clothed with divine authority, he shall use it on the behalf of the favoured nation, for whom he shall show himself strong, that they be not misjudged, slandered, or in any way treated maliciously. His sentence shall put their accusers to silence, and award the saints their true position as the accepted of the Lord. What a consolation to

feel that none can suffer wrong in Christ's kingdom: he sits upon the great white throne, unspotted by a single deed of injustice, or even mistake of judgment: reputations are safe enough with him. *And thy poor with judgment.* True wisdom is manifest in all the decisions of Zion's King. We do not always understand his doings, but they are always right. Partiality has been too often shown to rich and great men, but the King of the last and best of monarchies deals out even handed justice, to the delight of the poor and despised. Here we have the poor mentioned side by side with the king. The sovereignty of God is a delightful theme to the poor in spirit; they love to see the Lord exalted, and have no quarrel with him for exercising the prerogatives of his crown. It is the fictitious wealth which labours to conceal real poverty, which makes men cavil at the reigning Lord, but a deep sense of spiritual need prepares the heart loyally to worship the Redeemer King. On the other hand, the King has a special delight in the humbled hearts of his contrite ones, and exercises all his power and wisdom on their behalf, even as Joseph in Egypt ruled for the welfare of his brethren.

Verse 3. *The mountains shall bring peace to the people.* Thence, aforetime, rushed the robber bands which infested the country; but now the forts there erected are the guardians of the land, and the watchmen publish far and near the tidings that no foe is to be seen. Where Jesus is there is peace, lasting, deep, eternal. Even those things which were once our dread, lose all terror when Jesus is owned as monarch of the heart: death itself, that dark mountain, loses all its gloom. Trials and afflictions, when the Lord is with us, bring us an increase rather than a diminution of peace. And the little hills, by righteousness. Seeing that the rule of the monarch was just, every little hill seemed clothed with peace. Injustice has made Palestine a desert; if the Turk and Bedouin were gone, the land would smile again; for even in the most literal sense, justice is the fertilizer of lands, and men are diligent to plough and raise harvests when they have the prospect of eating the fruit of their labours. In a spiritual sense, peace is given to the heart by the righteousness of Christ; and all the powers and passions of the soul are filled with a holy calm, when the way of salvation, by a divine righteousness, is revealed. Then do we go forth with joy, and are led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills break forth before us into singing.

Verse 4. *He shall judge the poor of the people.* He will do them justice, yea, and blessed be his name, more than justice, for he will delight to do them good. He shall save the children of the needy. Poor, helpless things, they were packhorses for others, and paupers themselves, but their King would be their protector. Happy are God's poor and needy ones; they are safe under the wing

of the Prince of Peace, for he will save them from all their enemies. And shall break in pieces the oppressor. He is strong to smite the foes of his people. Oppressors have been great breakers, but their time of retribution shall come, and they shall be broken themselves. Sin, Satan, and all our enemies must be crushed by the iron rod of King Jesus. We have, therefore, no cause to fear; but abundant reason to sing—

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him lord of all."

It is much better to be poor than to be an oppressor; for both the needy and their children find an advocate in the heavenly Solomon, who aims all his blows at haughty ones, and rests not till they are utterly destroyed.

Verse 5. *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure.* And well they may. Such righteousness wins the cheerful homage of the poor and the godly, and strikes dismay into the souls of unrighteous oppressors; so that all through the lands, both good and bad are filled with awe. Where Jesus reigns in power men must render obeisance of some sort. His kingdom, moreover, is no house of cards, or dynasty of days; it is as lasting as the lights of heaven; days and nights will cease before he abdicates his throne. Neither sun nor moon as yet manifest any failure in their radiance, nor are there any signs of decrepitude in the kingdom of Jesus; on the contrary, it is but in its youth, and is evidently the coming power, the rising sun. Would to God that fresh vigour were imparted to all its citizens to push at once the conquests of Immanuel to the uttermost ends of the earth. Throughout all generations shall the throne of the Redeemer stand. Humanity shall not wear out the religion of the Incarnate God. No infidelity shall wither it away, nor superstition smother it; it shall rise immortal from what seemed its grave; as the true phoenix, it shall revive from its ashes! As long as there are men on earth Christ shall have a throne among them. Instead of the fathers shall be the children. Each generation shall have a regeneration in its midst, let Pope and Devil do what they may. Even at this hour we have before us the tokens of his eternal power; since he ascended to his throne, eighteen hundred years ago, his dominion has not been overturned, though the mightiest of empires have gone like visions of the night. We see on the shore of time the wrecks of the Caesars, the relics of the Moguls, and the last remnants of the Ottomans. Charlemagne, Maximilian, Napoleon, how they flit like shadows before us! They were and are not; but Jesus for ever is. As for the houses of Hohenzollern, Guelph, or Hapsburg, they have their hour; but the Son of David has all hours and ages as his own.

Verse 6. *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.* Blessings upon his gentle sway! Those great conquerors who have been the scourges of mankind have fallen like the fiery hail of Sodom, transforming fruitful lands into deserts; but he with mild, benignant influence softly refreshes the weary and wounded among men, and makes them spring up into newness of life. Pastures mown with the scythe, or shorn by the teeth of cattle, present, as it were, so many bleeding stems of grass, but when the rain falls it is balm to all these wounds, and it renews the verdure and beauty of the field; fit image of the visits and benedictions of "the consolation of Israel." My soul, how well it is for thee to be brought low, and to be even as the meadows eaten bare and trodden down by cattle, for then to thee shall the Lord have respect; he shall remember thy misery, and with his own most precious love restore thee to more than thy former glory. Welcome Jesus, thou true *Bien-aime*, the Well beloved, thou art far more than Titus ever was—the Delight of Mankind. As showers that water the earth. Each crystal drop of rain tells of heavenly mercy, which forgets not the parched plains: Jesus is all grace, all that he does is love, and his presence among men is joy. We need to preach him more, for no shower can so refresh the nations. Philosophic preaching mocks men as with a dust shower, but the gospel meets the case of fallen humanity, and happiness flourishes beneath its genial power. Come down, O Lord, upon my soul, and my heart shall blossom with thy praise:—

"He shall come down as still and light
As scattered drops on genial field;
And in his time who loves the right,
Freely shall bloom, sweet peace her harvest yield."

Verse 7. *In his days shall the righteous flourish.* Beneath the deadly Upas of unrighteous rule no honest principles can be developed, and good men can scarcely live; but where truth and uprightness are on the throne, the best of men prosper most. A righteous king is the patron and producer of righteous subjects. None flourish under Nero but those who are monsters like himself: like will to like; and under the gentle Jesus the godly find a happy shelter. And abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. Where Jesus reigns he is known as the true Melchizedek, king both of righteousness and peace. Peace based upon right is sure to be lasting, but no other will be. Many a so called Holy Alliance has come to the ground ere many moons have filled their horns, because craft formed the league, perjury established it, and oppression was the design of it; but when Jesus shall proclaim the great Truce of God, he will ordain perpetual peace, and men shall learn war no more. The peace which Jesus brings is not superficial or short lived; it is abundant in its depth and duration. Let all hearts

and voices welcome the King of nations; Jesus the Good, the Great, the Just, the Ever blessed.

Verse 8. *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea.* Wide spread shall be the rule of Messiah; only the Land's End shall end his territory: to the Ultima Thule shall his sceptre be extended. From Pacific to Atlantic, and from Atlantic to Pacific, he shall be Lord, and the oceans which surround each pole shall be beneath his sway. All other power shall be subordinate to his; no rival nor antagonist shall he know. Men speak of the Emperor of all the Russias, but Jesus shall be Ruler of all mankind. And from the river unto the ends of the earth. Start where you will, by any river you choose, and Messiah's kingdom shall reach on to the utmost bounds of the round world. As Solomon's realm embraced all the land of promise, and left no unconquered margin; so shall the Son of David rule all lands given him in the better covenant, and leave no nation to pine beneath the tyranny of the prince of darkness. We are encouraged by such a passage as this to look for the Saviour's universal reign; whether before or after his personal advent we leave for the discussion of others. In this Psalm, at least, we see a personal monarch, and he is the central figure, the focus of all the glory; not his servant, but himself do we see possessing the dominion and dispensing the government. Personal pronouns referring to our great King are constantly occurring in this Psalm; *he* has dominion kings fall down before *him*, and serve *him*; for *he* delivers, *he* spares, *he* saves, *he* lives, and daily is *he* praised.

Verse 9. *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him.* Unconquered by arms, they shall be subdued by love. Wild and lawless as they have been, they shall gladly wear his easy yoke; then shall their deserts be made glad, yea, they shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. And his enemies shall lick the dust. If they will not be his friends, they shall be utterly broken and humbled. Dust shall be the serpent's meat; the seed of the serpent shall be filled therewith. Homage among Orientals is often rendered in the most abject manner, and truly no sign is too humiliating to denote the utter discomfiture and subjugation of Messiah's foes. Tongues which rail at the Redeemer deserve to lick the dust. Those who will not joyfully bow to such a prince richly merit to be hurled down and laid prostrate; the dust is too good for them, since they trampled on the blood of Christ.

Verse 10. *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents.* Trade shall be made subservient to the purposes of mediatorial rule; merchant princes, both far and near, shall joyfully contribute of their wealth to his throne. Seafaring places are good centres from which to spread the gospel; and seafaring men often make earnest heralds of the cross. Tarshish of old was so

far away, that to the eastern mind it was lost in its remoteness, and seemed to be upon the verge of the universe; even so far as imagination itself can travel, shall the Son of David rule; across the blue sea shall his sceptre be stretched; the white cliffs of Britain already own him, the gems of the Southern Sea glitter for him, even Iceland's heart is warm with his love. Madagascar leaps to receive him; and if there be isles of the equatorial seas whose spices have as yet not been presented to him, even there shall he receive a revenue of glory. He has made many an islet to become a Holy Isle, and hence, a true Formosa. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Agriculture and pasturage shall contribute their share. Foreign princes from inland regions, as yet unexplored, shall own the all embracing monarchy of the King of kings; they shall be prompt to pay their reverential tribute. Religious offerings shall they bring, for their King is their God. Then shall Arabia Felix be happy indeed, and the Fortunate Isles be more than fortunate. Observe, that true religion leads to generous giving; we are not taxed in Christ's dominions, but we are delighted to offer freely to him. It will be a great day when kings will do this: the poor widow has long ago been before them, it is time that they followed; their subjects would be sure to imitate the royal example. This free will offering is all Christ and his church desire; they want no forced levies and distrains, let all men give of their own free will, kings as well as commoners; alas! the rule has been for kings to give their subjects' property to the church, and a wretched church has received this robbery for a burnt offering; it shall not be thus when Jesus more openly assumes the throne.

Verse 11. *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him.* Personally shall they pay their reverence, however mighty they may be. No matter how high their state, how ancient their dynasty, or far off their realms, they shall willingly accept him as their Imperial Lord. All nations shall serve him. The people shall be as obedient as the governors. The extent of the mediatorial rule is set forth by the two far reaching *alls*, all kings, and all nations: we see not as yet all things put under him, but since we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour in heaven, we are altogether without doubt as to his universal monarchy on earth. It is not to be imagined that an Alexander or a Caesar shall have wider sway than the Son of God. "Every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Hasten it, O Lord, in thine own time.

Verse 12. *For he shall deliver the needy.* Here is an excellent reason for man's submission to the Lord Christ; it is not because they dread his overwhelming power, but because they are won over by his just and condescending rule. Who would not fear so good a Prince, who makes the needy his peculiar care, and

pledges himself to be their deliverer in times of need? When he crieth. He permits them to be so needy as to be driven to cry bitterly for help, but then he hears them, and comes to their aid. A child's cry touches a father's heart, and our King is the Father of his people. If we can do no more than cry it will bring omnipotence to our aid. A cry is the native language of a spiritually needy soul; it has done with fine phrases and long orations, and it takes to sobs and moans; and so, indeed, it grasps the most potent of all weapons, for heaven always yields to such artillery. The poor also, and him that hath no helper. The proverb says, "God helps those that help themselves; "but it is yet more true that Jesus helps those who cannot help themselves, nor find help in others. All helpless ones are under the especial care of Zion's compassionate King; let them hasten to put themselves in fellowship with him. Let them look to him, for he is looking for them.

Verse 13. *He shall spare the poor and needy.* His pity shall be manifested to them; he will not allow their trials to overwhelm them; his rod of correction shall fall lightly; he will be sparing of his rebukes, and not sparing in his consolations. And shall save the souls of the needy. His is the dominion of souls, a spiritual and not a worldly empire; and the needy, that is to say, the consciously unworthy and weak, shall find that he will give them his salvation. Jesus calls not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He does not attempt the superfluous work of aiding proud Pharisees to air their vanity; but he is careful of poor Publicans whose eyes dare not look up to heaven by reason of their sense of sin. We ought to be anxious to be among these needy ones whom the Great King so highly favours.

Verse 14. *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence.* These two things are the weapons with which the poor are assailed: both law and no law are employed to fleece them. The fox and the lion are combined against Christ's lambs, but the Shepherd will defeat them, and rescue the defenceless from their teeth. A soul hunted by the temptations of Satanic craft, and the insinuations of diabolical malice, will do well to fly to the throne of Jesus for shelter. And precious shall their blood be in his sight. He will not throw away his subjects in needless wars as tyrants have done, but will take every means for preserving the humblest of them. Conquerors have reckoned thousands of lives as small items; they have reddened fields with gore, as if blood were water, and flesh but manure for harvests; but Jesus, though he gave his own blood, is very chary of the blood of his servants, and if they must die for him as martyrs, he loves their memory, and counts their lives as his precious things.

Verse 15. *And he shall live. Vive le Roi! O King! live for ever!* He was slain, but is risen and ever liveth. And to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba.

These are coronation gifts of the richest kind, cheerfully presented at his throne. How gladly would we give him all that we have and are, and count the tribute far too small. We may rejoice that Christ's cause will not stand still for want of funds; the silver and the gold are his, and if they are not to be found at home, far off lands shall hasten to make up the deficit. Would to God we had more faith and more generosity. Prayer also shall be made for him continually. May all blessings be upon his head; all his people desire that his cause may prosper, therefore do they hourly cry, "Thy kingdom come." Prayer *for* Jesus is a very sweet idea, and one which should be for evermore lovingly carried out; for the church is Christ's body, and the truth is his sceptre; therefore we pray for him when we plead for these. The verse may, however, be read as "through him, "for it is by Christ as our Mediator that prayer enters heaven and prevails. "Continue in prayer" is the standing precept of Messiah's reign, and it implies that the Lord will continue to bless. And daily shall he be praised. As he will perpetually show himself to be worthy of honour, so shall he be incessantly praised:—

"For him shall constant prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown his head;
His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise
With every morning's sacrifice."

Verse 16. *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains.* From small beginnings great results shall spring. A mere handful in a place naturally ungenial shall produce a matchless harvest. What a blessing that there is a handful; "except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah:" but now the faithful are a living seed, and shall multiply in the land. The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon. The harvest shall be so great that the wind shall rustle through it, and sound like the cedars upon Lebanon:—

"Like Lebanon, by soft winds fanned,
Rustles the golden harvest far and wide."

God's church is no mean thing; its beginnings are small, but its increase is of the most astonishing kind. As Lebanon is conspicuous and celebrated, so shall the church be. And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. Another figure. Christ's subjects shall be as plentiful as blades of grass, and shall as suddenly appear as eastern verdure after a heavy shower. We need not fear for the cause of truth in the land; it is in good hands, where the pleasure of the Lord is sure to prosper. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good

pleasure to give you the kingdom." When shall these words, which open up such a vista of delight, be fulfilled in the midst of the earth?

Verse 17. *His name shall endure for ever.* In its saving power, as the rallying point of believers, and as renowned and glorified, his name shall remain for ever the same. His name shall be continued as long as the sun. While time is measured out by days, Jesus shall be glorious among men. And men shall be blessed in him. There shall be cause for all this honour, for he shall really and truly be a benefactor to the race. He himself shall be earth's greatest blessing; when men wish to bless others they shall bless in his name. All nations shall call him blessed. The grateful nations shall echo his benedictions, and wish him happy who has made them happy. Not only shall some glorify the Lord, but all; no land shall remain in heathenism; all nations shall delight to do him honour.

Verses 18-19. As Quesnel well observes, these verses explain themselves. They call rather for profound gratitude, and emotion of heart, than for an exercise of the understanding; they are rather to be used for adoration than for exposition. It is, and ever will be, the acme of our desires, and the climax of our prayers, to behold Jesus exalted King of kings and Lord of lords. He has done great wonders such as none else can match, leaving all others so far behind, that he remains the sole and only wonder worker; but equal marvels yet remain, for which we look with joyful expectation. He is the Blessed God, and his name shall be blessed; his name is glorious, and that glory shall fill the whole earth. For so bright a consummation our heart yearns daily, and we cry *Amen, and Amen.*

Verse 20. *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* What more could he ask? He has climbed the summit of the mount of God; he desires nothing more. With this upon his lip, he is content to die. He strips himself of his own royalty and becomes only the "son of Jesse," thrice happy to subside into nothing before the crowned Messiah. Before his believing eye the reign of Jesus, like the sun, filled all around with light, and the holy soul of the man after God's own heart exulted in it, and sung his "Nunc dimittis:" "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" We, too, will cease from all petitioning if it be granted to us to see the day of the Lord. Our blissful spirits will then have nothing further to do but for ever to praise the Lord our God.

TITLE. *For Solomon.* I shall but mention a threefold analogy between Christ and Solomon.

1. In his *personal wisdom* (1Ki 4:29-30); so Christ (Col 2:3); "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

2. In the *glorious peace and prosperity of his kingdom*: the kingdom was peaceably settled in his hand. 1Ch 22:9 4:24-25. And so he fell to the work of building the temple, as Christ doth the church; so Christ (Isa 9:6); he is the Prince of Peace, the great Peacemaker. Eph 2:14.

3. In his *marriage with Pharaoh's daughter*. Some observe that the daughter of Pharaoh never seduced him: neither is there any mention made of the Egyptian idols. 1Ki 11:5,7. In his other outlandish marriages he did sin; but *this* is mentioned as by way of special exception (1Ki 11:1); for she was a *proselyte*, and so it was no sin to marry her: and the love between her and Solomon is made a type of the love between Christ and the church. So Christ hath taken us Gentiles to be spouse unto him. Psalm 45. *Samuel Mather (1626-1671), in "The Figures or Types of the Old Testament."*

Whole Psalm. The Seventy-second Psalm contains a description of an exalted king, and of the blessings of his reign. These blessings are of such a nature as to prove that the subject of the Psalm must be a divine person.

1. His kingdom is to be everlasting.

2. Universal.

3. It secures perfect peace with God and goodwill among men.

4. All men are to be brought to submit to him through love.

5. In him all the nations of the earth are to be blessed; *i.e.*, as we are distinctly taught in Ga 3:16, it is in him that all the blessings of redemption are to come upon the world. *Charles Hodge, in "Systematic Theology."* 1871.

Whole Psalm. This Psalm was penned by a king, it is dedicated to a king, and is chiefly intended concerning him who is "King of kings." *Joseph Caryl, in a Sermon entitled "David's Prayer for Solomon."*

Whole Psalm. Two Psalms bear *Solomon's* name in their titles. One of these is the Hundred and Twenty-seventh, the other is the Seventy-second; and here the

traces of his pen are unequivocal. A mistaken interpretation of the note appended to it, "The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended," led most of the old commentators to attribute the Psalm to David, and to suppose that it is a prayer offered in his old age "for Solomon," as the peaceful prince who was to succeed him on the throne. However, it has long been known that the note in question refers to the whole of the preceding portion of the Psalter, much of which was written by Asaph and the sons of Korah; and there can be no doubt that the title can only be translated, "of Solomon." So clear are the traces of Solomon's pen that Calvin, whose sagacity in this kind of criticism has never been excelled, although he thought himself obliged, by the note at the end of the Psalm, to attribute the substance of it to David, felt Solomon's touch so sensibly, that he threw out the conjecture that the prayer was the father's, but that it was afterward thrown into the lyrical form by the son. This is not the place for detailed exposition; I will, therefore, content myself with remarking that, properly speaking, the Psalm is not "for Solomon" at all. If it refers to him and his peaceful reign, it does so only in as far as they were types of the Person and Kingdom of the Prince of Peace. The Psalm, from beginning to end, is not only capable of being applied to Christ, but great part is incapable of being fairly applied to any other. *William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm. This is the forth of those Psalms which predict the two natures of Christ. This Psalm admonishes us that we believe in Christ as perfect God, and perfect Man and King. *Psalter of Peter Lombard*(—1164).

Whole Psalm. That under the type of Solomon (to whom it is inscribed) the Messiah is "The King" of whom this Psalm treats, we have the consent, not only of the most eminent divines of modern times, and of the Fathers of the early Christian church, but the ancient and most distinguished Jewish expositors; of which reference, indeed, it contains the most conclusive internal evidence. And, as under a new type, so is the kingdom here presented to us in a new aspect, in marked contradistinction to its character as foreshadowed by its other great type, the Davidic: for the character of David's reign was conquest. He was "a man of war" (1Ch 28:1-3); the appointed instrument for subjecting the enemies of God's people Israel, by whom they were put in undisturbed possession of the promised land. But the character of Solomon's reign was peace, the import of his name, succeeding to the throne after all enemies had been subdued, and governing the kingdom which David's wars had established (1Ki 2:12), the two types, respectively, of Christ as he is yet to be manifested at his next appearing; first revealed as David, as seen in the vision of that event (Re 19:11): "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness *he doth judge and*

make war, "etc., subduing the Antichristian confederacy (Re 19:19-21), as before predicted in the Second Psalm, of this same confederacy: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And then, as Solomon, taking his throne, and extending the blessings of his kingdom of peace to the ends of the earth. David in the Second Psalm; Solomon in this. William De Burgh.

Whole Psalm. The reader is reminded of James Montgomery's hymn, beginning, "Hail to the Lord's Anointed; "it is a very beautiful versification of this Psalm, and will be found in "Our Own Hymn Book, " No. 353.

Verse 1. *Give the king thy judgments, O God.* Right and authority to execute judgment and justice. The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son. *John Fry.*

Verse 1. *The king... The king's son.* I do not apprehend, with the generality of interpreters, that by *The king*, and *The king's son*, David means himself and his son, but *Solomon* only, to whom both the titles agree, as he was David's son, and anointed by him *king* during his lifetime. *Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 1. *The king... The king's son.* We see that our Lord is here termed both Klm, and Klm Nb, being king himself, and also the son of a king; both as respects his human origin, having come forth from the stock of David, and also as to his divine origin; for the Father of the universe may, of course, be properly denominated King. Agreeably to this designation, we find on the Turkish coins the inscription: *Sultan, son of Sultan.* *George Phillips.*

Verse 2. *Thy judgments.* From whom does he seek these? O God, he says, give them. Therefore is it the gift of God that kings should judge righteously and observe justice. Moreover, he does not simply say, O God, give judgment to the king, and righteousness to the king's son; but *thy judgments* and *thy righteousness*. Grant them this grace, that what is just in thy sight they may judge. The world has its own judgments and its own righteousness, but deals in such a way that true righteousness is more oppressed than approved. Not such are the judgments and righteousness of God. *Musculus.*

Verse 3. *The mountains shall bring peace to the people, etc.* Those who apply this Psalm to Solomon expound the distich thus; "That the steep mountains on the frontier, strongly garrisoned, shall secure the land from hostile invasion; and the hills, cleared of the banditti, which in the rude ages were accustomed to inhabit them, under the government of the king, intended in this Psalm, should

be the peaceful seats of a useful, civilised peasantry." This sense is not ill expressed in Mr. Merrick's translation:

"Peace, from the fort clad mountain's brow,
 Descending, bless the plain below;
 And justice from each rocky cell,
 Shall violence and fraud expel."

But so little of the Psalm is at all applicable to Solomon, and the greater part of it so exclusively belongs to the Messiah, that I think these mountains and hills allude to the nature of the land of Judaea; and the general sense is, that, in the times of the great king, the inhabitants of that mountainous region shall live in a state of peace and tranquillity. The thing intended is the happy condition of the natural Israel, in the latter day restored to God's favour, and to the peaceful possession of their own land. It is a great confirmation of this sense, that *righteousness* is mentioned as the means of the peace which shall be enjoyed. *Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 3. *The mountains shall bring peace to the people.* It was, and still is, common in the East to announce good or bad news from the tops of mountains and other eminences. By this means acts of justice were speedily communicated to the remotest parts of the country. Thus, when Solomon decided the controversy between the two harlots, the decision was quickly known over all the land. See 1Ki 3:28. *Alexander Geddes.*

Verse 3. *The mountains shall bring peace.* The reference is to the fertility of the soil, which now is shown in an extraordinary way, when mountain summits, which are either oppressed with hopeless sterility or yield at a far inferior rate to the valleys, produce all things plentifully. And by this figure he signifies that this happiness of his kingdom shall not be the portion of a few only, but shall abound in all places and to all people, of every condition and of every age. No corner of the land, he affirms, shall be destitute of this fertility. *Mollerus.*

Verse 3. *The mountains shall bring peace.* You may be sure to have peace when your mountains shall bring forth peace; when those mountains, which heretofore were mountains of prey and hills of the robbers, shall be a quiet habitation; when peace shall not be walled up in cities, or fenced in by bulwarks, but the open fields and highways, the mountains and the hills shall yield it abundantly; under every hedge, and under every green tree, there shall you find it; when the cottagers and the mountaineers shall have their fill of it; when they shall eat and be satisfied, lie down and none shall make them afraid,

then the blessing is universal: and this is the work of *righteousness*. *Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 3. *The mountains and hills* are not at all named as the most unfruitful places of the land, which they really were not, in Palestine, compare De 33:15 Ps 147:8, "Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains;" Ps 65:12,—nor even because what is on them can be seen everywhere, and from all sides. (*Tholuck*), compare against this, Joe 3:18, "The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk," Isa 55:12,—but, as being the most prominent points and ornaments of the country, and, therefore, as representing it, well fitted to express the thought that the country shall be *everywhere* filled with peace. *E. W. Hengstenberg*.

Verse 4. *The children of the needy*. The phrase, *the children of the afflicted*, is put for *the afflicted*, an idiom quite common in Hebrew; and a similar from of expression is sometimes used by the Greeks, as when they say *uiouv iatrwn*, *the sons of physicians* for *physicians*. *John Calvin*.

Verse 5.—

The lofty glory of the Flavian family shall remain,
Enduring like the sun and stars. *Martial*.—Bk. 9. Epig. 7.

Verse 6. *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass*, etc. This is spoken and promised of Christ, and serves to teach us that Christ coming to his church and people, by the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit, is most useful and refreshing to their souls, like showers of rain to the dry ground, or a meadow newly cut to make it spring again. Christless souls are like the dry ground; without the moisture of saving grace their hearts are hard; neither rods, mercies, nor sermons, make impression upon them. Why? They are without Christ, the fountain of grace and spiritual influences. Before the fall man's soul was like a well watered garden, beautiful, green, and fragrant; but by his apostasy from God, in Adam our first head, the springs of grace and holiness are quite dried up in his soul; and there is no curing of this drought but by the soul's union with a new head; to wit, Christ our second Adam, who has the Spirit given him without measure for the use of all his members. Now, when we are united by faith to Christ, our Head of influences, the dry land is turned into water springs; Christ "comes down as the rain" by his Spirit of regeneration, and brings the springs of grace into the soul. He is the first and immediate receptacle of the Holy Spirit, and all regenerating and sanctifying influences, and out of his fulness we must by faith receive them. And when at any time the springs of grace are interrupted in the soul by sin or unbelief, so as

the ground turns dry, the plants wither, and the things which remain are ready to die, the soul hath need to look up to Jesus Christ to come down with new showers upon the thirsty ground and decayed plants.

1. As the rain is the free gift of God to the dry ground, it comes free and cheap to poor and rich, small and great, and cost them nothing: so Christ with his blessings is God's free gift to a dry and perishing world; for which we should be continually thankful.

2. As nothing can stop the falling of the rain; so nothing can hinder Christ's gracious influences, when he designs to awake, convince, or soften a hard heart. When those showers do fall on sinners, the most obstinate will must yield, and cry, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

3. As the rain is most necessary and suitable to the dry ground, and to the various plants it produces, and also to the different parts of every plant or tree—such as the root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit; so Christ is absolutely necessary, and his influence most suitable to all his people's souls, and to every faculty of them—the understanding, will, memory, and affections; and to all their different graces, faith, love, repentance, etc.; to root and establish them, strengthen and confirm them, quicken and increase them, cherish and preserve them.

4. As the rain comes in diverse ways and manners to the earth, sometimes with cold winds and tempests, thunders and lightnings, and at other times with calmness and warmth; so Christ comes to sinners, sometimes with sharp convictions and legal terrors, and sometimes with alluring invitations and promises.

5. O how pleasant are the effects of rain to languishing plants, to make them green and beautiful, lively and strong, fragrant and beautiful! So the effects of Christ's influences are most desirable to drooping souls, for enlightening and enlivening them, for confirming and strengthening them, for comforting and enlarging them, for appetizing and satisfying them, transforming and beautifying them. A shower from Christ would soon make the church, though withered, turn green and beautiful, and to send forth a smell as of a field that the Lord hath blessed; and likewise some drops of this shower, falling down upon the languishing graces of communicants, would soon make them vigorous and lively in showing forth their Saviour's death at his table. *John Willison.*

Verse 6. There cannot be a more lively image of a flourishing condition than what is conveyed to us in these words. The grass which is forced by the heat of

the sun, before the ground is well prepared by rains, is weak and languid, and of a faint complexion; but when clear shining succeeds the gentle showers of spring, the field puts forth its best strength, and is more beautifully arrayed than ever Solomon in all his glory. *Thomas Sherlock*. 1678.

Verse 6. *He shall come down*, dry There is a fourfold descending of Christ which the Scripture mentions.

1. His incarnation, the manifestation of himself in the flesh.
2. The abasing himself in condition; he did not only assume human flesh, but all the natural infirmities of our flesh.
3. The subjecting of himself to death.
4. The distillations of his grace and spiritual blessings upon his church. *Ralph Robinson*.

Verse 6. (*first clause*). Some render this "like dew on the fleece." The mysterious fleece of Gideon, which on being exposed to the air, is first of all filled with the dew of heaven, while all the ground around it is quite dry, and which afterwards becomes dry while the earth is watered, pictures to us, according to the old divines, that the dew of Heaven's grace was poured out upon Judaea at the time when all the rest of the world remained in barrenness and ignorance of God; but that now, by a strange alteration, this same Judaea lies in dryness and forgetfulness of God, while on the contrary, all the other nations of the earth are inundated with the dew of heavenly grace. *Pasquier Quesnel*.

Verse 6. *Upon the mown grass*. The Hebrew word used here hath a double signification. It signifies a shorn fleece of wool, and it signifies a meadow newly mown. This hath occasioned divers readings. Some read it, He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool: so the Septuagint. They that follow this reading make it an allusion unto the dew that fell upon Gideon's fleece (Jud 6:37-39), when all the land beside was dry, and, again, upon the rest of the land when the fleece was dry. Others read it according to our translation: *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass*. This seems to me more agreeable to the meaning of the Holy Ghost; especially because of the clause following, which is added by way of explication: *As showers that water the earth*. As the showers, Mybybr Rain and showers differ only as less and more; rain signifies smaller showers, and showers signify greater rain. De 32:2. Rain falling in multitude of drops is called a shower. *That water the earth*. The word

Pyzrz *zarziph*, which is here translated *water*, is only used in this place in all the Bible. It signifies to water by dispersion, to water by drops. The showers are dispersed in drops all over the face of the earth, in a very regular and artificial way. "God hath divided, "saith Job, "a watercourse for the overflowings of water." Job 38:25. The rain is from the cloud spouted out by drops after such a manner that every part hath its share. *Ralph Robinson*.

Verse 6. *The mown grass*; literally, *that which is shorn*, whether *fleece* or *meadow*. In the former sense it occurs Jud 6:37, and so the older translators all take it, (Aq epi kouran, LXX and others epi plokou, Jerome and Vulgate, *in vellus*,)probably with the idea that the reign of the monarch would be accompanied by signal tokens of the divine favour and blessing, like the dew upon Gideon's fleece; in the latter sense, the word is found Am 7:1; and this is indisputably its meaning here, as the parallel shows. The *mown* meadow is particularly mentioned, because the roots of the grass would be most exposed to the summer heat after the crop has been gathered in, and the effect would be most striking in the shooting of the young green blade after the shower. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 7. *Righteous. Peace*. Do you ask what he is individually? The answer is, "King of Righteousness:" a being loving righteousness, working righteousness, promoting righteousness, procuring righteousness, imparting righteousness to those whom he saves, perfectly sinless, and the enemy and abolisher of all sin. Do you ask what he is practically, and in relation to the effect of his reign? The answer is, "King of Peace:" a sovereign whose kingdom is a shelter for all who are miserable, a covert for all who are persecuted, a resting place for all who are weary, a home for the destitute, and a refuge for the lost. *Charles Stanford*.

Verse 7. *Abundance of peace*. Literally, *multitude of peace*; that is, the things which produce peace, or which indicate peace, will not be few, but numerous; they will abound everywhere. They will be found in towns and villages, and private dwellings; in the calm and just administration of the affairs of the State; in abundant harvests; in intelligence, in education, and in undisturbed industry; in the protection extended to the rights of all. *Albert Barnes*.

Verse 7. *So long as the moon endureth*. It does not necessarily follow from these words that the moon will ever cease to exist. The idea, commonly held, of the annihilation of the starry firmament is without foundation in Scripture. Such an idea has a pernicious influence on the human mind, inasmuch as it leads men to depreciate that which bears in such striking character the stamp and impress of the divine glory. *Frederic Fysh*.

Verse 8. *From the river.* There are many modern interpreters who, from the mention of the "river"—namely, the river Euphrates—in the other clause of the verse, think that the boundaries of the land of Palestine are here to be understood, that country being described as extending from the Red Sea to the Sea of Syria, otherwise called the Sea of the Philistines, and the Great Sea; and from the Euphrates to the Great Desert lying behind Palestine and Egypt. These are the limits of the Israelitish territory: the former, from the south to the west; the latter, from the north to the east. (Ge 15:18.) But, in this passage, there can scarcely be a doubt that by the *river*—to wit, the Euphrates—is indicated the extreme boundary of the earth towards the east. In a highly poetical, magnificent description, such as is given in this song, of a king exalted above all others, nothing can be conceived more inappropriate than saying that the dominions of such a king should be bounded by the limits of Palestine. *Ernest F. C. Rosenmueller (1768-1835), in "The Biblical Cabinet, " vol. 32.*

Verse 9. *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, etc.* This is equivalent to saying, *the wild Arabs, that the greatest conquerors could never tame*, shall bow before him, or become his vassals; nay, his enemies, and, consequently, these Arabs among the rest, *shall lick the dust*, or court him with the most abject submissions. *T. Harmer's Observations.*

Verse 9. *His enemies shall lick the dust.* Bear in mind that it was a custom with many nations that, when individuals approached their kings, they kissed the earth, and prostrated their whole body before them. This was the custom especially throughout Asia. No one was allowed to address the Persian kings, unless he prostrated himself on the ground and kissed the footsteps of the king, as Xenophon records. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verses 9-10. Wilderness, Tarshish, Sheba. The most *uncivilized*, the most *distant*, and the most *opulent* nations shall pay their homage to him. *Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verses 9-11. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; *and his enemies shall lick the dust.* They shall humble themselves under the mighty hand of Christ; they shall acknowledge and receive him as their Lord; they shall fear and reverence him as their King; they shall veil and bow to his sceptre: they shall put themselves, and all that is theirs, under Christ; they shall give themselves to the exaltation and setting up of Christ. *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.* They shall consecrate their abilities to Christ's service; they shall communicate of their substance to the maintenance of Christ's church, and minister to the preservation and increase of Christ's kingdom. *All kings shall*

fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. All shall adore and serve him as their king; all shall exalt and honour him, as loyal subjects, their heavenly sovereign; all persons, from the highest to the lowest, must serve the Lord Jesus, and study to make him glorious; grace works obedience in the hearts of princes, as well as in the hearts of beggars. The sun as well as the stars, did obeisance unto Christ, under his kingdom and gospel. *Alexander Grosse* (-1654), in *"Sweet and Soul Persuading Inducements leading unto Christ."* 1632.

Verses 9-11. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; *and his enemies shall lick the dust.* See *Psalms on "Ps 72:9"* for further information.

Verse 10. *Tarshish* was an old, celebrated, opulent, cultivated, commercial city, which carried on trade in the Mediterranean, and with the seaports of Syria, especially Tyre and Joppa, and that it most probably lay on the extreme west of that sea. Was there, then, in ancient times, any city in these parts which corresponded with these clearly ascertained facts? There was. Such was Tartessus in Spain, said to have been a Phoenician colony; a fact which of itself would account for its intimate connection with Palestine and the Biblical narratives. As to the exact spot where Tartessis (so written originally) lay, authorities are not agreed, as the city had ceased to exist when geography began to receive attention; but it was not far from the Straits of Gibraltar, and near the mouth of the Guadalquivir, consequently at no great distance from the famous Granada of later days. The reader, however, must enlarge his notion beyond that of a mere city, which, how great soever, would scarcely correspond with the ideas of magnitude, affluence, and power, that the Scriptures suggest. The name, which is of Phoenician origin, seems to denote the district of south western Spain, comprising the several colonies which Tyre planted in that country, and so being equivalent to what we might designate Phoenician Spain. We are not, however, convinced that the opposite coast of Africa was not included, so that the word would denote to an inhabitant of Palestine the extreme western parts of the world. *J. R. Beard*, in *"A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature."* 1866.

Verse 10. *The isles.* Myya, only in the Psalter besides, Ps 97:1, where, and uniformly, so rendered. The word, however, denotes all habitable land as opposed to water (see Ge 10:5, where first it occurs, with Isa 42:15), and so *"maritime land, whether the sea coast of continent or island"* (Gesenius); especially the countries washed by the Mediterranean, and the remote coasts to the west of Palestine. So in the parallel prophecy, Isa 60:9 11:11 41:1-2 Isa 42:10-12 49:1, etc. Accordingly, *"The isles shall wait for his law,"* (Isa 42:4) is expounded in Mt 12:22—"In Him shall *the Gentiles* trust." *William DeBurgh*.

Verse 10. *Sheba and Seba.* There appear to have been two nations living in the same region, viz., Southern Arabia. One of these was descended from Cush, the son of Ham, and the other from Joktan, a descendant of Shem. These two people were often antagonistic in interests, despite the similarity of their names, but their divisions would be healed, and unitedly they would offer tribute to the Great King. It is an Arab proverb, "divided as the Sabaeans, "but Christ makes them one. "The Greek geographers usually couple Abyssinia with Yemen, in Arabia, and invariably represent the Abyssinian as an Arab or Sabaeon race. Modern travellers, also, unanimously agree in recognising the Arab type among those Abyssinian populations which do not belong to the African stock." That the Sabaeon nations were wealthy is clear from the Greek historian Agatharchides. "The Sabaeans," says he, "have in their houses an incredible number of vases and utensils of all sorts, of gold and silver, beds and tripods of silver, and all the furniture of astonishing richness. Their buildings have porticoes with columns sheathed with gold, or surmounted by capitals of silver. On the friezes, ornaments, and the framework of the doors, they place plates of gold encrusted with precious stones. They spend immense sums in adorning these edifices, employing gold, silver, ivory, and precious stones, and materials of the greatest value." They appear, also, to have acquired great wealth by trading, both with India and Africa, their peninsula lying between those two regions. Rich would be their gifts if Lenormant and Chevallier's description of their commerce be correct. "The principal importations from India were gold, tin, precious stones, ivory, sandalwood, spices, pepper, cinnamon, and cotton. Besides these articles, the storehouses of southern Arabia received the products of the opposite coast of Africa, procured by the Sabaeans in the active coasting trade they carried on with this not far distant land, where Mosytion (now Ras Abourgabeh) was the principal port. These were, besides the spices that gave name to that coast, ebony, ostrich feathers, and more gold and ivory. With the addition of the products of the soil of southern Arabia itself, incense, myrrh, laudanum, precious stones, such as onyx and agates, lastly, aloes from the island of Socotra, and pearls from the fisheries of the Gulf of Ormus, we shall have the list of the articles comprised in the trade of this country with Egypt, and with those Asiatic countries bordering on the Mediterranean; and at the same time, by considering this activity of such a traffic." "Poor as God's people usually are, the era will surely arrive when the richest of the rich will count it all joy to lay their treasures at Jesus' feet." *C. H. S.*

Verses 9-11. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; *and his enemies shall lick the dust.* See *Psalms on "Ps 72:9"* for further information.

Verse 12. *He shall deliver the needy when he crieth.* There needeth no mediator between him and his subjects; *he heareth the needy when they cry.* The man that hath nothing within him or without him to commend him to Christ, to assist, help, relieve, or comfort him in heaven or earth, is not despised by Christ, but delivered from that which he feareth. *David Dickson.*

Verse 13. *He shall spare;* more correctly, *compassionate or comfort the poor and needy; and shall save their souls, or preserve the lives of the needy.* *William Henry Alexander, in "The Book of Praises: being the Book of Psalms... with Notes Original and Selected." 1867.*

Verse 13. *And shall save the souls of the needy.* Scipio used to say, that he would rather save a single citizen than slay a thousand enemies. Of this mind ought all princes to be towards their subjects; but this affection and love rose to the highest excellence and power in the breast of Christ. So ardent is his love for his own, that he suffers not one of them to perish, but leads them to full salvation, and, opposing himself to both devils and tyrants who seek to destroy their souls, he constrains their fury and confounds their rage. *Mollerus.*

Verse 14. *And precious shall their blood be in his sight.* The Angolani so despised their slaves that they would sometimes give as many as twenty-two for one hunting dog... But Christ prefers the soul of one of his servants to the whole world, since he died that it might be made more capable of entering into eternal felicity. For breaking one goblet the Roman cast his slave into the pond to be devoured by the muraenae. But the Son of God came down from heaven to earth to deliver mankind, his vile, ungrateful, faithless servants, from the pangs of the serpent, like the golden fleece, and save them as Jonah from the whale. Is not their blood precious in his sight? *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 15. *And he shall live;* Hebrew, "So shall he live; *"i.e., the poor man.* *Charles Carter.*

Verse 15. *And he shall live.* There is a clear reference to the coronation of kings in the loud acclamations, *Long live the King!* and the bestowal of the customary gifts and presents, as is plain from 2Sa 16:16 1Ki 1:39 1Sa 10:27 2Ch 17:5. *Hermann Venema.*

Verse 15. *He shall live.* Alexander the Great acknowledged at death that he was a frail and feeble man. "Lo! I," said he, "am dying, whom you falsely called a god." But Christ proved that he was God when, by his own death, he overcame, and, as I may say, slew death. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 15. *He shall live.* It is a great consolation to soldiers imperilled amid many forms of death, that their king *shall live*. Whence one of the chief of these warriors, consoling himself, said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at the last day I shall rise from the earth." Great is the consolation of the dying, that he for whom, or in whom, they die, *shall live* for evermore. With whom, if we die, we shall also live again, and share his riches equally with himself; for rich indeed is our Solomon, in whom are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God. *Gerhohus*.

Verse 15. *Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.* It might have been rendered, "Prayer also shall be made *through* him continually, and daily shall he be blessed." The word is rendered "blessed," "when speaking of an act of worship towards God; and the word translated "for" is sometimes used for "through," as Jos 2:15, "Through the window." If we hold the translation "for him," then it must be understood of the saints praying for the Father's accomplishment of his promises, made to the Son in the covenant of redemption, that his kingdom may come, his name be glorified, and that he may see his seed, and that the full reward may be given him for his sufferings, and so that he may receive the joy that was set before him. *Jonathan Edwards*.

Verse 15. *Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.* In all conquered countries, *two* things marked the subjection of the people:

1. Their money was stamped with the name of the conqueror.
2. They were obliged to pray for him in their acts of public worship. *Adam Clarke*.

Verse 16. *An handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains.* Not only would the soil be likely to lack depth of earth, but the seed itself would be apt to be blown away by the winds of heaven, or washed down by the teeming rain to the base beneath. *Peter Grant*. 1867.

Verse 16. *An handful of corn,* etc. Upon mature consideration, I am persuaded that the proper sense of the word Mk, or hmk, is "a patch" or "piece;" and that it is used here just as we use the same words in English, in such expressions as these,—"a patch of wheat, a patch of barley, a piece of corn." *Samuel Horsley*.

Verse 16. *An handful of corn.* Doubtless it has been familiar to you to see corn merchants carrying small bags with them, containing just a handful of corn,

which they exhibit as specimens of the store which they have for sale. Now, let me beg of every one of you to carry a small bag with this precious corn of the gospel. When you write a letter, drop in a word for Christ; it may be a seed that will take root... Speak a word for Christ wherever you go; it may be a seed productive of a great deal of fruit. Drop a tract on the counter, or in a house; it may be a seed productive of a plenteous harvest. The most difficult place, the steepest mountain, the spot where there is the least hope of producing fruit, is to be the first place of attack; and the more labour there is required, the more is to be given, in the distribution of the seeds. *James Sherman.*

Verse 16. *Shall shake like Lebanon.* With a plentiful ear, shall yield so large and strong a stalk that, with the motion of the wind, it shall shake cedar like. *Joseph Hall.*

Verse 16. *Shall shake as Lebanon.* That is to say, shall wave backwards and forwards with the wind, like the tall cedars of Lebanon. This implies that the corn will be lofty and luxuriant. *French and Skinner.*

Verse 16. Neither *wave* nor *shake* conveys the full force of the Hebrew verb, ver which suggests the additional idea of a rushing noise, like that of the wind among the cedars of Lebanon. This comparison is certainly more natural and obvious than that which some interpreters assume with the grain crops or harvest fields of Lebanon itself. This would be merely likening one harvest to another, nor is any such allusion ever made elsewhere to the mountain, though its circumjacent plains and valleys were productive. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 16. *Like Lebanon.* By dint of skill and labour, they have compelled a rocky soil to become fertile. Sometimes, to avail themselves of the waters, they have made a channel for them, by means of a thousand windings on the declivities, or have arrested them in the valleys by embankments. At other times they have propped up the earth, that was ready to roll down, by means of terraces and walls. Almost all the mountains being thus husbanded, present the appearance of a staircase, or of an amphitheatre, each tier of which is a row of vines or mulberry trees. I have counted, upon one declivity, as many as a hundred, or a hundred and twenty, tiers from the bottom of the valley to the top of the hill. I forgot, for the moment, that I was in Turkey. *Volney.*

Verse 16. *Like Lebanon.* To understand the images taken from Mount Lebanon, it is necessary to remark that four enclosures of mountains are described, rising one upon another. The first and lowest of these is described as rich in grain and fruits. The second is barren, being covered only with thorns, rocks, and flints. The third, though higher still, is blessed with a perpetual spring; the trees are

always green. There are innumerable orchards laden with fruit, and it forms, altogether, a terrestrial paradise,

"Where fruits and blossoms blush,
In social sweetness, on the self same bough."

The fourth, or highest ridge of all, is the region of perpetual snow. Now, the imagery in the 72nd Psalm is evidently taken from the first of these ridges of Lebanon, where (most probably following the ancient mode of cultivating) the monks of Lebanon, for they were the chief cultivators of the terraced soil, industriously husband every particle of productive earth. In the expressive words of Burckhardt, "*Every inch of ground is cultivated*," so that no image could have been more singularly expressive of the universal cultivation under Messiah's reign, than to say that *His fruit shall shake like Lebanon*; or, understanding the psalmist to speak figuratively, what moral landscape could be painted more richly than he does, when he intimates that those barren mountains of our world, which at present yield no fruit unto God, shall be cultivated in that day so industriously and so fully, that the fruit shall wave like the terraced heights of Lebanon. *Robert Murray Macheyne*. 1813-1843.

Verse 16. *Shall flourish like grass.* The peculiar characters of the grass, which adapt it especially for the service of man, are its apparent *humility* and *cheerfulness*. Its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service,—appointed to be trodden on and fed upon. Its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth,—glowing with variegated flames of flowers,—waving in soft depth of fruitful strength. Winter comes, and, though it will not mock its fellow plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colourless and leafless as they. It is always green; and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar frost. *John Ruskin*.

Verse 17. *His name shall be continued.* *Yinnon*: The Kethiv, *yanin*, would be; "shall produce fresh progeny," or "send forth new shoots." M. Renan was far from intending to supply a commentary on this verse, when he said of the Lord Jesus, "*Son culte se rajeunira sans cesse*." Yet it would not be easy to find a more forcible illustration of the meaning of *yannin*. *William Kay*.

Verse 17. (*second clause*). The version and sense which Gussetius gives seems best of all: *His name shall generate, or beget children before the sun*; that is, his name preached, as the gospel, which is his name (Ac 9:15), shall be the

means of begetting many sons and daughters openly and publicly, in the face of the sun, and wherever that is. *John Gill*.

Verse 17. *All nations shall call him blessed.* It is sometimes inadvertently said that the Old Testament is narrow and exclusive, while the New Testament is broad and catholic in its spirit. This is a mistake. The Old and New Testaments are of one mind on this matter. Many are called, and few chosen. This is the common doctrine of the New as well as of the Old. They are both equally catholic in proclaiming the gospel to all. The covenant with Adam and with Noah is still valid, and sure to all who return to God; and the call of Abram is expressly said to be a means of extending blessing to all the families of man. The New Testament does not aim at anything more than this: it merely hails the approaching accomplishment of the same gracious end. *James G. Murphy, in "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis."* 1863.

Verse 19. *Amen, and Amen.* Rabbi Jehudah the Holy, said, "He that said *Amen* in this world is worthy to say it in the world to come. David, therefore, utters *Amen* twice in this Psalm, to show that one 'Amen' belongs to this world, the other to that which is to come. He who saith 'Amen' devoutly, is greater than he who uttereth the prayers, for the prayers are but the letter, and the Amen is the seal. The scribe writeth the letters, the prince alone seals them." *Neale and Littledale*.

Verse 19. *Amen, and Amen.* What is *Amen* in Mt 16:28 is alhywv or "verily" in Lu 9:27. Our Saviour hath this phrase peculiar to himself, "Amen, Amen, "to give confirmation to the doctrine, and to raise our attention and faith; or to show that not only truth is spoken, but by him who is truth itself... There is no need for a rubric by the men of the Great Synagogue, or a canon, to command a man to blush, when it only the natural passion that will command it; so, when the heart is warm in prayer with serious and earnest affections, a double Amen doth as naturally flow from us as milk from a mother's breast to her suckling. And *Amen* comes from Nma, *aman*, which signifies "to nurse; "as if it were, if not the mother, yet the faithful nurse, of lively devotion. Assent to repetitions is essential unto prayer, and it is not signified publicly but by one Amen. *Thomas Woodcock*(—1695) in "*Morning Exercises*."

Verse 19. *Amen* is a short word, but marvellously pregnant, full of sense, full of spirit. It is a word that seals all the truths of God, that seals every particular promise of God. And it is never likely to arise in the soul, unless there be first an almighty power from heaven, to seize on the powers of the soul, to subdue them, and make it say, "Amen." There is such an inward rising of the heart, and an innate rebellion against the blessed truth of God, that unless God, by his

strong arm, bring the heart down, it never will nor can say, "Amen." *Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 20. *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* This announcement carries with it an intimation that other Psalms besides are to follow. It would have been superfluous, if the Psalms had not been to follow which bear on their front the name of David. To this, indeed, it must point, bearing the character of an enigma, that these additional Psalms stood in other relations than those given in the first two books. We shall attain perfect clearness and certainty by perceiving that all the Psalms of David in the last two books are inserted as component parts into the later cycles. The subscription at the end of the second book must have been designed to separate the free from the bound, the scattered and serial Psalms of David from each other. Analogous in some measure is the subscription, *at an end are the speeches of Job*, in Job 31:40, which is not contradicted by the fact that Job appears again speaking in chapters 41 and 42; it should rather be regarded as serving to give us a right understanding of that formal conclusion. *E. W. Hengstenberg*.

Verse 20. At the conclusion of this Psalm, the Hebrew copies have, *Here end the orisons of David, the son of Jesse*. But, as several other Psalms of David follow, we must understand the note to mean either, "Here ends this book of the orisons of David," or, "Here ends the collection of hymns made by David himself; "additions being afterwards made to it, containing other hymns of David, by Asaph and others, and, lastly, by Esdras. *Daniel Cresswell*.

Verse 20. *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* So long as the fivefold division of the Psalter was neglected, this note gave nothing but perplexity to the commentators. Augustine, and his master, Ambrose of Milan, finding it standing in their Psalters, between the seventy-second and seventy-third Psalms, took it for part of the title of the latter, and tortured their ingenuity in divining its import. Calvin saw that the note is retrospective, but, not having observed its position at the end of a book, he thought it pertained exclusively to the Psalm immediately preceding, and took it to mean that the Psalm embalms the last prayers of the aged king. But he was at a loss to reconcile this with the two obvious facts, that the *title* of the Psalm ascribes it to Solomon, and that quite a different Psalm is elsewhere preserved as "the last words of David" (2Sa 23:1). And this perplexity of the great Reformer is shared by the older commentators generally. We get rid of it at once, by simply remarking the position of the note in question. It is set down after a doxology which marks the end of the Second Book. It has no special reference, therefore, to the seventy-second Psalm. It either refers to the Second Book, or, more probably, to both the First and Second. *William Binnie*.

Verse 20. *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* (Compared with Psalm 86, title, *A prayer of David*. How can the prayers of David be said to be ended, when more begin? Answer: The end David had in making the Psalms, prayers, and praises, is one thing; but to make a final end of praying is another. Many several opinions have been given to reconcile this. Some that here end the prayers he made for Solomon. Some that here end the prayers he made in the days of his affliction. Some that here end the praises that he made, not the prayers, turning the word *tepillahs* into *tehillahs*. Some that here end David's, the rest that follow are Asaph's. Some that this Psalm was the last, the rest *posthumes*, found after his death. Some think it is spoken as the phrase is in Job 31:40: "The words of Job are ended; "and yet he had some words after this, but not so many. But the soundest resolution is this:—Here ends the prayers of David the son of Jesse; that is, here they are perfected. If any ask hereafter what or where lies the end that all these Psalms were made for? tell them here it lies in this Psalm, and, therefore, placed in the midst of all; as the centre in midst of a circle, all the lines meet here, and all the Psalms determine here; for it is only a prophetic treatise of the kingdom of Christ drawn out to the life, and it is dedicated to Solomon, because here is wisdom; other men had other ends, it may be, but the son of Jesse had no other end in the world but to set out Christ's kingdom in making of his Psalms. *William Streat, in "The Dividing of the Hoof."* 1654.

Verse 20. *The son of Jesse.* It is the note of true humility and sincere love to God to abase ourselves, and acknowledge our low condition, wherein God did find us when he did let forth his love to us, that thereby we may commend the riches of God's goodness and grace unto us, appeareth here in David. *David Dickson*.

Verse 20. *Are ended.* The sense is, that David, the son of Jesse, had nothing to pray for, or to wish, beyond the great things described in this Psalm. Nothing can be more animated than this conclusion. Having described the blessings of Messiah's reign, he closes the whole with this magnificent doxology:

Blessed be Jehovah God,
 God of Israel, alone performing wonders;
 And blessed be his name of glory,
 And let his glory fill the whole of the earth.
 Amen, and Amen.
 Finished are the prayers of David, the son of Jesse.
 —*Samuel Horsley*.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Whole Psalm.

1. He shall.
2. They shall. Ring the changes on these, as the Psalm does.

Verse 1. The prayer of the ancient church now fulfilled.

1. Our Lord's titles.
 - (a) King, by divine nature.
 - (b) King's Son, in both natures. Thus we see his power innate and derived.
2. Our Lord's authority: "Judgments."
 - (a) To rule his people.
 - (b) To rule the world for his people's benefit.
 - (c) To judge mankind.
 - (d) To judge devils.
3. Our Lord's character. He is righteous in rewarding and punishing, righteous towards God and man.
4. Our loyal prayer. This asks for his rule over ourselves and the universe.

Verse 2. The rule of Christ in his church.

1. The subjects.
 - (a) Thy people, the elect, called, etc.
 - (b) Thy poor, through conviction and consciousness of sin.
2. The ruler. He, only, truly, constantly, etc.
3. The rule.—Righteous, impartial, gentle, prudent, etc. Lesson. Desire this rule.

Verse 3. Mountains of divine decree, of immutable truth, of almighty power, of eternal grace, etc. These mountains of God are securities of peace.

Verse 4. The poor man's King, or the benefits derived by the poor from the reign of Jesus.

Verse 5. The perpetuity of the gospel, reasons for it, things which threaten it, and lessons derived from it.

Verse 6. The field, the shower, the result. This verse is easily enough handled in a variety of ways.

Verse 7.

1. The righteous flourish more at one season than another.
2. They flourish most when Jesus is with them: *in his days, etc.*
3. The fruit of their growth is proportionately abundant: *and abundance, etc. G. Rogers.*

Verse 7. *Abundance of peace.* Abundant overtures of peace, abundant redemption making peace, abundant pardon conferring peace, abundant influences of the Spirit sealing peace, abundant promises guaranteeing peace, abundant love spreading peace, etc.

Verse 8. The universal spread of the gospel. Other theories as to the future overturned, and their evil influence exposed; while the benefit and certainty of this truth is vindicated.

Verse 9 (*last clause*). The ignoble end of Christ's enemies.

Verse 10. Christian finance; voluntary but abundant are the gifts presented to Jesus.

Verse 12. Christ's peculiar care of the poor.

Verse 12.

1. Pitiable characters.
2. Abject conditions: "cry; ""no helper."
3. Natural resort: "crieth."
4. Glorious interposition. *G. Rogers.*

Verse 14. The martyr's hope in life and comfort in death. *G. Rogers.*

Verse 14 (*last clause*). The martyr's blood.

1. Seen of God when shed.
2. Remembered by him.
3. Honoured by being a benefit to the church.
4. Rewarded especially in heaven.

Verse 15. *Prayer shall be made for him.* We are to pray for Jesus Christ. Owing to the interest he has in certain objects, what is done for them is done for himself and so he esteems it. We, therefore, pray for him when we pray for his ministers, his ordinances, his gospel, his church—in a word, his *cause*. But what should we pray for on his behalf?

1. The degree of its resources; that there be always a sufficiency of suitable and able instruments to carry on the work.
2. The freedom of its administration; that whatever opposes or hinders its progress may be removed.
3. The diffusion of its principles; that they may become general and universal.
4. The increase of its glory, as well as its extent. *W. Jay.*

Verse 15. Prayer for Jesus, a suggestive topic. Daily praise, a Christian duty.

Verse 15. A living Saviour, a giving people; the connection between the two. Or, Christ in the church fills the exchequer, fosters the prayer meeting, and sanctifies the service of song.

Verse 16.

1. A happy description of the gospel: it is *a handful of corn*.
2. The places where it is sown.
3. The blessed effects which this gospel, when thus sown, will produce in the world. *J. Sherman.*

Verse 16.

1. Commencement.
2. Publicity.

3. Growth.
4. Result.

Verse 16.

1. What? *Corn.*
2. How much? *A handful.*
3. Where? *In the earth upon the top of the mountains.*
4. Will it grow? *The fruits, etc.*
5. What then? *They of the city, etc.*

Verse 17.

1. Christ glorified in the Church: *men shall be blessed, etc.*
2. Glorified in the world: *all nations, etc.*
3. Glorified in worlds to come: *endure, be continued, etc.*
4. Glorified for ever. *G. Rogers.*

Verses 17-19. The Four Blesseds, their meaning and order.

Verse 20.

1. Prayer should be frequent: *The prayers.*
2. Should be individual: *Of David.*
3. Should be early commenced: *the son of Jesse.*
4. Should be continued till they are no more needed.

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND BOOK OF THE PSALMS.

WORK UPON THE SEVENTY-SECOND PSALM

In CHANDLER'S *Life of David*, Vol. 2, pp. 440-44, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.